

SIAM Activity Group on Supercomputing
Business Meeting
February 22, 2006
San Francisco, CA

Bill Gropp, SIAG Chair, chaired the session of the business meeting. The following issues were discussed.

1. Current election. Voting by web for the new SIAG officers is now open on line. SIAG members were encouraged to cast their vote. An e-mail notice had already gone out to all members notifying them of the process. Gropp also encouraged those in the room who were not members to join.
2. Discussion about the current conference on Parallel Processing. Gropp noted that the current number of attendees was 360, and that even though many attendees were struggling to complete SciDAC proposals, attendance at sessions was generally good.
3. Next Conference on Parallel Processing. Gropp proposed that the next conference be held around the same time in two years. He led a discussion about ideas for the location, noting that the new SIAG officers will take the inputs from this meeting and make the decision. San Francisco was proposed again because of its proximity to national labs and the success it has had attracting attendees. Santa Fe and Austin were also offered from the floor. Some suggested that alternating to the East Coast would help those who live in the eastern half of North America and also shorten the trip for European attendees. Being near a major airport was important, especially to European travelers. The SIAG officers will choose the next site.
4. Gropp presented some statistics on the SIAG, prepared by SIAM staff (Susan Whitehouse). He noted that the fraction of students in this SIAG is lower than many others. This led to a discussion of how the SIAG can better attract students to the conference and to the SIAG. One suggestion was that the conference needed better funding for students, and it was suggested that the SIAG apply for a small grant for student travel, as it did for the 2004 conference (Padma Raghavan wrote a proposal to NSF/CISE from her university.) It was also suggested that SIAM survey the students and ask them if they were to join to a second SIAG, what would it be? This followed from the assumption that many students are choosing the SIAG on CS&E, but would also have an interest in Supercomputing.

A discussion of SIAM student chapters followed. There was an inquiry whether a computer science department could start a SIAM student chapter. Crowley noted that chapters are university-based and open to all students, regardless of major or department, who share an interest in applied mathematics or computing. There was a sense from the attendees that SIAM student chapters need to reach out to computer science students.

There was also a suggestion that there be some sort of competition to encourage student participation (Padma Raghavan).

Another suggestion was to have invited talks on hot topics and grand challenges. Such talks would attract students to the field as well as to the meeting.

5. Health of the Field. The discussion on students led to a discussion on supercomputing itself, as a disciplinary area of research. There was a strong feeling that "Supercomputing in this country is quite healthy" and that this is now a vital and growing field. There was further discussion about "who we are," especially in contrast to CS&E. One person noted that this conference draws more from computer science departments. There was a sense that the SIAG should remain focused on its mission. This includes, for example, research that seeks getting good performance on multi-core chips for scientific computing.
6. Proceedings. It was noted that this conference had proceedings until recently. People from computer science feel that proceedings are an important consideration for them when deciding whether to attend a conference. A suggestion was made to simply have a collection of invited papers. Cleve Moler talked

about the SIAM Board perspective: they made a decision that SIAM should “get out of the proceedings business.” Eric de Sturler noted that there was no natural SIAM journal for many of the papers presented at this meeting, and that this argued for a proceedings. A discussion followed on details of proceedings. For example, proceedings of computer science conferences tend to be highly refereed and it not worth doing a proceedings unless the talks themselves are refereed and the conference is highly selective.

7. SIAM News. Crowley talked about SIAG communications, noting that SIAGs were encouraged to provide communication to their members through either newsletters, e-letters, or an active web presence. SIAM will try to encourage selected individuals to write up something for SIAM News, and suggestions were welcomed.

Meeting adjourned.

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