

# AMC SIGDOC Business Meeting 2021

## Minutes

October 15, 2021. Called to order by Dan Richards at ~10:00 a.m. Central.

## Attendance

### PRESENT

- **Executive Committee (EC):** Daniel P. (Dan) Richards (chair), Sarah Read (vice chair), Susan Youngblood (secretary/treasurer), Emma Rose (past chair and hub co-chair for Tacoma, Washington, USA)
- **Board:** Derek Ross (editor of CDQ), Luke Thominet (communications manager), Adam Strantz (website manager), Jason Tham (social media manager), Nupoor Ranade (student representative), Lisa Dush (member at large), Manuela Aparicio (chair of EuroSIGDOC and hub co-chair for Lisbon, Portugal)
- **2021 Conference Committee:** Andrew Mara (conference chair); Liz Lane and Halcyon Lawrence (program co-chairs); Sonia Stephens and Jack Labriola (Microsoft student research competition [SRC] co-chairs); Jordan Frith (sponsorship chair)
- **2021 Conference Hub Chairs:** Andre Salgado (Lavras, Brazil); Zhijun Gao (Beijing, China); Manuela Aparicio (also see Board) and Carlos J. Costa (Lisbon, Portugal); Kathryn (Kat) Lambrecht (Tempe, Arizona, USA); Jason Swartz (Raleigh, North Carolina, USA)
- **Other members:** Lisa DeTora, Yunye Yu, Alisha Karabinus, Soyeon Lee, Flavia Santos

### ABSENT

- **Board:** Sean Zdenek (access chair), Natasha Jones (member at large), Lisa Dush (member at large), Lisa Melonçon (organizational liaison)
- **2021 Conference Hub Chairs:** André Pimenta Freire (Lavras, Brazil); Yvonne Cleary, Darina Slattery, and Ann Marcus-Quinn (Limerick, Ireland); Liza Potts (East Lansing, Michigan, USA); Enrique Reynoso and Rebecca Shallon (Tacoma, Washington, USA)

## Note

The topics in these minutes have been consolidated, so some items appear in a different order than mentioned in the meeting.

## Chair's Welcome

Dan (Daniel P.) Richards, chair, welcomed attendees and gave thanks (rolled into the comments below).

## Communication Team and Report

The communications team, which does a wonderful job, is ready for help and new participation. Please reach out to Dan if you would like to be involved in shaping/executing the larger communication strategies, especially if you would consider taking on the project as Adam Strantz's successor as website manager.

Adam Strantz set up the website as the conference infrastructure and did a fantastic job, which has allowed us to host the conference without an online conference management fee. He reported that the website is adaptable to multiple purposes, including that one. Jason Tham, social media manager, noted that multiple communication channels are active [note: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube]. Luke Thominet, communication manager, discussed the use of our Listserv.

Liz Lane (program co-chair) asked about YouTube video metrics and asked Dan how long we keep them up. Emma Rose (past chair and hub co-chair for Tacoma, Washington, USA) also asked how many people consume the virtual content (e.g., for the conference). Liz suggested making the stats available, which could be done in the annual report.

## Communication Design Quarterly

Derek Ross, editor of CDQ, complimented communications. He also complimented Avery Edenfield, outgoing book review editor, for making book reviews accessible, shifting how they're advertised so that they get done and so that more people get to review (not just the most seasoned people in the field). Erika Sparby is taking over as book review editor.

The publication has been growing at a healthy rate in last few years. In 2018 and 2019, CDQ published 11 and 8 articles respectively. In 2020, that number was 14. This year, we already have 12 with one more in the works.

Multiple people would like to join the editorial board, but we need a mechanism to remove people from the board. Also, the editor serves at the SIGDOC president's discretion. We need to institute a cutoff. Derek suggests the editor transition in and out with the executive committee.

Compliments and thanks to Adam, who takes each article/review from InDesign, puts it into a web format, and makes it accessible.

The publication needs good mentoring reviewers: reviewers who avoid meanness and denigration and who give feedback that moves people forward. Mentoring has been an excellent focus of the reviewing process.

## Membership

Dan gave an overview of membership, which is often conference dependent. This year's membership is a bit down at 163 (compared to 177/178 last year). [Reminder: We aim to become a "yearly organization" (with a sense of year-round purpose for members) with a rise to 200 members.]

