

AMC SIGDOC Business Meeting

Minutes

October 28, 2023. Called to order by Huiling Ding at ~8:30 a.m. Eastern.

Attendance

PRESENT

- **Executive Committee:** Huiling Ding (chair), Chen Chen (secretary/treasurer)
- **Board:** Jason Tham, Tim Elliott, Daniel Hocutt (technical editor), Chris Lindgren (website manager)
- **2023 Conference Committee:** Sonia Stephens (conference chair; see also *Board* above)
- **Members:** Donnie Sackey, Liz Hutter, Amber Lancaster (CDQ associate editor), Luke Thominet

ONLINE

- **Executive Committee:** Daniel P. (Dan) Richards (chair) (present via Zoom)

ABSENT

- **Executive Committee:** Halcyon Lawrence (vice chair, needs to step down due to medical reasons), Jordan Firth (editor of CDQ)
- **Board:** Sahajiya Nath, Nupoor Ranade, Sherena Huntsman

Note

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

Welcome

Introductions around the table.

Overview of agenda and introductions (Huiling)

Huiling Ding gave an overview of the agenda.

Conference 2023 updates (Sonia)

Sonia thanked everyone who was involved in organizing the conference and program (Kristen and Joe, Dan Richards, Daniel for technical editing, Jason for social media, Sherena for accessibility, Halcyon for assisting, etc.). She noted the submission number of proposals was quite high compared to the past.

Trying to keep costs down by looking at the AV, the food, working with the hotel, making sure to communicate with the hotel early enough to know exactly how much things would cost. The hotel was good to work with.

We went with the hotel because UCF was not available during the semester. ACM put out the bid, and 12 or 13 hotels responded. Only 3 were within the financial scope. ACM helped negotiate the costs down for AV and food with the hotel. We ended up providing some of our own AV.

Suggested having a co-conference chair, having someone with institutional knowledge (someone on the Board or EC, perhaps). Technical editing was a lot of work because more people were accepted for proceedings; there was concern for that workload. She suggested discussing this more in the future. Attendees were 170, including people online; online/hybrid presentation procedures needed to be clarified.

Future suggestions: ACM might not assist with negotiations with universities, although universities might be cheaper because AV would be included normally.

Possible Accessibility Suggestions: locate things earlier was helpful. Keynote speakers could be hard to hear for the CART person.

Secretary/Treasurer's Report

Chen Chen, secretary/treasurer, noted that SIGDOC's overall financial health is good. Last year and the year before, our SIG ended the year with a little less than we began with. This year, we were projected to come out around \$3,000 ahead of where we began for the organization, but that may change based on the final conference costs. We still have a decent cushion of funding, although it's been decreasing more since last year. That cushion has largely grown over time, thanks to many people's careful stewardship. Credit also goes to everyone who encourages participation in the conference and keeps CDQ thriving. Usually, we hover at a few thousand in revenue or expenses at the end of the year, often alternating depending on conference venue. Our reserves have been building over time, which has allowed us to dedicate a line in our budget to social justice work.

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 (FY24) is \$35,287 (based on a formula using expenses [organizational and conference] and net income). We've started this FY24 at \$76,780 in our funds reserve, so that's \$41,493 over the required minimum balance.

ACM's fiscal years run July 1 – June 30. Our conferences alternate between generating revenue and tapping into reserves. Conference expenses for onsite conferences like this one include costs like rooms and food, on-site logistics such as AV costs. Since we've been back in person, we expect our conference expenses to vacillate between generating income and tapping into reserves.

Historically, SIGDOC's largest revenue and expense streams are our conferences, but we plan for them to be a revenue stream (with revenue exceeding expenses) only every other year. The pattern over the last few years gives sense of where we are. The FY 2021 conference (October

2020, so three conferences ago) had been expected to tap into reserves by a little over \$1,200 dollars as an onsite conference but instead was in the black. But last year's conference in Boston was quite expensive so we had to dip into our reserve a bit more. We are projected again to come out in red this year, due to an increase in the organization overhead to ACM by \$15,000. As a special interest group within ACM, SIGDOC uses the expertise and infrastructure of ACM and incurs overhead per year. In the past the overhead was \$10k and now it's 25k, which is why we need to have a conversation about future conference models. If you recall, membership fees were raised from \$35 to \$45 since Jul 1 and this year the conference registration rates also went up. You can see more about this in [past Chair Dan Richards' update](#). It is possible that the EC may consider further membership fee increase, but that will be voted through the Advisory Board as well.

