Questions for ACM Presidential Candidates, Joe Konstan and Yannis Ioannidis Round 2, April 26 2022

Thank you to Yannis and Joe for working together to solicit questions from the computing community and taking the time to answer them in this public way.

Questions have been submitted anonymously through a Google form and an event on OnlineQuestions.org. In OnlineQuestions, it is possible to see the questions others have submitted and vote for them.

We have already posted a first round of 20 questions and 10+ pages of answers from each of the candidates. You can find those at https://tinyurl.com/acmelection2022.

The volume of questions submitted in this second round has been higher and we decided to once again limit the number of official questions to 20 new questions plus 2 followup questions. If your question does not appear as submitted, we apologize. In some cases, a similar question was asked in the first round. This is an experiment and we hope everyone will value the process even if it is a bit messy.

The candidates have committed to these 2 rounds, but we will discuss with them the possibility of a third round before voting ends on May 23.

As in round one, the moderators suggest a limit of 300 words when answering each question. Some questions are similar, if it is helpful to answer some questions as a group, we encourage that and have attempted to group similar questions together to facilitate this style.

Moderators: Jeanna Matthews, Nuria Oliver and Moshe Vardi

Policy

1) Technology no longer stands on its own - it's intimately tied with policy issues around the world. As president, what will you do to increase ACM's involvement in policy topics? Would you consider raising the profile of the Technology Policy Council (e.g., by including policy as a focus area for the ACM75th anniversary celebration)?
2) What ideas do you have concerning collaborations with other organizations, such as IEEE and CRA, for the purpose of advancing computer science agendas in government and society?

ACM governance

3) ACM Bylaws state: "The Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer shall have charge of the principal office of the Association, and shall be responsible for the general administration of the affairs of the Association". This does not seem to cohere with current practice. How do you plan to address this discrepancy?

4) Although ACM conferences demand that more and more PC members recuse themselves for increasingly tenuous reasons (e.g. "the paper was written at an institution where I was a postdoc for one year in 1997"), we do not actually ask PC members to recuse for explicit bias (e.g. "so-and-so was my partner, but we divorced last year.", which, by the way, is not a recusal reason right now). Would you support a rethinking of our recusal policies for conferences and journals -- and for other professional roles -- centered on the principle of fair, unbiased professionalism, in which we would express the principle, and then illustrate it with examples that are genuine issues for concern?

5) Many academic disciplines rely more on journal publications than conference publications, yet much of computer science still mainly uses conferences for publications. What do you see as the pros and cons?

Diversity, inclusion and outreach

6) What will you do, specifically and personally, to increase the number of people of color and women in ACM-centered disciplines? Please address the pipeline from middle-school to high-school to college.

7) Diversity policies are adopted by several ACM venues. How will ACM quantify, track and evaluate their effects, particularly in conjunction with potentially conflicting goals, such as scientific excellence? Will ACM reject excellent scientific articles, if the articles do not conform to diversity policies (e.g., like the ones explicitly stated in ACM SIGMOD's 'inclusion and diversity' policy)?

8) Many members have the feeling that the ACM does not adequately and equally represent the interest of all its members but positions itself rather as a US association with clear focus on US policies. How much of that do you think is perception and how much reality? What do you plan to do to change both the perception and the reality?

9) Candidates for this kind of position in ACM as well as other organizations, promote diversity and inclusion, but their communications are in English language. I am aware that it is a common language among scientists and technicians. Nevertheless that practice is against diversity and inclusion: it promotes leaving behind other languages (against diversity), and it discriminates against non-English speakers (against inclusion). So, what are your thoughts about that topic? [I'm a non-native English speaker, so I might have written this poorly, but that is part of the problem I'm trying to raise awareness of.]

Access to content

10) What will you do to open access to ACM's publications / the Digital Library to researchers, teachers, and practitioners in the global south (the majority world)?

11) When will the ACM Digital Library be open to all, no ACM membership required, no copyright or other encumbrances? Will the ACM Digital Library eventually be available without fee or login to the general public, and if so, on what timeframe?

12) ACM charges the same APC (for publishing in journals and conferences) from researchers in wealthy countries (like Switzerland, USA, and Luxembourg) and developing countries (like Botswana, Argentina, Brazil, and Ecuador); note that the GDP/capita in these countries is in different orders of magnitude. (There is a policy of not charging researchers in some very poor countries.) Would you consider doing more to reduce APC charges in developing countries? If so, how? If not, why not?

Ethics

13) Should ACM expect all conference publications to include the specific discussion of potential ethical/societal impacts of the research methodology and/or proposed research artifact or application and use that as part of the review criteria? Why or why not?

ACM awards

14) Related to Question 20 of the first question round, do you have thoughts on changing ACM membership levels and the way members are honored? While many peers rightfully are named Fellow or Distinguished Member, other applications for individuals for these levels fail in a non-transparent way. No feedback is given to those nominated but not selected, questioning whether their work is appreciated by the community and

whether ACM is the right community for them. Do you see any evidence of selection bias in these committees?

15) The selection of the 2020 Turing award winner was controversial, adding salt to the injuries of those community members who were hurt. What did ACM learn from this and how do you plan to put any lessons learned into actions?

16) Does the ACM have a right to discriminate against award nominees that express an opinion on their own personal social media accounts, private emails, or even in published articles?

Some popular questions from the OnlineQuestions forum (Note: a number of others were asked and answered in the first round.)

17) Do you have any plans to stimulate younger children (ie, age 5-12) in our field as a long term strategy for bringing in more people into our field? For example by sponsoring Bebras Challenge or other similar endeavors?

18) Do you think ACM should actively reach out to members that volunteer for events such as the ICPC or the International Olympiad in Informatics, and ask them to become distinguished members and fellows based on their outreach work?

19) ACM members will not have access to O'Reilly's learning platform anymore from July 1st. I believe this is a huge benefit of being an ACM member and losing it would be catastrophic. Is there anything you could do to change this?   If not, do you have a plan for compensating for the loss of O'Reilly library by partnering with platforms like Udemy, A Cloud Guru, MasterClass, Pluralsight or others?

20) ACM is the leading society for computing professionals world-wide, yet its membership system fails to properly accommodate the many people with one-word names, forcing them to use false names to join. Were you aware this is a problem? Would you be willing to address this?

Followup questions

21) Yannis Ioannidis mentioned regional offices. For Yannis, could you elaborate a bit on this? How many staff people would you propose for each office and what job descriptions/skills would you especially target? Do you have a proposal for specific countries/cities for these offices? Have you discussed a budget for this? For Joe, what do you think of the

proposal of regional offices? Is this something you would support as well? If so, how would you see it working and if not, why not?

22) When discussing the ACM DL, Joe Konstan said "I feel the problem is the lack of solid investment in and prioritization of the user experience." A report by an ACM Task Force that was publicized in early 2021 also questioned the skill set in ACM Headquarters and the lack of clear strategic vision for the DL project. Do you agree with the conclusions of the Task Force? If so, what would you do as ACM President to address these issues? If not, why not?