

MS-CC Consortium (MS-CC)

Charter

V10.2 October 24, 2025 DRAFT

Preamble:

This charter serves to codify the structure and operation of the MS-CC. We advance the use of cyberinfrastructure (CI) for education and research; identify services to be provided to faculty, staff, students, and institutions; and offer professional development opportunities on participating campuses and at other locations as may serve the varied interests of the community so we can accomplish more together than we could do independently.

It is a living document that can be updated by the Consortium Leadership Board (CLB) and approved by its CLB members.

The consortium advances cyberinfrastructure and relevant technologies that enhance the research, teaching and learning, and enterprise technologies at participating institutions. We foster a community that collaborates across organizations in broad fields such as data science and engineering, research computing, teaching, curriculum and professional development, and capacity-building. We accomplish more together than we can independently.

Shared Vision:

We envision a transformational consortium that promotes advanced cyberinfrastructure (CI), and advanced technologies for teaching, learning, research, and enterprise technology capabilities on HBCU, TCU, HSI, and MSI campuses. We learn and grow as a consortium, lifting up all participating institutions by advancing CI for research and education across broad fields, disciplines, and communities of interests. We engage in building-capacity as full contributors to the global research and education community.

Purpose:

Increasing Access to CI Resources: MS-CC explores and develops effective strategies and leading practices that campuses may use to engage their students, faculty, and staff to access and become more effective users of advanced research and educational CI at local and broader levels, leveraging state, regional, national, and international resources with capacity-building activities.

Enhancing Interactions and Effectiveness Among Researchers and CI Professionals: MS-CC is further dedicated to extending and enhancing the reach and impact of campus and national research computing infrastructures to institutions with emerging research missions to promote research conducted at the campus level and through multi-institutional collaborations.

Enabling Innovation in New and Distinct Teaching and Learning Environments: MS-CC is dedicated to enabling innovation in teaching and learning environments, particularly where advanced cyberinfrastructure enhances the effectiveness, impact, and reach of those environments.

Professional and Career Development: MS-CC is dedicated to providing and sharing in career development activities, curricula, and training for professional CI staff and faculty, researchers, and students. This includes supporting campus research computing and data efforts through enhancing interactions among both professional CI staff and researchers to better utilize, share, and prepare a workforce for the future using advanced computing resources.

Community Alignment and Development: MS-CC appreciates the missions of HBCUs, TCUs, HSIs, other MSIs, and other institutions, while simultaneously lifting up the shared values and interests across MS-CC. This involves full engagement with dialogue and ongoing alignment for decision-making and action. We are guided by the principle from the disability movement of “nothing about us, without us” reflecting the commitment to self-determination by MS-CC and its partner institutions.

Guiding Values:

Collaboration: Dignity, respect, community, and trust are advanced based on productive engagement and the principles of our common goals.

Innovation: Advancing the frontiers of research computing and data with creativity, learning, dialogue, and action, which are advanced through mentoring, coaching, collaboration, and the principle of being “hard on the problem, not each other.”

Stakeholder Value: Voice, governance, independence, interdependence, safety, risk, and reward are advanced based on the principle of “we can accomplish more together than we could do independently”.

Openness: Operating in an open and transparent way, with effective, clear, honest, and accountable communication to the greatest extent possible across MS-CC.

Stakeholder Value Propositions:

Researchers and Educators: Enabling researchers and educators to harness the power of data and computing resources to advance the frontiers of knowledge in ways that are aligned with the mission of HBCUs, TCUs, HSIs, and other emerging research colleges and universities – spanning science, engineering, social science, humanities, arts, and other domains.

Students: Providing students at HBCUs, TCUs, HSIs, and other emerging research colleges and universities the research resources, support, and opportunities to address issues of importance with data and computing capabilities, as well as preparing them to be the next generation workforce – including future cyberinfrastructure professionals.

Cyberinfrastructure Professionals: Connecting cyberinfrastructure professionals across HBCU, TCU, HSI, and other emerging research colleges and universities so we can accomplish together what we can’t do separately – including building capability, bringing in funding, establishing career paths, advancing knowledge, and pioneering new technologies.

