

**MINUTES**  
**LOUISIANA OPTICAL NETWORK INITIATIVE**  
**MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

November 9, 2010

The Louisiana Optical Network Initiative (LONI) Management Council (MC) met at 1:00 p.m., Tuesday, November 9, 2010, in Room 153, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, Claiborne Office Building, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Dr. Les Guice, Chair of the LONI Management Council, called the meeting to order. A roll call was taken and a quorum was established.

**Council Members Present:**

Mike Asoodeh  
Beth Courtney  
Les Guice  
Steve Landry  
Laura Levy  
Charlie McMahan  
Ed Driesse  
Bob Fudickar  
Michael Stubblefield  
Joel Tohline  
Donnie Vandal  
Brian Voss  
Connie Koury

**Council Members Absent:**

Bradley Ebersole  
Lee Bairnsfather  
Rachel Vincent-Finley  
Greg Speyrer

**Guests:**

Jan Waguespack, AT&T  
David Lemoine, DOA  
David Lynn, Dell  
Carlos Thomas, SUBR  
Michael Slack, BCI  
Niki Papazoglakis, BCI  
Honggao Liu, LSU/LONI  
Randy Ward, LPB  
Wanda Smith, DOA  
Angela Mastainich, BoR  
Karen Odom, TW Telecom  
Randy Walker, DOA  
Brett Brock, CISCO  
Steven Halliwell, H.P.  
Robert Grueneveld, H.P.  
Jim Jeans, H.P.  
Ken Dawson, RBS

## APPROVAL OF MARCH 9, 2010 MINUTES

**On a motion of Dr. Laura Levy, seconded by Dr. Joel Tohline, the LONI Management Council voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the September 14, 2010 LONI Management Council meeting.**

## NLR AND INTERNET 2 UPDATES

Dr. Guice welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked Mr. Charlie McMahon to report on Internet 2 (I2). Mr. McMahon reported that the fall I2 meeting had occurred just last week and most of the focus was on the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) grant awards to state and regional networks across the nation and to the Internet 2's U.S. UCAN project. Mr. Brian Voss also added that the new I2 CEO, David Lambert, provided some insightful remarks on global issues that have been evolving with respect to regional and national network interests and had suggested that those issues should be discussed and considered carefully as continuing developments unfold. Mr. Voss indicated that he thought that Louisiana and LONI were very well structured and positioned and that there are many states and regional networks that are still striving to establish the right structure and people for effective service delivery.

## CHIEF ADVISOR REPORTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Dr. Steve Landry asked Mr. Vandal to provide a technology report since Mr. Leger was in New Orleans working on the setup and connection for the Supercomputing Conference being held there next week. Mr. Vandal reported that Mr. Leger's standard activity report was included in the meeting materials, and it indicated various accomplishments since the last report. LSU-A has been provided with a 50 Mbps connection and ULL has established an enhanced connection to provide for remote storage capability at ULM; the Wampold building connection agreement amendment has been executed; BTOP quarterly reporting is being prepared and submitted on a

regular basis; GEC, an engineering firm, has been selected for the engineering and environmental assessment work on the BTOP project; and the SC '10 Conference setup has been underway. Another project in the pipeline is a redesign of the LONI website.

Dr. Landry asked if the fiber disruption in New Orleans had been resolved and Mr. Vandal indicated that with the help of a private provider an emergency connection had been established to maintain service until a more permanent fix can be put in place.

### CHIEF SCIENTIST REPORT

Dr. Joel Tohline said that he has not heard of any new grants surfacing, but the LaSIGMA project, a major \$20 million grant under the EPSCoR program is still waiting final approval. He reported that he and Mr. Vandal had attended the EPSCoR Cyberinfrastructure workshop in Washington, D.C. and that there was strong interest from workshop participants regarding the success of LONI. There were inquiries at the conference regarding the connection of the community and technical colleges in Louisiana to LONI and it was a pleasure to respond that we had already started on connecting those schools to the network and that Louisiana's BTOP award would facilitate more progress in that effort. He commented that it is gratifying to be associated with a nationally recognized successful program and effort such as LONI.

