

ACM History Committee Meeting Minutes, November 15, 2024

Welcome (Almstrum)

- Meeting began at 12:00pm ET / 9:00am PT via Zoom

1. Attendees (Almstrum)

- Vicki Almstrum (led meeting)
- Troy Astarte
- Jonathan Grudin
- Dave Kasik
- Sachin Maheshwari
- Andrew Meade McGee (joined late)
- Mara Mills
- Barbara Boucher Owens
- Dag Spicer
- John Tucker
- Jeffrey Yost

Not in attendance

- David Brock
- Carol Hutchins
- Kim Tracy (chair)
- Chuck House (guest)

2. Minutes status (Secretariat / Almstrum, Astarte)

- Minutes from the February 28 face-to-face meeting, regular July and August meetings: approved and submitted for posting on the HC website.
- Minutes for September 20, 2024: Sent out on 11/13 for review and voting.
- Minutes for October 18, 2024: Ready for review and voting.

3. Brief update on Key Awards/VHoF (Tracy)

- At their September meeting, the ACM Executive Committee heard the proposal for the Key Awards and Virtual Hall of Fame. At the meeting in early November, the ACM EC voted to not fund the project for now, due in part to the pending Open Access Digital Library decision and the associated uncertainty around ACM finances. While disappointed, Chuck will continue doing some work toward eventual adoption of the VHoF.
- As a result of this decision, Chuck has determined that his regular participation in the monthly ACM HC meeting is not necessary.

- At the time of this meeting, Chuck was completing some tasks for the project and had nothing underway other than his offer to conduct additional interviews as a volunteer.
- Chuck had done three interviews recently, but most of his attention had been focused on the VHOF.
- Chuck highly recommends funding modest levels of snippet extraction for the ACM Key Award interviews, although there is no urgency for this work.

4. Committee membership and recruitment (Tracy)

- Troy volunteered to manage certain administrative aspects of the HC listserv and the drive:
 - Coordinate website updates. It is likely we will shift to having the team at ACM HQ manage the HC website after Kim's discussion with Vicki Hanson (see Section 6)
 - Manage the HC listserv
 - Manage permissions for the Google HC Operations Drive
 - Manage Zoom account, including scheduling of meetings and posting the meeting recording link and password after each meeting
- We reviewed whether everyone is a member of at least one subcommittee.

5. Plan for upcoming meetings

- We discussed our regular meeting time and day, including whether we should continue to meet monthly. For several years prior to 2015, the HC met less frequently than monthly.
- Our decision was to keep the meeting on the third Friday at noon Eastern time. We agreed that it is easier to cancel than to reschedule and that the monthly schedule will help us maintain momentum on projects.

6. Committee organization and charter discussion (Tracy)

- From Kim's conversation with ACM's president, Yannis Ioannidis
 - The committee charter should be revised to make it broader. Such a change in charter must come from the EC. Vicki Hanson, ACM's CEO, will draft the new charter.
 - The aim is to broaden the charter to include computing history as well as ACM history (the current charter implies ACM history only).
 - Current charter: *The History Committee fosters collection, preservation, and interpretation of the history of the ACM and its role in the development of computing. To this end, the committee provides guidance within the Association and carries out activities independently and in collaboration with other groups.*
- Vicki H. is in the process of drafting the charter.
 - The charter will be similar to the current one but will broaden the scope to cover activities that the HC already supports.
 - The charter will be brief, but will include constraints such as committee structure, that members must be current members of ACM, the minimum and maximum number of committee members, and the mission statement for the committee.
- Other points from Vicki H:
 - An Operations Manual could help the HC specify operating procedures for the HC.

