ACM SIGIR Annual Business Meeting 2017: Secretary's Notes

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1   Opening Matters

The 2017 ACM SIGIR Annual Business Meeting took place on Thursday August 10, 2017, at the SIGIR '17 Conference in Tokyo, Japan. The meeting started at 12:30 and was led by the chair of SIGIR Executive Committee, Diane Kelly.

The meeting started with an introduction to the executive committee, which involves Diane Kelly (University of Tennessee) as the chair, Jaap Kamps (University of Amsterdam) as the vice chair, Emine Yilmaz (University College London) as the secretary, Ben Carterette (University of Delaware) as the treasurer and Charles Clarke (University of Waterloo) as the past chair.

Apart from the executive committee, volunteers play an important role in running SIGIR. Diane introduced and thanked the volunteers for 2015-2016. The volunteers for this period were Nattiya Kanhabua & Guido Zuccon (Information Director), Jaime Arguello (Student Travel Awards Chair), Craig Macdonald (June Forum Editor), Claudia Hauff (December Forum editor), Falk Scholer (Awards Chair), Laura Dietz (Student Affairs Chair), Jimmy Lin (CIKM Conference Liaison), Ricardo Baeza-Yates and Sue Dumais (previous and new WSDM Conference Liaisons, respectively) and Edie Rasmussen (JCDL Conference Liaison). This year, additional volunteer positions have also been introduced: Student Liaisons to SIGIR, Industry Liaison Chair (Yoelle Maarek) and Industry Liasons. The roles of these new volunteers were discussed later in the meeting.

2   Initiatives and Accomplishments

The meeting continued with a summary of initiatives and accomplishments that were made during the last year.

2.1   Registration Fees

One of the primary accomplishments was the lowering the price of conference registration for non-student members by USD100 for SIGIR and SIGIR sponsored conferences. For SIGIR, this was

achieved by including expected sponsorship in TMRF and for ICTIR and CHIIR, it was achieved by relaxing contingency.

2.2 Student Support

This year SIGIR supported students in several ways, which includes an award of approximately USD250K in student travel scholarships, sending 10 students to the 50 Years of Turning Celebration, organization of SIGIR Student Lunch and Party. SIGIR also sponsored the CRA-W event this year.

The meeting continued with a talk by Laura Dietz (Student Affairs Chair), who summarized the activities performed during the last year. Laura started with an overview of the mission of the Student Affairs Chair, whose goal is to make sure that every student attendee is improving her or his network and to ensure ideal conditions for IR students to thrive. To achieve these, SIGIR has been organizing the Student's Get Together event since 2015. This year, SIGIR also introduced two new initiatives, the Student Liaisons and the PhD Buddy Program.

The goal of employing SIGIR Student Liaisons are to stay in touch with students, to listen to students concerns, and to work on improvements. Student liaisons also run the PhD Buddy Program. SIGIR liaisons for this year were Hamed Zamani, Maram Hasanain, Jiaxin Mao, Mohammad Aliannejadi, Jaspreet Singh and Johanne Trippas. New liaisons will be selected for next year and all student members of the SIGIR community can apply to serve as a student liaison.

The goal of the PhD Buddy Program is to connect students to the future generation of bigshots (who are currently also students). There is an informal introduction service, to which the students can sign up at `https://goo.gl/CAeXro`.

2.3 Communications

This year, all the communications were unified under the Information Co-Directors and the mailing list was moved to ACM. A higher resolution version of the SIGIR logo has been created and added to the ACM SIG Logo matrix.

2.4 Community

For the first time this year, SIGIR organized a Diversity and Inclusion Luncheon event, where three different talks were given to raise the attention of the community towards the problems faced by the minorities and to discuss what can be done to help them. Another new initiative for this year was the inclusion of presentations TOIS articles at SIGIR, CHIIR and ICTIR.