Campus Leaders: Making strategic investments in the capabilities needed for a post-industrial, digital world – advancing the mission and impact of HBCUs, TCUs, HSIs, and other emerging research colleges and universities.

Industry Leaders: Enabling industry leaders to engage with HBCU, TCU, HSI, and other emerging research colleges and universities around new technologies, services, resources, and next-generation talent relevant to research and educational cyberinfrastructure.

Foundations and Government Leaders: Fostering engagements among foundations and government agencies and HBCU, TCU, HSI, and other emerging research colleges and universities around research priorities, community development relevant to research, and educational cyberinfrastructure.

Appendix 1: Structure -- Governance and Operations

The Consortium Leadership Board (CLB)

The governing body of the MS-CC is the Consortium Leadership Board (CLB), which provides oversight on policy and strategic direction. CLB membership includes Participants and Affiliated Individuals. The CLB consists of at least five and no more than nineteen members, as determined by the board. At least 50% of the CLB members will include professionals from HBCUs, TCUs, HSIs, or other MSIs. The remaining CLB members may come from other community categories. All CLB members will be voting.

The CLB Governance and Nominating Committee (GNC) brings forth nominations for CLB membership each year as needed. New CLB members shall be elected by a majority vote of the members of the CLB. CLB members serve staggered terms to ensure continuity.

Resignation and Vacancies. A member of the CLB may resign at any time by communicating such resignation to the Board Chair and/or Secretary in writing. The resignation is effective when communicated unless the notice specifies a later effective date or subsequent event upon which it will become effective. Vacancies may be filled on an ad hoc basis and appointed by the board.

Removal. CLB Members may be removed from the board, a board office, or as a committee chair at any time by a vote of three-fourths of the remaining members of the CLB. Excessive absences or failure to comply with the roles and responsibilities of board members may be considered a cause for removal.

Meeting Attendance. Board Members are expected to attend, be prepared, and actively participate in at least 50% of CLB meetings and their regularly scheduled Committee meetings.

Leave of Absence. CLB members may request a leave of absence for up to six (6) months. The Chair of the Board will accept the request and inform the CLB.

Terms. CLB Members may serve up to three 2-year terms. After 3 full terms, a Board Member may be re-elected to the Board after a one-year hiatus.

CLB Elections. New CLB Members shall be elected annually to replace those whose terms will expire at the end of the fiscal year. This election shall take place during a regular meeting of the CLB, called in accordance with the provisions of this charter.

CLB Officers. The CLB elects a Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary yearly from the CLB membership. The Chair presides over meetings of the CLB (and the Vice-Chair in the absence of the Chair). The Secretary ensures that meeting minutes are correct and documented and that the agenda is approved. The Treasurer provides financial reports to the board, assists in the budget preparation, and chairs the Finance Committee.

CLB Meetings. The CLB meets every other month or as needed. The Chair may call a meeting of the CLB at any time. The Vice-Chair may call a meeting of the CLB in the absence or incapacity of the Chair. The Executive Committee may choose to cancel a meeting.

A quorum represents more than 50% of the active members of the CLB.

Committees and Working Groups

The CLB approves the creation of standing committees and working groups. The CLB shall designate the chair or co-chairs of each standing committee, working group, or other body. All committees, working groups, and other bodies shall maintain minutes of their meetings and provide reports to the CLB on their work. The CLB can convene external advisory groups as needed. CLB members will serve on at least one committee, but they are not required to be in working groups.

Committee members may include employees of Participants, Associates, and Supporters of Affiliated Individuals. Committees may establish working groups, in coordination with the CLB. Each committee must include at least one CLB member. Committees are composed of at least three (3) individuals. Committee members are expected to attend at least 50 of their scheduled meetings.

Members of working groups may include employees of Participants, Associates, and Supporters or Affiliated Individuals. Each working group must have a CLB sponsor. The sponsor will monitor the activities of the working group, ensure that the group remains engaged, and facilitate periodic reports from the working group to the CLB as appropriate.

