

# ACM History Committee Meeting

## Minutes, April 20, 2020 (v. 3)

---

### 1. Welcome (Owens)

- Meeting began at 11:00am EDT / 8:00am PDT via Zoom

### 2. Attendees (House)

- Barbara Boucher Owens (chair)
- Vicki Almstrum
- David Brock
- Carol Hutchins
- Roy Levin
- Bernadette Longo (first part of the meeting)
- Sachin Maheshwari
- Ursula Martin (slightly late arrival)
- Erik Rau
- Kim Tracy
- Mary Whitton

Committee members not attending:

- Amanda Wick
- Jeffrey Yost

No guests attended. Tom Haigh had sent an email report about the Turing project and Charles House had sent his regrets.

### 3. Minutes from March meeting (Almstrum)

- March minutes approved without changes.
- Vicki shared that she had prepared the approved minutes to be put up on the website. Discussed whether the meeting minutes need to be redacted. We agreed that current procedures are producing minutes that may go directly to the website. Approved.

### 4. Budget (Whitton, Rau)

- ACM requested that the committee pare down its 2021 budget, which runs from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021, to the same level as for 2020. This requires that we cut \$27,000 from the proposed budget.
- Erik: The cuts affected primarily travel and meetings. Erik's report is in Appendix A.
- After a brief discussion, the committee voted to accept the modified budget in order to meet ACM's reduced budget request. Erik will send the updated budget to ACM.

## 5. Status of Turing update (Levin)

- The travel cuts will affect what can be spent to complete interviews for the Turing project.
  - They plan to do at least an initial interview will take place during the summer via Zoom with Dana Scott, who is 87 years old. There may be a follow-up interview later that is face-to-face.
  - David Jefferson will consider the situation on a case by case basis as he schedules additional interviews.
- Earlier in the week, Tom Haigh had sent an email reporting several accomplishments.
  - He has now posted video snippets for 3 of the 4 additional profile pages approved by the committee. These are for Diffie, Liskov, and Stonebraker.
  - The new snippets are hosted on a separate ACM-branded channel set up by the ACM social media staff.
  - Tom is continuing to experiment with tools and settings to optimize the preparation and presentation of snippets within the constraints of ACM's chosen tools and platforms. Some of the new snippets were edited to omit extraneous parts of discussion, which takes more work but gives shorter and stronger results.
- Roy and Erik reminded us that the Turing Award is no longer an ACM special project grant. This project budget is now part of the History Committee's annual budget. The points that are part of the Turing work (and thus the Turing budget):
  - The actual interviews with Turing Laureates. About 6 remain from the past, plus the new ones. Among other things, this includes the management fee (which is done on a piece work basis. Roy reports that they are only missing a few interviews:
    - David Scott (hope that will happen this year)
    - Others: Andy Yao, Adi Shamir, Tim Berners-Lee
    - The interview with Fred Brooks was conducted about two months ago and is being processed.
    - The three machine learning winners for 2018 (Yoshua Bengio, Geoffrey Hinton, Yann LeCun)
  - Tom's work with the snippets (done on a piece work basis).
  - Tom's oversight work in ensuring that a good biography/summary is produced for each interview. Sometimes he is the one who does the writing, sometimes he engages someone else.
- ACM is considering alternatives for this year's Turing award ceremony, given that the regular June event will not take place. It is likely to happen later in the year, if at all.
- The agreement to do some interviews jointly with the Computer History Museum has been finalized, thanks to David Brock's efforts.

## 6. India Oral History update (Maheshwari)

- India has been on lock-down, so everything is at a standstill and that will continue at least another month.

- The interview with Mr. Kohli scheduled for March 18 has been postponed. Sachin is considering other potential interviewers who are local and can conduct that interview when things have opened up.
- He has been considering doing a Zoom interview with one of the other interviewees. For another interviewee, the interview must be a personal, face-to-face interview.

## 7. ACM award video series (House)

- No updates from Chuck, who was not able to join the Zoom meeting.

## 8. Web work (Tracy)

- Kim has made some small steps forward. He has added the fellowship winners.
- He will begin by posting more recent minutes. The older minutes will require some rework before they are ready to add to the new site.
- He is waiting for old blog posts from ACM in order to add these to the website. He also has plans to add the Fellowship history.
- Barb mentioned the desire to ensure we can help provide easy access to existing interviews that are relevant to the History Committee's mission.