## Conference Report/Debriefing

**Overview.** Andy Mara, conference chair, debriefed attendees, and other members engaged in conversation on the key topics. The conference was a healthy event with 200 people registered. On paper, it looked like we were doing better than ever. Yet two hubs had to bow out. We had good participation in online events. Events that were really early in the United States were less well attended than we would have liked. The conference had a lot of moving parts, and the hybrid was extra work, but the hubs were valuable.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. **Format: Virtual with hubs:** For the hybrid + hub format, we had to remain flexible and set regular meetings with hub chairs. That worked pretty well, and this was the first SIGDOC that felt truly international. But we need to reinforce the documentation of what works with the hubs, and we need to have a conversation about documentation and resource (e.g., Portuguese ASL, Irish ASL) in the future. Hubs likely will be in similar locations. We need to reinforce these relationships. As we look at future formats, we should consider what works best in different types of spaces and what can't be replicated in other types of spaces, and make the choices intentional.
2. **Participation vs. workload:** Virtual session numbers were high and participation was robust. The SRC was more successful than ever in this venue. But the hybrid format amplifies the workload of the program co-chairs. Future co-chairs need to know what they're getting into.
3. **Program chair(s) support:** We need to reinforce the structural support for the program chair(s). We need the help of someone who can handle the onerous technical aspects of the TAPS process.
4. **Access:** We need to think broadly about access (one suggestion is that the antiracist heuristic be brought in and practiced beforehand), baking it into training, doing it early, including different ranks and students, and considering perceptual abilities and geography. Inclusion should be at the core of how we drive the conference forward.

## FURTHER DISCUSSION

1. **Siting:** Siting applies to both virtual and onsite conferences. Sarah Read, vice chair, noted that we need to write a document about conference siting that incorporates lessons from feedback. Siting is an opportunity for a member or institution to put themselves out there, gain exposure.
2. **Format for the future:** Sarah noted that we need to make sure we make decisions intentionally, considering what is right and using both qualitative and quantitative data to inform decisions. Emma encouraged us to think about what works well virtually. The workshops were quite well attended. She pointed out that some events could be uncoupled from the conference (see Organization Building). Andy commented that successful past conferences led to hubs—conferences build infrastructure and capacity for the future, especially with junior faculty.
3. **Hub value:** Jason Swarts noted that the implementation in Raleigh generated a lot of local and regional interest. Working with facilities on campus was pretty smoothly. Emma said the Tacoma hub was smallish but a lovely opportunity to get together. Sarah echoed their value (but also see siting). Kat Lambrecht (hub chair for Tempe) said it was great to sit in hub coordination meetings with professional colleagues from all around the world.
4. **Hub logistics:** Jason pointed out that we need to know what expenses are allowable and that hub chairs need to know talk to their local AV and facilities people. Emma noted that some charges come as a surprise: your own institution might say, "Oh, it's a conference: we'll charge you." She also commented that the work was to balance the hub logistics

and labor with its high value. Manuela Aparicio and Carlos J. Costa (hub co-chairs, Lisbon), Andy, and others, others pointed to the time differences as complicated. But Lisbon did have high student attendance (50+), and we had students from China, Canada, Portugal, and other countries. Timewise, we would like more involvement from the US participants in the non-USA experiences.

5. **Editors' roundtable:** Andy called the roundtable a "resounding success." From his wish list of editors, he got 10 (all but two he had asked). It was effective online.
6. **SRC:** Sonia Stephens (Microsoft SRC co-chair) coordinated the last two years of SRC. It was different online and in person. The SRC worked best when she was in the weekly meetings with conference folks. The students' work was strong and well attended in the online format. These issues should be considered in the conference onboarding document. Among many shoutouts Dan gave was one to Sonia Stephens and Jack Labriola (Microsoft SRC co-chair) for their fine work.
7. **Sponsorships:** Dan congratulated Jordan Frith (sponsorship chair) on the highest sponsorships to date.
8. **Conference onboarding packet:** Dan discussed the packet in development in large part with Liz Lane and Halcyon Lawrence (program co-chairs). They can attest to the steep learning curve for technologies and the intellectual work of being program chairs. We would like to integrate a sign-off on the SIGDOC anti-racist review heuristic; see link in the agenda for more information.
9. **Proceedings:** The program co-chairs need a technical editor and/or editorial assistant for formatting and validating to make it easier for the authors and to allow the program chairs to focus on the intellectual work. It would be good experience for an early career person or a PhD student. For many students in the field, a SIGDOC proceedings article is their first publication; it would help them particularly. Dan commented that for students, working with TAPS was the most stressful part of the process.

