SIGPLAN FY '05 Annual Report

July 2004—June 2005
Submitted by Jack W. Davidson, SIGPLAN Chair

This year ACM SIGPLAN has continued its active sponsorship of many conferences and workshops as well as its two newsletters.

SIGPLAN′s present financial situation is strong, and our fund balance grew in FY 2005 after three consecutive years of losses. Our fund balance comfortably exceeds the required minimum. Our conferences overall incurred financial gains, including OOPSLA, our largest conference, which had incurred a significant financial loss for each of the three preceding years.

We were more selective with funding worthwhile projects such as student travel, funding these at about one half the level of recent years.

A good resource for monitoring our activities is our web page, found at `http://www.acm.org/sigplan/`.

1. Conferences

We sponsored seven annual conferences last year, GPCE (with SIGSOFT), ICFP, LCTES (with SIGBED), OOPSLA, PLDI, POPL (with SIGACT), and PPDP. We also sponsored PPoPP and ISMM, which are held approximately biannually. Of these conferences, PLDI, POPL and PPoPP appear in the Citeseer top 15 of more than 1200 Computer Science publication venues, based on their citation rates.

We sponsored numerous workshops, including AADEBUG, BUGS, CUFP, Erlang, FOOL, Haskell, IVME, MSP, PLAN-X, Scheme, TLDI, and PEPM.

Financial results for our conferences were positive. Conference attendance has been holding steady, with a dramatic increase in student participation. Conferences continue to receive far more submissions than we can accept, and our major conferences continue to be extremely selective.

We have separate steering committees for all of our conferences.

2. Publications

SIGPLAN publishes two newsletters on a regular basis.

SIGPLAN Notices is sent to all SIGPLAN members monthly. Six of these issues contained conference or workshop proceedings. For FY 2006, we plan to limit the number of issues containing conference proceedings to five issues.

The April 2004 issue was a special issue that contained "20 Years of the ACM SIGPLAN Conference on Programming Language Design and Implementation (1979 - 1999): A Selection." The thirteen member program committee, chaired by Kathryn McKinley, compiled a selection of what they deemed to be the fifty most influential papers published in PLDI from 1979 to 1999.

The editors of *SIGPLAN Notices*, Cindy Norris and Jay Fenwick, of Appalachian State University, have indicated their desire to step down as editors. They have agreed to continue as editors while a search is conducted for a replacement editor or editors.

Our other regular newsletter, *Fortran Forum*, published three issues, as scheduled. Ian Chivers served as its editor.

3. Awards

Erich Gamma, Richard Helm, Ralph Johnson, and John Vlissides received the 2005 SIGPLAN Programming Languages Achievement award for their work on design patterns. This work has had a major impact on programming

practice and programming language design. Michael Burke presented the award at PLDI 2005 held in Chicago, Illinois in June.

Amitabh Srivastava and Alan Eustace received the 1994 Most Influential PLDI Paper Award for their paper "ATOM: a system for building customized program analysis tools."

Mads Tofte and Jean Pierre Talpin received the 1994 Most Influential POPL Paper Award for their paper "Implementation of the Typed Call-by-Value lambda-calculus using a Stack of Regions."

4. Activities and Programs

We continue our Professional Activities Program, PAC, which was instituted a number of years ago, primarily to provide funding to graduate students who participate in a SIGPLAN-sponsored conference. This year we awarded 41 grants totalling $17,440, all to support travel by student authors of papers or posters being presented at 13 SIGPLAN-affiliated conferences or workshops. We capped individual awards at $750, with an average grant of $425, to extend the allocated money over more grants. This worked out well: we did not have to turn down any grant request (though in almost all cases the amount awarded was smaller than the amount requested). One institution had students receive five grants (for somewhat reduced amounts); three received three, and all others two or one. The large majority of the grants (35/41) were to students at institutions in the US or Canada; otherwise, there were two to India, two to Israel, and one each to Singapore and Germany.

5. Membership Changes

Starting in FY 2004, an annual SIGPLAN CD-ROM became a member benefit. The SIGPLAN 2005 CD will be enclosed with the August 2005 issue of *SIGPLAN Notices*. Covering the year 2004, the CD contains the proceedings of all SIGPLAN-sponsored or co-sponsored conferences, all issues of *SIGPLAN Notices*, all volumes of TOPLAS, and all SIGPLAN-sponsored workshops that were published by the ACM.

6. Key Issues for the Next 2–3 Years

Given the positive financial results for our conferences and a reduction in non-conference spending, SIGPLAN gained money for FY 2005, after three consecutive years of losses. We can restore some of the reduced expenditure on worthwhile projects such as student travel to conferences.

We hope that electronic memberships will make it possible to avoid losing money overall on memberships, and that the price increase for paper subscriptions does not cause a significant decline in membership. Once we understand these trends, the prices of electronic and/or paper memberships may have to be adjusted.

SIGPLAN's fund balance allows us to resume funding our existing programs at about the level of years preceding FY 2004. We have a balanced budget for FY 2006.

The relative lack of new SIGPLAN members continues to be an issue. We will be exploring ways to attract new electronic-only members. We hope that by publicizing the SIGPLAN CD and developing programs targeting faculty at teaching colleges that membership will be attractive to faculty and students at teaching colleges. We also plan to work with ACM IS department on streamlining the process of applying for the two SIGPLAN memberships.

We are receiving significantly more requests for SIGPLAN proceedings publication in *SIGPLAN Notices* than we can handle with our current budget. Our plan is to move some of these to electronic-only supplements, which will be included in the Digital Library and on the year-end CD-ROM. However, this move has raised an important issue with our European members.

Promotion and advancement in European universities as well as government funding decisions rely heavily on the number of citations to work as measured by various citation indexes (e.g., Thomson's ISI Web of Knowledge). Currently, *SIGPLAN Notices* is indexed while conference proceedings placed in ACM's Digital Library (and not published in *SIGPLAN Notices*) are not indexed. Thus our decision to limit the number of conference proceedings published in *SIGPLAN Notices* directly impacts how attractive SIGPLAN-sponsored conferences are to our European members. We are working with the ACM Publications Board to resolve this very important issue.