

SURAgriD Governance and Decision-Making Structure

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1. Background and Purpose

SURAgriD is a consortium of institutions and organizations collaborating and combining resources to create a distributed high performance computing (HPC) infrastructure (cyberinfrastructure) for the SURA region. With many participating institutions and organizations and contributed computing resources, SURAgriD has evolved over the past several years into a significant community of collaborators and HPC resources supporting research and education. Prior to March 31, 2007 SURAgriD was managed as a consortium of collaborating institutions with facilitation by SURA staff. Decision-making was primarily a process of group consensus.

SURAgriD reached a stage of maturity and investment where the development of a more formal governance and decision-making structure was necessary. As SURAgriD continues to grow, the more formal governance structure will support two core purposes: ensuring that institutions and organizations investing in SURAgriD have an appropriate role in its governance; and supporting the sustainable growth of active community participation and cooperative engagement in enhancing the SURAgriD infrastructure. Current SURAgriD participants include: SURA, SURAgriD resource providers, contributors to development (i.e. SURAgriD portal development/operation, SURAgriD Bridge CA development/operation), application users, participants seeking shared knowledge and/or experience with grid computing, and corporate partners.

The SURAgriD Project Planning Working Group (PPWG) (established September 21-22, 2006 at the SURAgriD In-Person Meeting) considered governance options and recommended a new governance structure for SURAgriD. PPWG members included:

- Linda Akli, SURA
- Gary Crane, SURA
- Steve Johnson, Texas A&M University
- Sandi Redman, University of Alabama in Huntsville
- Don Riley, University of Maryland, and SURA IT Fellow
- Mike Sachon, Old Dominion University
- Srikanth Sastry, Texas A&M University
- Mary Fran Yafchak, SURA
- Art Vandenberg, Georgia State University

This document represents the recommendation by the SURAgriD Project Planning Working Group and the approval by the SURAgriD membership for a SURAgriD Governance and Decision-Making Structure.

2. SURAgriid Membership Classes

SURAgriid consists of three initial SURAgriid membership classes:

1. **Contributing Member:** A Contributing Member is a higher education institution or related association or organization that contributes significant resources to the SURAgriid community for the advancement of regional cyberinfrastructure. SURA is by definition a Contributing Member.
2. **Participating Member.** A Participating Member is a higher education institution or related association or organization that participates in SURAgriid activities other than as a Contributing Member.
3. **Partnership Member.** A Partnership Member is any organization, commercial entity, or other non-higher education group that establishes a strategic relationship with SURAgriid.

These initial membership classes may be amended or revised by the SURAgriid Governance Committee with approval by the SURAgriid membership.

3. SURAgriid Governance and Decision-Making Structure

SURAgriid Contributing Members will comprise the primary governing body of SURAgriid.

Each SURAgriid Contributing Member will designate one individual to act as their institution's SURAgriid voting member.

The SURAgriid Governance Committee (SGC) will be elected by SURAgriid Contributing Members. The SGC will provide guidance on the growth and development of SURAgriid, facilitate meetings of the SURAgriid Members, and report to SURAgriid Members on action(s) taken by the SGC on the behalf of SURAgriid members. Contributing Members are eligible to serve on the SURAgriid Governance Committee.

The SURAgriid Governance Committee will be comprised of nine members. Eight members of the SGC will be elected by and represent SURAgriid Contributing Members. The ninth member of the SGC will be appointed by SURA.

The SURAgriid Governance Committee is responsible for the following duties:

1. Action on behalf of SURAgriid Contributing Members to provide overall guidance for SURAgriid, to recommend policies and processes for approval by Contributing Members, and to recommend defined governmental procedures and functions of the SGC for approval by Contributing Members.
2. Recommend a definition of SURAgriid membership criteria and a process for evaluation and approval of applications for SURAgriid membership for approval by Contributing Members.
3. Liaison with the SURA IT Steering Group to ensure strategic alignment with SURA IT initiatives, policies, and programs.
4. Appoint SURAgriid member representatives to the SURAgriid Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) and work with SAG to establish high-level strategic goals for SURAgriid.
5. Liaison with SURAgriid, and appropriate SURA, working groups, committees and councils as established.

6. Development, maintenance and documentation of a community-driven *SURAgriid Strategic Plan* to guide SURAgriid strategy and operations.
7. Communication with SURAgriid Membership.
8. Provision of *Annual Report of SURAgriid Status*.

