

Southern African Computer Lecturers' Association (SACLA)
28 June – 1 July 2009

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) HELD ON MONDAY, 29
JUNE 2009 AT 16H30 AT MPEKWENI BEACH RESORT, EASTERN CAPE**

Chair of SACLA 2009: Mr John McNeill
Host University: Departments of Computer Science and Information Systems,
Rhodes University

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed everyone and thanked the sponsors for their generous donations, without which SACLA would not be possible

2. PRESENT

Funmi Adebessin, Shaun Bangay, Edwin Blake, Duane Boucher, Betty Breed, Andre Calitz, Colin Chibaya, Charmain Cilliers, Sonja Cloete, Engela Dednam, Martin Dednam, John Dhlamini, Jean Greyling, Mandlenkosi Gwetu, Mike Hart, Marietjie Havenga, Nobert Jere, Pieter Joubert, Claudia Kalil, Melisa Koorsse, Jan Kroeze, John McNeill (Chairman), Elsa Mentz, Jane Nash, Lydia Palmer, Roxanne Piderit, Vreda Pieterse, Brenda Scholtz, Dave Sewry, Lisa Seymour, Derek Smith, Riana Steyn, Jean-Paul van Belle.

3. OTHER MATTERS FOR THE AGENDA

3.1 Common Portal for Courseware Resources

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous AGM were confirmed (proposed by Marietjie Havenga and seconded by Lydia Palmer).

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

6. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair highlighted the following points which were then discussed:

6.1 Attendance

- SACLA was attended by 50 delegates from 14 institutions.
- The limited number of delegates and underlying reasons (lack of interest or timing of the Conference) were considered. Delegates suggested that whilst interest in SACLA had not dwindled, the timing of the Conference coincided with mid-year vacations. It was also suggested that the publication of the proceedings in a special

issue of an accredited journal may influence positively future attendance at SACLA.

- It was suggested that future SACLA conferences should include presentations by fourth-year/honours students – not only did they have a valuable contribution, but they could also bolster numbers. Given that SACLA is a conference for lecturers about teaching, it was AGREED neither to solicit submissions from honours students nor to permit their attendance.

6.2 Venue

- The venue for future SACLA conferences was considered. It was AGREED that venues that provided separate bedrooms with private bathroom facilities, as was the case with the Mpekwani Beach Resort, should be selected. Additionally, it was AGREED not to make use of university-type residence accommodation and to try as best as possible to locate the conference in a venue that precluded local delegates from going home of an evening and in a venue that provided delegates with alternate attractions in close proximity.

6.3 SACLA as a Valuable Teaching Conference

- It was AGREED that SACLA continues to be the foremost ICT teaching conference on the Southern African landscape.
- SACLA is regarded as “good value for money” by many lecturing staff. It was reported that some departments funded attendance at SACLA out of departmental funds regardless of presentation of a paper.
- Whilst strict refereeing and publication of submissions in a leading journal was a desirable practice, it should be remembered that the spirit of SACLA is collegial and founded on dissemination of good practice without the overhead of formality. Sadly, this did stand in stark contrast to the need for academics to publish and to raise funds for attendance based on publication of articles in journals., hence the need to referee submissions and to pursue options for publication.

6.4 SACLA Fund

- The fund that was established in 2002 to help delegates in need of funds from Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries to attend, had not been publicized for SACLA-2009. (See item 8: Interim Financial Report)

6.5 Funding to Attend SACLA

- Delegates indicated that it was important that papers submitted for presentation be refereed and published in an ISBN-coded set of proceedings failing which they did not receive financial support to attend. Delegates further noted that significant reductions had been experienced in subsidy received by universities for

conference papers presented. Anecdotal evidence suggested that some conferences were regarded as better than others, but no one other than the National Department of Education knew into which category conferences fell. This placed enormous pressure on universities and their capacity to fund conference attendance.

6.6 Publication of Proceedings in a Journal

- The need to publish papers presented at SACLA in a journal was considered. It was AGREED that computer journals, like SACJ, or education journals, like the Journal of Higher Education, should be approached. Delegates did, however, note the pressure currently being experienced by SACJ by the high volume of papers submitted for possible publication. None the less, the editor of SACJ, Lucas Venter would be approached.
- The organisers of SACLA-2009 were thanked for their efforts to mount SACLA-2009 in Cooperation with the ACM Special Interest Group on Computer Science Education (SIGCSE). As a result of this association, the conference proceedings would be placed on the ACM Digital Portal.

7. **SACLA-2008 FINANCIAL REPORT**

The SACLA-2008 Financial report was NOTED. The Chair AGREED to pursue the matter of the outstanding balance of R583-54 with the Chair of SACLA-2008.

8. **SACLA-2009 INTERIM FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Chair tabled the SACLA-2009 Interim Financial Report. It was noted that the Report was in draft stage and would be finalised after the Conference.

The matter of the envisaged surplus was considered. It was AGREED that:

- A sum of R20,000-00 would be forwarded to the organisers of SACLA-2010 to serve as seed funding.
- A similar sum, but increased by 10% per annum, should be forwarded to future organisers.
- Any residue from SACLA-2009, and future conferences, would be added to the SACLA Fund.
- The SACLA Fund should continue to provide funding assistance for members in need from SADC countries who wish to attend SACLA conferences.
- The SACLA Fund should be used to offset conference registration costs. Requests to fund travel costs to attend SACLA should not be entertained.
- The SACLA Fund should also consider funding any costs related to publication of conference papers in a journal, for example, page charges.

9. **SACLA-2010**

Pieter Joubert, University of Pretoria, confirmed that the Department of Informatics, University of Pretoria would host SACLA-2010. Due to the FIFA World Cup soccer being held in June/July, he noted that the Department had proposed that SACLA-2010 be held from the 4th to the 6th June, followed by ECIS from the 7th to the 9th June. Both the SACLA and ECIS conferences are being hosted by the University of Pretoria.

It was AGREED that future dates for SACLA would be discussed at the AGM next year. Several delegates indicated that they would like to take a break at this time of the year, and not attend conferences.

The possibility of SACLA being organized by the same university two years in a row was considered. Whilst it was acknowledged that experience gained in organising SACLA in one year becomes experience lost the next, it was unanimously AGREED that organisers should change each year.

(NOTE: Engela Dednam approached Lydia Palmer, after SACLA, and indicated that the University of the Free State (UFS), would be interested in hosting SACLA-2011.)

10. **COMMON PORTAL FOR COURSEWARE RESOURCES**

A common portal for academic courseware and information was considered. Given the need for collaboration in a relatively small ICT community, a portal was regarded as important.

The following points were noted:

- Concerns were expressed in regard to intellectual property rights and current investigations in this area at certain universities.
- The need to choose to participate or not in such a portal was important.
- The need for the portal to be seen independent of any university was crucial.
- The possibility of using the SACLA portal as an entry point was proposed.
- The portal governed by a Creative Commons Licence agreement was mooted.

It was AGREED that Derek Smith would investigate the concept and report to the SACLA community.

11. **CLOSURE**

The Chair thanked delegates for their attendance and wished them a rewarding conference.

The meeting ended at 18h00.