

ACM Presidential Candidates Q&A, Round 2
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9 May 2022

As in round 1, in my answers below, I indicate my firm intention to initiate discussions on several issues, plan for possible reforms, establish new structures and processes, and take specific actions on issues of concern. These will first be brought to the table for a thorough discussion with the other elected officers, together with ideas that they may have and in light of the commitments they would like to undertake themselves. All ideas will be prioritized according to the needs of the community and acted upon accordingly. Some may be fully accomplished, with concrete outcomes and observable impact, within the two years of our term. Some others will be initiated during that timeframe to prepare the ground for our successors but will require longer time until fruition. We will set short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals for the future and work toward them collectively.

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)?
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As I mentioned in my candidacy statement, computing is on the critical path of most societal activities and cutting-edge computing technologies may have significant consequences on society, such as threats on democracy, increasing inequalities, and loss of privacy. As computing professionals, we are responsible for helping policy makers develop appropriate policies on the use of our technologies, but also, in the other direction, for developing technologies that help / support policy making (e.g., applying advanced AI/ML techniques on data and publications for evidence-based policy making – for which Open Access is again critical).

ACM has recognized the importance of its involvement in influencing policy making around the world, and in providing computing professionals, policymakers, media, and the public with a deeper understanding of information technologies and their powerful social and economic impacts. It has structured its corresponding activities at the highest level, within the ACM Global Technology Policy Council, and the currently two “regional” Technology Policy Committees, in the US and Europe, under it. As different policy issues arise and/or have different level of importance in different regions of the world, I intend to explore the creation of additional TP Committees in other regions, thereby enhancing the footprint of the Global TP Council and elevating the role of policy involvement of ACM.

Although policy issues are already high on the agenda of the ACM organization internally, this is not necessarily externalized to its membership and only few members are correspondingly sensitized. SIGs are well positioned to implement policy-focused activities, e.g., policy-centric meetings producing white papers, and scale up ACM member involvement with relevant national and international bodies. I intend to work with SIGs and the TP Council to increase awareness of relevant opportunities and motivate members to contribute their knowledge and advise accordingly.

Regarding the ACM 75th Anniversary Celebration, the main event will occur in June, before the next president takes office. The program is already fixed and includes 5 panels on truly exciting topics. Although none of them is exclusively on policy per se, all of them are extremely relevant and offer ample opportunity to bring up and discuss such issues, as their titles or various phrases in their descriptions indicate clearly, e.g., “policy decisions”, “human-centered AI”, “addressed ... with regulation”, “societal opportunities and challenges”, “global impact”, and others. In any additional Celebration events or activities around the world during the second half of the year, the policy-related activities of ACM could be highlighted even more explicitly.

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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?

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I have always been a firm believer of "In Unity there is Strength". If elected, I will be making every effort to be coordinating with the leadership of international organizations, e.g., IEEE, or national/regional organizations, e.g., CRA and Informatics Europe, to work collaboratively on their common goals with ACM.

ACM has been operating in this spirit already, e.g., in the joint ACM (Education Board)/IEEE (Computer Society) release of Computing Curricula, the joint ACM (US Technology Policy Committee)/CRA response to the Office of Science and Technology Policy in the White House regarding how to improve Federal Scientific Integrity Policies, or the joint ACM (Europe Council)/Informatics Europe report on "Informatics for All".

I intend to maintain and enhance this spirit: On any global issue that ACM will be choosing to focus on, by default I will be contacting the leadership of the appropriate organizations to explore the possibility of joining forces before any actual work is done by the relevant (permanent or ad hoc) ACM body. Especially with IEEE, if elected, I intend to meet with the current Presidents and Presidents-Elect of both IEEE and IEEE-CS for strategic discussions on possibly systematizing our collaboration.

In the same direction, I would also like to see ACM expanding its network of strategic collaborators with select non-profit think-and-do tanks for pursuing appropriate common goals. As a particular example I have some familiarity with, I would like to see ACM be more actively involved in The Future Society's efforts on "AI and the Rule of Law", especially in the development of future versions of the corresponding MOOC, where among others, IEEE has contributed also.

