

Chair's Message

As I sat down to write this message, I received my March issue of SIGMOD Record, which contained the long-delayed Volume 5 of SIGMOD Anthology. It has indeed taken a long time to release this volume. Some of the reasons were explained in an email I sent to the membership earlier this year. Our efforts to ensure completeness have also added to the delay. I am as relieved as many of you that we have finalized this project. I am also happy to report that DiSC Volumes 3 and 4 covering publications from years 2000 and 2001 are in production as I write this and should be included with this issue. With a little luck, DiSC Volume 5 (for year 2002) will be included with the next issue of SIGMOD Record. As I mentioned in my email to membership, we hope to produce these more regularly and earlier in the year.

I had reported earlier that our membership fees do not seem to cover our expenses (see my message in the June 2002 issue). This year we have undertaken a study to determine our actual costs. The news is not good: our cost per member is about \$24 while our membership fee is \$20. I should note that \$24 is the direct cost of membership including only services that we provide directly to members (e.g., SIGMOD Record, DiSC); we cost other SIGMOD initiatives such as the awards, undergraduate scholarships, the regular operating expenses or even the cost of the Anthology separately. Our membership fee has not changed in the last 10-12 years. We have decided to leave it at the same level this year, but we will need to make an adjustment next year. As you are well aware, we have worked hard to cut our costs, including eliminating the shipment of hard copy proceedings to members. I have heard from a number of you that you would like to receive proceedings as a membership benefit (there seems to be some reluctance to purchasing it through ACM Store). We have devised two new membership grades to accommodate these requests. One grade (which we internally call "gold", but ACM insists on calling A14/B14) will ship either the SIGMOD or the PODS proceedings, the second (which we call "platinum" but ACM officially calls C14) will ship both. We hope these will provide sufficient options and flexibility so that you can structure your membership benefits as you wish.

I had mentioned, in earlier columns, our efforts to institutionalize many of the SIGMOD operations. SIGMOD is a large organization with many and varied activities. To streamline operations and to ensure that they proceed without undue load on a few officers (with the consequent delays), it is important to identify major activities, create the appropriate positions, and find volunteers who are willing to take responsibility for them. One such position we just created is that of Conference Coordinator, whose mandate is to develop organizational guidelines for SIGMOD Conferences and to work with SIGMOD Conference General chairs to ensure continuity and some amount of uniformity from year-to-year. Dr. Jianwen Su of UCSB Santa Barbara has accepted to take on this responsibility and he is now preparing a Conference Organization Guide that will be helpful to the General Chairs. As you know, Jianwen was the General Chair of the very successful 2001 SIGMOD Conference. I look forward to working with him to bring continuity and stability to the conference organization activities.

M. Tamer Özsu
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