The inaugural SURAgriid Governance Committee members will have 1-year terms. The inaugural SGC will recommend a process for SGC elections to be approved by the SURAgriid Contributing Members. Staggered terms for SGC members are recommended, to avoid loss of continuity from year to year, with an annual vote to renew/replace SCG members whose term expires.

The SURAgriid Governance Committee will designate a Chair and Co-chair. Other designated positions may be proposed by the SGC as deemed appropriate.

All SURAgriid Members (Contributing, Participating or Partnership) may participate in discussion or any SURAgriid working groups.

4. Transition to the SURAgriid Governance and Decision-Making Structure

The SURAgriid Project Planning Working Group recommended the following process steps to transition from the SURAgriid ad hoc governance structure to the SURAgriid Governance and Decision-Making Structure.

It is noted that this transition process was a one-time mechanism and that the steps outlined, and specifically the role of the SURAgriid Leads, were only relevant for the transition. Once the process completed (Steps 1 to 8), the SURAgriid Governance and Decision-Making Structure went into effect. Steps 1 to 3 completed **March 31, 2007**. Steps 4 to 8 completed **May 31, 2007**.

1. Each SURAgriid Participating Organization will identify a **SURAgriid Lead**. SURAgriid Participating Organizations are those organizations listed as of December 31, 2006 at http://www.sura.org/programs/sura_grid.html. *Attachment A is the official roster of organizations for the purposes of this transitioning process.*
2. The proposed SURAgriid Governance and Decision-Making Structure will be submitted by March 1, 2007 to the **SURA Information Technology Steering Group (ITSG)**, the **SURAgriid Strategic Advisory Group**, and **SURAgriid Participating Organizations** (via suragrid@sura.org list) for comment and feedback to the SURAgriid Project Planning Working Group.
3. **SURAgriid Leads** from each of the SURAgriid Participating Organizations will vote on the proposed SURAgriid Governance and Decision-Making Structure. A two-thirds majority of SURAgriid Lead votes cast must be AYE for the Proposed SURAgriid Governance and Decision-Making Structure to be deemed approved by the SURAgriid Participating Organizations (as listed in Attachment A).
4. Upon approval by SURAgriid Participating Organizations, by voting of the SURAgriid Leads, the SURAgriid Governance and Decision-Making Structure will be officially adopted. Attachment A will be updated with a record of the results.
5. The SURAgriid Project Planning Working Group will organize the nominations and election process of the inaugural SURAgriid Governance Committee. The SURAgriid Membership will be polled for nominations for the eight SURAgriid Governance Committee positions.

6. Each **SURAgriid Lead** will be asked to vote for eight individuals from the pool of nominees for the inaugural SURAgriid Governance Committee. Participating Organizations that do not designate a lead or respond with a vote by the dates provided throughout this process forfeit the opportunity for their vote to be considered.
7. Upon tallying the cast votes, the SURAgriid Governance Committee will be officially constituted, including the eight nominees receiving the highest number of **SURAgriid Lead** votes and the ninth representative appointed by SURA.
8. The SURAgriid Governance Committee will determine a Chair and Co-chair and proceed with their duties as defined by the SURAgriid Governance and Decision-Making Structure.

Attachment A
SURAgriid Participating Organizations
 (See http://www.sura.org/programs/sura_grid.html)

SURAgriid Participating Organization	SURAgriid Lead	Vote Aye/Nay	Date
University of Alabama at Birmingham	John-Paul Robinson	Aye	3/29/2007
University of Alabama at Huntsville	Sandi Redman	Aye	3/30/2007
University of Arkansas	Amy Apon	Aye	4/1/2007
Bowie State University			
Clemson University			
University of Florida			
George Mason University	Phil Yang	Aye	3/28/2007
Georgia State University	Art Vandenberg	Aye	3/21/2007
Great Plains Network			
Kennesaw State University			
University of Kentucky	John Connolly	Aye	3/30/2007
University of Louisiana at Lafayette			
Louisiana State University	Dan Katz	Aye	3/28/2007
Louisiana Tech University			
University of Maryland	David McNabb	Aye	3/22/2007
University of Michigan ATLAS Computing Center	Shawn McKee	Aye	3/28/2007
Mississippi Center for SuperComputing Research			
University of North Carolina, Charlotte	Barry Wilkinson	Aye	3/22/2007
North Carolina State University			
Old Dominion University	Mike Sachon	Aye	3/27/2007
University of South Carolina	Duncan Buell	Aye	3/22/2007
University of Southern California			
Southeastern Universities Research Association (SURA)	Mary Fran Yafchak	Aye	3/30/2007
Texas A&M University	Steve Johnson	Aye	3/28/2007
Texas Advanced Computing Center (TACC)			
Texas Tech	Philip Smith	Aye	3/26/2007
Tulane University			
Vanderbilt University			
University of Virginia			

Attachment B
SURAgriD Advisory and Working Groups as of February 2007

The **SURAgriD Strategic Advisory Group (SAG)** provides SURAgriD with strategic advice from regional leaders in high performance and grid computing. The SURAgriD SAG was formed in Fall 2006 and is co-chaired by Ed Seidel (LSU) and Alan Blatecky (UNC).

