CaRCC Emerging Centers Call #54, 2025-04-16

Wednesday, April 16, 2025 - 12p ET / 11a CT / 10a MT / 9a PT / 7a HT

Title

RCD Origin Stories #1: Sarvani Chadalapaka and Jane Combs

Speakers

Sarvani Chadalapaka, Research Computing Director, University of California, Merced
Jane Combs, Director, UC Advanced Research Computing Center, University of Cincinnati

Abstract

We kick off our RCD Origin Stories series with Sarvani Chadalapaka, Research Computing Director at the University of California, Merced and Jane Combs, Director of the UC Advanced Research Computing Center at the University of Cincinnati. This series, which emerged from discussions started at our PEARC24 Emerging Centers Birds of a Feather (BoF), will build a library of stories about how individual emerging RCD centers got their start, their challenges as they became more established, and how they sustain themselves. As this library grows, the intent is that the community will be able to find common best practices for building and sustaining RCD centers across these origin stories.

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Please Note:

- ***We will record this call and post shortly thereafter on CaRCC's YouTube channel.***
- ***We expect all persons on the call to adhere to CaRCC's Code of Conduct.***

Announcements

- Welcome to the Emerging Centers Track of the CaRCC People Network!
  - Join the People Network email lists.
  - Join the CaRCC Slack workspace.
  - Track descriptions
- The CaRCC People Network is your community for research computing and data professionals. Please see this brief overview and https://carcc.org/ for more details.
- If you have questions about CaRCC or are interested in becoming more involved, please contact:
  - ec-coordinators@carcc.org for emerging centers-related activities, or
  - getstarted@carcc.org or getinvolved@carcc.org for other CaRCC work
- We expect all persons on the call to adhere to CaRCC's Code of Conduct.

Sign-In (Name / Affiliation / Email)

Note: To help with our outreach efforts, please sign in with the suggested format (we will not sell/share your information per our Privacy Policy). Switch your editing mode to "Viewing" after sign-in, if you're worried about making accidental edits.

1. Patrick Clemins / University of Vermont / patrick.clemins@uvm.edu
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14. Chris Dalton / christopher.dalton@maine.edu / University of Maine
15. Forough Ghahramani/NJEdge/forough.ghahramani@njedge.net
16. Kevin Thompson/NSF/kthompso@nsf.gov
17. Bob Doran / Univ of South Carolina / rdoran@sc.edu

Max attendee count: 22

Call Notes

Slides

Notes

Sarvani Chadalapaka, Research Computing Director, University of California, Merced

UC-Merced is focused on applied research

- With that, they have recognized the importance of research computing both in terms of research and fostering those skills in their students and faculty

RCD (CIRT - Cyberinfrastructure & Research Technologies) at UC-Merced started with a 2014 NSF MRI Computational Cluster Grant with 2 FTEs... a Director and a HPC Systems Admin

Established the CoRC (Committee on Research Computing) faculty advisory board early

Lots of outreach and training to build from 40 to 600 cluster users

Student engagement in Phase 2 infrastructure build-out (2019 - 2nd NSF MRI Grant)

- At this point, established a hardware lifecycle plan

Now, have a cost recovery model and working on sustained campus funding

- Recently, received a NSF CC* Regional Compute award

Jane Combs, Director, UC Advanced Research Computing Center, University of Cincinnati

NSF CC* Awards (starting in 2014) for a Science DMZ and CI Engineer started things off

- Had some departmental clusters at that point

At first, worked to have faculty / students to use Ohio Supercomputing Center

- Initially wrote a grant to establish a condo at OSC, but that was declined with feedback that staffing was needed at U of Cincinnati to help folks use HPC resources... so... worked on that route instead

First campus-wide cluster was purchased with a faculty's startup funds and staffed with a (2) 20% FTEs and volunteers

A big initial (and on-going) challenge was convincing administration that a RCD center was needed at U of Cincinnati and building an RCD community

Eventually, received an NSF MRI award in 2020

- Started with researcher investment model (5 year increments)
- But, now a core facility and swapped investment model for a pay per CPU hour model... No free tier

Has a really nice one-pager services sheet to distribute each year to department heads

- https://arc.uc.edu

Questions

Chat Comments

00:26:40 Mike Renfro: Can be answered after: 600 users over what timeframe: in the last year, total, etc.?

00:28:06 Mike Renfro: Not as much a super-fan, but I named our first cluster "Impulse" and the second one "Warp 1".

00:28:36 Patrick Clemins: Please sign in (and feel free to contribute to notes) here: https://docs.google.com/document/d/14v3O3BNnR7LvXVc8y6wfYPfNInLOmLZ8IPxeeLZzp8E

00:38:02 Sarvani Chadalapaka(UC Merced)-She/Her: Replying to "Can be answered afte..."

We had grown from 40- 400 users in the first year. At this point, we have about 600 active users on the cluster

00:38:10 Sarvani Chadalapaka(UC Merced)-She/Her: Reacted to "Not as much a super-..." with ❤️

00:40:34 Mike Renfro: Replying to "Not as much a super-..."

Technically, “Impulse” was named because my MS was in vibration and I could make a logo from a MATLAB figure. “Warp 1” followed on from there, years later.

00:48:34 Mike Renfro: Adaptive Rack Cooling System: https://www.hpe.com/psnow/doc/a00051240enw

00:49:35 Mike Renfro: We’ve got at least 7 folks missing from the call document sign-in sheet: https://docs.google.com/document/d/14v3O3BNnR7LvXVc8y6wfYPfNInLOmLZ8IPxeeLZzp8E — Patrick and CaRCC will be sad if we don’t know who was here. Please keep them from being sad.

01:02:45 Kevin Thompson (NSF): If users ask for more capacity beyond what you provide locally, do you talk to them about PaTH/OSPool and/or ACCESS resources?

01:03:27 Sarvani Chadalapaka(UC Merced)-She/Her: Absolutely. Our Research Facilitator helps faculty write ACCESS request proposals. Our HPC trainings include references to NSF resources like ACCESS when researches want to scale their research

01:06:44 Jerry Waldron - MDREN: Replying to "If users ask for mor..."

I was the CIO at two smaller colleges and one HBCU. I would have totally supported being part of a multi-campus shared research support service. This was an activity that my small teams could not support.

01:07:52 Kevin Thompson (NSF): Replying to "If users ask for mor..."

Saran you can also send them here for access to osg/ospool: https://portal.osg-htc.org/application

01:08:01 Sarvani Chadalapaka(UC Merced)-She/Her: Reacted to "Saran you can also s..." with ➕

01:08:06 Kevin Thompson (NSF): Replying to "If users ask for mor..."

Sarvani sorry

01:08:50 Sarvani Chadalapaka(UC Merced)-She/Her: Replying to "If users ask for mor..."

Yes, we also contribute to OSG through our latest CC* compute grant, so our users are aware of OSG resources as well :-D

01:09:02 Sarvani Chadalapaka(UC Merced)-She/Her: Reacted to "Saran you can also s..." with ✔️

01:09:06 Bob Freeman, PhD: Great talks! Thx!

01:09:58 Patrick Schmitz: Have to run - great session!

Connection Details

https://utah.zoom.us/my/carcc?pwd=TjFuR3VVM2d5eE5zWnEvWWxDTFBCUT09

Meeting ID: 824 0051 8198
Password: 31415926

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Cursor Garden ↩️ *“Don't leave your cursor in a seedy alleyway”*

