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Michael Zentner Joins SDSC to Lead Sustainable Scientific Software Group

Senior research scientist and entrepreneur comes from Purdue University

The San Diego Supercomputer Center (SDSC) at the University of California San Diego today announced the appointment of Michael Zentner as director of Sustainable Scientific Software, effective immediately.

Zentner joins SDSC following nine years with Purdue University, where he was an Entrepreneur in Residence at the Purdue Foundry and a senior research scientist. Zentner continues as a senior research scientist and director of the HUBzero®

Michael Zentner. Photo: Jon Chi Lou/SDSC

Platform for Science and Engineering, an open source software platform that hosts analytical tools, publishes data, shares resources, and builds collaborative communities in a single web-based ecosystem. He also remains co-principal investigator (co-PI) of the Network for Computational Nanotechnology project, which operates the science gateway nanoHUB.org that hosts a rapidly growing collection of simulation tools for nanoscale phenomena that run in the cloud and are accessible through a web browser.

"Michael brings with him a wealth of expertise and insight that will be of strong value to SDSC, UC San Diego, and the national academic research and data science community," said SDSC Director Michael Norman. "He will be an asset as SDSC addresses the challenges of supporting its software and services in a financially and reputationally sustainable manner. Michael has significant experience in developing startups out of the university, and will assist SDSC in creating new services and partnerships with the private sector and other funders."

Science Gateways Community Institute

Zentner was also officially named PI of the Science Gateways Community Institute (SGCI), founded by SDSC Associate Director Nancy Wilkins-Diehr in 2016 under a five-year, $15 million National Science Foundation grant. Wilkins-Diehr is retiring on June 30 after 26 years at SDSC, and has been the director and PI of SGCI, created to accelerate the development and application of highly functional, sustainable science gateways that address the needs of researchers across the full spectrum of NSF directorates and other federal agencies.

"Nancy has methodically and collaboratively established SDSC as the preeminent institution for science gateways," said Norman. "Her work has revolutionized the way many researchers interact with and productively use high performance computing. SGCI represents the pinnacle of this achievement and as she departs, Nancy leaves SDSC as the leader in science gateways. Her contributions to the research community will endure for many years. She will truly be missed and I wish her the best in her next chapter. Knowing Nancy, it will be adventurous and bold."

"Having worked with Michael as a co-PI of SGCI since 2016, I'm confident that he has the skills needed to move the institute forward as PI," said Wilkins-Diehr. "I'm thrilled that Michael has accepted this position with SDSC, and am excited about the expanded role he'll play as the Center sharpens its focus on software sustainability."

Zentner earned a Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering from Purdue University and dual MBAs in international business from Purdue University's Krannert School of Management and the TIAS School for Business and Society Business in Tilburg, Netherlands.

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