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**Regional Research Computing Collaboration to be Explored at PEARC20**

Northeast Cyberteam Will Offer Lessons Learned

Holyoke, Massachusetts, June 13, 2020 – A model for regional collaboration on research computing among academic institutions of all sizes will be explored at [PEARC20](https://pearc.acm.org/pearc20/). A paper and Birds of a Feather (BOF) session accepted by conference organizers outline lessons learned by the [Northeast Cyberteam](https://necyberteam.org/) during its two-and-a-half-year, National Science Foundation-funded project to expand access to research computing. The Cyberteam’s BOF session will take place July 29 at 12 noon Pacific Time.

Computing has become central to nearly every scientific discipline. The effective use of cyberinfrastructure at small and mid-sized institutions is essential if their faculty and students are to remain competitive. To advance this goal, the Northeast Cyberteam has built a pool of research computing facilitators (RCFs) that can be shared across institutional boundaries, along with a variety of self-service tools.

“We now have a well-established system that is delivering on the goals of moving science forward while giving potential RCFs real-world experiential training in the field of research computing,” said John Goodhue, the Northeast Cyberteam’s principal investigator and the executive director of the [Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center](https://www.mghpcc.org/) (MGHPCC). “The results of the initiative have been very promising, with many successful projects yielding publishable results. We are also seeing smaller institutions starting to treat research computing as an ordinary part of the research and education tool kit, instead of just a distant luxury item.”

“Our model pairs researchers with student RCFs who are guided by mentors,” added Julie Ma, program manager for the Northeast Cyberteam. “This gives the student the opportunity to practice facilitation skills, gain hands-on experience with advanced computing resources, and learn a new domain.”

The Northeast Cyberteam is led by a steering committee comprising leaders from each of the larger institutions that anchor the project: the MGHPCC, [University of Maine](https://umaine.edu/), [University of New Hampshire](https://www.unh.edu/) and [University of Vermont](https://www.uvm.edu/).

“This is an important partnership that is advancing academic research while creating new opportunities for students and faculty and lowering barriers to utilizing high performance computing at institutions across the Northeast,” said Adrian Del Maestro, Associate Professor of Physics at the University of Vermont and Director of the Vermont Advanced Computing Core. “The Northeast Cyberteam is accelerating impactful science and can serve as a model for regional and even national collaborations that maximize the academic and economic benefits of research computing.”

To date the Northeast Cyberteam has launched 35 projects at 17 institutions. Among the lessons learned:

* Experienced RCFs have been willing to serve as mentors to student RCFs, supporting the teaching as well the research mission of academic institutions.
* The project has attracted students at grade levels ranging from sophomore to post-doctoral, providing them with experiential learning opportunities early in their careers and more time to develop the skill set needed to become RCFs.
* The project has received robust participation from research computing groups at larger universities – a key factor in the success of the project. Larger institutions have offered experienced RCFs to serve as mentors, and contributed to a Q&A site and a training resources repository.
* Students and mentors have made use of collaboration tools such as high-quality desktop videoconferencing to cross institutional boundaries – a trend with important implications in a COVID-19 world.

In a recent new development, the Northeast Cyberteam’s model also helped inform creation of [Computing Against COVID-19](https://computingagainstcovid19.org/), which facilitates connections between groups developing and deploying applications to fight the pandemic, and expert developers, architects and operators willing and able to provide computing help and support.

[**About the Northeast Cyberteam**](https://necyberteam.org/)

The Northeast Cyberteam is a three-year, NSF-funded initiative to make advanced computing more accessible researchers at small and mid-sized institutions in New England that do not have critical mass to support these resources on campus. It is led by a steering committee comprising leaders from each of the larger institutions that anchor the project: the [Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center](https://www.mghpcc.org/) (MGHPCC), [University of Vermont](https://www.uvm.edu/), [Worcester Polytechnic Institute](https://www.wpi.edu/), [University of Maine](https://umaine.edu/) and the [University of New Hampshire](https://www.unh.edu/).

[**About the Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center**](http://www.mghpcc.org/)

The Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center (MGHPCC) provides state-of-the-art infrastructure for computationally intensive research that is indispensable in the increasingly sensor and data-rich environments of modern science and engineering. Computers at the MGHPCC run millions of virtual experiments every month, supporting thousands of researchers in Massachusetts and around the world. The MGHPCC was developed through an unprecedented collaboration among the most research-intensive universities in Massachusetts (Boston University, Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Northeastern University and the University of Massachusetts); the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; and private industry (Cisco and Dell EMC). The member universities fund the ongoing operation of the data center, which is open for use by any research organization.

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