- A multiyear plan could guide the HC's work and make clearer to others what the committee is striving to accomplish.
- Finances may become tighter as ACM transitions to an open access model.
- The root folder of the HC Operations Drive now contains a dedicated folder, Charter, where HC members can read and comment on the draft.
- The charter update will be an important item on the December meeting agenda.
- John stressed the importance of HC branding.
 - He proposed that the HC should develop a policy for when and how the HC may be involved with co-sponsored events (including planning, budget, etc.). This would include use of the HC logo.
 - Barb shared that the term "in cooperation with" is used by SIGCSE for such arrangements.
 - Jeff and Mara both shared examples of this.

7. Planning for 2025 F2F meeting

- As soon as we have a specific time frame, we will determine a location, which will depend in part on the budget. We agreed it would be interesting to consider locations and times that offer likely partnerships/visits in conjunction with the F2F meeting.
- We considered several ideas for meeting locations:
 - SHOT 2025 will be 9-11 October 2025 in Luxembourg. Troy shared plans for the IEEE Annals of the History of Computing editorial board, as well as the IEEE CS History committee, to meet in conjunction with the SHOT event. For SHOT 2026, the website lists a tentative date of 23-24 October 2026 for an online meeting.
 - Mara invited us to consider her Center at NYU for a face-to-face meeting.
 - We could meet at CHM (San Jose, CA) or CBI (Minneapolis, MN).
 - Meeting in the UK is possible (as discussed during the October meeting), but travel would be relatively expensive.

8. Brief updates on committee work

a. Turing Project (Brock, McGee)

- There had been a discussion about posting full-length videos on the ACM channel—none for three years.
- In an email dated October 23, Tom reported results from his project to update the categorization for the Turing interviews.
 - Tom met with Roy Levin to review every awardee and add Roy's second opinion on the assigned tags. These changes are now live.
 - The new list of categories: <https://amturing.acm.org/bysubject.cfm?cat=14>
 - The new longer names can make it harder to see where categories end, but mousing over the labels reveals hyperlinks and a count, which is helpful.
 - There are now 18 categories, down from 34 before starting this overhaul.

- The updated word cloud reveals Theoretical Computer Science as the biggest category and Programming Languages as the second biggest, which strikes Tom as historically accurate. The three categories Artificial Intelligence, Cryptography & Security, and Analysis & Design of Algorithms are the second tier.
- Overall the process resulted in better consistency and led to most awardees being tagged for more than one area for major contributions documented in the profile. Tom and Roy decided to use the full profile rather than the citation, as some citations were longer and more detailed than others.
- In the same email, Tom reported that he had received a draft profile of Widgerson from Lance Fortnow. It looks good, so that should be posted soon.
- Tom's next tasks will be the videos and getting the project materials listed in the digital library.

b. Fellowship (Yost)

- Jeff agreed to chair the Fellowship sub-committee meeting.
- Vicki will distribute the current version of the draft (already updated from last year's version). Everyone should read and comment as soon as possible.
- Once the call has been finalized, Jeff will begin to distribute it.
- An important task is to ensure we document the places we send the call so we are building a good basis for effective distribution in the future.

c. Finances (Astarte)

- We do not have up-to-date information about the status of the HC's budget. Troy is uncomfortable about how difficult it is to get current information about the budget.
- In upcoming years, it is likely that the HC will have to plan a reduced budget, due in part to ACM's transition to Open Access. In her new role in a replacement position on the SIGCSE board, Barb has participated in discussions about the effect ACM's new open access model will have on authors etc, as well as budget.
- An additional factor affecting ACM budgets is the trend that SIGs have less income from conferences, which affects overall budgets. For example, Jonathan mentioned that SIGCHI may do away with their unified big conference.
- Troy pointed out that the HC has enjoyed a large budget and accomplished a good deal thanks to that. The HC must consider how to continue doing useful work with a reduced budget.
- David Brock and Troy have set up finance documents to help us better track HC expenditures. In the Finances folder in our HC Operations drive, the folder set-up and a spreadsheet for tracking expenditures on the fly. They have also discussed introducing a semi-annual review with ACM HQ
- Troy reminded us that, due to David's plan to leave the HC in May 2025, we must assign another person to this subcommittee very soon.
- Important action: help with completing the budget numbers that are missing.

