

SIGSAM FY'06 Annual Report
July 2005 - June 2006
Submitted by: Emil Volcheck, SIGSAM Chair

The SIGSAM homepage is at <http://sigsam.org/> .

Membership

As of 30 June 2006, SIGSAM had 296 members, down from 357 a year ago.

This decrease can be explained in part by the fact that the current figure does not include ISSAC 2005 complimentary memberships, while last year's figure includes ISSAC 2004 complimentary memberships. SIGSAM issued six-month complimentary memberships to those who registered for ISSAC 2005 as nonmembers, and these memberships expired in May 2006. The old membership figure can be broken down as 302 regular members plus 55 ISSAC 2004 participants who received one-year complimentary memberships. While the current figure does appear to be a significant decrease from the previous year, this figure does better reflect the stable core of SIGSAM membership.

The program of complimentary memberships does not appear to have resulted in long-term increase in membership, so SIGSAM has discontinued the program and did not issue complimentary memberships for ISSAC 2006.

Financial Summary

The SIGSAM fund balance as of 30 June 2006 was 4450 USD, down from an opening balance of 8887 USD. Despite the decrease in the closing balance, SIGSAM was essentially revenue-neutral for FY 2006. This stability is obscured by difficulties in the accounting of income and expenses across the fiscal year boundary.

Our treasurer worked with ACM Finance to account for the decrease and has found three items that account for most of the decrease. First, the June 2005 issue of our quarterly publication was charged to FY 2006, rather than FY 2005, which artificially inflated our closing balance for FY 2005. Second, the ISSAC proceedings from both 2005 and 2006 were charged against FY 2006, which artificially deflated our closing balance for FY 2006. Third, a conference income credit from ISSAC 2005 expected in FY 2006 did not appear until July 2006 (hence in FY 2007), artificially deflating the FY 2006 closing balance.

We believe SIGSAM finances are improving. We are taking steps to save on costs and are trying to better understand and account for our income and expenses. These steps include (1) saving on production and distribution costs for our quarterly publication by printing and mailing two double issues per year, while electronically publishing four issues per year as before, (2) reducing storage costs, (3) discontinuing the ISSAC complimentary memberships. We look forward to an increase in our closing balance at the end of FY 2007.

Viability

The next viability review for SIGSAM is in March 2007.

ACM Communications in Computer Algebra

During the past year, we again published four issues of our quarterly publication. Starting with Volume 40 for the year 2006, we have changed the name of our publication from the "SIGSAM Bulletin: Communications in Computer Algebra" to the "ACM Communications in Computer Algebra" (CCA). Volume 39 for the year 2005 had a total of 148 pages. Ilias Kotsireas and

Austin Lobo continue to serve as co-Editors, and Chris Brown continues to serve as the Associate Editor for Formally Reviewed Articles.

ISSAC Conferences

ISSAC 2005 in Beijing, China posted a loss of approximately 2800 USD.

ISSAC 2006 in Genoa, Italy was hosted by the Department of Mathematics of the University of Genoa and was a successful event. Preliminary figures indicate the conference will at least break even and possibly come in slightly under budget.

ISSAC 2007 will be held in Waterloo, Canada. Sponsorship is yet to be determined.

Organization

The officers of SIGSAM are in the final year of their second two-year term of office. The officers are

Emil Volcheck (Chair)
Werner Krandick (Vice Chair)
Fabrice Rouillier (Secretary)
Wayne Eberly (Treasurer)
Rob Corless (Past Chair).

Werner Krandick was appointed to fill the vacancy left by the untimely passing of Manuel Bronstein. Fabrice Rouillier was appointed to fill the vacancy left after Mark van Hoeij stepped down.

Elections will be held in 2007. The Nominating Committee will be jointly chaired by Rob Corless (Past Chair) and Bob Caviness (former SIGSAM Chair).

The SIGSAM Executive Committee receives advice from a ten-member Advisory Board. The membership is listed at this URL:

<http://acm.org/sigsam/officers/advisory-board.html> .

The newest member of the Advisory Board is Prof. Joachim von zur Gathen, who was elected at ISSAC 2006.

Annual General Meeting

The 2006 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of SIGSAM was held at the ISSAC 2006 conference in Genoa, Italy. The slides from the Chair's Report are available at URL

http://acm.org/sigsam/officers/AGM/2006/Chair/Chair_Report.pdf .

Executive Committee Activities

SIGSAM made progress on several initiatives this year.

Awards

This year ACM officially designated the Richard D. Jenks Memorial Prize as an ACM SIGSAM prize. The Jenks Prize recognizes excellence in software engineering applied to computer algebra. SIGSAM nominated this award, which was previously administered by an ad hoc committee of community leaders, for consideration as an ACM SIG-level award and facilitated the process. The new prize selection committee has one representative each from SIGSOFT and SIGSAM, representing a new cooperative effort between our two SIGs.

The 2006 ACM SIGSAM Richard D. Jenks Memorial Prize was awarded to Prof. John Cannon of the University of Sydney for the Magma computer algebra system.

Research Funding Initiative

Inspired by the theoretical computer science community, SIGSAM has begun an effort to prepare a "white paper" on the importance of research in computer algebra and symbolic computation. A committee has been formed, and we have received offers of support and assistance from an NSF Program Officer in the CCF cluster and from the Executive Director of the CRA.

Outreach to the Mathematics Community

SIGSAM supported a special session on symbolic computation at the largest US mathematics conference, the Joint Mathematics Meetings. SIGSAM provided a small travel grant to the session organizers to open the door. With the support of the session organizers, we received permission from the American Mathematical Society to publish abstracts from the session in CCA. We offered the AMS a free advertisement in that issue of CCA. They accepted, and then provided some AMS computer algebra books to display and donate at the ISSAC 2006 conference. We also contacted the Executive Editor of "Mathematical Reviews" in regard to expediting inclusion of SIGSAM and ACM content in their reviewing service and provided them with ISSAC proceedings on CD. These interactions mark the beginning of stronger ties between SIGSAM and the AMS.

Support to the ISSAC Community

SIGSAM sponsored the ISSAC 2005 conference and absorbed the loss of approximately 2800 USD. SIGSAM sponsored ISSAC 2006 and offered assistance with budget review and preparation. SIGSAM produced DVDs for ISSAC 2006 containing the proceedings and a selection of free and open source computer algebra software.

Membership Initiatives

SIGSAM received approval to offer a discount membership rate to members from economically developing countries, with a temporary waiver of dues for those without easy access to Western currency.

