

October 2022 - Open Session Notes

President Neha began the Open Session with an introduction to Cale Passmore, Adjunct Chair for Equity, to discuss safety and conferences. Cale began by providing the background on the topic and noted that, based on concerns brought up at the town hall, a joint effort with SIGCHI CARES is underway to discuss and implement a series of initiatives for safety at all conferences (not just CHI) - 1.) Formation of the equity committee; 2.) Creating guidelines for chairs to standardize equity among conference offerings; 3.) An allyship and bystander training program that would be up and running before CHI23 to build up safety at conferences.

The formation of the Equity Committee is almost finalized and will be published once approved by the Executive Committee. This committee will inform and implement the work set forth by the initiatives discussed.

Creating guidelines for General Chairs (GCs) to standardize equity among conferences helps inform GCs and/or attendees who may not be aware of what they are consenting to. These guidelines will also help determine where equity intersects with conference organizers and chairs. One goal of this initiative is to streamline the reporting process to make reporting policies that are currently in place more effective to build a culture around accountability, and to level the playing field.

The Allyship and Bystander training program will consist of a series of educational materials presented to help individuals learn what the different reporting bodies and tracks are. The goal is to implement this training before and at CHI23. The Equity Committee will be charged with figuring out the format and modality of the training and present the concept to the CHI chairs as a potential SIG at CHI23 since the deadline for workshops has passed and SIGs are included in the registration fees where workshops are paid.

Susanne Boll, the VP of Conferences, notes that before these initiatives are implemented, there needs to be discussion around how to softly introduce them to existing conferences, explaining the "why" and giving time for implementation, using the example of the Harassment Policy and asking several questions - What is a good timeline to keeping GC's on track with this? What is early enough to keep them informed but not too early that they might ignore it? There is heavy reliance on knowledge transfer but what resource can be provided when the knowledge transfer doesn't happen? Neha mentions that a conference handbook is being generated and will include links to pages and websites for reference, including references on equity and safety at conferences.

Cale wrapped up the discussion by noting that information on an Open Session on Equity will be forthcoming and that while there are several different entry points to equity, scalability is a central concern but setting a standard or bar is a good place to start.

Neha gave an update regarding the SIG Governing Board Meeting where they discussed various agenda items around conference overhead, and DEI issues across SIGs. There is talk of working with other SIGs to do a cross-SIG event to discuss these issues in the Spring of 2023.

Andrew Kun, Executive Vice President, gave an update on the Awards cycle noting that it is in full swing and that there is an open call for sub-committees that has been publicized with the community and on social media. The open call, the first of many steps to get potential candidates, for awards nominations is set to close on December 5, 2022.

Susan Dray, Adjunct Chair for Partnerships, provided an update that the Interactions Special Issue is finalized and should be coming out in November/December.

Neha closed the Open Session noting that the once the Comms Committee is full formed, the group should brainstorm more ideas for outreach.