- Ongoing: send spending information to Troy/David to support the tracking process and better support the six-month check-in with ACM HQ.

d. Secretariat

- Troy shared issues that came up while working with the HC Operations drive.
 - It can be challenging for people less familiar with the organization to find their way around. The orientation sessions Vicki offers do help, but it is important to consider how to best set up and maintain the folder structure.
 - Troy highlighted the problem that some folders are locked, making it difficult for the Secretariat to fully update the structure. This may be solved when Troy assumes admin responsibilities for the HC Operations drive.
 - Troy has created an _Archive folder and moved several older top-level folders there.

e. Heritage Project (Almstrum, Grudin)

- Heritage Insights should be ready quite soon, although a few copyright transfers must still be completed.
- We should consider the lessons for how to improve this transfer process.
- Vicki will ask Amanda whether she will consider co-writing the introduction for this premier issue of *Heritage Insights*.

f. Global (Owens, Hutchins, Maheshwari)

- Sachin reports he is making good progress. The India leaders project is wrapping up. The transcripts are nearly ready for interviewee approval. It is possible Sachin will be able to report completion of this project at the December HC meeting.
- Barb reminded Sachin that we want his ideas for individuals from India who could be good additions to the HC to replace Sachin. Barb will follow up.
- We discussed bringing in the HC member from India via the ACM India structure.
- A potential problem is how to ensure that someone from India (or another part of the world) feels integrated into the committee and properly supported. Sachin shared his sense of being an “outsider”, due in part to being rather removed from ACM’s structure. We discussed ideas for how to better incorporate members into the activities of the HC.

g. Outreach, Marketing (Hutchins, Owens)

- In communications with Kim, Vicki H. offered to have ACM HQ manage the HC website. Kim agreed that would be fine.
 - Automated features such as volunteer recognition (recently announced by ACM HQ) would be easier to maintain.
 - It would be natural for ACM HQ to update the list of current HC members based on appointment letters.
 - A disadvantage is that the process will require us to submit updates to the HQ team, which might delay their appearance.

- Overall, Kim thinks using ACM HQ for making these updates will make the HC website easier to keep up-to-date.

h. DEIA (Mills, Owens)

- Mara reported that she and Barb met just before this HC meeting to discuss ideas for the DEIA subcommittee.
- One suggestion was to add Mara to the fellowship subcommittee so she can better identify ways to include DEIA ideas.
- Another idea would be for the HC to diversify to specify grants for areas such as Women and Global.
- Mara directs the cross-school Center for Disability Studies (CDS) at NYU (<https://disabilitystudies.nyu.edu/>). She offered that this can be an effective distribution route. The center is provostial, making it straightforward to organize an event on disability and the history of computing in the future using CDS funding. The event could be badged as an ACM HC operation, with *Heritage Insights* possible as a venue for publication.
- Mara and Barb noted that diversity in the HC should be a priority when considering membership.

i. Computing curriculum (Tucker, Tracy, Almstrum)

- John will set up a meeting with Kim and Vicki to discuss curriculum issues in the near future.
- Vicki reached out to Amruth Kumar, an ACM representative on the joint committee for Computer Science Curricula 2023, to request ideas for individuals to discuss connections between the curriculum content and history topics. Amruth suggested Rick Blumenthal and Susan Reiser, who were also involved in the SEP knowledge area of CS2023 that covered the history of computing, and offered to help connect them with our curriculum subcommittee.
- Kim and Vicki had their SIGCSE workshop accepted, so will be working on the content. John stressed that it is important to include the ACM HC badge.

j. Other

- No other topics.

9. Additional issues

- No additional issues.

10. Next meetings

- December 20, 2024, 12 noon Eastern Time

11. Conclusion 13:00 pm ET