SIGDOC's typically second largest revenue stream is the digital library, but this year and last, it is our largest revenue stream. It again has exceeded projections thanks to the Communication Design Quarterly (CDQ) team's work and the promotion of articles online. We've budgeted for its revenue this year to be at \$10,336 (base revenue from access is set at \$10,000; any dollar amount in addition indicates higher access), and this is a slight decrease from last year by about \$1000. We encourage faculty to have students download articles directly rather than access them as uploaded copies in a learning management system because it benefits the organization and it demonstrates use of the ACM Digital Library to our institutions, thus preserving access.

Also updated the grants and awards funds distributions process: CARG and Design Justice are grants, but Rigo and Diana are awards. For both grants and awards, recipients receive the money as direct taxable income.

James Schembari (and Irene Frawley before him) serves as our contact, preparing the initial budget, calculating particulars, and keeping us within the guidelines of ACM. Also, we use the infrastructure of the digital library, and conference payment infrastructure that is separately billed to us.

Daniel Hocutt asked questions about the Digital library, Dan Richards' answer: If you are member, you can download proceedings for free after the initial period.

Conference siting (2024 and beyond) (Huiling)

Huiling announced that Nupoor is already working with the EC to plan the next conference. Halcyon has to step down due to the medical reasons, so we need a new vice chair to help with conference planning. The EC will return to the ballots and votes to find the next vice chair.

Jason Tham has offered to think about co-locating with CPTSC for 2025. Returning to campuses will keep the costs down. In 2026 Quan Zhou at Metropolitan State University in MN has offered to host. We are looking for conference co-chairs for future years. The EC is also looking for program co-chairs, who will work on CFP, getting proposals, review, working through the proceedings with the technical editor. Huiling invited the audience to think about serving in these roles. The other conference co-chair doesn't necessarily have to be local as long as one conference chair is local. Program chairs can be from anywhere.

Daniel Hocutt has agreed to serve as technical editor for one more year, but we are looking for the next technical editor for 2025.

EC is looking for building cohorts of people who would be interested in serving these roles in the future. EC is also planning to create/update documentation for these procedures so that people don't have to reinvent the wheel every year.

Discussion:

Daniel asked question about co-locating logistics: There might be an overlap of the workshop day. Huiling added we'd still have separate registration fees, but hopefully the overlap will help save travel and hotel costs.

Amber asked if SIGDOC has been hosted at Portland.

Daniel asked if we have thought about rotating sites across the country. Not really, it's more volunteer-based. But the previous EC did talk about doing Central-East-West rotation.

Chris asked about how to sustain the sponsorship relationships (particular industry relationships). Huiling updated on Jordan Frith's work on finding sponsors from the industry: very hard to reach by cold calling. If people's programs have large alum networks, they might be able to suggest. Dan talked about corporate sponsorship through in-kind sponsorship, such as donating products. If there are industry members can leverage relationships, maybe that's one avenue for finding sponsors as well. Open to other suggestions for finding more industry sponsorship.

ACM doesn't offer sponsorship support. Dan suggested we bring it up by working with other SIG chairs at the SIG chairs annual meeting.

Organizational updates

Annual reports are posted on the website for everyone to access. Dan invites people to check it out to get an overview of how the organization works, issues we are working with, and opportunities to serve. Historical records of the reports are posted from the 90s.

Dan suggested we should think about different conference formats, thinking about ways to better serve our diverse membership (lots of grad students, early-career faculty). The previous EC started the discussion about different formats, such as doing SRC in the spring online, alternating online/in-person conferences, biannual event with every other year online, etc.

Spring workshop planning: Huiling and Dan are thinking 2-3 workshops in the spring, planning to send out a survey with topics to gauge interests/get nominations in attending or presenting (also suggesting other topics). Workshop leaders can have free conference registration. Potential topics might include: accessibility; grant writing; conference/program planning; AI-assisted writing, etc. Thinking about charging a small fee, open to SIGDOC members and non-SIGDOC members, to increase revenue. Huiling invites people to think about participating themselves or nominating others.

Discussion:

Jason: from the CPTSC experience, the membership preferred to be in person overwhelmingly, coming out of the pandemic.

