TEAMS OF CI PROFESSIONALS: RECRUITMENT & RETENTION, MANAGEMENT BUILDING, AND MOTIVATION

Preston Smith

Executive Director, Research Computing, Purdue University
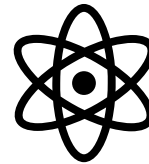
Virtual Residency Workshop 2020

MYPATH

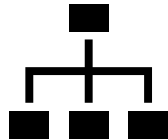MIS Degree

Sysadmin job
(libraries)

"Beowulf" looks
interesting (Physics)

TeraGrid

Help support
Purdue's Teragrid
resources

Maybe
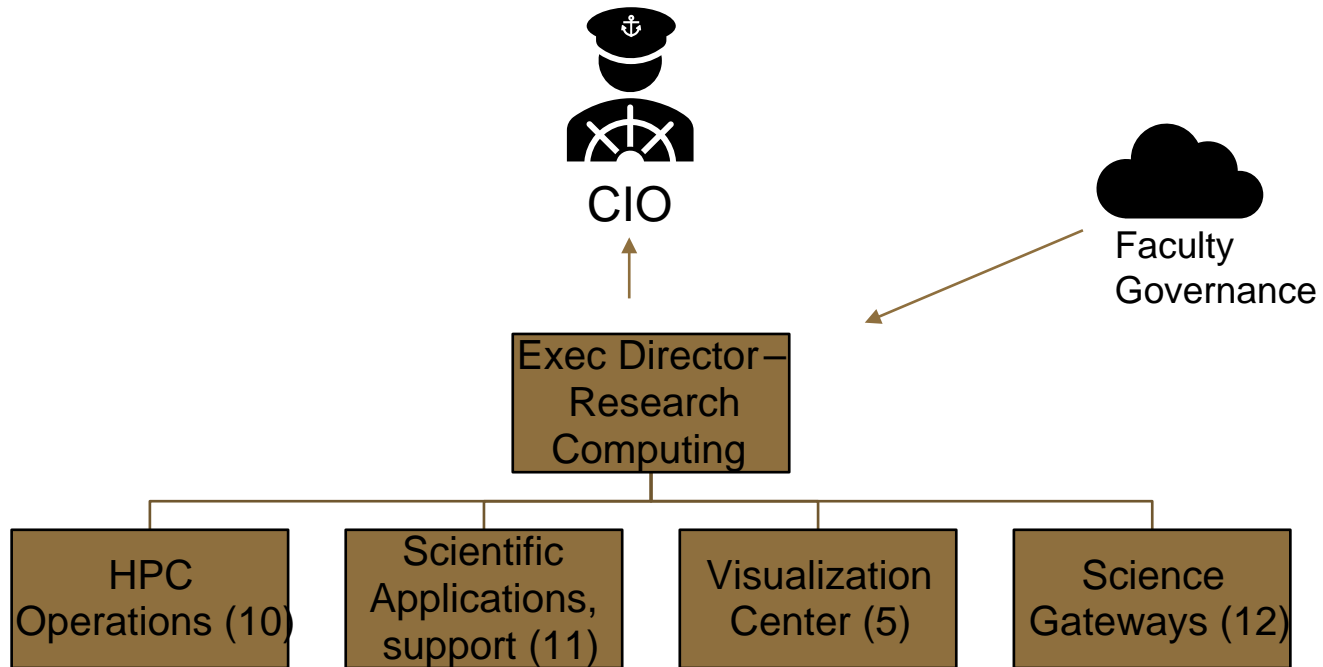management?
(Custom
solutions team)

"User services
Needs a
manager, you
should try it"

Me today

Our Organization

CIO

Faculty Governance

Exec Director – Research Computing

| HPC Operations (10) | Scientific Applications, support (11) | Visualization Center (5) | Science Gateways (12) |

Plus:
Architect
Training
Communications
PMs

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Building a Team

What has been a success?

- Develop undergrad interns into RCpracticioners
- In 14 years, approximately 70 students have gone through the program.

  - 9 became full -time staff at Purdue

  - 4 are research computing practitioners elsewhere

- 20% conversion rate entering our community
- Several of our senior people grew from this path

- Dual career staff (for science/application track)

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Building a Team

What has NOT been a success?

- Recruiting seasoned people from outside

- Sometimes early career PhDs have struggled moving from graduate student to self-directed, independent role

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Staff Characteristics

What are our Staff like?

- Hire for mindset, more than having 100% of skills

  - Creative, initiative, problem solvers

  - Not punchlists

  - People skills

- Money is always nice for motivation and reward– but..

  - Interesting work

  - Making an impact

  - Working with top minds

  - Flexible work

  - Opportunities for travel and networking

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Coordinating and Uniting on Purpose

How to keep a large team on task?

- Annual all-hands meeting
- Management team keeps "top 5" org priorities

- Now in our remote world, it's been an evolution

  - Daily standups

  - More regular all-staff discussions from sr mgmt

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