

Memorandum: CEOAS Research Computing Services (RCS)

December 2019

(see updates from 2020 and 2022 at the end of this document).

RCS Rationale and Services Provided

The availability of effective computing resources is critical to every aspect of the CEOAS mission. The computing needs of the CEOAS community are broad, ranging from teaching programs, to our state-of-the-art research enterprise, and to the administration needed to support these. As a result, the RCS group currently provides a wide range of services to CEOAS, including the following:

- Management of user accounts for printing and data storage
- Email account management and device configuration
- Active Directory account management and integration
- Consultation on computer purchases including notebook, desktop, and HPC
- Network infrastructure, connectivity, and IP address management
- Operating system installation and troubleshooting
- Software license management
- Research computing services and consultation
- Instructional computing laboratory management and expert ArcGIS support
- Provision of a dedicated, environmentally controlled, UPS backed computer room and operations
- Representation for the college with other colleges, institutes and vendor relationships
- Technology watch and new technology integration

CEOAS Computing Task Force (2016-2017)

In recognition of central mission that RCS fulfills for the college, a task force was convened in April 2016. This body examined the college's computing needs, environment, and funding model. CEOAS leadership thanks this group for their efforts. The report from this committee documented the college's extensive computing needs and highlighted the challenges faced by the RCS group in providing services across a college where hardware and software usage and needs vary substantially. The committee concluded that the college RCS fee should be more equitable and sustainable, and that improved communication and coordination was needed among CEOAS leadership, the RCS group, and faculty and other stakeholders. Further details can be found in the report from this task force, which is included with this memo.

Formation of a CEOAS Computing Services Committee

To assist the RCS Director in understanding the needs of CEOAS faculty and staff, and following the recommendation of the 2016-2017 task force, CEOAS is implementing a standing Computing Services Committee (CSC). The CSC will be charged with facilitating communication between faculty, staff, and the RCS group, while providing insight into and voicing concerns about the computing needs of faculty, research groups, and larger programs. The CSC will be providing a conduit for input from faculty and other key groups to the RCS group.

The membership of this group will be:

Chair: Director of RCS (ex-officio)

Discipline Group Representatives: One each from EOB, GEM, G&G and POA

Graduate Students: One representative

Professional Faculty: One representative

FOBC: One representative

At Large: Significant stakeholders not represented by discipline groups, appointed as needed

Membership of the group will be established by the usual internal selection mechanisms for discipline groups. For other groups representatives will be appointed by the CEOAS Dean.

Changes to the RCS Fee Model

In accord with the recommendations of the 2016-2017 RCS committee, CEOAS is also planning to implement changes to the existing RCS fee model. These are driven by a recognition that college funding for RCS is currently at an unsustainable level, whereby at present RCS fees cover about 40% and the college subsidizes the remainder. The annual expenses for RCS are approximately \$1.2 million, much of which (63%) are fixed salary costs. In addition, the college also covers several other computing related costs, such as an annual subscription fee to central OSU IT (~\$250k) and costs of IT infrastructure investments and upgrades.

In instituting changes to the RCS fee model, we recognize the following:

1. The RCS fee structure should maximize the support for CEOAS computing obtainable from extramural funding.
2. The RCS should be as simple and transparent as possible, should be sustainable, and should have low administrative costs.
3. The RCS fee should be equitably distributed across all in the college, and be functional now and into the future.
4. The college should meet computer services needs for instructional and service activities.
5. The college needs to make allowances for large programs with greater RCS needs.
6. The college needs to make allowances for faculty with large research groups.
7. The college needs to cover RCS costs for students, who already pay tuition.
8. The college needs to provide a safety net for RCS fees where these cannot reasonably be met by research grants and other faculty resources.

