NPS Unveils New Supercomputer

On January 30, 2009, leaders and faculty from the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) celebrated the arrival of a new supercomputer, a cluster of computers that provide researchers with high-powered processing capabilities that will enable researchers and students to carry out advanced levels of computing never before seen on campus.

The new supercomputer, named "Hamming" in honor of the late Dr. Richard Hamming, a world-renowned mathematician who was a pioneer in his field and a NPS professor from 1976 to 1998, is a Sun Microsystems High-Performance Computing Cluster with a processing power of 10.736 teraflops – or 10.736 trillion floating-point operations per second. The system includes 112 terabytes of storage, more than 1100 CPUs, and blade-based technology, which helps the system consume less energy. The new system will be readily accessible to all students and researchers at NPS, including students in distance-learning programs and off-campus collaborators.

"This is the biggest, fastest machine NPS has had in a long time, and as far as we know it's the fastest computer in the county," said Haferman. "Researchers and students will now have a resource available where there are thousands of CPUs … they should be able to solve larger and more complex problems than they're doing now."

At a ribbon-cutting ceremony in Ingersoll Hall, NPS President Dan Oliver recognized the milestones NPS has achieved in its last 55 years of computing. Dr. Christine Cermak, the NPS Chief Information Officer, said the new supercomputer is a reflection of NPS' growing reputation as a world-class teaching and research university. "We have made such great strides in high-performance computing (HPC) at the Naval Postgraduate School in the last several years, but this is really a peak moment for us," she said.

NPS Provost Leonard Ferrari praised the efforts of the Information Technology Task Force and the HPC Center, and said the new supercomputer will not only improve the school's research, but help with recruitment as well.

"This is going to enhance the capacities of researchers all over the NPS campus, and will really help the national labs, war-fighting labs and systems commands. I think this will help attract more civilians and Ph.D. students to the campus, so this is a great asset," he said. "This system also ranks among the top 1,000 systems in the world. Today, that's an impressive number."