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ACM governance

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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?

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To the best of my understanding, as Executive Director and CEO, Vicki Hanson is indeed the ultimate responsible for the principal office and for the administration of ACM. Particular tasks or whole areas of responsibility have been assigned to and are performed by other staff members, but directly or indirectly, they all report to the Executive Director and CEO, who is therefore the highest authority and overall responsible. In this sense, it is unclear to me what

deviation from the Bylaws the question is referring to. If elected, I will investigate the issue and, if reality contradicts my current perception, I will work with those involved to resolve it and bring actual practice in full alignment with the Bylaws.

In general, as mentioned in my answer to question #7 of round 1, I intend to establish a task force for revising the ACM Bylaws where necessary. As part of this effort, practices that have deviated from the current version of the Bylaws for a very long time (including the one raised in this question) will be examined carefully as potential candidates for becoming the norm in the new version. In the interim, until a formal decision is made on a potential change of the Bylaws, immediate action will be taken anyway so that the letter of the Bylaws is followed to the T.

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- 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?

Performing our professional duties in a fair and unbiased way is an axiomatic goal that we should try to achieve to the fullest. In this sense, any potential gap that may be detected in the Conflict-of-Interest Policy for ACM Publications should be examined carefully and appropriate action should be taken so that the gap disappears.

Although I am in full support of the spirit of your suggestion in your question, I do not see the need for much rethinking of our recusal policies, at least not based on your examples, as I believe that the Conflict-of-Interest Policy for ACM Publications that we currently have is exactly in this spirit already. The recusal reasons do not seem tenuous, as all professional relationships are bounded to "within the last two years or reasonably expected within the next year", with the only one naturally escaping these bounds being "the lifelong relationship between Ph.D. student and Ph.D. supervisor". Furthermore, the Policy does express principles, which do cover the "recently divorced" example that you mention, as that should fall under "notable personal or professional rivalry/animosity (publicly known or not)" and "personal or family relationships that would reasonably cause others to doubt impartiality".

I do agree, however, that there are no explicit examples under most principles in the Policy. Collecting such explicit bias cases that are issues of concern would be quite informative. I will discuss with the ACM Publications Board about possibly issuing a call for examples to the members, so that a few illustrative non-trivial cases may be listed in the Policy.

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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?

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The very notion of a publication may be changing in the next few years, especially in the context of practicing Open Science. ACM can play a pioneering role in exploring different models and the technologies that may support them. Different SIGs have been experimenting with various (hybrid) schemes in the conference-to-journal spectrum, with a variety of reviewing approaches, timelines, and presentation forms. Through dissemination of their successful (and unsuccessful) experiences to other SIGs for inspiration, and further in-depth exploration by SIG leaders and the Publications Board, new publication models may evolve.

Personally, I believe that computer science should move closer to the traditions of other disciplines, while maintaining some of its unique characteristics. The key idea is to **decouple publication from presentation** of a paper. Below is a point in the space of alternatives that I find attractive. It has advantages of both the journal and conference worlds and draws upon experiences with publishing in data management (ACM TODS, ACM SIGMOD, VLDB, ...).

- Publishing in a conference or journal: “continuous” submissions during the year (as in journals); reviewing by a predetermined committee, committed for a year (as in conferences); rigorous evaluation with a possibility for revisions (as in journals) but with strict deadlines (as in conferences); publication of accepted papers in their full size.
- Presenting at a conference: poster presentations of all accepted papers in one or more plenary poster sessions (as in most other disciplines); oral presentations, upon invitation, of some of the papers accepted to the conference itself (if deemed exciting/controversial/broad/... enough), papers from other conferences or journals, work unrelated to a publication (as in keynotes), student papers in special tracks for practice (as in PhD workshops), etc. Poster presentations give more time for deeper detailed discussions; oral presentations generate more excitement to a broader subset of the community.