The changes to the RCS fee structure are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Proposed model for the CEOAS RCS fee structure (TTF - Tenure Track Faculty)

New RCS Model	Monthly Fee	User pays	CEOAS pays
Rate 1: Research (\$375/month)			
12 Month TTF ¹	\$375	\$225 (60%)	\$150 (40%)
9 Month TTF ²	\$375	\$150 (40%)	\$225 (60%)
Other research personnel ³	\$375	\$319 (85%)	\$56 (15%)
Rate 2: Other (\$100/month)			
Admin, Instructors, Courtesy, etc.	\$100	\$0 (0%)	\$100 (100%)

¹ This category includes research focused tenure track faculty, typically on 12-month appointments.

² This category includes traditional 9-month teaching focused positions, as well as faculty on 12 months appointments that are also teaching focused.

³ This category includes FRA/SFRA, postdocs, non-tenure track research faculty, and others primarily focused on the research mission of the college.

The new RCS fee model outlined here meets our goals via the following:

1. Everyone in CEOAS will be assessed the RCS fee; and it is calculated per individual.

2. There are only two rates of RCS fee (respectively \$375 and \$100, see Table 1), based on the function of an individual's position (tenure track faculty (TTF) and other research personnel vs. admin, instructor, courtesy faculty, etc.).
3. The RCS fee is a fixed cost for everyone; however, the amount individuals pay vs. the amount that CEOAS pays is dependent on individual job descriptions, scaled to research effort. Twelve-month research-intensive faculty (see definitions in Table 1) will contribute proportionally more to RCS than nine or twelve-month teaching-intensive faculty, whose teaching activities require college support. The college payment is roughly proportional to the proportion of effort dedicated to activities other than research.
4. RCS charges are capped at \$10,320 total per year for tenure track faculty and their research groups (equivalent to TTF+2 or more in Table 2) and at \$15,300 (equivalent to 4 or more individuals) for large programs (see definition below).
5. As with the current model, where grant funds are not available, the college will cover all or part of the RCS fee. However, we also expect that all CEOAS members make every effort to obtain the RCS through their external grants.
6. To ease the accounting practices, for an individual the source of the RCS need not match the same grant sources from which salary derives from.

Comparison to existing RCS model

A comparison to the existing RCS model is shown in Table 2 below. For the majority of tenure track faculty (TTF) (~80%) the new RCS model will result in a net decrease of the RCS fee they are currently paying. For example, 12-month faculty with no personnel to support (TTF+0) will see a decrease of 25% in the RCS fee per month. Those TTF that do support one or more other personnel (e.g. FRA, SFRA, professional faculty) using the current TTF+1 or TTF+2 model will see small increases, although these charges are capped at TTF+3.

For 9-month TTF faculty there will also be a significant decrease, although to date some 9-month faculty from the former Department of Geosciences have not paid RCS fees (even where these funds have been included in grants) due to accounting difficulties. We will now start charging these fees.

Table 2. Comparison of existing and proposed RCS for 12- and 9-month faculty

12-Month Faculty Grant Charges/Month					
TTF Count ¹	Group Size	Current	Proposed	Difference	
42	TTF+0	\$300	\$225	-\$75	-25%
13	TTF+1	\$500	\$544	\$44	9%
2	TTF+2, TTF+3, etc.	\$675	\$863	\$188	28%
9-Month Faculty Grant Charges/Month					
TTF Count ¹	Group Size	Current	Proposed	Difference	
15	TTF+0	\$300	\$150	-\$150	-50%
2	TTF+1	\$500	\$469	-\$31	-6%
2	TTF+2, TTF+3, etc.	\$675	\$756	\$81	12%
0	TTF+3, TTF+4, etc.	\$675	\$863	\$188	28%

¹ Number of CEOAS faculty in this category

Implementation

The college understands that this is a transition and will assist individuals and programs to implement the new RCS model. The new RCS system is planned to start January 1, 2020. For most this change will be seamless, and will require that TTF and other PIs continue to include RCS fees into requests for extramural support. For 9-month and other faculty who have not been including this support in proposals we require that you likewise include sufficient support to cover your RCS fees in your funding requests. CEOAS-FOBC proposal and budget support staff are happy to assist with this. Information on RCS will also be included in proposal information sheets and templates. For other faculty or other PI's where the RCS fee is increasing (TTF+2 in Table 1 for example), we request that you also include these increased fees in new funding proposals. FOBC staff also can assist with this.

