

**Senate Research Committee (SRC)
February 10, 2020
Minutes of the Meeting**

These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate; none of the comments, conclusions, or actions reported in these minutes represent the views of, nor are they binding on the senate, the administration, or the Board of Regents.

[In these minutes: Storage Governance and Infrastructure Updates; Action Item: Research Openness Exemption; Senior Leader Strategic Plan Consultation; MN-GEMS Update]

PRESENT: Julie Olson (chair), Bill Arnold, Chris Cramer, John Freeman, Kelsie Full, Sumanth Gopinath, Tasoulla Hadjiyanni, Lisa Johnston, Leslie Kennedy, Boyd Kumher, Katsumi Matsumoto, Shashi Shekhar, Susannah Smith, Pamela Webb

REGRETS: Diana Karwan, Nelson Rhodus, Kathleen Vohs

ABSENT: Gregory Cuomo, Daniel Heemstra, Tucker LeBien, Matthew Pappas, Nicole Pilman, Dianne Newmark Sztainer, David Roberts, Teresa Rose-Hellekant, Ali Salavati, Vaybhav Shaw, Carston Wagner, Philip Zelazo

GUESTS: Jim Wilgenbusch, director of research computing, Minnesota Supercomputing Institute; Doug Finley, service owner, Infrastructure, OIT; Graham Candler, chair, Research Openness Subcommittee; Pat Briscoe, export controls and international programs officer, Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR); Arnie Frishman, senior associate general counsel, Office of the General Counsel (OGC)

OTHERS ATTENDING: Dan Gilchrist, Bri Keeney, Mike Langhus

Chair Julie Olson welcomed the committee and the members introduced themselves.

1. Storage Governance and Infrastructure Updates

Jim Wilgenbusch, director of research computing, Minnesota Supercomputing Institute, and Doug Finley, service owner, Infrastructure, OIT, introduced themselves and presented slides titled [*Storage Governance and Infrastructure Updates*](#). Their presentation focused on current data needs at the institution, including how they have changed and what the challenges are. Additionally, they covered new developments in OIT and research computing and the ways in which the institution is communicating the new developments across the various governance structures.

Wilgenbush told members that OIT and research computing have a shared goal to make data less of a liability (e.g. cost of allocating, storing, and protecting) and more of an asset to the institution. Data as an asset, he explained, would allow for:

- promotion of public and private collaborations,
- better recruiting of faculty and students,

- less duplication; and,
- increased research capacity and capability.

Wilgenbush also noted some of the challenges related to data storage, including specific issues that need to be addressed at the institution to better organize data, and also some of the key requirements necessary to shift data to be more of an asset to the University.

Finley then provided information about what OIT has done to better understand how data is used at the University, and what the cost has been historically. He explained that the Service Discovery and Design team held a series of community input sessions to collect use cases and feedback, and then developed request for proposals (RFPs) to procure technology solutions to support an OIT storage services portfolio that focuses on three main areas: administrative (cloud storage services, departmental storage), systems (system backup storage, application storage), and research (research data storage, high performance storage, static storage).

Finley explained that the storage services portfolio is a multi-year initiative aimed at providing avenues to store the right data in the right places. He said the project will be a significant undertaking, and will require evaluating and moving all of the existing data currently housed in the General Data Storage service (files.umn.edu/nfs.umn.edu/Isilon).

Wilgenbush then discussed new developments to research computing, and walked members through the systems roadmap timeline. He also noted that the Minnesota Supercomputing Institute (MSI) has doubled the capacity of the supercomputer. The goals of the MSI, he said, are to: (1) make it easy to get dedicated access to computing when free allocation is not enough, and (2) shorten turnaround time from request to delivery.

Wilgenbush and Finley then closed with an overview of the Institutional Cyber Infrastructure Group (ICIG) and the University Storage Council (USC). They also introduced two tools that have recently been launched to the University community by the USC: the [Storage Champion Network](#) and the [Storage Selection Tool](#). Wilgenbush told members that they would like feedback from the committee about any potential gaps in their long-range planning.

3. Action Item: Research Openness Exemption

Olson then reminded members that a Request for Exception to Research Openness in Research Policy has recently been submitted, and per University policy, the exception must be reviewed by the Senate Research Committee as well as the SRC Research Openness Subcommittee. Olson explained what the committee was responsible for considering, and gave a brief overview of the proposal, which was provided to members in advance. She reported that the subcommittee had already met regarding the exception request. She then invited Graham Candler, chair, SRC Research Openness Subcommittee, to provide the subcommittee's feedback.

Candler told the committee that the subcommittee considered two main questions:

- (1) Will the research lead to discovery that will be of interest for national security?
- (2) If the University does not conduct the research, will another institution do it?

Candler reported that the subcommittee believed that the research could produce information that would be of interest for national security, and although they couldn't be certain that another institution would conduct the research, the subcommittee agreed that the proposal was strong and it is in the nation's interest to have the work done at the University because it might not happen otherwise. Candler told members that the subcommittee also discussed the disadvantages of the exemption request, primarily that there will be a lack of publication related to the work, which would be limiting for the postdoctoral researchers involved, who likely expect to be able to publish their research. He told members that the subcommittee ultimately felt strongly that the exemption should be granted, with the caveat that the postdoctoral researchers should be treated differently than the professional staff, and be given an opportunity to do the research that would allow for publication, if possible.

Committee members discussed security standards, restrictions on non-US citizens involved in the research, compliance risks, and whether the project should be restricted to professional staff rather than allowing postdoctoral researchers to be involved. The committee then voted to approve the exemption.

Olson told members that she would complete the required form indicating that the committee had voted affirmatively to move the exemption forward. The endorsement, she explained, is a recommendation to Chris Cramer, who will make the final recommendation for the exemption request.

4. Senior leader strategic plan consultation

Cramer then joined the meeting and told members that President Gabel requested that he present the [Systemwide Strategic Plan draft goals](#) for feedback from the committee.

The committee offered the following feedback regarding the goals under Commitment 2: Discovery, Innovation and Impact:

- Consider decoupling “collaboration” from “creativity” and “entrepreneurial” in goal two.
- Consider clarifying the language to help the community understand specifically what the goals are meant to accomplish. Some members reported that the language seemed “cluttered” and “vague.”

Committee members also discussed the emphasis on engaging Minnesota and whether (1) Minnesota should be called out specifically, rather than articulating the importance of impacting the entire international community, and (2) whether Minnesotans feel that the University does not engage the state. Cramer reminded members that part of a strategic plan is to decide where to allocate money, and he said many constituencies have voiced concern that the institution does not do enough for the state.

Some members suggested that the University consider marketing strategies to help inspire and educate the state about the research being done at the institution. Members suggested that the third goal be updated to read “engage and inspire Minnesota.”

Cramer thanked members for the feedback and explained that the next step will be to articulate action items under each draft goal, and that draft action items will be discussed at the Board of Regents retreat in March followed by broader consultation across the institution.

5. MN-GEMS update

Pamela Webb provided the following updates regarding the MN-GEMS RFP:

- Two finalists were invited to campus for two full-day demonstrations, and the vendors are currently being graded.
- The project is in the useability testing phase, and will be tested by four faculty members, four central administrators and four research administrators.
- Once the final grading has been done, the project will enter contract negotiations before final implementation.

Olson reported that the Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC) has prioritized communicating this change to all faculty members, and she encouraged committee members to share the updates with their units.

Olson then adjourned the meeting.

Bobbie Erichsen
University Senate Office