

Presidential Task Force on SIG Overhead

A Presidential Task Force is convened when the ACM President believes a potential direction or issue would benefit from special analysis/expertise. The work of a PTF is advisory in nature. Any discussions or recommendations should be kept confidential until the President chooses to share the information more widely.

The SIGs are a vibrant and critical part of ACM. There are currently 38 SIGs, which differ dramatically in terms of longevity, number of members, level of activity, and funding available (i.e., each SIG's "fund balance"). Each SIG generates its own income, and also receives a share of the annual Digital Library income. To cover the costs of administration, support, and governance incurred by ACM on behalf of the SIGs, each SIG pays overhead based on its expenses (both SIG governance and SIG-related conferences).

The overhead fee is currently assessed using a sliding scale established by the EC and SGB almost 20 years ago. The scale is sharply recessive, so that a SIG pays a lower overhead rate for each additional \$125,000 of expenses. The more a SIG spends, the lower its rate, with the result that individual SIGs pay anywhere from 7% to 16%.

That overhead assessment method worked very well for the first decade, but a preliminary analysis conducted in FY21 by Cherri Pancake indicated that it may be contributing to a growing gap between the "wealthier" (large fund balance and/or high level of activity) and the "poorer" SIGs.

The ACM President is convening a presidential task force (PTF) to review how SIG overhead is handled and make recommendations for possible future adjustments.

Responsibilities

The PTF is charged with reviewing current method of overhead assessment, determining if there are inequities or other drawbacks, and identifying other possible methods for assessing the overhead needed to cover the costs of managing and supporting the SIGs.

The PTF chair will report to the President of progress on a biweekly basis.

Expected Outcomes and Timeline

The PTF will develop recommendations on how overhead should be assessed and summarize them in a report to the President. The timeline is: begin formulating recommendations in January and early February; propose initial ideas for discussion by the EC in early March; then involve a larger group of SIGs as appropriate, with the hope that the most equitable 1-2 methods (which may include the current method) can be presented to the full SGB at their spring meeting; this would hopefully lead to a resolution that can be voted on by May and approved by the EC prior to Council's discussion of the FY23 budget in June.

Membership

The PTF will be chaired by Cherri Pancake and include the SGB Chair and 5-6 other members representing a different SIGs and familiar with how their SIG and SIG budget operate. All members will be appointed by the President.

ACM staff representatives will attend the meetings and be available to answer questions or to provide needed historical data.