
FROM THE CHAIR...

Greetings SIGIR members. I am pleased to be writing to you in my new role as SIGIR Chair. For the past three years, I served on the Executive Committee as Treasurer, along with **Charlie Clarke** (Chair), **Yoelle Maarek** (Vice-Chair), **Jaap Kamps** (Secretary) and **James Allan** (Past Chair). Thanks to all the outgoing members of the Executive Committee for their service and the new programs they initiated, most notably: (1) the SIGIR Student Travel program, which provided funding to 267 last year; (2) Friends of SIGIR, which provided approximately \$33,000 in funding to help with local IR events; and (3) two new conference series, ICTIR and CHIIR. It was a period marked by generosity, support for others and creating opportunities for you.

This year's election ballot consisted of an amazing slate of candidates! Thanks to all those who ran for office and to **Jaime Callan** for managing the election. Your new Executive Committee consists of two familiar faces from the past Executive Committee in new roles, **Jaap Kamps** as Vice-Chair and **Charlie Clarke** as Past Chair, along with two new members, **Emine Yilmaz**, who will serve as Secretary and **Ben Carterette**, who will serve as Treasurer. We look forward to leading you through the next three years and welcome your questions, concerns and ideas.

Along with the Executive Committee, there are many other volunteers who keep the organization strong. Some of these volunteers are ending their service and I would like to issue a few special words of thanks to them. I want to extend a huge thanks to **Fernando Diaz** who has served as Awards Chair for the past several years. Most notably as Awards Chair, Fernando chartered the SIGIR Test of Time Award, which grew from an idea he and I informally discussed at ECIR in 2013. Fernando was willing to put in all the hard work required to bring his idea to fruition, including becoming an official SIGIR volunteer, iterating through multiple rounds of feedback about procedures and processes, and shepherding the first selection committees. Equipped with a great idea and a willingness to put in the work, Fernando started a new SIGIR tradition from which many members will benefit! Thank you, Fernando. Moving forward, **Falk Scholer** will join us as the new Awards Chair. He is already busy creating new award opportunities for members.

I want to thank **Krisztian Balog** who is stepping down as Information Director. Through Krisztian's efforts, we have seen the SIGIR website change and grow in positive ways. His efforts have included leading a website redesign, creating a new image for the homepage and porting the website to a platform that makes it more manageable, extensible and flexible. Also vacating their positions are **Ben Carterette**, who moves from the December Forum editor to SIGIR Treasurer, and **Claudia Hauff**, who moves from IRList editor to December Forum editor. Thanks to Krisztian, Ben and Claudia for your service!

These vacancies gave us an opportunity to reimagine our information and communication positions. To better align and coordinate communications, we decided to create a second Information Director position and folded all of the following responsibilities into the Information Co-Director positions: website, social media and IRList. **Guido Zuccon**, the current Social Media Director, and **Nattiya Kanhabua** will serve as the new Information Co-Directors. The team will soon start working on integrating our communication channels and creating more ways for all of us to connect.

Based on the positive feedback we have received about the SIGIR Student Luncheon and Student Party, both of which take place at the annual SIGIR Conference, we have created a new position, Student Affairs Chair, to manage these events and identify other ways to involve students. To create more leadership opportunities for students, we have also created several Student Liaison positions, who will advise the Student Affairs Chair. **Laura Dietz** will serve as

the inaugural Student Affairs Chair and is working to develop procedures for identifying student liaisons. Students, stay tuned for information about how you can serve as a SIGIR student liaison!

Finally, I want to recognize our volunteers who are continuing their service: **Jaime Arguello**, Student Travel Awards Chair and **Craig Macdonald**, June Forum editor, our conference liaisons: **Ricardo Baeza-Yates**, **Jimmy Lin** and **Edie Rasmussen**, and our Asia/Pacific Regional Representative, **Tetsuya Sakai**.

SIGIR 2016 was held in Pisa, Italy in July. Along with a strong technical program (two best paper awards and three honorable mentions!), we had several notable social events, including a welcome reception at Giardino Scotto, a banquet at Arsenali Repubblicani and a student party that lasted long into the night. Thanks to Raffaele Perego and Fabrizio Sebastiani for making the conference such a huge success. SIGIR 2017 will be held in Toyko, Japan (do not miss the 40th International ACM SIGIR Conference!) and, in 2018, the SIGIR Conference will be held in the United States in Ann Arbor, Michigan. At the business meeting, we announced the location of SIGIR 2019, which will be held in Paris, France. Other upcoming conferences sponsored or co-sponsored by SIGIR include WSDM (Cambridge, UK), CHIIR (Oslo, Norway), JCDL (Toronto, Canada), ICTIR (Amsterdam, The Netherlands), and CIKM (Singapore).

One special event that I would like to bring to your attention, which will take place at SIGIR 2017, is the recognition of the Test of Time Awardees, Pre-2002. When the Test of Time Award guidelines were created, eligible papers were identified as those that were published in a window of time 10 to 12 years prior to the award. This meant that in the first year this award was given (2014) eligible papers came from the years 2002-2004. When this award was crafted, the intention was to always go back and select Test of Time winners from the earlier years. After many, many months of work, a ten-person committee, led by Keith van Rijsbergen, selected 30 papers as SIGIR Test of Time Awardees (see <http://sigir.org/awards/test-of-time-awards/pre-2002-recipient/>). These 30 papers, and the authors, will be formally recognized at SIGIR 2017. An upcoming edition of the SIGIR Forum will feature a special section describing these award-winning papers.

The new Executive Committee is excited about working with you during the next three years to improve the SIGIR experience! We have identified a number of new initiatives that are documented in the Secretaries Notes from the SIGIR business meeting which follow this letter. These include identifying ways to lower the price of SIGIR conference registration, developing and unifying communication and feedback channels, identifying ways to increase membership, creating a travel grant program for students from underrepresented groups and student first-timers, and connecting SIGIR sponsored conferences with our ACM journal, Transactions on Information Systems.

You will see after reading Emine's notes, that our finances continue to be healthy and our membership is steady. You will also see evidence in her notes of a rich and productive discussion at the business meeting about various issues of concern to members. At this year's business meeting, we held the discussion first and trimmed the amount of time spent on business and reporting. We also solicited ideas for discussion topics prior to the conference via IRList. This discussion led to many interesting observations, concerns and suggestions, which we will begin to follow-up in the incoming year. Please keep your ideas and feedback coming!

Diane Kelly
Chair of the SIGIR Executive Committee
chair.SIGIR@acm.org