

# **SIGUCCS Annual Report**

July 1, 2010 - June 30, 2011

Submitted by Bob Haring-Smith, Past Chair

During the past year, SIGUCCS (Special Interest Group for University and College Computing Services) continued its service to the community of professionals who provide computer support at institutions of higher education while also preparing for two significant transitions. This was the final year, for at least a while, in which we held our Fall Conference and spring Management Symposium as separate events. In the fall of 2011, they will be held jointly as part of a SIGUCCS annual conference. Also this year, we prepared for a leadership transition and conducted elections for a new Executive Committee for the SIG.

The Executive Committee members for 2010-2011 (Chair, Bob Haring-Smith; Vice Chair/Fall Conference Liaison, Kelly Wainwright; Secretary/Management Symposium Liaison, Tim Foley; Treasurer, Alex Nagorski; Information Director, Patti Mitch; and Past Chair Leila Lyons) completed the final year of their three-year term of office. Continuing to serve as appointed members of the board were Karen McRitchie (Tutorial Chair), Greg Hanek (coordinator of the Communication Awards program), and Christine Vucinich (chair of the Membership and Marketing Committee). Other volunteers too numerous to name here individually contribute their energy and ideas to the organization through service on conference and program committees, on the Awards Committee, on the Membership and Marketing Committee, and as judges for the Communication Awards. Many of these individuals are listed in appropriate pages on the SIGUCCS web site (<http://www.siguccs.org>).

The election was held in the spring, but we started to publicize it last fall in order to solicit volunteers to run for office and to encourage voting participation by the membership. A strong slate of two candidates for Chair and nine candidates for the other four newly elected positions on the Committee was assembled by the Nominating Committee. No one petitioned for inclusion on the ballot. Kelly Wainwright was elected Chair and Melissa Bauer, Mat Felthousen, Karen McRitchie, and Parrish Nambi won the other positions.

## ***Awards and Grants***

The SIGUCCS Awards Programs have been in place for more than a decade. The Penny Crane Award for Distinguished Service recognizes significant multiple contributions to SIGUCCS and the profession from individuals over an extended period of time. The Hall of Fame awards recognize selected individuals who have contributed their time and energies to benefit SIGUCCS. For descriptions of the awards programs, please go to: <http://www.siguccs.org/awards/>.

**Penny Crane Award for Distinguished Service** – Lida Larsen was the recipient of the 2010 Penny Crane Award. For more information please go to:

[http://www.siguccs.org/awards/penny\\_crane/lida\\_larsen.html](http://www.siguccs.org/awards/penny_crane/lida_larsen.html).

**Hall of Fame** – Two people were inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2010, Ann Amsler and Jennifer Whiting. See <http://www.siguccs.org/awards/halloffame/halloffame2010.html> for more information.

**Conference attendance grants** – The SIGUCCS Grant Program provides partial support for students and employees in institutions of higher education to participate in the SIGUCCS Management Symposium or the SIGUCCS Fall Conference. This support is funded by SIGUCCS and consists of a complimentary conference registration, hotel room accommodations for the nights of the conference, and complimentary registration for one workshop at the conference.

In selecting grant recipients, we favor applicants from institutions that have not been represented at recent SIGUCCS conferences. This approach is intended to make the conferences more widely known and build future attendance.

The program completed its third year in 2010-2011 and underwent an evaluation to determine the extent to which it was achieving its goals. The outcome was that, while we feel the program does provide a service to the profession, it is not achieving the goal of promoting attendance at subsequent SIGUCCS conferences by institutional colleagues of grant recipients. In light of recent budget deficits run by SIGUCCS, the decision was made to scale back the program by restricting awards to full-time employees and offering only three grants beginning with SIGUCCS 2011.