## 9. Heritage update (Almstrum, Wick)

- Amanda and Vicki had a meeting to discuss the steps with the Heritage project.
- Amanda will focus on the toolkit aspect (organizing your office, practical tools, tool selection helper / decision tree). This will provide a SIG or Committee with a place to start.
- The goal through this year is to build up the website, the exemplars, and the toolkit.
- Another important piece is a more interactive piece. The Google group exists, but has not become active. Another idea would be to create a wiki that can be built up with ideas. ACM did not have any preferred wiki tool, so it is up to us to decide on tools based on our goals.
- Need to figure out if and why people are engaging with the materials. We also talked about having an obvious contact form and the future prospect of offering consulting support from experts to allow concentrated to get people started, in a sense a mini-workshop just to get a project underway.
- Barb recommended that Vicki and Amanda develop a white paper to explain the project scope and vision as part of the process of building up the heritage website. This can also provide more of a roadmap of the project plan.
- Erik: Good to focus on what an archive tends to collect. Two goals to keep in mind: What do historians want? and How can this work serve the SIGs and ACM? Amanda mentioned two parts relevant to this: *History sharing* and *Legacy building*.
- Carol: Use of wikis by SIGs in their early days to collect information within their subject area. Could be good to look to see whether tools such as this are still available. The Wayback Machine can also help with this. Leveraging what is already there is a helpful starting point.

## 10. Additional business

- Bill Aspray sent this question to Barb about interviews with women in computing.
  - “My reason for writing is to find out about the oral histories where the interviewee (or at least one of the interviewees in the case of a group interview) is a woman. I am chairing the IEEE Computer Society History Committee this year, and I am working as part of a subcommittee focused on diversity. We have not yet decided what we plan to do as a subcommittee (we are in the information-gathering stage), but two possibilities are to have a list of existing oral histories of women computer scientists, and another is to conduct some new interviews. Is there a way that you can point us to your oral history lists or provide other useful information? Thanks!”
  - Form the zoom chat comments:
    - Erik: Remembers a similar question on the SIGCIS listserv at least a month ago.
    - Carol: No easy way to find this in the new version of the ACM DL.
    - Ursula: Sometimes finds interviews of women by going to oral history sites and searching for “she”.
- Internationalism question to Ursula: What kinds of things can we do?
  - Ursula will think about this and distribute some suggestions via email.
- Kim attended a recent on-line meeting of the SIG Governing Board, where they discussed finances, primarily publications.
- Mary: IEEE VR conference went off very well, completely virtual. The sessions were conducted via Zoom, with Twitch and Google hubs for interaction. The hubs worked very well for poster sessions.
- Ursula and Carol: An ACM Presidential Task Force is developing a guide for running virtual meetings and conferences  
[people.clarkson.edu/~jmatthew/acm/VirtualConferences\\_GuideToBestPractices\\_CURR-NT.pdf](http://people.clarkson.edu/~jmatthew/acm/VirtualConferences_GuideToBestPractices_CURR-NT.pdf)
- Mary: Are there any items that would have been covered during the F2F that we should tackle at future meetings? For example, we have not yet discussed future members of the committee. Barbara will add this to future meeting agendas. Kim has set up the meetings through November on Zoom.

11. Next meeting Monday, May 18, 2020, 11:00 am EDT via Zoom

12. Conclusion 11:59 am EDT / 8:59 am PDT

## Appendix A: Proposed budget discussions from Erik Rau (edited)

From: Erik Rau to HISTORY via listserv.acm.org  
Thu, Apr 16, 4:19 PM (4 days ago)

Dear Committee,

As you may know, the ACM central administration requested that we reduce our FY2021 proposed budget, which requested a \$27,000 increase over FY2020, back down to our FY2020 "ask." In other words, we were asked to carve out \$27,000 from our FY2021 request.

Mary and I solicited your thoughts and we received many useful suggestions. After discussions among ourselves and Barbara, we submit for your review a revised FY2021 budget request (attached). Please review this before our meeting on Monday.

To aid our discussion, I offer the following discussion, thanking Mary and Barbara for their thoughts and leadership. Any errors are my own.

You will note that we took the \$27,000 cut requested by Command Central in just three areas: Outreach (a \$4.5k cut), the F2F meeting (a \$10k cut), and the workshop (a \$12.5k cut). Allow me a few moments to explain our thinking.

First, we were proposing a number of activities involving travel, which no longer seems as likely to happen, making some of our choices easy.

