

Minutes Business Meeting SI(AG)²
Bern, Switzerland
Friday, July 12th, 2019 from 5:15 pm - 7:00 pm

1. Introduction by Jon

Jon welcomes the audience, introduces the current officers and welcomes the SIAM Director of Programs and Services Richard O. Moore.

Current officers:

Chair: Jon Hauenstein

Vice Chair: Teresa Krick

Program Director: Caroline Uhler

Secretary: Elisenda Feliu

Jon announces that the charter has been renewed, and explains the process for the election of new officers, including the roles of each of the officers: chair, vice-chair, program director, secretary.

SI(AG)² has two new SIAM fellows: Pablo Parillo and Jesús de Loera. The SIAG/AG Early Career Prize has been awarded to Elina Robeva, who was selected by the prize committee among 8 nominations.

2. SIAM conference on Applied Algebraic Geometry 2019 and SIAM annual meeting

Jon reviews the conference history in terms of number of participants, and Jan Draisma (the local organizer of the conference) announced that there are about 750 participants in the present conference, making it the largest SI(AG)² conference so far.

Jon thanks the organization of the conference: the chairs (Sandra di Rocco and Caroline Uhler), the program committee, and the local organizers, especially Jan Draisma.

There is no annual meeting in 2019, which is replaced by the conference ICIAM 2019 in Valencia, of which the AG's conference is a satellite meeting. The annual meeting in 2020 will be held in Toronto, jointly with CAIMS, July 6 – 10. The call for participation will be announced in September 2019. The activity group is required to host a track at the SIAM annual meeting every 7 years. Since this was done in 2018, there is no obligation to host one in 2020, though proposals are welcome.

3. Report on SIAM and SI(AG)² activities and membership

Jon announces that there is a mailing list, a wiki, the SIAM news and SIAM blogs. Jon encourages the audience to submit their stories written for a general audience to SIAM news or SIAM blogs.

Jon shows all journals SIAM runs, and remarks that they are also of interest for the people in our community, which are top journals. Jon explains the Gene Golub SIAM Summer School. Jon explains the benefits of joining SIAM and emphasizes the possibility to nominate 2 students for free membership.

The next topic is the membership report. In numbers, we are a small activity group, 435 members, and the number of members is increasing.

Jon shows some graphs on the distribution of members regarding different criteria. Female to male ratio is higher than other activity groups and general SIAM members. For employer type, most of our members are in academia and mathematics departments.

4. SIAGA journal

Bernd Sturmfels, editor-in-chief of the SIAM Journal on Applied Algebra and Geometry, takes the word. Bernd thanks the corresponding and associate editors. Bernd tells the audience that SIAGA is our journal, and encourages people to submit their best papers and to convince other authors to submit their best papers to SIAGA. Bernd is open to discuss potential submissions.

5. MEGA and SIAM conference on Applied Algebraic Geometry

Jon announces that the conference MEGA, currently biannual and overlapping in year with the AG conference, will switch to even years from 2022. SIAM AG and MEGA alternate will now be held on alternate years. Carlos d'Andrea is thanked and takes the word. Carlos recognizes it won't be easy to make the transition, and emphasizes that they count on SIAM AG to continue to take place in odd years. The next MEGA conference will take place in Tromsø, Norway, in 2021, and immediately the year after there will a MEGA conference in Krakow, Poland, which will be a satellite of ICM.

Carlos stresses that it will suppose a big effort to have two MEGAs in consecutive years, and asks the audience to support both upcoming conferences with their participation.

6. SIAM conference on Applied Algebraic Geometry 2021 and 2023

SIAM AG 21 must be in North America as per SIAM rules, as at least every second year the conference must be held in North America.

Lihong Zhi presents their bid for hosting SIAM AG in Beijing in July 2023, at the Academy of Mathematics and System Sciences of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. The institute has experience in hosting big conferences, including ICIAM 2015. All buildings have air-conditioning, there are two conference halls rooming 400 persons each, and more than 30 lecture rooms spread in two buildings.

They will apply for financial support to keep registration fees comparable to other meetings, cover expenses of invited speakers, and offer support for young researchers and students. The local organizers would be the lab of mathematics of mechanization with 12 people. She explains the highlights of Beijing, including good communication by transport. Accommodation near the campus is reasonable.

Next, the discussion of the location of the next SIAM AG meeting (2021) starts. No group has made an official bid. According to the SIAM process, Richard O. Moore has to approve the bids. He announces that the conference steering committee is composed by the officers, but in this case Jon is excluded due to a conflict of interest.

There are two potential bids: Illinois Institute of Technology (Chicago) and Texas A&M University. The two bids present their proposals and there is a discussion moderated by Caroline Uhler.

Frank Sottile presents the proposal for Texas A&M University, College Station:

The proposed dates are May 17-21, May 24-28, or August 9-13, to avoid teaching periods. The duration of the conference is set to five days.

The department counts with a strong group in AG: Anne Shiu, JM Landsberg, Laura Matusevich, and Eric Rowell. Furthermore, they have significant local support, including the head of department, and there is dedicated staff for conference organization. They have ample and excellent facilities, all air-conditioned. A highlight includes a big lecture hall in the physics department (450 seats), just across the math building. Frank claims they have enough room to host the conference.

Frank explains the connections by plane (regional airport, and main airport in Houston, 150km). They will run shuttles between the airport and the campus. There are many restaurants around and 7 big hotels within 1.5km of the venue (100-150 dollars per night). They hope a negotiation can be in place.

José Israel Rodríguez presents the proposal for the Illinois Institute of Technology:

The proposed dates are June 22-26 or July 27-31.

The local organizing committee will have Sonja Petrovic as chair, and include Jon Hauenstein and Shahrzad Jamshidi Zelenberg. The institute is a private, technology-focused research university. It has hosted large conferences of about 400 participants four times. A big auditorium seats 836 people, and there many auditoriums and classrooms, as well as live recording facilities.

Some advertisement of the city of Chicago in terms of leisure follows: Hotels with flat rates for IIT visitors can be negotiated, and there is on-campus housing for 125 dollars per night. Access to IIT is easy.

After the presentation of the two proposals, the floor is open to questions, which mainly address practical issues including accommodation, organizational capabilities, and temperature concerns. There is some discussion about whether one should aim at having large poster sessions, but there is the concern of whether that would mean not everyone would get enough attention. A solution could be to organize the session by topics.

We proceed to have a non-binding vote. The audience rises hands, and it is visually estimated that the votes distribute equally.

7. Open discussion

Jon takes the word again to discuss two suggestions on the format of the conference. The first suggestion is whether to include parallel semi-plenary talks in different areas. The idea is discussed, mainly in conjunction with having introductory talks in mini-symposia with many sessions. This format could work very well for students and young researchers, and could encourage more interactions among members. The conference should avoid overlaps and spread these talks over the week. It is noted that this may present organizational difficulty.

The second suggestion concerns having virtual seminar talks (e.g. Math Frontiers, Webinar Series, TCS+) for the activity group. That would be great for people that cannot join the conference. Rekha Thomas

volunteered to look into this possibility and organize this, and it is left to her whether she wants to pursue the idea.

Jon opens the floor for comments from the audience. Agnes Szanto expresses her concern about the underrepresentation of our activity group in SIAM, including committees, Gene Golub... Agnes encourages the audience to nominate group members in SIAM roles.

It is suggested to create an ad-hoc committee to nominate people to run for SIAM officers.

Jon closes the meeting by thanking Jan Draisma one more time for the organization of this amazing conference.