Greetings SIGIR Members! SIGIR in Taipei was a success. A big thank you to the general chairs Hsin-Hsi Chen, Wei-Jou (Edward) Duh, and Hen-Hsen Huang, for putting on a great conference, in a beautiful venue. Thank you also to the Program Chairs Makoto Kato, Josiane Mothe and Barbara Poblete for the excellent technical programming! We would like to congratulate the Best Paper winners Maik Fröbe, Jan Heinrich Reimer, Sean MacAveney, Niklas Deckers, Simon Reich, Janek Bevendorff, Benno Stein, Matthias Hagen, and Martin Potthast for their paper *The Information Retrieval Experiment Platform*. We would also like to congratulate Alireza Salemi, Juan Altmayer Pizzorno, and Hamed Zamani whose paper *A Symmetric Dual Encoding Dense Retrieval Framework for Knowledge-Intensive Visual Question Answering* won the Best Student Paper Award at SIGIR this year. Preparations for SIGIR 2024 in Washington DC are well underway, as preparations for SIGIR 2025 in Padua are beginning.

The first SIGIR-AP was held November 27 - 28 in Beijing. Congratulations to General Chairs Yiqun Liu, Alistair Moffat and Qingyao Ai and Program Chairs Xuanjing Huang, Tetsuya Sakai and Justin Zobel. SIGIR-AP aims to promote information retrieval research within the Asia-Pacific region, as this region represents a significant proportion of the contributions to the field. Congratulations also to Haiyuan Zhao, Jun Xu, Xiao Zhang, Guohao Cai, Zhenhua Dong, and Ji-Rong Wen for the very first SIGIR-AP Best Paper Award for their paper *Unbiased Top-k Learning to Rank with Causal Likelihood Decomposition*.

The SIGIR Virtual Forum began this fall, with two sessions (one in a Europe-friendly time zone and one in an Americas-friendly time zone) featuring a panel discussion *PhD Connect: Navigating the Journey*. The first program was a resounding success with nearly 100 students in attendance across the two sessions. We are looking forward to seeing how the Virtual Forum develops. A huge thank you to Ayah Soufan and Shubham Chatterjee for hosting the events, and to Steering Committee Chairs Ebrahime Bagheri and Suzan Verberne for driving the initiative.

In 2023 - 2024, the Executive Committee continues to focus on improving the quality of the reviewing for SIGIR conferences and reducing the burden on the reviewers. As SIGIR Reviewing will begin in a few months, it is worth taking a moment to look at the ACM Peer Review Policy (https://www.acm.org/publications/policies/peer-review). The ACM is developing a program to train reviewers, and when that is ready, we will make it available.

Due to the extremely high volume of submissions to the conferences, reviewers often are asked to handle a large number of papers. Many papers rejected at one conference will be resubmitted to the next conference. The same paper, instead of receiving three reviews and a meta review,
will be reviewed by 8 people (or more), often with minimal or no changes from the first (rejected) version. SIGIR-AP introduced “Revise and Resubmit” decision, which allowed SIGIR 2023 meta-reviews to be included in the online discussion of the papers. SIGIR 2023 reviewers opted in to allow their reviews to be shared as well. Of the 13 “R&R” papers submitted, six were accepted. We are exploring expanding this program to other SIGIR conferences.

The Sustainability Chairs (Paul Thomas and Tetsuya Sakai) developed a Sustainability Checklist for conference organizers to minimize the environmental impact of the Conference, which was piloted at SIGIR 2023. A large part of the harm to the environment comes from travel to the conference itself. One solution is to offer a compelling and rich online experience to reduce the need to travel to the conference in person. Alas, current hybrid programming offerings are far from that. It is important to remember that the community does not agree on whether conferences should be in-person only, in-person primarily, or hybrid. There are solid arguments for each option and no solution is going to satisfy everyone.

For now, we believe that SIGIR must allow authors to present remotely. The many reasons for this include sustainability (reducing the number of people who must travel to the conference) and inclusion (many people are unable to travel for visa, financial or health reasons). Providing a fully hybrid experience is extremely expensive, and very few people actually use the hybrid features beyond presenting their own paper. For this reason, until we have a more compelling online conference paradigm, we will offer the ability to participate in the conference remotely on a limited basis, i.e. streaming plenary sessions, allowing zoom participation for a limited number of participants on a first-come-first served basis, and posting the talk recordings for online viewing.

At the same time, pre-recorded talks and no-shows significantly degrade the in-person experience, so we are experimenting with creative ways to mitigate the harm, such as requiring remote presenters to present live and be available for questions, arranging proxy presenters in advance in case a remote presenter doesn’t show, and following up with authors to know beforehand whether they will be in-person or remote, and to verify they are present and available.

As always SIGIR sits on the shoulders of its volunteers. We would like to thank SIGIR Academy Chair Alistair Moffat, Awards Chairs Hannah Bast, Gianluca Demartini and Mark Sanderson, and Early Career Awards Chair Rob Capra. A thank you also to Sustainability Chairs Tetsuya Sakai and Paul Thomas, Student Affairs Chairs Maria Maistro, Qingyao Ai and Jiaxin Mao, Student Travel Chair Sole Pera and Community Relations Coordinator Bhaskar Mitra. The Community Relations Coordinator is the point of contact for folks who want to set up a meeting or gathering at one of the conferences. We would also like to thank DEI Chairs Hussein Suleman and Suzan Verberne, Women in IR Chair Nazli Goharian, Information Directors Nattiya Kanhabua and Guido Zuccon, SIGIR Historian Donna Harman and SIGIR Forum Editors Tirthankar Ghosal, Josiane Mothe, and Julian Urbano. If you are interested in volunteering, please let the Executive Committee know.

As always, thank you all for your ideas, input and enthusiasm!

Vanessa Murdock
Chair, ACM SIGIR Executive Committee