



ACENET Welcomes New CEO



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By Jeff Green

ACENET has a new chief executive officer.

Greg Lukeman assumed the role on Nov. 15, succeeding Ann MacKenzie who has retired. [ACENET](#) is a consortium of universities and community colleges in Atlantic Canada offering advanced research computing resources. Memorial is the lead institution and head office for ACENET, while Dr. Neil Bose, vice-president (research), is the chair of its board of directors.

Founded in 2003, ACENET provides researchers and industry access to unique, highly powerful computers with the goal to accelerate discovery and innovation in Atlantic Canada. Its staff of 18 situated across Atlantic Canada provide the research consulting, technical support and specialized training needed to make effective use of these cutting-edge resources. As part of the Compute Canada Federation, the scale of resources available to ACENET researchers total nearly 200,000 CPU cores and dozens of petabytes of storage.

Long association

Mr. Lukeman is no stranger to ACENET. In fact, his association stretches back to early days.

“Before ACENET had hired employees, I was part of the group volunteering to put together the initial architecture and run the first Request for Proposals,” said Mr. Lukeman, who has served as ACENET’s chief technology officer since 2005.

Atlantic roots

Originally from Nova Scotia, Mr. Lukeman obtained his B.Sc. from St. Francis Xavier University, where he majored in Math. He then completed a M.Sc. in Applied Math at Dalhousie. He has been involved with high-powered computers for nearly two decades, as either a user, systems administrator or managing executive.

As ACENET’s chief technology officer, he guided the evolution of the consortium, its technical team and its computing resources. Now he is set to take the organization into a new decade.

“I’m grateful to the ACENET Board for this opportunity and am excited to continue to work with ACENET’s staff, universities, stakeholders and researchers in this new role,” Mr. Lukeman told the *Gazette*.

“I’ve most enjoyed the talented and dedicated people I’ve had the privilege to work with to build the organization and develop it into what is now an essential shared service for researchers in Atlantic Canada.”

National scope

A regional partner with Compute Canada, the national organization responsible for advanced research computing in this country, ACENET receives financial support from agencies such as the Canada Foundation for Innovation and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, as well as its four provincial partners in the region.

In addition to being familiar with ACENET, Mr. Lukeman has made significant contributions to Compute Canada’s growth, representing Atlantic Canada on the Technology Leadership

Council, numerous committees and various working groups.

He was also part of the Advanced Research Computing (ARC) working group of the Leadership Council on Digital Research Infrastructure, the group that prepared a report for the federal government that resulted in significant new funding for Digital Research Infrastructure (DRI) in Canada.

‘Critical space’

“The 2018 federal budget included a five-year \$572.5 million investment in DRI in Canada,” explained Mr. Lukeman. “Over the next few years, this new funding will significantly change the way Advanced Research Computing services are organized in Canada.”

“The changes in the national DRI landscape are meant to lead to a stable, predictable, and well-provisioned national ARC service,” he added.

“I see organizations like ACENET as a critical space for innovation, agility, creating and piloting new services, and quickly responding to provincial and regional priorities. This is something ACENET is already good at – one example is our recent diversification to expand our services to support industry R&D in the region with our new Siku computing cluster at Memorial.”

Powerful resources

Over the past two decades, Mr. Lukeman says high-powered computing “has become a pervasive component of research in nearly every discipline and sector,” and will grow even more in the future. He says ACENET is eager to support that growth.

“Those areas that always relied heavily on advanced computing – Chemistry, Physics, Engineering, Oceanography, Climate Science – now rely on it even more strongly, and other areas we don’t often associate with computing are quickly discovering that the power of these resources and methodologies can be transformative for them as well,” he noted.

“ACENET’s technical team is critical not only for technical support, but to provide the computing training to the researchers, students, staff, and post-docs that make up research groups. ACENET is working hard to provide expertise across as wide a spectrum as possible.”

Dr. Bose congratulated Mr. Lukeman and acknowledged Ms. MacKenzie’s service to ACENET.

“On behalf of the ACENET board of directors, I am pleased to welcome Greg to his new role and am looking forward to working with him as he leads ACENET into a new era of research computing,” Dr. Bose noted. “I also express my thanks to Ann for her incredible enthusiasm and commitment to ACENET, and our partner organizations, and recognize her inspired leadership and many contributions to the success of ACENET and its national reputation. I wish her well in her retirement.”