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Diversity, inclusion and outreach

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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.

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I believe the pipeline starts at pre-school, so that’s where we should start our efforts to inspire young kids to “play” with computational thinking and eventually get into the science and technology of computing, approaching each age group differently. Whatever the approach, the development of role models is a significant part of a recipe for success. In front of every

underrepresented group of young prospects we'll be trying to inspire, we should be putting computing professionals of a similar profile delivering the appropriate messages.

In close collaboration with the Education Board, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council, and ACM-W, I intend to (a) recruit volunteers of the appropriate profiles who would be willing to visit select schools and deliver their own success stories as well as those of others; (b) develop material that would help these volunteers in their efforts; and (c) develop short and longer videos that would be disseminated on the web, especially on platforms that are popular to the young generation. This should be a global effort, where for each region, it should be locals who should be recruited: geographic, religious, and ethnic affinity with the target group should be part of the profile of role models recruited.

Both philosophically and by experience from my team, I am a firm believer in the merits of diversity and inclusion and the significantly heightened effectiveness that results thereby. My team includes a high percentage of women and I have played a catalytic role in the establishment of the Greek chapter of ACM-W, also being the opening keynote speaker in its first event a few years ago. Diversity, equity, and inclusion is one of my priorities and I will make it a point to be joining the actual role models for people of color or women in some of their visits as a symbol of unity among all.

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- 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)?

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Both questions posed have no straightforward answers and need broader collective thinking to capture all relevant elements before any decisions are made. I intend to initiate such discussions with all relevant bodies within ACM. As in many other cases, different SIGs may explore different approaches to monitoring their policies and then experiences may be shared at the SGB level. Similarly, there should be a comprehensive discussion at the Publications Board about establishing a set of key performance indicators for diversity in journal publications and monitoring them longitudinally to see their effect.

One of the key values that characterize ACM in all aspects of its activities is (striving for) excellence. Scientific / technical excellence is non-negotiable and so is excellence in diversity. The ethical dilemma that arises when the two are in conflict cannot be answered monolithically and certainly not before concerted targeted efforts are made to improve the diversity and inclusion aspects of our organization and our profession in general. In this sense, I really appreciate the fact that the truly comprehensive ACM SIGMOD policy is currently applied as a set of guidelines that lead to suggestions for modifications when a paper does not follow them, and not as a set of rules that result in rejection of a paper. We need to give some time to our

community to mature on diversity and inclusion issues before we move to any stricter application of the policy. I hope that the relevant efforts of our SIGs and the rest of ACM will be intensified and accelerated so that they bear fruit in the next few years. I will work on that specifically, with an aspiration that eventually, diversity and inclusion will come naturally and organically, to the point that we will not even need an explicit DEI Council.

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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?

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It is partly perception and partly reality, with reality decreasing and perception increasing over the years, but things still being not where they should be for ACM to be and be considered a truly global organization. The non-US-centric efforts are not well highlighted across ACM, so impressions from earlier times tend to stick to people's minds in a way that do not reflect the present.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that ACM does not conduct itself in a globally balanced way and its North American weight is dominant. For example, except for ACM Council and Executive Committee (which are being chaired by Gabriele Kotsis, a European) and for the Councils explicitly named and mandated to focus on particular regions of the world, all chairs and co-chairs of every single ACM-wide Council, Board, or Committee is from North America and, in fact, with one exception, from the US. The same US-heavy presence is true at the level of SIG Chairs/Presidents and several other high-level invited groups, e.g., the various panels at the upcoming 75th Anniversary celebration. Even the lack of (the need for) an ACM US Council, next to the Europe, Asia, and India Councils, is indicative of the current level of US centrality of the organization.

