Introduction to Research Facilitation

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Lore vs Data

At the end of this session, we're going to go around the room, and each of us will:

a. say whether you've done research facilitation before;

b. if so, tell a story about a research facilitation experience you had and what you learned from it.

Some History at OU

- In 2001, even before we founded the OU Supercomputing Center for Education & Research (OSCER), I was already going around to researchers and helping them.
- In the early years, I did "rounds," where I'd go to someone's office for an hour a week to help with the computing- and/or data-intensive aspects of their research.
- Once we got to 20 different groups getting rounds each week, we started to run out of Henry-hours, so we switched to a help session approach, where I'd do 3 hours a week in a PC lab, so I could help multiple people at a time.
- Then, one of our operations team members started showing up and listening in.
- Then, he started doing some of the facilitation.

History at OU (cont'd)

- Then, other OSCER operations team members started doing it.

- Then, I stopped doing it and they were doing all of it.

- Then, they switched to an ad hoc approach, where people can make an appointment with an OSCER team member to meet either in the researcher's office or in one of our offices.

- Now, we're switching back to regularly scheduled help sessions.

- And, we've got 1.5 FTE of research computing facilitators on staff as of Spring 2017.

Goal

- Get them as productive as possible as quickly as possible.

What Are We Asked to Do?

- <u>Beginner</u>: Teach them basic Unix commands; show them how to use a batch system.

- <u>Intermediate</u>: Help them deploy (or deploy for them) community software, either in their home directory or in a central software repository.

- <u>Advanced</u>: Help them parallelize their code or otherwise optimize it for the platform they want to run it on.

- <u>Guru</u>: Help them design the project; identify the right resources and how to get access to them; co-author the grant proposal; co-author the publications.

What Don't We Do?

- We don't have to become experts on their research domain -- but we do have to become sufficiently knowledgeable that we can have an intelligent conversation about it.

- We don't have to be experts on STEM -- but we do have to become experts on how STEM research is done.

- We don't have to write their code for them -- they're better served if we **teach** them how to write the code.

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Thanks for your attention!

Questions?

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