Other community based activities involve the Friends of SIGIR programme and the SIGIR Awards:

2.4.1 Friends of SIGIR

Friends of SIGIR program, through which SIGIR provides up to USD5,000 to support student travel and keynote speaker(s) for conferences considered as friends of SIGIR. Applications for this program are managed by the SIGIR Treasurer and are accepted four times per year. Current

friends include ADCS, AIRS, CLEF, FIRE, IR Autumn School and MediaEval. Approximately USD40,000 was awarded as part of the Friends of SIGIR programme during the last year.

2.4.2 Awards

Diane continued with the awards and described the Test of Time Award, where the SIGIR 2018 Test of Time Award will be selected from the set of full papers presented at SIGIR 2006, 2007, and 2008. The top five most cited papers (according to the ACM DL) are automatically nominated for the award and other papers can be nominated by sending an email to Falk Scholer, the Awards Chair of SIGIR. As a new initiative, SIGIR sponsored the CHIIR Best Paper Award this year and the same can be considered for ICTIR as well. Also, the SIGIR Best Short Paper Award has been reintroduced and will be awarded as part of SIGIR 2018.

There were also discussions about the awards available at the ACM level, such as ACM Fellow, Athena Awards and the Turing Award and Diane encouraged the senior members of the community to consider applying or nominating people for the awards. This year, nominations for the ACM Future of Computing Academy has also been accepted and four nominations have been made from the SIGIR community.

There have been some changes made to the Student Travel Grants, which moved to a different application model starting with WSDM 2017. In the new model, students still need to meet basic eligibility requirements but in terms of the amounts awarded, USD1,000 and USD2,000 was awarded national and international travel, respectively.

2.5 SIGIR Diversity Scholars

This year, a new student travel grant program was introduced for students who will add diversity to conference. In this program, students can elect to attend any SIGIR-sponsored conference, and the amount awarded was the same as regular student travel grants. In total USD25,000 has been allocated for the program, for which there are three application cycles within a year.

2.6 Other New and Ongoing Initiatives

Other new and ongoing initiatives of the committee involve appointing task force (with TOIS) to define implementation procedures for ACM Badging and experimenting with using iThenticate to evaluate submissions before going to review cycle. Significant amount of work has been done for growing membership numbers and conference attendance, for documenting policies and procedures, and for communications and branding, including updating website.

3 Treasurer's Report

SIGIR treasurer Ben Carterette took over and reported that the SIG's finances are very healthy, with a discretionary budget that is well above the ACM requirement to have enough reserves to cover a SIGIR conference. Overall finances (the amount of savings) of SIGIR has been going up, with the savings slowly increasing.

Ben gave a detailed list of expenses of SIGIR. The primary expenses of SIGIR tends to be grants and awards, publications, travel/meetings, and allocations. SIGIR also used some of its budget for funding some special programs/SIGIR initiatives in 2017, such as the Friends of SIGIR program (including the CRA-W sponsorship), the SIGIR 2017 events (the SIGIR Diversity and Inclusion Event and the SIGIR Lunch and Party at the SIGIR 2017 Conference), the SIGIR Student Travel Grant Program (for which the budget used has doubled over FY 2015), and the ACM 50th Turing Award Celebration.

Ben described the changes in conference income over time, showing how the income changed over different years for SIGIR, CIKM, JCDL, WSDM, ICTIR and CHIIR. Most SIGIRs and SIGIR sponsored conferences seem profitable according to the reported values.

Ben also described other sources of income outside of conferences for SIGIR. Most of this income comes from the ACM Digital Library, which has been increasing over the different years, with a slight decrease during the last year. Income from membership dues (which involve the professional, affiliate, student memberships and the MemberPlus program) has been going up slightly during the last few years and the income obtained from interests seems stable overall. Finally, Ben gave some statistics about membership numbers, which had been decreasing for a while but started to increase again now.

4 Conferences

Diane continued with discussions on SIGIR sponsored and co-sponsored conferences.

4.1 SIGIR Co-Sponsored Conferences

The SIGIR co-sponsored conferences include Joint Conference on Digital Libraries (JCDL), Conference on Information and Knowledge Management (CIKM) and Web Search and Data Mining (WSDM).