The SURAgriD Strategic Advisory Group provides guidance to the SURAgriD project by:

1. Providing technical and programmatic advice to the SURAgriD community regarding the evolution of regional, national and international grid technologies,
2. Working with the SURAgriD Governance Committee to help set the direction for future development of SURAgriD.
3. Providing input and review to SURAgriD Governance Committee for the *SURAgriD Strategic Plan* to guide SURAgriD strategy and operations.
4. Providing input and review to the SURAgriD *Annual Report of SURAgriD Status*.

SURAgriD Working Groups may be formed as needed by any members of SURAgriD to address SURAgriD activities of interest to SURAgriD Participating Organizations. Working groups as of February 2007 include:

- **SURAgriD Project Planning Group** – Established at the September 2006 SURAgriD In-Person meeting and intended to be transitional, ending with community approval/adoption of this document.
- **SURAgriD Implementation Team** – Meets every other week to resolve technical issues with the deployment or use of SURAgriD resources and provides in-depth consideration of technical issues when needed to support discussion or decision with the larger SURAgriD community. The work of this group is heavily supplemented by a SURAgriD-supported *Implementation Coordinator* to track and facilitate individual application and resource deployments. The SURAgriD Implementation Team is responsible for:
 - Guidance and leadership on best practices for SURAgriD technical infrastructure.
 - Recommendations for best practices in application deployment.
 - Discussion, planning and documentation of processes to support successful deployment of both resources and applications on SURAgriD.
 - Preparing for long-term expansion and leveraging of anticipated additional resources.
 - Providing technical expertise and support for immediate resolution of technical issues encountered by sites using or deploying resources and applications on SURAgriD.
- **SURAgriD Teaching Environment Working Group** – Meets semi-monthly to develop application requirements and collaborative proposals to support teaching using SURAgriD.
- **SURAgriD Funding Group** – Meets roughly quarterly to review external funding opportunities and develop ideas for collaborative proposals to support SURAgriD activities.
- **SURAgriD Environment Variables Working Group** – Established to develop SURAgriD Environment Variables v1.0 January 2006, with intention to reconvene to develop SURAgriD Environment Variables v2.0 as needed.

Attachment C
Clarifications from SURAgriid All-Hands meeting, March 15, 2007

The following points were discussed and clarified during the SURAgriid Governance discussion on March 15, 2007 of the SURAgriid All-Hands meeting (<http://www.sura.org/events/SURAgriid031407agenda.htm>).

- 1)** The voting and approval processes described in "A proposal for SURAgriid Governance and Decision-Making Structure" are transitional processes that are intended to provide a more structured and efficient means to make decisions affecting the SURAgriid Project. This process is not intended to create any financial commitments or liabilities for any of the participating institutions and does not provide any mechanisms for individual SURAgriid members to make commitments of resources or personnel for any other members of SURAgriid.
- 2)** Organizational representatives should determine the need for any necessary coordination and approval within their organization prior to responding, and respond accordingly. Full organizational names are listed for most SURAgriid participants at this time (e.g., University of XXX) but more constrained listings can be used (e.g., C.S. Dept, University of XXX). However, each organization may respond with only one representative/vote.
- 3)** SURAgriid participants that do not respond within requested deadlines for approval of the current proposal or any later nomination/election of a Governance Committee will simply not have their vote included and therefore will not be influential in the acceptance of the proposal or creation of the Governance Committee (depending on whatever you are unable to respond to in time). However, this will *not* mean that your institution is then "out" of SURAgriid. Participating organizations will continue as-is until participation requirements are further examined and possibly formalized by the future SURAgriid Governance Committee.
- 4)** It is further noted that Attachment B describes the current state of SURAgriid working groups as input to the anticipated SURAgriid Governance Committee, who may modify the structure and operation of SURAgriid working groups in the future.