FROM THE CHAIR …

Greetings,

My best to all our long-standing ACM-SIGIR members, and a warm welcome to those of you who became new members when you registered for your first SIGIR Conference in Singapore in July! The SIGIR Executive Committee is focused on providing both the intellectual stimulation and the member services to ensure that we retain the interest, participation, and membership of all of you. The Forum is one way we accomplish this. A major goal of the Chair's regular Forum column is to share highlights of what's happening in SIGIR and to seek your thoughts on how to both accomplish our goals and make your SIGIR membership most beneficial and meaningful to you.

To this end, we made some rather dramatic changes in the manner of conducting the Annual Business Meeting, which was still held in our traditional mode over box lunches on Wednesday, July 23rd. For those who are either new or were not able to attend, let me explain these changes.

The goal of the changes was to have more of the content of the meeting generated by the audience vs. reports from the SIGIR Executive Committee sitting on the stage. To this end, a listserv was set up for all registered SIGIR members a few weeks prior to the Conference, on which I made a request that members post to the listserv suggestions of SIGIR initiatives for open discussion at the Business Meeting. We asked for ideas in the form of propositions, that is, ideas to be acted on. The listserv discussion was lively – with detailed postings from many members – and some interesting SIGIR history revealed!

The Executive Committee then selected a subset of these propositions for discussion at the Business Meeting. These propositions included:

- Industry Day at SIGIR should be continued.
- The SIGIR Senior Program Committee Meeting should be virtual vs. face-to-face.
- Means are needed for improving ongoing participation of members who don't attend the conference when not held in their part of the world.
- A mode for inclusion of papers that do not use traditional evaluation metrics should be included at SIGIR because paradigm shifts may not be recognizable using established evaluation methods.
- The reviewing cycle for the SIGIR Conference should be shortened so that we have 'fresher papers' at the conference and this can be accomplished by producing electronic proceedings only.

One-slide summaries of these propositions were presented and then the floor was opened for discussion, with microphones in the aisles for participants. For some of the larger scale initiatives, members who posed the proposition were invited to make brief presentations of their ideas from the podium.

Needless to say, the propositions set forth and the new model for the meeting engendered very active participation by a broad range of attendees, in fact enough to fill the two hours. Dave Lewis' minutes from the Business Meeting should be read for the highlights and outcomes (in addition, slides from all SIGIR Business Meetings are available online at http://www.sigir.org/geninfo.html). My main point in reporting this is to share our efforts in opening up participation in SIGIR, and to seek further suggestions – the Executive Committee's email address is SIGIR-EC@LISTSERV.ACM.ORG and we welcome your input. Do read Dave's minutes as well as this message and get back to us. Feel free to share your

propositions now for consideration by the Executive Committee or inclusion in next year's Annual Meeting.

Since our major activity is the Annual Conference, check out http://www.sigir2009.org/ for the important dates on submissions for next year's SIGIR Conference – July 19 – 23 in Boston, Massachusetts, USA. We expect it to be an outstanding, very well attended conference. As a member, if you are asked to contribute your time and expertise as a reviewer or committee member, I hope that you will do so.

Cheers,

Liz Liddy