



Center for International
Earth Science Information Network

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MEMORANDUM

To: CCI Steering Committee
From: R. Chen
Date: 1 March 2007
Subject: Progress Report for CI4EI

We are pleased to submit this progress report for the EI Cross-Cutting Initiative, “CI4EI: How Can Cyberinfrastructure Help the Earth Institute Save the World?”

As you know, the CCI projects were announced in early November 2006 and accounts became available in early December. Due to the holidays, it was not possible to schedule the kickoff meetings for CI4EI until early February.

To date, we have held two kickoff meetings, one on the main campus in Low Library and a second at the Lamont campus in Lamont Hall. Initial interest has been high across the Earth Institute, and we had good representation of the key EI centers and programs interested in CI at the meetings. Attendance lists for the two kickoff meetings are attached. A number of additional individuals have also expressed interest in participating, even though they were unable to participate in the initial two meetings.

The kickoff meetings have identified a large set of CI-related issues of concern to the community. Based on these initial discussions, we will be establishing a Steering Committee and several subcommittees. As originally envisioned, the Steering Committee will be made up of representatives from the major centers, programs, and departments and will address high-level strategic issues related to CI—e.g., potential major proposals, possible development initiatives, coordination needs across units and campuses, and opportunities for key partnerships.

An operational subcommittee will be created to address the immediate needs identified in the kickoff meetings for mechanisms to encourage coordination and collaboration across the EI and the University as a whole. This subgroup will set up a wiki, work with the EI web group to develop a coordinated web presence (e.g., a portal to the relevant campus resources), and address other operational issues such as coordination of site licenses and developing an inventory of CI resources and capabilities across campus.

Another key issue that emerged from the discussions is the need for CI to help the EI succeed in its primary mission to foster sustainable development especially in the developing

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world. A subcommittee will be formed to address the need for new CI technologies and approaches suitable for use in developing countries. This subgroup will work with EI initiatives like the Arsenic Superfund Basic Research Program project and the Millennium Villages Project to identify specific ways to provide appropriate and sustainable information technologies that support the goals of these initiatives.

A third subcommittee under consideration would focus on specific issues related to access to high performance computing and associated CI facilities. The Steering Committee will review the level of interest in forming this subcommittee and develop appropriate terms of reference for this subcommittee, if needed.

In parallel with the kick-off meetings, CIESIN has established an initial web site in support of the CI4EI activity: <http://www.ciesin.columbia.edu/ci4ei/>. This site includes basic project information, lists recent key reports and documents on CI issues, provides a calendar of CI-related events, and provides other important links. Results from the kickoff meetings will be posted on the site early next week.

Although staff from the Columbia University libraries had expressed their interest in participating in the kick-off meetings, they were unable to do so. However, we have had separate meetings with Jim Neal, Stephen Davis, David Millman, and others regarding their involvement in CI4EI and their collaboration in approaching key CI agencies such as the National Science Foundation.

Plans for bringing in speakers are under discussion, though scaled back somewhat from the original proposal due to the reduced budget we received. A visit by PYXIS Corporation originally planned for late February was postponed by PYXIS due to another conflict. I do expect to talk to Chris Greer of the Office of Cyberinfrastructure about the CI4EI activity at an upcoming U.S. National Committee for CODATA meeting on 20 March, and will invite him to Columbia or suggest a meeting in DC in the near future.

Please let us know if you have any questions or suggestions.

Attachment

Participant List

CI4EI Kickoff Meeting 1
 February 15, 2007, 12:00 noon - 2:00 p.m., Low Library Trustee's Meeting Room

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CI4EI Kickoff Meeting 2
 February 23, 2007, 12:30 noon - 2:30 p.m., Lamont Hall, Lamont Campus

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