From 10 applicants for Fall Conference grants in 2010, the following five people received grants:

Stephen McTigue, Roanoke College  
Patrick Pow, University of Washington - Tacoma  
Ayola Singh-Kreitz, University of Florida  
Gary Wong, Community College at Lingnan University  
Jay Yates, IUPUI (student)

From 6 applicants for SIGUCCS Management Symposium grants in the spring of 2011, the following five people received grants:

Melissa Bauer, Baldwin-Wallace College  
David Kleckner, UNC- Chapel Hill  
Steve McKinney, Moravian College  
Gary Sullivan, University of Oregon  
Elizabeth Wagnon, Texas A&M University

On January 1, 2011, Teresa Lockard became Chair of the SIGUCCS Awards Selection Committee and Dennis Mar became Past Chair, following the rotation of the committee's membership described at <http://www.siguccs.org/awards/committee.htm>. Two new members, Nancy Bauer and Rob Paterson, replaced John Bucher and Jayne Ashworth, who retired from the committee at the end of 2010.

**2010 Communications Awards** - As we have done for many years, we held our Communications Awards competition in conjunction with the Fall Conference. A description of these awards and the 2010 winners can be found at: [http://www.siguccs.org/Conference/Fall2010/award\\_winners.shtml](http://www.siguccs.org/Conference/Fall2010/award_winners.shtml). Judging

for this competition is led by Greg Hanek who has overseen the Communications Awards competition for several years. The Communications Awards Committee is formed each year from the previous year's top award winners in each category.

As can be seen from the listing, there need not be an award made in a category, even if there are submissions. Each year the categories in the competition are reviewed to ensure that they appropriately represent the range of communications currently used in higher education.

## ***Conferences***

The thirty-eighth **Fall Conference** was held October 24-27, 2010 in Norfolk, Virginia, with the theme of "Navigation & Discovery." The keynote speakers were Ethan Zuckerman of Harvard's Berkman Center for Internet and Society and Charlie Kiriakou of the US Navy. Technical sessions covered a wide range of topics, including training, new technologies for teaching, and developing and promoting new services. Seven pre-conference workshops were offered on subjects ranging from project management to Second Life. For the complete program, see <http://www.siguccs.org/Conference/Fall2010/files/dailyschedule.pdf>.

The **SIGUCCS Management Symposium** was held from April 10-13, 2011 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The theme was "IT: Leading the Revolution." The program featured discussions of strategic planning, career development, IT management, and virtualizing services. Plenary addresses were given by Dr. Peter Jonas of Cardinal Stritch University, Sheri Stahler of Temple University, and Dr. Doug Gale of the Internet Legacy Institute. Dr. Stephen G. Payne led a pre-conference seminar on leadership. The complete program is available at <http://www.siguccs.org/Conference/Spring2011/program.html>.

Planning is currently underway for the next two annual conferences, which will combine a Management Conference and a Service and Support Conference. The two parts will occur in sequence but share a plenary session. Attendees can register for either or both parts of the conference. The SIGUCCS 2011 conference committee has selected a theme that brilliantly evokes both the San Diego setting of the conference and the spirit that led to consolidating the events: One Team, One Mission. We expect to learn a lot from presenting this first combined conference, so that it continues to be an effective means for members of our profession to connect with and learn from each other.

As a cost saving measure and in recognition of the search capability and other features in ACM's Digital Library, the SIGUCCS Board decided to discontinue distribution of conference proceedings to all members beginning with SIGUCCS 2011. Those attending the conference will still receive the proceedings on CD as they have for many years, so that they will have full papers available when deciding which sessions to attend or authors to whom they wish to speak at the conference.

## ***Webinars***

SIGUCCS instituted a series of professional development webinars early in 2010 and has continued the series over the past year with five new webinars, under the leadership of Tutorial Chair Karen McRitchie. Management of staff, especially student staff, is of great interest to the SIGUCCS community and has been a focus of the webinars. In addition, one was offered on time management. An average of 62

people per webinar participated over the course of the year. Recordings of past webinars are available on the SIGUCCS web site at <http://www.siguccs.org/resources/webinar.html>.

We subscribe to GoToMeeting's webinar service, which both saves us a substantial amount of money over our previous means of conducting phone conferences for board meetings and provides a versatile medium for SIGUCCS services and operations. We use it extensively, not only for webinars and board meetings, but also for committee meetings, pre-conference orientation sessions for first-time attendees at the SIGUCCS Fall Conference, and other on-line volunteer gatherings.