Large Program Definition

For the purposes of implementing the RCS fees, a large program is defined as a group of four or more individuals (including TTF, other PI's, FRA/SFRAs) whose efforts are focused on a singular sponsored activity, even though that singular activity could be supported through multiple grants. Examples include RCRV, OOI and the OSU-MGR. Tenure track faculty, other PI's and FRA/SFRAs may be included in a large program if their sponsored effort is focused 100% on that singular activity, otherwise tenure track faculty are considered separate from the program for the purpose of RCS. For these large programs the RCS fees charged are capped at \$15,300 per year (equivalent to four individuals at the other research personnel rate).

**Update to CEOAS Research Computing Service (RCS) Fee
November 2020**

This CEOAS Research Computing Service (CRS) fee plays an important role in providing research and other computing resources for the college. In January 2020 a new fee schedule was introduced for the RCS to provide greater flexibility, and more equitable payment of the fee across the college. At the time the fees were set as the best estimate of the minimum required to produce sufficient revenue for CEOAS computing requirements. Recent accounting has now revealed that we can lower this fee by \$50/month. The subsidy paid by the college remains the same. The new fee is outlined in the table below.

These changes are to be implemented from November 1 2020, and are to be included in all proposal budgets from now on.

In addition, discussions with faculty and others since the introduction of the new policy have resulted to two important additions:

Emeritus Professors: Emeritus professors that still have academic wage appointments and are working on grants will be charged at 12-month TTF or 9-month TTF rates (dependent on what their professor appointments were), but emeritus faculty may also appeal for college assistance to cover any gaps between their FTE appointment and the full RCS charge.

Postdoctoral Fellows: Postdoc Fellows with appointment types C94220 are externally funded, and are excluded from RCS charges.

New RCS Model	Monthly Fee	User pays	CEOAS pays
<i>Rate 1: Research (\$325/month)</i>			
12 Month TTF ¹	\$325	\$195 (60%)	\$130 (40%)
9 Month TTF ²	\$325	\$130 (40%)	\$195 (60%)
Other research personnel ³	\$325	\$276 (85%)	\$49 (15%)
<i>Rate 2: Other (\$50/month)</i>			
Admin, Instructors, Courtesy, etc.	\$50	\$0 (0%)	\$50 (100%)

**Update to CEOAS Research Computing Service (RCS) Fee 2021-2022
July 2022**

Some changes to the college RCS fee process are detailed below.

Large program definition

For the purposes of implementing the RCS fees, a large program is defined as a group of four or more individuals (including TTF, other PI's, FRA/SFRAs) whose efforts are focused on a singular sponsored activity, even though that singular activity could be supported through multiple grants. Examples include RCRV, OOI and the OSU-MGR. *Tenure track faculty, other PI's and FRA/SFRAs may be included in a large program if their sponsored activities are focused more than 50% on that singular program, otherwise they are considered separate from the program for the purpose of RCS.* For these large programs the RCS fees charged are capped at \$15,300 per year.

RCS FEES for AY 2022-2023

RCS Fees will stay the same for AY 2022-2023. For reference these fees are:

RCS Model	Monthly Fee	User pays	CEOAS pays
Rate 1: Research (\$325/month)			
12 Month TTF ¹	\$325	\$195 (60%)	\$130 (40%)
9 Month TTF ²	\$325	\$130 (40%)	\$195 (60%)
Other research personnel ³	\$325	\$276 (85%)	\$49 (15%)
Rate 2: Other (\$50/month)			
Admin, Instructors, Courtesy, etc.	\$50	\$0 (0%)	\$50 (100%)

Associate Dean RCS Charges

All Associate Deans will be considered at the 12-month rate for RCS charges. Assistant Deans are considered Admin.