

ACM SIGIR Annual Business Meeting 2019: Secretary's Notes

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1 Opening Matters

The 2019 ACM SIGIR Annual Business Meeting took place on July 24, 2019, at the SIGIR '19 Conference in Paris, France. The meeting was held between 12:50-14:20 and was led by the chair of the SIGIR Executive Committee, Ben Carterette.

The meeting started with an introduction of the new executive committee (whose term runs from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2022): Ben Carterette (chair), Tetsuya Sakai (vice-chair), Claudia Hauff (secretary), Min Zhang (treasurer) and Diane Kelly (past chair). Ben thanked the outgoing executive committee—Diane Kelly (chair), Jaap Kamps (vice-chair), Emine Yilmaz (secretary), Ben Carterette (treasurer) and Charles Clarke (past chair)—for their work in the past three years.

SIGIR would not function without volunteers. The volunteers in the past year were Nattiya Kanhabua & Guido Zuccon (Information Co-Directors), Yubin Kim & Damiano Spina & Jaime Arguello (Student Travel Awards Chairs), Craig Macdonald & Claudia Hauff (SIGIR Forum Editors), Falk Scholer (Awards Chair—who worked hard to get the SIGIR Best Short Paper Award recognized as an official ACM award!), Laura Dietz & Jiaxin Mao (Student Affairs Chair), Yoelle Maarek (Industry Liaison), Jimmy Lin & Jaap Kamps (CIKM Liaisons), Sue Dumais (WSDM Liaison) and Edie Rasmussen (JCDL Liaison).

A new SIGIR volunteer position has been created too; that of the *SIGIR historian*, a role that is filled by Donna Harman. Old SIGIR materials will be scanned and sent to ACM to be archived at the Charles Baggage Institute.

2 Official Recognition for SIGIR Members

ACM's most prestigious member grade (*ACM Fellow*) recognizes the top 1% of ACM members for their outstanding accomplishments in computing and information technology and/or outstanding service to ACM and the larger computing community. In 2018, Ellen Voorhees became an ACM Fellow.

In 2018, Tetsuya Sakai and Jaime Teevan became *ACM Distinguished Members*. This members' grade recognizes those ACM members with at least 15 years of professional experience and 5 years of continuous Professional Membership who have achieved significant accomplishments or have made a significant impact on the computing field.

3 Initiatives

3.1 Student Affairs

The mission of the SIGIR Student Liaisons is to connect students within the IR community and to bring student events to conferences besides SIGIR.

Over the past year, two new SIGIR Student Liaisons have been recruited: Souvick Ghosh from America and Xiaohui Xie from Asia. Student events were organized at CHIIR 2019 (thanks to Johanne Trippas and Leif Azzopardi) and SIGIR 2019 (thanks to Laura Dietz, Benjamin Piwowarski and Brigitte Grau). A separate SIGIR student liaison budget was set up to support the student events and provide travel support for the organizers of those events.

With five current student liaisons graduating soon, additional volunteers are needed to fill the role. One important idea for the near future is the student paper reviewing program: new reviewers need to be mentored and more opportunities for student reviewers need to be created.

A special thanks went to Laura Dietz who started the SIGIR Student Liaison program.

3.2 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiative is being co-chaired by Barbara Poblete, Suzan Verberne and Hussein Suleman.

A DEI lunch was organized at SIGIR 2019 with a thought-provoking talk by Jennifer Rode about how to make conferences accessible.

The Diversity Scholars program (which sponsors people from areas that typically do not attend SIGIR) provided four scholars with the opportunity to attend SIGIR 2019. All four had also attended AFIRM, the first ACM SIGIR/SIGKDD Africa Summer School on Machine Learning for Data Mining and Search. AFIRM took place in Cape Town (South Africa) in January 2019. AFIRM's five-day program was attended by 35 students from all over Africa.

3.3 ACM Artifact Badging

At SIGIR 2018, the SIGIR artifact badging task force (tasked with the development of review procedures to assign ACM badges) met for the first time. The badge system was introduced by ACM to recognize efforts of reproducibility in research publications. Every SIG was asked to develop their own badging procedures. The SIGIR artifact badging task force has the following members: Nicola Ferro (chair), Diane Kelly, Maarten de Rijke, Leif Azzopardi, Peter Bailey, Hannah Bast, Rob Capra, Norbert Fuhr, Yiqun Liu, Martin Potthast, Filip Radlinski, Tetsuya Sakai, Ian Soboroff, and Arjen de Vries.