Coming from outside the US and having been a member of the ACM Europe Council, I am particularly sensitive to the goal of ACM becoming true to its world-wide role and fulfilling its global mandate. I will ensure that candidates from all regions of the world are considered for all major positions and, without making any discounts on excellence, strive for diversity in the overall mosaic of ACM leaders, exercising any influence or power the president has on the final choices of each position. I will also be working in the same direction for the constituencies of all ACM bodies and high-level invited groups, encouraging in advance and monitoring afterwards. My answer to questions #15 and #16 of round 1 are applicable here as well, where plurality in geographic representation among the members of all groups should be achieved at some level even if the usual criteria for excellence are not uniformly satisfied by all members.

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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.]

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(At least as a non-native English speaker myself, I believe you have expressed your questions perfectly.) There are different ACM contexts in which natural language enters the picture, each one with different prospects of language diversification. In my mind, there are three areas I believe ACM should adopt additional languages for its communication and I intend to investigate about them together with the leadership of the corresponding ACM bodies:

(a) The ACM Digital Library should work towards becoming a cross-language platform, both offering additional major languages at its interaction interface and hosting important content that is written in languages other than English. Eventually, DL users should be able to explore the DL in any of the chosen languages and receive all relevant content, independent of the language it is written. This will be a multi-year long-term effort, but I hope to be able to lay its foundations soon, as part of the work of the new DL Board.

(b) The ACM website should be offered in multiple languages. This is an easier project than the one before, but it will go far in conveying the image of a truly global organization. I imagine all items of the website being offered identically in all languages, thereby spreading the same common messages to everyone, but this is to be decided after careful consideration by the DL Board and specialized communication experts.

(c) Key publications (e.g., CACM) and key documents produced by ACM (e.g., TechBriefs or CS Curricula) should be translated (with the help of native-speaker members) and offered in the languages chosen, so that much broader, often non-technical audiences have access to such valuable content. I expect that the impact that the multi-lingual offerings of these may have around the world will increase dramatically.

The set of languages to adopt should be chosen collectively, with the help of the regional Councils, taking into account the number of ACM members, the number of computing professionals, and the size of the global population that are native speakers of these languages.

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?

Having been for over 10 years the coordinator of OpenAIRE (with its repository Zenodo), the publications-and-data infrastructure that supports the Open Access policies of Europe, opening the content of the ACM Digital Library is a priority for me, as is for many ACM members. With its ACM Open program, ACM is already on its way to opening the DL completely, requiring neither subscription fees by the readers, nor Article Processing Charges (APCs) by the authors. The timeframe for switching from the current model to ACM Open is approximately three years from now. As I mentioned in my answer to question #10 of round 1, if at the time the costs of the ACM publications program cannot yet be covered by the new model, ACM should invest some of its reserves to finance the transition to ACM Open anyway.

In parallel, ACM has always been offering special deals, waiving Open Access fees and/or offering lower-cost subscriptions, to researchers and institutions in underprivileged parts of the world, all of which belong to the global south. As mentioned in my response to question #9 of round 1, I will continue working in the same direction with the relevant volunteer leaders and staff and investigate the possibility of broadening the regions of the world that benefit from such special treatment, until ACM Open comes into effect.

The question of what DL services could possibly be an ACM membership benefit (if any) requires a proper market research to identify demands. It will be part of a much broader discussion I intend to initiate, which among other issues, will put to the table the very concept of membership and possible new interpretations of it.

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?

Given the fundamental role that computing plays in every aspect of life currently, any research we do has some effect on society and/or our environment one way or another. Nevertheless, the direct ethical/societal impact that research work may potentially have varies dramatically depending on the particular area of computing that the work focuses on, and there are cases where such impact may not really exist. It's one thing to be researching, for example, the impact of a new data structure on searching a file and another on researching the impact of virtual reality on museum visits by children.

Computing is a rather diverse discipline, as captured by the thematic areas of our SIGs and hopefully broadened even more as ACM moves more towards computing-related interdisciplinary areas. In this sense, the nature of the topics covered by each SIG conference and ACM journal is fundamental in judging the appropriateness of requiring a discussion on the ethical/societal impact in the papers submitted to it. Introducing such a requirement blindly and universally may be counterproductive for achieving the original, noble intentions, as it may risk the danger of simply introducing a rubber-stamp, vacuous element in several publications.

