Program Chair Duties for ACM SIGMETRICS Conference

Preamble

Being Program Chair for an ACM SIGMETRICS conference requires a one-year commitment, with the bulk of the work done in a 4-month period (November-February) about 4-6 months before the conference. This "busy period" spans the paper submission and review cycle, culminating in the Program Committee meeting to finalize the technical program for the conference. Being Program Chair is a big responsibility, but a highly respected role and a valued service to your research community. Often the role is filled with two co-chairs, to balance the area coverage for theory/practice, and to ease the workload.

Many others have done this role before you. Feel free to seek them out for advice. There is much wisdom and experience to glean from prior Program Chairs, as well as your General Chair, and your SIGMETRICS Executive Committee.

Duties and Expectations

The following list shows roughly a 15-month timeline of activities, in approximately chronological order. The assumption is that you are Program Chair for a June conference in Year N, and that you are appointed in March of Year N-1.

Determine submission, review, and camera-ready deadlines for papers. Work backwards from the proceedings production schedule to determine camera-ready deadline, notification deadline, PC meeting date, and paper submission deadline. Watch out for major holidays (American Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, Easter) that could affect your schedule. Also be cognizant of the submission and/or notification dates of other large conferences that you want to avoid (e.g., INFOCOMM, SIGCOMM, WWW).

Draft an initial Call for Papers (CFP) for publicizing your conference. You can copy the previous year's version, with appropriate updates to the dates and location of the conference, as well as the technical topics, submission deadline, and notification date.

Select Program Committee members. Think about committee size (40-45 members is typical to handle 200 papers). Get people who are technically strong, who have a reputation for doing thorough and competent reviews, and who you can trust to do the job that is required in a timely fashion. Think about topic area coverage, seniority, gender, geography, academia/ industry, theory/practice, as well as degree of overlap with last year's committee. Send invitations by email or in person. Expect about an 80% "yes" rate to your invitations, and have some backup names to fill any topic area gaps that arise. With luck you can have most of your committee lined up by June, so that they can be listed on the CFP.

Attend the SIGMETRICS conference in Year N-1, bringing along about 100 color copies of a CFP flyer to distribute. Do some follow up with recruited PC members who are in attendance, some in-person arm-twisting of prospective new ones, and solicit names and suggestions of other ones to pursue.

Make 1-3 PowerPoint slides promoting the dates and deadlines for your conference. Beg for a 5-minute slot to present to the SIGMETRICS conference audience, perhaps just before or just after lunch.

Bring extra copies of the CFP flyers to other relevant conferences that you attend in the next few months. Give some to PC members.

Make a Web version of your CFP for posting on the main SIGMETRICS Web site, or the conference Web site, or both.

Make a text-based version of your CFP suitable for mailing to the SIGMETRICS-MEMBERS mailing list, the "performance" mailing list, as well as every other relevant mailing list you can think of. Have the designated Publicity Chair assist with CFP advertising, especially in the 2-3 months leading up to the submission deadline. At least three calls, at one month intervals, seems to work well.

Choose the software system that you want to use for paper submission and review. Some of the available ones are CMT, CyberChair, EasyChair, EDAS, and HotCRP. These differ slightly in functionality, usability, and cost. Choose something that you are comfortable with and know how to use, as you will be spending a LOT of time using the system! Get the submission URL and formatting instructions on the conference Web site well in advance of the paper submission deadline (2 months). Design the review form that you want to use as well.

SIGMETRICS historically does double-blind submission. That is, reviewers don't know who wrote the paper, and authors don't know who wrote the reviews. If you see any reason to deviate from this, consult with your SIG EC.

Monitor paper submissions in the weeks leading up to the submission deadline. You can expect about 200 papers, but about **half of these will arrive on the last day possible**. Handle occasional email queries from authors regarding formatting and deadlines. Resist the urge to offer extensions, though a 7-day gap between abstract registration and full-paper submission is customary. Be firm, but not draconian!

Assign submitted papers to reviewers, based on their technical expertise, or indicated interests in each paper via a bidding process. Set clear timelines and expectations for the reviewing process.

Monitor the reviews coming in, especially as the reviewing deadline approaches. Again, you can expect most to come in at or near the deadline, and lots of begging for extensions. Be firm, but patient.

Monitor online discussions of papers, if any, before the PC meeting. Flag difficult cases, missing reviews, high-variance papers, and conflicts of interest.

In consultation with the General Chair, set a target number of papers to accept (e.g., 30-32), and possibly posters as well.   Suggest keynote speakers for conference, if General Chair needs ideas.

Organize and chair PC meeting to discuss papers. SIGMETRICS always does an in-person PC meeting, with each PC member covering their own travel costs to attend the meeting. Encourage all of your PC members to attend. The meeting is usually 1 or 2 days, often in mid-to-late January. You decide the dates and location for the meeting. Make sure to provide suitable travel and hotel information for your PC members, as well as suitable food and beverage at the meeting. Hosting a celebratory PC meeting dinner is customary. Keep costs reasonable, coordinating with General Chair as required.

After the meeting, double-check all review decisions carefully. Make sure that any missing reviews are updated as needed, and that any shepherding requirements are duly noted. Send notifications to authors. **Expect some complaints**.

Organize accepted papers into sessions for the conference. Coordinate program structure with General Chair, giving adequate consideration to sessions, breaks, posters, banquet, keynotes, etc. Get tentative program onto conference Web site well in advance of the conference (3 months) so that publicity, travel, registration, etc can proceed unimpeded.

Provide a (carefully ordered) list of accepted papers and paper IDs, as well as the authors and their contact information, to the designated **Proceedings Chair** for the conference. They will coordinate with ACM to distribute formatting instructions and copyright forms to authors,

collect camera-ready papers, produce proceedings, and deliver them to the conference venue on time. Options include printed proceedings, CD-ROM, or both. Papers will also end up in the ACM Digital Library as a permanent record of the conference. The usual contact on the ACM side is Lisa Tolles at Sheridan Printing.

Draft a one-page "Message from the Program Chair(s)" to include in the front of the SIGMETRICS proceedings.

Create an ad hoc subcommittee of your PC to select award papers, based on the recommendations received from your PC members. It is customary to identify a "Best Paper", as well as a "Best Student Paper" for the Sevcik award. Get title and authorship information regarding award papers to ACM (via your General Chair) at least one month before the conference, so that plaques can be ordered.

Line up session chairs for the conference. Usually these are PC members who will be in attendance, and reviewed some or all of the papers in that session.

Attend SIGMETRICS conference in Year N. Give opening remarks about the review process, statistical data, and technical program, including thank-you's as appropriate. Present paper awards, if any.

Enjoy the conference!

Meet with SIGMETRICS Executive Committee to report on your experiences while they are still fresh. Also make sure to share your ideas and advice with next year's Program Chair, who is likely in attendance.

Provide summary statistical data to General Chair for post-conference report.

Suggest updates and improvements to the information in this document.