Research publication authors may ask for a badge upon acceptance of their paper. Simple badges (e.g., *Artifact available*) will be processed by a standing committee. Demanding badges (e.g., *Results reproduced*) will be queued in a requests queue and reviewed by volunteers. In order to encourage reviewers to participate in this time-consuming process a number of reviewer rewards are envisioned:

- The artifact stamp in the ACM Digital Library will link to OpenReview for artifacts.
- For simple badges, once per year a SIGIR Forum report will list all badge reviewers.

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- For replicability badges, an overview paper will be co-authored by all reviewers consisting of text from OpenReview. An alternative option is a dedicated SIGIR Forum report to which each reviewer contributes a short abstract.
 - For reproducibility badges, a TOIS Resources and Reproducibility paper will be co-authored by all reviewers.

3.4 Local Chapters

The SIGIR Tokyo and the SIGIR Beijing Chapters have been established.

The SIGIR Tokyo Chapter is chaired by Hideo Joho; Tetsuya Sakai acts as vice-chair and Masaharu Yoshioka as treasurer.

The SIGIR Beijing Chapter is chaired by Yiqun Liu; Jiafeng Guo is vice-chair and Zhicheng Dou is treasurer.

Information on how to organize and maintain an ACM chapter can be found at <https://www.acm.org/chapters/chapter-in-a-box>.

4 Treasurer's report

SIGIR treasurer Min Zhang presented SIGIR's finances. A large part of the expenses are accounted for by student travel grants: \$230K were awarded across six conferences in FY2018, a similar amount is expected to be spend in 2019. Other expenses are higher than usual due to the already mentioned AFIRM and DEI commitments. Overall, \$32.5K were spent on the *Friends of SIGIR* program. In terms of conference incomes, SIGIR has by far the largest surplus of all (co-)sponsored conferences; the biggest income for SIGIR comes from the digital library. Overall, Min concluded that we are in a healthy state and can provide generous financial support to special events and our students.

5 Conferences

Ben continued with the discussion of SIGIR (co-)sponsored conferences, in particular CIKM and ICTIR. CIKM 2019 had a record 1,031 paper submissions. The discussion of what ICTIR is about (currently: generalizable insights, theory does not just mean math) may be resolved through a community survey.

6 Branding

In April 2019 a workshop took place in Cologne to discuss the SIGIR brand—its vision & mission as well as its visual identity. The result of this workshop and the subsequent work that took place was presented by Ben in a short branding presentation.

The goal of the branding is to refresh the look and feel of the SIGIR brand; to create a bigger differentiation between SIG and IR; to improve the “stickiness” and engagement of the brand; and to be more inclusive and attract a more diverse group of people to SIGIR events.

Ben walked the audience through the design decisions (made with longevity and people instead of technology in mind). Esther Smith is leading the branding and is creating not just the design for the SIGIR website but also templates and assets for conference organisers, both online and offline.

In the best case, the completion of the brand identity, website and conference assets will take another six months.

7 Audience Comments and Questions

During the last part of the business meeting the floor was opened to the audience. Among those attendees that spoke up, the organization of the SIGIR conference led to most comments/suggestions:

- The current **presentation format** at SIGIR (long talks) does not leave a lot of time for engaging in a Q&A. We should either shorten the talks or take inspiration from machine learning conferences that have few oral presentations and many poster sessions.
- We should move to a **format** of unlimited number of references (similar to ACL).
- The current 10-page **page limit** encourages poor reviewing quality. *Ben Carterette takes an informal poll: most of the audience prefers 8-pages over 10-pages.*
- Due to the **conference surplus** we can give one author of each paper a free conference registration. The conference surplus of SIGIR should be the starting budget of next year's SIGIR.
- Short papers are **reviewed** as critically as long papers. Reviewers generally want to find faults in papers instead of starting out positively. Senior reviewers appear to not always read their assigned papers. Senior reviewers struggle with non-responsive reviewers during the discussion phase. We should keep track of well/poorly performing reviewers across conferences and years. We need additional incentives for reviewers to review well.
- We should increase **acceptance rates** for SIGIR to increase inclusivity.

The following questions were raised:

- Can we reduce the **registration fee** for SIGIR? Why are participants not given refunds when the surplus becomes known?
- What is stopping people from **attending** SIGIR?
- Should we try the **OpenReview** model?

8 Conclusions

As sessions were about to start again, Ben Carterette concluded the business meeting with a thank you to all attendees.