Community subsidies

Are there things CCB wants to invest in centrally to promote good practices, avoid more costly cost-shifts, and otherwise avoid perverse incentives?

Goal

Explicitly characterize central staffing and funding investments to ensure CCB spends community funds on the most important things and eliminates low-value investments.

Proposed community investments

CU Blogs

$1,200 - 1,500/yr, starting July 2016 (a year away)

CIT's costs to research blogs will be $100/yr per blog, and we currently have 12-15 blogs there. New blogs get charged this year, but almost all ours are existing blogs, so for them, billing starts July 2016.

Considerations for this proposal:

- CCB paying centrally for this service prevents perverse incentives. Groups won't save money by not using CU Blogs.
- CU Blogs has an economy to ChemIT and Research groups, and also meets the technical needs of almost all research groups.
    - Economy is lost and costs are shifted if using other services. CU Blogs is understood by many in department, including ChemIT. CU Blogs credentials are all NetID-based (no username and passwords to manage). Technical problems addressed by CIT, with them working with vendor. Some free in-person assistance from CIT. Similar cost as with other WYSIWYG-style web hosting vendors (wix.com , webs.com, etc.).
    - Costs to the department if not done: ChemIT asked to consult on alternatives. ChemIT asked to directly CCB domain name <researchgroup.chem.cornell.edu> to service and all of them are different so have to be figured out and sometimes debugged.
- Buffers CIT from reputational hit of them nickeling and diming research groups directly.

LabView

$1,800/yr, starting "now"

Lack of a license server leads to less trusted census. As compared to MATLAB and Mathematica, which we're fine still collecting funds for.

Considerations for this proposal:

- Department heavily subsidizes clusters. This software primarily used by non-cluster groups so affords some balancing of resources.
- Administrative overhead invested by ChemIT and Research groups seems high relative to total dollar value. Comes to $50/seat per year if 36 seats and tricky to adjust up and down proportional to actual responses.
- This specific license used to be paid by the department for prior years. This year we got our act together this year and tried cost-recovering amounts. Want a formal decision permitting us not to try this again. :-)

DRAFT: Characterizing existing shared investments:

Network charges

- Currently, CCB pays $xx/ year to pay for network and phone charges.

Staff community resources

- Currently, over 1 FTE in ChemIT is focussed on specialized services to run CCB's cluster and other high-performance computer systems. Hardware and software costs subsidies for this service are low.