## ***Special Projects***

Two special projects occupied groups of SIGUCCS volunteers during the past year.

**Conference Management System:** The need for a more effective means of managing abstracts and papers for our conferences was identified early in the tenure of the Executive Committee that just left office. The Fall Conference had used a variety of home-grown systems over the years, while the Management Symposium had developed its own system that worked well for the limited needs of that event, but would have been unsuitable for the Fall Conference. Our goal was to find or develop a system that would serve both conferences and could be used consistently from year to year.

We compiled a list of candidate systems based on what other SIGs use and on suggestions from other sources. Upon examination, we found that none of the systems aligned well with our usual paper review process for the Fall Conference. Some of the front-line support personnel who make proposals for that conference are writing their first professional papers, so the reviewer is as much an editor helping the author hone the paper. This is in keeping with SIGUCCS' mission of professional development, but the systems that we saw do not readily support this type of interaction between author and reviewer.

Nonetheless, we settled on Microsoft Research's Conference Management Toolkit (<http://cmt.research.microsoft.com/cmt/>) for use in handling paper flow for SIGUCCS 2011. We hope to grow more skilled in our use of the system from year to year, and perhaps to engender new features that will make the system better suited to our needs.

**SIGUCCS 50:** SIGUCCS was founded in 1963 and held its first conference in 1973, so 2013 is both the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of SIGUCCS and the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that first conference. A group led by former SIGUCCS Chairs Leila Lyons and Jack Esbin has been meeting periodically to brainstorm about what form the recognition of these milestones might take. In anticipation of trying to book some particularly distinguished keynote speakers, we will accelerate our normal process for selecting a conference site in order to have SIGUCCS 2013 conference dates set earlier than usual.

It is important to the "SIGUCCS 50" group that the anniversary celebration not be simply an exercise in nostalgia for older members of the SIGUCCS community, but have clear value for all who rely on SIGUCCS services. Certainly, many of the biggest challenges we face are perennial problems of management, communication, and staff development. Recognizing how the problems persist even as

the technology changes may be an important outcome of the SIGUCCS 50 events. Planning for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary recognition is ongoing.

## ***Issues***

The economic downturn and its effect on college and university finances continue to be the most important issues that we face. Participation in our conferences, from submission of papers through attendance at the conference, depends on college and university support for staff travel and professional development—support which has been greatly curtailed over the past few years.

Attendance at the Fall Conference in Norfolk rebounded noticeably from the low we reached in St. Louis but remains well below average registration levels for the past ten years (324 for Norfolk versus 213 in St. Louis and an average of 414 from 2001 through 2008). Registration for the Management Symposium in Philadelphia was, disappointingly, lower than the preceding year in Victoria (78 versus 92) despite the large number of institutions of higher education in easy reach of Philadelphia.

Since, like most SIGs, SIGUCCS depends on its conferences for most of its income, attendance problems at the conferences are quickly translated into financial problems for the SIG. The good news is that we entered the economic downturn with a substantial reserve for a SIG our size and that our financial losses from last year's conferences are significantly lower than for the preceding year. The bad news is that the losses are continuing.

Reduced conference registration also depresses membership in the SIG because the registration discount for members encourages many to join SIGUCCS or to renew their memberships. While there are other reasons to join the SIG, the financial savings loom large. Offering webinar registration first to SIGUCCS members, as we do, creates a small incentive to be a member. In coming years, the decision to discontinue distribution of proceedings CDs to all members may induce some to retain their memberships in order to have continued access to the SIGUCCS content in the Digital Library.

We have increased conference registration fees judiciously in order to garner more revenue without discouraging attendance. We are also paying especially close attention to major conference expenses like audio-visual support, Internet access, and food and beverage costs—trying to maintain the appeal of our events while controlling those costs. But our best opportunity for changing the bottom line lies on the revenue side of the ledger. We need to market SIGUCCS and its conferences more effectively so that those working in IT support in higher education know of us and feel that the conferences are worth the time and money that it takes to attend them. That will likely be the new Executive Committee's biggest challenge.