Sonia: two years ago, with the online SRC there were more international students who were able to attend without the travel expenses.

Amber: a hybrid option can be more accessible for people with disabilities who can't travel.

Sonia: This year the pre-recorded option shouldn't be how we do hybrid. Truly hybrid model would double or triple AV costs, probably not sustainable. Maybe alternating fully online and fully in-person is a good option. Decoupling SRC might mean student participants wouldn't have a full conference experience.

Amber: a pre-conference day on zoom hosted through university might be feasible? But Sonia added that it would be a good idea to have people whose only responsibility is to organize that (team of 3 at CPTSC)

Tim: when people are zooming into an in-person conference, it's not a good experience.

Donnie: suggesting alternating online/in-person as a good option. From ATTW's experience, there wasn't much of a change in membership. 2023 online conference saw an increase in attendee numbers. People either liked it or hated it. The online format would serve different needs. If alternating would allow the organization to save money, it would make a lot of sense. But folks should probably think more creatively about different online formats (think ATTW's 2022 model with workshops, spread across longer days).

Jason: for co-locating with CPTSC in 2025, they would prefer in person. But the one-day online preconference might be doable.

Sonia: ACM might have limitations on SRC structures. Need to check.

Daniel: potentially looking at doing a fully online conference beyond 2026, so maybe now it's a good time to look for people who might be interested in hosting online in the future, also thinking about the online + in-person hub model like 2021 (there are a lot of logistics challenges associated with that model)

Huiling: worried about volunteer burnout (asking a lot of our members to serve all these roles).

Chris: gather some research on costs for online conferences vs. in-person conferences, to better inform decision-making for changing the model.

Dan: online platforms are also not free. We may have to pay for our own Zoom access rather than relying on university offering it like they did earlier in the pandemic. Other specific conferencing platforms are much more expensive.

Tim: if there's a virtual conference in the spring, then there could be an in-person component later where some people can re-present their work in an in-person context.

Luke: spring workshops came up historically, so that could be another option to consider.

Donnie: ATTW2022, hosts used their own accounts and then ATTW bought a Zoom license for one month. CART services costed a lot that year (a little bit more than half). Graduate students also don't pay for registration at ATTW.

Daniel: Thinking about the different audiences for the spring workshops. Is there value in catering some of the spring workshops to industry folks, cross-listed in some way that would count as professional development for them (think about the STC certificate model?)

Chris: Some tech workshops can be just recorded video modules. So that can potentially be a model for spring workshops for asynchronous access. Longer revenue stream: pay a small fee to access the content posted on the website every time. But recognizing it's probably more labor for people creating the content. **Especially if it's backed by ACM for credentialing with badges.**

Tim: STC certificates require membership registration, but if we open our spring workshops online without that barrier, that'd be helpful.

Board elections for 2024-2026

Open board positions: social media manager (particularly good for grad student/early career folk); workshop development and membership engagement (to help with spring workshops, for example); grants and awards manager; industry and organizational liaison. Huiling invites people to nominate and self-nominate.

Three social media avenues: FB group/page; Twitter; LinkedIn.

Communication Team and Accessibility Report

Website updates: Chris is building a workflow and documentation to prepare for the next web person and future conference planning teams, including a conference site architecture. There's a way to generate a conference schedule through EasyChair or Cvent, but neither is intuitive. So Chris plans to build a tool that would make that process more easily. Daniel suggested doing as much single-sourcing as we can.

Daniel also suggested potential help technical editor can provide to help conference chairs. Daniel also suggested not using PDF for the entire program for accessibility reasons, a fully HTML page, especially the schedule. Huiling also mentioned that we should discuss, thinking about ways that people can/need to use the programs to document.

Communication Design Quarterly (Amber)

Up 30% in regular submission. 2 special issues out for 2023, 2 more in the works for 2024. Enough submissions now in the pipeline for the entire 2024. Looking for book review editor (good entry level position) (about 8-10 submissions a year). New genre of opinion piece. New assistant editor is coming in at Clemson, a new assistant editor coming in at Oregon Tech to help with copyediting. Encouraging submissions.

Amber: there can be opportunity to include proceeding papers in CDQ (within copyright permissions with ACM).

CDQ had been working on making CDQ a journal not a newsletter. But the downside would be ACM would select the editorial team, which might not be a good idea.