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Fairbanks, Alaska—The Arctic Region Supercomputing Center is now a part of the Geophysical Institute at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

ARSC’s 21 employees, supercomputers and mass data storage devices now constitute another of the GI’s operational facilities. Faculty, staff and students at ARSC will use the GI’s administrative services, such as its business office and human resources, for their day-to-day business functions. These changes will streamline operations behind the scenes, but ARSC customers shouldn’t notice any differences.

“We see them as a perfect fit to the GI’s research mission of discoveries from the center of the earth to the outer reaches of space,” said Bob McCoy, GI director. “Over the coming months, I anticipate many opportunities for GI researchers and ARSC to work together more closely than we have, and, ultimately, we hope to strengthen collaborations between ARSC and the whole university.”

ARSC services haven’t changed since the center became part of the GI on March 3.

“As part of the GI, our ability to support all of UA and the State of Alaska research community is enhanced,” said Liam Forbes, ARSC technical services manager and interim director. “Everything is operating as usual.”

The center has helped to create tsunami inundation models of Alaska’s coastal communities and a better understanding of Fairbanks’ air quality. McCoy and Forbes hope the merger will promote in-house collaboration, while showcasing to potential users how high-tech arctic research might be conducted.

ARSC maintains and operates two supercomputers with a combined total of 3,848 processors, a 275-terabyte high-speed parallel file system, archival enterprise storage and a small private cloud for Platform as a Service hosting. These reside in the Butrovich Building on the UAF campus. There are no plans to move the supercomputers from their current location.

Any University of Alaska faculty, staff, students or their research affiliates may use ARSC resources. For those interested in what ARSC can provide, a dedicated help desk team is available weekdays. Staff and students at ARSC also provide training for users on ARSC systems, software and other resources.
With the addition of ARSC, the Geophysical Institute has 15 facilities and seven research groups. Roughly 350 people are affiliated with the institute and conduct research in a range of disciplines ranging from atmospheric sciences to volcanology. The GI was established in the 1940s by an act of Congress to better understand arctic phenomena such as the aurora borealis. Since then, the institute has pioneered studies to better understand Alaska, the arctic and beyond.

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