Executive Committee (EC)

An Executive Committee is composed of the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and Chair(s) of the Governance and Nominating Committee, Chair(s) of the Programs and Priorities Committee, and the Co-Chair of the Finance and Development Committee. The Executive Committee meets monthly prior to the full board meeting to prepare the agenda and other items to bring to the CLB. Proposals relating to strategy, senior leadership, financial health, and governance that are perceived to be key to policy formulation and MS-CC strategic direction will be taken to the CLB for review and approval.

Governance and Nominating Committee (GNC)

The Governance and Nominating Committee is responsible for nominating and onboarding new MS-CC board members, and facilitating all board elections. The committee will develop governance policies and procedures, as needed, for ratification by the board.

Program and Priorities Committee (PPC)

The Program and Priorities Committee is responsible for providing guidance to the CLB and MS-CC staff on priorities and programs for the MS-CC. The PPC will coordinate with the PI in creating an advisory group for currently funded activities, and evaluation of other funding sources/projects.

Finance and Development Committee (FDC)

The Finance and Development Committee is responsible for identifying and pursuing future funding opportunities, developing financial strategies for MS-CC, and presenting a proposed budget and financial reports at regular CLB meetings in collaboration with the MS-CC fiscal agent, Internet2, for funds held by Internet2, and with other entities if funds are held elsewhere. The CLB must approve the budget. All expenditures shall be within the budget unless approved by the CLB. Any major change in the budget must be approved by the CLB. Membership of the Finance and Development Committee must include the CLB Treasurer and the Chair or Vice-Chair.

MS-CC Community Meeting

The MS-CC shall hold a community meeting at least once per year for the purpose of reviewing activities and progress, sharing information and current practices, enabling collaborations and mechanisms for undertaking new activities, reviewing this charter, and other community activities.

Decision Making:

The MS-CC strives to make timely, effective decisions in the best interest of MS-CC. CLB is accountable for resolving complex issues as constructively and quickly as possible, documenting our decisions, and letting impacted parties know about decisions. CLB strives for consensus. If CLB does not have consensus, decisions are made by simple majority vote of the MS-CC unless otherwise stated in this Charter.

Maintaining and Revising the Charter

The MS-CC Secretary holds this charter and records revisions by the CLB and MS-CC Community.

Requests for revision to this Charter can be made to the MS-CC Secretary at secretary@ms-cc.org. The Secretary will bring those to the CLB for review at least annually, and if approved, will be added for review and feedback by MS-CC before full adoption.

Appendix 2

Participants

MS-CC is composed of participants and relationships in several categories that share the vision and principles of MS-CC.

Participant Categories:

The Consortium has the following participant categories:

- Institutional participants (voting members)
- Affiliate Institutional/Not-for-Profit participant
- Affiliate Industry/Vendor/For Profit participant
- Affiliate Individual Members

An additional designation of “Founding Member” may include individuals in any of the above categories.

Participant Criteria:

Prospective members may apply for membership in the Consortium by indicating their commitment to this charter. Applications are submitted to the Governance and Nominating Committee and brought to the CLB, with endorsement by a simple majority of CLB members. A standard application form per membership category will be developed by the Governance and Nominating Committee.

Based on membership categories and tiered levels within the categories, the CLB will establish reasonable dues levels and fees that correspond to services and value propositions.

Institutional Participation:

Institutional membership in the MS-CC is open to any organization that is either a public or private academic institution (or component thereof), or a national or regional non-profit institution or organization that involves or supports broad education and research computing. Emerging research organizations include organizations specified by the U.S. Department of Education include:

- Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) (§322 of the HEA, 20 U.S.C. §1061)
- Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) (§316 of the HEA, 20 U.S.C. §1059c)
- Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) (§502 of the HEA, 20 U.S.C. §1101a)
- Alaska Native-serving institutions or Native Hawaiian-serving institutions (§317(b) of the HEA, 20 U.S.C. §1059d(b))
- Predominantly Black Institutions (§§318(b) and 371(c)(9) of the HEA; 20 U.S.C. §§ 1059e(b) and 1067q(c)(9))
- Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving institutions (§§ 320(b) and 371(c)(2) of the HEA, 20 U.S.C. §§1059g(b) and 1067q(c)(2))
- Native American-serving nontribal institutions (§§319(b) and 371(c)(8) of the HEA; 20 U.S.C. §§ 1059f(b) and 1067q(c)(8)).