Dr. Guice asked if there were any indications from EPSoR that new grants opportunities might be coming available. Dr. Tohline said there was discussion concerning the EPSCoR states seeking new hardware funding opportunities through a proposal to have the NSF EPSCoR program provide perhaps \$9 million annually to help sustain hardware investment. He also indicated that there were breakout sessions to develop ways to structure such a program. Dr. John Connolly, Director of the Kentucky EPSCoR program, is the point person for this effort and we should plan to monitor this over the next six months.

Likewise, the oil spill conference in New Orleans held November 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> had four or five science-related foundations in attendance which were inspired by what Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama were planning to do with the \$6 million grant that was recently awarded to do coastal hazards modeling. Unfortunately, the grant does not include funding for any infrastructure. Dr. Guice expressed optimism, however, that NSF will develop ways to assist states, particularly EPSCoR states, in acquiring funds needed to invest in computing infrastructure.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Bob Fudickar reported that there has not been in recent developments in economic development related to LONI. Dr. Guice informed the Council that there have been some economic development impacts that may not have drawn much attention. For example, at Louisiana Tech, a research team consisting of a physicist, a biomedical engineer, and a civil engineer have found ways to understand and predict electromagnetic pulse propagation effects using computational models on LONI cluster computers.

As a result of this research, they partnered with a company to develop ultra wide band technologies to pulse through the ground to enable equipment operators to be able to see things before they dig into them. A national robotics company and Louisiana Tech researchers received one of the first NIST Technology Innovation Partnership awards for \$3 million to commercialize the technology. A spin off company has been established at Louisiana Tech to assist in this R&D effort. They have already developed robot prototypes and expect the system could be commercial within the next year or so. Dr. Guice noted that we should look for other examples on our campuses and communicate those to broader audiences.

Mr. Vandal reported that he had been sent a contact from DED with DQSI, a firm interested in submitting a proposal to the U.S. Department of Energy for research into

development of commercial cloud computing environments. They are tenants in UNO's CERM facility and would like to partner with LONI.

#### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATES

Mr. Vandal said he has spoken on most of his issues already. The BTOP grant is requiring a considerable amount of staff time and effort. There have been recent discussions with U.S. Dept. of Commerce/NTIA regarding ways that additional project management resources could be secured from the grant and that appears promising.

The SC '10 Supercomputing Conference in New Orleans is scheduled for next week and there will be some demonstration opportunities for the oil spill response projects that were given grants earlier in the year. Mr. McMahon reminded everyone that the SC'10 conference is expected to attract as many as 12,000 to 13,000 attendants and should be a major event for New Orleans and Louisiana. Dr. Tohline said that the Governor had released a proclamation declaring it to be Supercomputing Conference week in the State of Louisiana.

A presentation on LONI and its value, benefits and accomplishments was made to the Board of Regents at the October meeting of the Board's Technology Committee. It was very well received and was an effective display of what LONI has provided to the postsecondary education community and the State.

Mr. Vandal took a moment to thank all of the outgoing officers for their hard work over the past several years, especially Dr. Guice who has served as Chair since 2004. Dr. Landry asked if the Chief Technology Advisor would have to be appointed by the Board of Regents and Mr. Vandal indicated that is what the bylaws prescribe.

#### OLD BUSINESS

Dr. Guice reminded the council that he had asked Mr. Voss at the last meeting of the council to assemble a group to look at high performance computing issues and he inquired as to whether any report was available at this time. Mr. Voss said that there are problems with aging infrastructure and lack of funds to repair or upgrade. Additionally, the end of the NSF HPCOPS (TeraGrid) grant is approaching and the funding and the six positions it supports will no longer be available for LONI's high performance computing operations. The good news is that the TeraGrid usage of Queen Bee that was required under the grant will be returned back to LONI users, but those computing resources are aging and systems will begin to start to fail. Mr. Voss related some data on usage which indicated that LSU/LONI was the predominant user, followed by the TeraGrid usage, and with lesser amounts of usage from the various other participating LONI institutions. He indicated that LSU IT staff is currently assessing options for repair/replacement of infrastructure to provide for high performance computing needs.