1) Travel and Meetings: We took the entire \$27k cut on this line, whose components include a cut to:

- Outreach: a \$4.5 cut, leaving \$2.5k. Recall that we had asked for \$7k on the assumption that Barbara and other HC ambassadors would be attending meetings and flying our flag. We decided that the opportunities for such travel were very low for FY21.
- F2F meeting: a \$10k cut, leaving \$3k, under the assumption that we'd be meeting by Zoom again next year. We regret that this will likely be the case: so much value in F2F meetings and conferences occurs in hallways and during breaks, but we think the current circumstances make reliable travel impossible.
- As with the F2F meeting, we made a deep (but not as deep) cut to the workshop, cutting the originally proposed amount in half (from \$25k to \$12.5k) We concluded that a workshop could still be mounted virtually, and that some funds should be allowed to augment workshop content content and discussion.

The rest of this email is primarily dedicated to explaining why we left the rest of the budget alone.

2) Communications was a \$1k component

- Miniscule, but still valuable to us.

### 3) Turing Award Content Creation

- A new ongoing responsibility of the HC, mandated and supported by the ACM as a whole. \$25k was to fund interviews, the remaining \$20k for snippets.
- In the case of the interviews, we agreed with HC members that interview costs might be reduced due to arrangements with the CHM and also if we can do the interviews via Zoom. Be that as it may, the agreement with the Computer History Museum has few road miles and shouldering the Turing interviews as a part of regular operations is also a new thing. Because of this, we decided it would be better to give unexpended resources back at the end of the year, rather than short ourselves at the start.
- As far as snippets go, we appreciate along with other HC members that the real “thing” is the interview, but also believe that for the purposes of outreach and access, the snippets are an important investment. Some of you suggested cutting this back. Mary and I decided against this approach and that we should let Tom Haigh’s capacity to produce these be the ultimate arbiter of any cuts.
- At the end of the day, we should be thinking a lot more about digital outreach, and the snippets are what we’ve got to work with right now.

### 4) SIG Heritage Exemplar Projects.

- We decided to leave this request intact, for similar reasons.
- Vicki and Amanda may not have a full-fledged plan in place, yet the pandemic would have had a large impact any plan they had produced ahead of budget submission.
- We decided there should be some fuel for their innovation, particularly since they will likely encourage digital outreach among the SIGs as they consider preservation plans.

Mary and I are happy to discuss this proposed revision further with all of you on Monday.

On the next page is a worksheet excerpt that shows the History Committee’s modified budget as submitted to the ACM on April 20 (after the committee meeting).

FY 2021 BUDGET ACM VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES Board, Committee and Program Requests (\$000)							
History Committee	FY 2021 Budget	FY2021 Budget Notes	FY 2020 Actual as of December 2019	FY 2020 Budget	FY2020 Budget Notes	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2018 Actual
- Travel and Meetings	\$ 18	\$3 for Face-to-Face Meeting, \$12.5 for Workshop, \$2.5 for outreach	\$ 0	\$ 38	Int'l Committee Members, Developing Archiving Skills	\$ 28	\$ 11
--#Face-to-Face Meeting							
--#Workshop		\$13					
--#Outreach		\$2.5 new line item in FY21 budget to cover travel & promotion of heritage best practices to ACM SIGS and allied groups					
- Communications	\$ 1		\$ -	\$ 1		\$ 0	\$ -
- Professional Services	\$ 45	Turing Award Content Creation	\$ -	\$ 25	Turing Award Content Creation	\$ 0	\$ 10
--#FY21 Turing Winner Interv(s)		\$25 (if arrangement with CHM comes about, actual exp. may be less					
--#Snippets		\$20 new line item in FY21; catchup snippets for promoting Turing OH; line will reduce in subsequent years					
- Grants and Awards	\$ 26	SIG Heritage Exemplar Projects	\$ -	\$ 26	SIG Heritage Exemplar Projects	\$ 14	\$ 16
- Miscellaneous (Explain)	\$ -		\$ -	\$ -		\$ -	\$ -
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 90</b>	Summary of increase: \$20K for OH Interview snippets; 7K for outreach	<b>\$ 0</b>	<b>\$ 90</b>		<b>\$ 43</b>	<b>\$ 37</b>
<b>Development Fund Projects</b>							
Turing Award Oral History Project							
Budget: \$210,000.00							
Spending as of December 2019: \$203,624.46							
Available Funding: \$6,375.54							
<b>History Committee Video Interview Series</b>							
Budget: \$336,000.00							
Spending as of December 2019: \$97,000.00							
Available Funding: \$239,000.00							