There are SIGs that are further along and more mature than others in their understanding of the issues involved. I will organize an exchange of relevant experiences between SIGs and journal EiCs and also initiate a broad discussion on the topic at the ACM level, forming a task force that will include external experts as well, such as ethicists, philosophers, and other social scientists.

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?
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You seem to be posing three separate questions above, two explicitly and one implicitly, which I am answering separately:

At present, I do not see the need to change the levels of ACM members. Each level in the 3-tier system is well defined and meaningful. Of course, any weakness in the system that a member brings to the table will be considered seriously and could lead to small or fundamental changes.

The competition for advanced membership levels is very intense each year: there are always many more worthy colleagues according to the corresponding criteria established than there is space for advanced level members. Invariably, this is the (implicit) reason for failed nominations. Nevertheless, I will be discussing the issue of the lack of feedback with the current and recent awards committee leaders and explore any possibilities. I suspect, however, that giving explicit individualized feedback may not be possible or in the best interest of the nominees, as it will have to be comparatively to others.

I am not aware of any bias in the selection process of advanced membership levels. On the other hand, I am not aware of any detailed study of the actual data either. As part of the overall effort that I have mentioned in my answers to several other questions on diversifying ACM membership, I will ask for a quick study of analyzing the profiles of all nominees vs. the profiles of those accepted for advanced membership. Depending on the results, if any bias is detected, appropriate compensating measures will be discussed and instituted so that the selection process removes all existing biases in any dimension.

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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?

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ACM is a professional society whose members join forces to advance computing, serve those whose work is related to computing, and benefit society at large. Any action that jeopardizes such “joining”, “serving”, or “benefiting” is against the values of ACM and, in so doing, its perpetrator potentially indicates only partial sharing of these values. The ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (the Code) is the blueprint of these values: the professional life of everyone associated with ACM, whether a member or not, must be consistent with and a reflection of the Code.

The main lesson learned (or maybe I should say, the main principle reaffirmed) by the particular incident is that technology and ethics are intertwined. As history has taught us, IQ and EQ should be in sync, and scientific progress outside of an ethical framework often does more harm than good. As a professional association of individual members, ACM cannot be separating technological excellence from ethical excellence in any of its activities.

Following the above, since last October ACM has adopted a new “Policy for Honors Conferred by ACM”, whose main difference from the previous version is exactly the introduction of ethical conduct and adherence to the Code as an important criterion for honoring individuals. The new policy is quite comprehensive, includes very particular rules and steps that must be followed, and I believe addresses all relevant concerns appropriately.

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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?

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Coming from Greece, the land that conceived of and first practiced democracy, I consider openness and freedom of expression as a fundamental right that cannot be challenged (while also respecting other traditions or environments around the world, where practicing this right may not be welcome or even possible). I firmly believe that everyone has the right to express their opinion privately or publicly, no matter how unpopular that may be, without experiencing any consequences on any other aspects of their professional or personal life.

On the other hand, I am also a firm believer that one’s freedom stops where the others’ freedom begins. Even more important for the case at hand is that one’s freedom of expression is unlimited regarding opinions on concepts, organizations, governments, rules, actions etc., but it does not extend at all to opinions on individuals, especially when these are derived through generalizations or specializations of the former types of opinions. Nobody should be discriminated against based on their nationality, race, gender, religion, government, etc.; no individual should be judged based on any of their identifying characteristics through inheritance of a judgement on other physical or legal entities with the same identifying characteristics. Individuals should be treated as such, independent of the many groups or categories they may belong to by virtue of birth, religion, or choice they made in life.

It is such unfair or misplaced criticism that constitutes discrimination. It is violating the ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, the document that captures the set of values commonly agreed by our community. Measuring a computing professional, award nominee or not, against the Code is not discrimination, but a test on one’s level of sharing of our common values. In this sense, ACM has every right to take this into account when conferring honors, as it actually does in its new awards policy.

