FROM THE CHAIR...

Greetings SIGIR members and friends. Since the publication of the June 2018 issue of SIGIR Forum, the SIGIR Executive Committee and volunteers have continued to advance initiatives to grow our community and keep it strong. The Executive Committee has entered into its last year of service, which will end at SIGIR 2019. Elections for new officers will be held early next year. Being a member of the Executive Committee is a great way to have a lasting impact on the organization, and help steer efforts to maintain and build community. Anyone wishing to run for office should contact Alistair Moffat (`ammoffat@unimelb.edu.au`).

We had another large, and exceptionally well-ran, annual meeting in July on the campus of the University of Michigan, which was organized by Kevyn Collins-Thompson and Qiaozhu Mei. SIGIR 2018 featured many innovations, strong technical and social programs, and perhaps the most spectacular program booklet ever seen at a SIGIR conference (thanks to Brand and Creative Chair, Esther Eickhoff!). Thanks to the entire SIGIR 2018 organizing team for hosting such a successful conference!

A number of awards were presented at SIGIR 2018. **Prof. Kalervo Järvelin** was presented with the Gerard Salton Award, which is the highest honor given by SIGIR to recognize significant, sustained and continuing contributions to research in information retrieval. Prof. Järvelin was recognized for his contributions in the areas of information retrieval and seeking, interactive and task-based retrieval, and evaluation metrics and models. His contributions include one of the most widely used evaluation measures in information retrieval, multiple insights on information seeking tasks in real-world contexts, and the creation and use of searcher simulations to better understand search behaviors, and to evaluate systems. His ability to integrate research in retrieval algorithms, models and evaluation, with research in information seeking and context, reflects the breadth of his scholarly influence. We congratulate Prof. Järvelin on this well-deserved recognition! The next Salton Award will be presented at SIGIR 2021.

A number of conference papers were recognized as well. This year's SIGIR Best Paper Award went to:

> **Should I Follow the Crowd? A Probabilistic Analysis of the Effectiveness of Popularity in Recommender Systems by Rocío Cañamares and Pablo Castells.**

This year's SIGIR Best Short Paper Award went to:

> **Cross Domain Regularization for Neural Ranking Models using Adversarial Learning by Daniel Cohen, Bhaskar Mitra, Katja Hofmann, and Bruce Croft.**

In addition to this short paper, the awards committee recognized another short paper with an honorable mention:

> **Towards Designing Better Session Search Evaluation Metrics by Mengyang Liu, Yiqun Liu, Jiaxin Mao, Cheng Luo, and Shaoping Ma.**

Finally, the SIGIR Test of Time Award went to:

> **Improving Web Search Ranking by Incorporating User Behavior Information by Eugene Agichtein, Eric Brill, and Susan Dumais.**

This paper was published at SIGIR 2006. The selection committee also recognized three other papers from SIGIR 2006 with honorable mentions:

Learning User Interaction Models for Predicting Web Search Result Preferences by Eugene Agichtein, Eric Brill, Susan Dumais, and Robert Ragno.

Formal Models for Expert Finding in Enterprise Corpora by Krisztian Balog, Leif Azzopardi, and Maarten de Rijke.

LDA-based Document Models for Ad-hoc Retrieval by Xing Wei and W. Bruce Croft.

Future SIGIR conferences will take us to France, China and Canada: Next year's SIGIR conference will take place in Paris, France; SIGIR 2020 will take place in Xi'an, China; and SIGIR 2021 will take place in Montreal, Quebec. At the business meeting, three groups made informal bids to host SIGIR 2022, which will take place in the Europe/Africa region. The location of this conference will be announced at SIGIR 2019. We also look forward to enjoying informal bids to host SIGIR 2023 by those in the Asia/Australia region. If this opportunity interests you, please email me.

One of the SIGIR Executive Committee's biggest accomplishments this year is *AFIRM: ACM SIGIR/SIGKDD Africa Summer School on Machine Learning for Data Mining and Search*, which will be held on January 14-18, 2019 in Cape Town, South Africa. The idea for this initiative grew from a discussion at the first *Diversity and Inclusion Luncheon* which was held at last year's SIGIR Conference in Tokyo, Japan, and also a desire to collaborate with closely aligned SIGs. The mission of *AFIRM* is to enable students to learn about modern research challenges and methods in information retrieval and data mining; to stimulate scientific research and collaboration in these fields; and to grow a community of researchers, students, and industry professionals working on information retrieval and data mining across Africa with collaborations all around the world. The summer school will accommodate up to 50 students, and will feature lectures, labs, and keynotes by top researchers from around the world. This tremendous effort has been led by Ben Carterette and Hussein Suleman, who are general chairs, and Doug Oard, who is the program committee chair. To learn more about *AFIRM* visit: `http://sigir.org/afirm2019/`. The next issue of *SIGIR Forum* will provide a report about this event.