Mr. Ed Driesse then addressed the council regarding concerns the Commissioner of Administration and Division of Administration (DOA) staff have with respect to the BTOP project and the possibility that it could interfere with the private sector. Division of Administration staff has identified several issues that should be addressed concerning the BTOP award. Mr. Driesse recognized that the implementation of the project will require "walking a tight rope" between not resulting in a government service provider but yet getting service delivered to the rural areas that have little or no service currently. He then asked Mr. Allen Doescher with the DOA to summarize the issues with regard to the BTOP project and LONI governance, statutory authority and management. Ms. Connie Koury inquired as to the statutory issues that the DOA believe come into play and that Board of Regents would appreciate identification of the specific issues involved. Ms. Koury further indicated that LONI is a program and initiative established by the Board of Regents with funding provided by State appropriation. Board of Regents considerations in establishing LONI and pursuing the BTOP project have been

that 1) LONI should not be serving as a commercial carrier and 2) the BTOP project would be limited to development of “middle mile” infrastructure and service delivery would be dependent upon “last mile” service providers.

Dr. Landry said that the federal government has been pushing the envelope with respect to the line between service providers and the federally funded development of broadband infrastructure, and there will be a need for continued discussions of areas of concern.

Mr. Bob Fudickar added that there has been availability of other grant opportunities, particularly in the last mile area, and private service providers have had a chance to apply for those grants but largely have not done so.

Mr. Driesse indicated that he would get the specific issues to Ms. Koury and Mr. Vandal so that there could be the necessary follow-up to insure all issues are handled correctly.

Dr. Guice expressed appreciation for the efforts of everyone involved, but wanted everyone to remember that this initiative holds the potential for students located in isolated, rural areas such as Tallulah, Louisiana to someday log on to the internet and experience a lecture given by Dr. Joel Tohline. He added that in time these efforts will result in graduation rate improvements.

Ms. Beth Courtney suggested that other states such as Florida be examined to see how they were utilizing their BTOP grant funding and dealing with the private service providers.

Dr. Guice then moved the discussion to the nominating committee that had been established for purposes of proposing a new slate of officers for the council. Mr. Landry, Chair of the nominating committee, responded that the committee had conferred and recommends Mr. Charlie McMahon as Chair, Dr. Joel Tohline as Vice Chair and Dr. Les Guice as Secretary/Treasurer.

**On a motion by Dr. Steve Landry, seconded by Mr. Bob Fudickar, the LONI Management Council voted unanimously to approve the recommended slate of officers for the 2011 year.**

Dr. Guice thanked Dr. Landry for his time on the Management Council and his service as the Chief Technical Advisor to the council, as he will be retiring this December from the University of Lafayette.

Dr. Guice introduced Dr. Carlos A. Thomas, Assistant Professor of Information Systems & Operations Management with Southern University, to make a presentation to the council. Dr. Michael Stubblefield then gave a brief introduction of Dr. Thomas and the proposal that he would be speaking on. Dr. Thomas said that he realized by listening to the council discussion here today that there is a real need for stakeholders interested in broadband expansion to come together. Southern University would like to host a conference to bring together the stakeholders in healthcare, higher education and economic development and other areas to share information regarding the BTOP grant and its potential to reach to all areas of the community. The proposal is to bring together over a hundred stake holders for a two day conference. Mr. Vandal said that at the first meeting for BTOP recipients back in April of this year, U.S. Department of Commerce/NTIA staff made it clear that community outreach is an expected activity. There were questions from recipients regarding the funding for such efforts and it was indicated that realignments of budgets would be considered for these types of activities. Dr. Stubblefield expressed excitement about hosting this type of conference at Southern University and looks forward to working with the LONI management council to move it forward.

#### PUBLIC EVENTS IN SUPPORT OF LONI

Dr. Guice indicated that with some loss of staffing at both Regents and LSU that there are concerns at this time about LONI public relations activities. Mr. Charlie McMahon suggested that campuses try getting their PR staffs to volunteer to help with the promotion concepts of

LONI. Ms. Koury asks that Mr. Vandal talk with the Board of Regents Public Relations person, Ms. Meg Casper, to help with the promotion of LONI.

Mr. Charlie McMahon asked that Mr. Tohline to make a presentation at the next meeting of the council in January concerning CCT funding and the LONI presence.

Meetings will be the regular 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of every other month starting with January. The dates will be sent out at a later time.

#### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before LONI Management Council, the meeting was adjourned at 2:05 p.m.