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

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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?

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As I mentioned in my answer to an earlier question, I believe that work on attracting children (whether from underrepresented sections of society/parts of the world or not) to computing should start at preschool. I consider it very important and intend to work closely with the Education Board and interact with the Computer Science Teachers Association (CSTA) to further strengthen the role of ACM on spreading computing education at all levels globally, starting with very young kids.

I want to intensify the efforts of ACM on catalyzing the inclusion of computational and algorithmic thinking (a fundamental skill) as a basic curriculum strand right from the beginning of schooling. Growing up well versed in the relevant skills, many young students will hopefully become inspired to follow a relevant career in computing. In the long term, casting a wide net and with appropriate targeting of such efforts, this should also largely eliminate any form of underrepresentation in our profession (and in ACM membership), based on gender, geography, or age.

The Bebras Challenge appears extremely promising for serving ACM's goals in the above direction, especially since it is already active in tens of countries and has a global perspective, in line with the global footprint that ACM has and wants to further highlight. It will certainly be brought up for possible sponsorship together with other potentially worthy efforts during a strategic discussion that I intend to have with the Education Board, CSTA, and other leaders on a (hopefully) increased portfolio of investments on education.

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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?

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All advanced membership grades recognize ACM members for different levels and kinds of noteworthy impactful accomplishments, advancing the science and technology of computing, or contributing to ACM or the larger community of computing. Contributions to the community take on various forms and may focus on any aspect of the computing profession, and these include volunteering for the type of events mentioned in the question.

Being recognized through an advanced membership grade is the result of a formal process that ACM has instituted, which begins with a member's nomination by another member and continues with a selection process by peers. The decision is based on a comparative evaluation of all nominees and rewards those with the highest achievements while staying within the limits of the % of members who can belong to each advanced grade.

Operating outside the established formal procedures is not possible and would be unfair. In this sense "asking them to become" is not appropriate, for any "them". ACM members "nominating them", however, where "them" refers to colleagues contributing in the ways mentioned in the question is appropriate, as they make a valuable contribution to the community. Such nominations will be evaluated next to all others uniformly.

Finally, on the subject "ACM" of the sentence "ACM should actively reach out ... and ask them ...": In principle, ACM is its members and, under this interpretation, indeed only members may proceed with nominations and, in general, we should all be actively reaching out to identify worthy colleagues for advanced grades. Any other interpretations of "ACM", however, e.g., ACM staff or volunteer leaders operating in their leadership role, is invalid.

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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?

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The loss of access to O'Reilly is indeed an unfortunate development. Given the level of negotiations that have occurred when trying to avoid this and the wonderful negotiating abilities that I know ACM staff has, I do not expect any reversal of O'Reilly's decision in the immediate future.

Appreciating the great value that access to such useful material has to ACM members, ACM has already started exploring alternative platforms. I intend to continue in the same direction and discuss with other volunteers and staff about striking similar deals. In this, members' opinions on which platforms would be most important and valuable will play a critical role in the final decisions, so the first membership poll that will be conducted will include a relevant question.

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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?

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I must admit that I was not aware of the problem until I read this question. Since then, I have talked with ACM staff and have a better understanding of it. ACM has always been demonstrating significant flexibility in accommodating (or at least making every effort to accommodate) exceptions to its rules, to accurately capture distinct characteristics of individual members. A recent example is the tremendous effort put by ACM staff in changing the names of a few tens of individual authors wherever they appear in the DL upon the authors' request. In exactly the same spirit, I will certainly investigate the issue of one-word names further, understand its extent, explore potential solutions with the Information Systems staff of ACM, and proceed according to the findings.

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Followup questions
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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?

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All these are very valid questions, which can only be answered accurately after the specific task force I will convene investigates the concept in detail and arrives at a plan and a recommendation. Here I will only attempt to give a first skeleton of the idea.