Additional efforts in the area of diversity and inclusion include hosting the second annual *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Luncheon* at *SIGIR 2018*, where the lunch program focused on name bias. We have created two new volunteer positions, *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Co-Chairs*, and have plans to start a *Diversity Scholars* program to support individuals' travel to one of our co-sponsored conferences. We continued our strong support of students, awarding approximately $218,000 in student travel scholarships last year. We also hosted the *SIGIR Student Lunch*, and the *SIGIR Student Party*, which continue to be popular events at the SIGIR conference. We provided financial support to *CRA-W* and also supported the efforts of the *Women in IR* group, who hosted a session at the SIGIR conference about mentoring women in IR.

Community members continue to create local opportunities to increase participation in SIGIR. Following the successful *SIGIR 2017* in Tokyo, the *SIGIR Tokyo* chapter was formed. Thanks to Hideo Joho, Tetsuya Sakai and Masaharu Yoshioka, who serve as officers. In addition to this

chapter, a *SIGIR Beijing* chapter has also been formed; officers include Yiqun Liu, Jiafeng Guo and Zhicheng Dou. The *Friends of SIGIR* program provided approximately $42,000 to support local IR events, including workshops, summer and autumn schools, and larger events such as CLEP, ADCS and FIRE.

Another significant initiative the SIGIR Executive Committee and volunteers will tackle this year is a redesign/development of the SIGIR website. This will include creating a number of assets that can be used by those hosting the SIGIR, ICTIR and CHIIR conferences, as well as workflows and guidelines for conference webmasters. The redesign will also include a complete overhaul of the front-end and back-end architecture that will allow volunteers to more easily build conference websites, and that will create a more secure and stable platform. The information architecture of the site will also be improved, including increasing the accessibility of online assets such as materials in the SIGIR museum, and recent conference papers, which are available through ACM's Open Table-of-Contents program.

An issue that has been mentioned before, but is worth mentioning again is ACM's *Policy Against Harassment at ACM Activities*, which can be found at `http://sigir.org/conferences/conference-code-of-conduct/`. This policy outlines expected behavior, as well as unacceptable behavior including abuse, discriminatory harassment, and sexual harassment. This policy provides guidance on how to report unacceptable behavior and information about how grievances will be addressed. It is everyone's responsibility to familiarize themselves with this policy, and to create and maintain a harassment-free atmosphere at SIGIR-sponsored conferences and events.

The SIGIR Executive Committee recently made the decision to end the print publication of *SIGIR Forum*. This issue has come-up repeatedly in the past, and members asked us to discuss this issue once again at this year's business meeting. After discussion, there was a vote, and nearly everyone at the business meeting was in favor of stopping the print issue. Thus, starting with the June 2019 issue, *SIGIR Forum* will only be available electronically. It will still be freely available at the SIGIR website and also available in the ACM Digital Library.

I want to thank other members of the SIGIR Executive Committee for working so hard this past year to implement our new programs: **Jaap Kamps** (Vice Chair), **Emine Yilmaz** (Secretary), **Ben Carterette** (Treasurer) and **Charlie Clarke** (Past Chair). I also want to recognize all of our volunteers who continue to add value for members: **Jaime Arguello**, Student Travel Awards Chair, **Laura Dietz**, Student Affairs Chair, **Falk Scholer**, Awards Chair, **Craig Macdonald**, June Forum editor, **Claudia Hauff**, December Forum editor, and **Nattiya Kanhabua** and **Guido Zuccon**, Information Co-Directors. I would also like to recognize our conference liaisons: **Susan Dumais** (WSDM), **Jimmy Lin** (CIKM) and **Edie Rasmussen** (JCDL), and our Asia/Pacific Regional Representative, **Tetsuya Sakai**. Finally, I would like to thank **Nicola Ferro**, who is leading a task-force to develop implementation procedures for the ACM Badging program.

The SIGIR Student Liaisons, who did an excellent job in the inaugural year of the program, should also be recognized: **Mohammad Aliannejadi** (Universit della Svizzera italiana (USI), Lugano, Switzerland); **Maram Hasanain** (Qatar University, Qatar); **Jiaxin Mao** (Tsinghua University, Beijing, China); **Jaspreet Singh** (L3S Research Center at Leibniz University, Hannover, Germany); **Johanne Trippas** (RMIT University, Australia) and **Hamed Zamani** (University of Massachusetts Amherst, USA). The student liaisons initiated the SIGIR PhD Buddy program, helped organize a number of student social events, and provided the SIGIR Execu-

tive Committee with feedback on several issues. Two new student liaisons joined the group this year: **Souvick Gosh** (Rutgers University, USA) and **Xiaohui Xie** (Tsinghua University, Beijing, China).

It has been a busy and productive year for the SIGIR Executive Committee and all the other SIGIR volunteers, including those who have organized SIGIR sponsored and co-sponsored conferences. As we continue to move our organization forward, we rely on you, the members of SIGIR, to send us your feedback and ideas, and volunteer to lead initiatives or activities that you believe are missing and would make our community more inclusive.

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Diane Kelly, SIGIR Chair
Director and Professor
University of Tennessee, USA

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