JCDL 2018 will take place in Texas, USA. The CIKM 2017, 2018 and 2019 Conferences will be held in Singapore, Torino (Italy) and Beijing (China), respectively. WSDM 2018 will be held in Los Angeles, USA and WSDM 2019 will take place in Melbourne, Australia.

4.2 SIGIR Sponsored Conferences

Conferences that are fully sponsored by SIGIR include ICTIR and CHIIR. ICTIR 2017 will be held in Amsterdam (Netherlands); ICTIR 2018 will take place Tianjin (China) and ICTIR 2019 will be held in Santa Clara (USA). CHIIR 2018 and 2019 will be held in NJ (USA) and Glasgow (Scotland), respectively.

4.3 Recent and Upcoming SIGIR Conferences

The discussion continued with a summary of the finances for the recent SIGIR Conferences, as well as a discussion on the future SIGIR Conferences.

First, Raffaele Perego, who co-chaired the SIGIR 2016 Conference together with Fabrizio Sebastiani, took over to discuss the SIGIR 2016 Conference. SIGIR 2016 had 577 registrants

(33% ACM/SIGIR members, 36% non-members, 31% students). Total revenue of the conference was USD459,013. When the expenses of USD286,494 were excluded together with the ACM quota (allocation for ACM) of USD45,839, the conference was left with a surplus of USD126,679.

Discussion continued with Tetsuya Sakai (co-chair of SIGIR 2017 together with Noriko Kando and Hideo Joho) presenting the SIGIR 2017 interim report. Tetsuya started with the new initiatives that were made in SIGIR 2017, such as switching from Confmaster to the Easychair system, the Reviewer Awards, TOIS presentations included in the SIGIR sessions, the Special Awards Session, the Diversity and Inclusion Luncheon event and the Childcare support that was made available for the first time at SIGIR 2017.

SIGIR 2017 was the biggest SIGIR ever, with a 57% increase in the number of registrations compared to the previous year. Even though the registration fees were decreased, the income was higher than expected due to the increased number of registrations.

Next, Kevyn Collins-Thompson (co-chair of SIGIR 2018 together with Qiaozhu Mei) took over to give an overview of SIGIR 2018, which will be run at University of Michigan.

An overview of SIGIR 2019 was presented by Benjamin Piwowarski, who will be co-chairing the conference together with Max Chevalier and Eric Gaussier. The conference will be held in Paris, at a venue that is very close to the University Pierre and Marie Curie.

Diane took the stage and officially announced the location of SIGIR 2020, which will be held in Xi'an, China and the conference chairs will be Jimmy Huang, Yi Chang and Xueqi Cheng. Diane continued with the announcement that the SIG-IR is asking for bids for SIGIR '21 to be held in the Americas Region. She asked for formal bids to be submitted on September 15, as stipulated on sigir.org/bid.html.

5 Discussion

The business meeting followed with discussions, led by the chair Diane Kelly. There were discussions about making all proceedings open access, which was strongly supported by the audience.

The next topic that was discussed was whether a submission that was previously published as a tech report, that was posted on the web, or that was put in Archive should be accepted at SIGIR. There were both positive and negative opinions about this, and no clear conclusion was made about the topic.

Doug Oard suggested recording the talks given at SIGIR and making them publicly available in some forum or some public space. However, David Lewis and some other participants were opposed to this suggestion, arguing that for tutorials, etc. recording and publishing is feasible but not for scientific papers. The chair Diane Kelly concluded the discussion saying that the executive committee will be looking into this.

Final discussion topic was regarding the length of presentations at SIGIR. Bruce Croft mentioned that presentations of TOIS papers (which was included in the presentations at SIGIR for the first time this year) suffered a lot because of the need for squeezing a journal article to 20 mins, which significantly affected the quality of the TOIS paper presentations. Finally, Nick Belkin mentioned that most speakers tend to speak for exactly 20 minutes, which is exactly the amount of time allocated for the speaker, leaving no time for discussion/questions. Nick emphasized that the session chairs need to strictly ensure that the presentation runs for a certain ampunt of time and leaves extra time for questions.

6   Conclusion

As sessions were about to start again, and Diane Kelly concluded the business meeting with thanks to all attendees.