Currently, ACM HQ is organized in the following Directorates: Policy, Publications, SIG Services, Finance, Information Services, Digital Library, and Member Services (although the latter operates without formally established as such currently). I can imagine eventually a regional office having staff in a structure that is a full replica of the one above: depending on the overall needs of ACM and the local demand-and-supply balance for certain expertise, a regional office could have staff working on any global, ACM-wide tasks. A case in point may be the Information Services Directorate, as technical people in the US may be harder to attract to ACM than in some other regions in the world.

What I consider as a priority and a most natural starting point, however, is for each regional office to have (besides a Head and some secretarial support) the Directorates whose work is by nature intimately regional. These are the Directorates on (a) Policy, to be dealing with the often significantly different policy issues in the region, (b) SIG Services, to be dealing primarily with conference operations and travel grants and awards in the region, and (c) Member Services, to be dealing with issues of the current members and of marketing to prospective members in the region.

The number of staff in each office will be determined based on the required volume of the regional activities, e.g., for the three directorates above, this may be reflected in the current

and predicted number of members and number of conferences, the governmental complexity, and other metrics. which should be assessed by the task force. As a blind prediction, however, and for obtaining some critical mass, during its first stage of 2-3 years of existence, I believe that a regional office should grow to around half a dozen people, and then expand according to its sustainability prospects based on its impact in the region and the revenue it is generating.

Choosing where to establish a regional office requires solving a multi-dimensional, weighted optimization problem that the dedicated task force will be called to do, after discussions with all relevant stakeholders. The location of the office will also determine the budget required for establishing and staffing it, so, cost will be one of the optimization dimensions. Based on the somewhat qualitative dimensions to be optimized (e.g., proximity to policy makers or density of computing industry and academia), there are specific locations that I consider as natural for some regional offices, e.g., Brussels for Europe or Bangalore for India. Nevertheless, putting them forward before evaluating the quantitative dimensions to be optimized as well (e.g., office operational costs, density of ACM membership, or breadth of necessary talent pool) risks of them being nothing more than random guesses. A thorough exploration of the multi-dimensional space of choices will lead to the overall optimal points.

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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?

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As a template for my answer, I will use the DELOS Digital Library Reference Model (which I co-authored several years ago) and which defines a Digital Library as “a potentially virtual **organisation**, which comprehensively collects, manages and preserves for the long term rich **digital content**, offering its targeted **user communities** specialised **functionality** on that content, of defined **quality** and according to comprehensive codified **policies**.” The definition remains quite valid today and each one of its keywords (in bold) identifies a significant, orthogonal dimension of the nature of a Digital Library.

The work of the Task Force was very thorough and, cast in terms of the above definition, looked into each dimension of the ACM DL in quite detail and identified weaknesses in every single one of them. The resulting report contains several insightful conclusions and some key recommendations for the way forward, which in general I agree with. The ACM DL is indeed the “**crown jewel**” of ACM and is currently at risk due to several internalities and externalities. It requires its own identity as a product, additional investment, exclusive attention by different groups of experts and specialists, and a vision for a next-generation DL that will be shining in all dimensions above. Only then the user experience (which Joe Konstan was right in highlighting) will reach the excellence level expected from a product with the ACM label.

Associated with each one of the dimensions in the above DL definition is distinctive deep technical and/or non-technical knowledge. Bringing it all together is crucial for informing the work on the next-generation ACM DL, but some of the relevant skills and expertise seem to be missing and need to be recruited.

Many of the Task Force recommendations have been adopted and acted upon. The new Digital Library Board, which has been formed based on the Task Force conclusions (and I'm a member of), is already working hard on these recommendations, formulating a solid vision and establishing workplans to address several of the weaknesses identified in the various dimensions. If elected, I will continue working closely and even more intensely with the DL Board. I will have a fresh look at the Task Force report, take stock of the progress made on its recommendations, and coordinate with the DL Board leadership and staff leadership to identify any corrective steps we may need to take to fill up potential gaps in our current plans and priorities across all the DL dimensions, the overall governance of the project, and/or the skillset required.