## Organization Building

How do we offer free-to-members or pay-to-attend events to keep membership up and keep the community thriving beyond the conference? To sustain engagement? As Andy and Carlos said, this community often works to get to the next conference. Carlos suggested having events to bring people together, especially ones that help bring in wide-ranging colleagues (from Africa, Europe, etc.).

Luke Thominet (communications manager) reminded everyone that this has been a goal for years. Emma specifically noted that some events might be uncoupled from the conference (or might supplement our activities at another time in the year). For instance, workshops, which were well attended in the conference space, could be held online at another time to engage members. Intentional, carefully chosen activities at other times needn't be limited to workshops. Derek offered to talk about the journal and publishing, and Carlos might be able to as well. Carlos mentioned the possibility of a competition as a way to connect people, too.

Chapters might be something to think about. EuroSIGDOC and operates like a chapter. In a chapter model (like we had in the past), each chapter receives support and has activities. We might motivate colleagues from Japan, China, India, and other locales to create something like chapters.

## **Updates to Bylaws, Board, Structure**

We are updating the bylaws, which need to go through ACM approval after internal approval. We are changing term limits for the EC to three (3) years (from two) and the board to two (2) years (now one). We are allowing self-nomination for board memberships (who are appointed). We are elevating the Access Chair to an elected officer at the suggestion of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion consultants (see below). That increases the number of elected members to four (4), and the past chair makes five (5). Because of the approval process for bylaw revisions, we will have to appoint someone for this cycle then elect to fill the position later.

The end of two-year terms for board members is coming. Some may stay, change., etc. Emails will go out soon.

## **Anti-Racist Recommendations**

We used the first allotment in our justice-centered budget line to hire three Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion consultants to audit the organization's documents and practices. We received their recommendation report (SIGDOC Anti-Racist and Inclusion Consulting Recommendation Report) this summer. Among other things, they recommended adding demographics to our annual report and sending a survey to membership, for which they included models. As mentioned above, they also recommended expanding the Access Chair role. You can learn more about their recommendations in the annual report.

## **Conference Siting**

Sarah noted that the Executive Committee (EC) is looking at siting. As we sort out what to do, we want to hear feedback about the value in the different types of experiences and make value-driven decisions. Values include but are not limited to inclusion, access, and labor.

## **Secretary/Treasurer's Report**

Susan Youngblood (secretary/treasurer) highlighted that SIGDOC's financial reserves have long been growing, and this long-term excellent financial health is the result of many people's careful stewardship. Credit also goes to everyone who encourages participation in the conference and keeps CDQ thriving. We typically hover at a few thousand in revenue or expenses at the end of the year, often alternating depending on conference venue, but our reserves have been building.

ACM's fiscal years run July 1 – June 30. Typically, our conferences alternate between generating revenue and tapping into reserves. Conference expenses for onsite conferences include costs like rooms and food. Digital conferences still have the expenses of technology, AV, accessibility, and so forth, but the conference committees this year and last were careful with expenses. For comparison, our FY 2021 conference (October 2020) had been expected to tap into reserves by a little over \$1,200 dollars as an onsite conference but instead generated \$561. In FY 2022 (this

year), the conference is also expected to be in the black by \$981, but we need to finalize the numbers. We are wrapping up the expenses. For instance, we just paid the \$1,680 for ASL interpretation.

We are required to maintain a financial cushion that varies; that is, we are required to have a minimum balance in our account. That amount for the coming fiscal year is \$12,355 (based on a formula using expenses [organizational and conference] and net income). Because of long-term care, our balance is \$103,660, which is about \$91,000 over the minimum required. Our largest source of revenue is the ACM digital library, which has grown from \$10,000/yr to \$11,175/yr. That growth is largely due to the CDQ and communication teams: Derek Ross, Jason Tham, Luke Thominet, and Adam Strantz.

The financial health of the organization has allowed us to designate a \$2,000 annual budget line to diversity, equity, and inclusion. As we consider our financial cushion, we need to remember to continue stewardship so we don't deplete reserves too much.