MS-CC is a prism and change agent that will help advance strategies and programs that directly engage and support emerging research and capacity-building in the 21st century digital STEM workforce by advancing the important research and education work of HBCUs, TCUs, Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) and other MSIs.

An institutional member shall be entitled to vote on all matters submitted to a vote of MS-CC members and shall be eligible for election as a Voting Member of the CLB (with one vote per institutional member). It is the responsibility of each institutional member to designate the individual who votes on behalf of the institution, but broad involvement of many people from a member institution is encouraged.

Affiliate Members (non-voting):

Affiliate members entail several categories and include institutions and organizations that are aligned and committed to the mission of the MS-CC. Affiliate members may participate fully in MS-CC dialogue, but should issues come to a vote, affiliates will only serve in a non-voting ex-officio role so as to ensure the full voice of instructional institutions.

Affiliate members may be in a position to financially support the MS-CC as a whole and/or MS-CC projects. In this instance, the flow of resources and money will be contractually defined and the oversight and decision-making of the expenditure of those monies will also be defined within the contract.

Affiliate Institutional/Not-for-Profit Members (non-voting):

Institutions and not-for-profit organizations aligned and committed to the mission of MS-CC are eligible to join in this category of membership (non-voting). This category could include, for example, foundations, academic organizations and entities such as institutions (including predominantly white institutions (PWIs), professional societies, research institutes, and non-profit organizations committed to advancing the work of MS-CC).

Affiliate Industry/Vendor/For-Profit Participant (non-voting):

Companies in support of the MS-CC mission, vision, and goals may join the MS-CC as industry members (non-voting).

Affiliate Individual Participants (non-voting):

Independent, non-affiliated individuals in support of the MS-CC mission, vision and goals may join the MS-CC as individual members (non-voting).

Founding Members:

At the inception period of the MS-CC, for the initial five-year period following the MS-CC launch (Summer 2019), “Founding Members” will be memorialized in December 2024 as having had early and foundational roles and commitments to the work of the MS-CC. Founding members

will have the roles, rights, and responsibilities of all MS-CC members. Individuals, affiliates, and corporations can be founding members in their respective roles.

Removal of Members:

Members are expected to make good faith efforts to meet their membership commitments and to participate actively in the MS-CC. In addition, if any member has concerns about another member's participation in MS-CC activities, they can contact the CLB Chair and/or Vice Chair, who will appoint a committee to investigate. Constructive efforts by the Chair and Vice Chair and/or the committee will be made to resolve any identified issues through discussion with the Member. However, if discussions with the Member do not adequately resolve issues identified during the review process, the CLB Chair will recommend to the CLB that the Member be removed. Removal is by a majority vote of the CLB.

Fiscal Year and Finances:

The MS-CC shall operate on a standard calendar fiscal year of January 1 to December 31. All terms of office and appointments shall operate in conformance with the fiscal year.

Conflict Resolution:

Complaints: Perceived violations of this charter or other issues associated with the MS-CC should be entered on an issue tracking record maintained by the CLB Secretary. Constructive dialogue is then encouraged – being hard on the problem, not each other. Issues that are confidential or sensitive can be registered directly with the arbitrators indicated below or other organizations or agencies as appropriate.

Mediation: Individuals or groups involved in a disagreement or complaint may request that any other individual in the MS-CC serve as a peer mediator. Individuals can turn down the request (no need to specify the reason). If an individual agrees to serve as a mediator, they will facilitate a three-step process, which is 1) Each party states what it understands to be the problem or the issue, with time for clarifying questions; 2) All parties identify relevant options – these are just options, no one is agreeing to anything; 3) All parties explore whether one or more options can serve as a resolution.

Arbitration: One or more individuals who are highly trusted by all members should be identified so that they can serve as arbitrators of disputes that can't be resolved through constructive dialogue or mediation.