News from the SIGs

by Ellen Walker,
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In this issue of News from the SIGs, we present an overview from our SIGCSE reporter and SIGCSE Chair, Amber Settle, of all of the conferences that SIGCSE will offer in 2018.

*From our SIGCSE reporter and
SIGCSE chair, Amber Settle*

With the start of 2018 right around the corner, now is a good time to look ahead to the three SIGCSE conferences. There is increasing attention on the cost of conference travel in terms of time, money, and impact on the environment, but I would argue that the significant benefits offered by the SIGCSE conferences justify the costs. The opportunities for making contacts, improving your teaching, and advancing your research agenda make the time and energy invested in conference travel well worth it.

The first SIGCSE conference in 2018 is the **SIGCSE Symposium on Computer Science Education (SIGCSE)** taking place February 21–24 in Baltimore, Maryland, USA. The theme of SIGCSE 2018 is CS for All, and with half a dozen paper tracks as well as keynotes, panels, special sessions, posters, supporter sessions, and demos there will be many opportunities to learn something new at the conference. One of the best ways you can take advantage of SIGCSE 2018 is by meeting people, although the typical size (1300+) of the conference ironically can make

that feel challenging. I recommend seeking out the smaller gatherings as a way to orient yourself, particularly if you're new to SIGCSE. The birds-of-a-feather sessions, pre-conference events and evening receptions offered by affiliated groups, and exhibitor booths can be a great way to find people who share your particular interests. I also recommend you come by the business meeting on Friday evening to connect with me and the rest of the SIGCSE Board.

The next SIGCSE conference in 2018 is the **Conference on Innovation and Technology in Computer Science Education (ITICSE)** which will be held in Larnaka, Cyprus July 2–4. ITICSE is a smaller conference, with around 200 participants each year, but it has many of the same opportunities as the larger SIGCSE conference. Its program typically includes three parallel sessions of papers and panels, two keynotes, poster sessions, and a tips, techniques, and courseware session. Working groups provide an opportunity to combine research collaboration with networking, since participants spend almost five days before and during the conference working intensely with a small group of people on a research question. Working groups can be a great way to get to know new collaborators, but they can also be completely engrossing which may mean that newcomers to ITICSE don't get to experience the full range of

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the conference. Luckily because of its smaller size, it's much easier to meet people during social events including the opening reception, lunches, and the conference banquet. I also highly recommend paying for one of the conference excursions. In the picture you can see the attendees of the 2017 wine tour, of which I was one. While learning about two vineyards in the Bologna area wasn't directly related to computing education, I enjoyed my extended conversations with the other participants on the tour which has been true on every ITICSE excursion I've ever attended.

The last 2018 SIGCSE conference is the **International Computing Education Research Conference (ICER)** located in Helsinki, Finland, August 12–15, with the Doctoral Consortium on the 12th. ICER, unlike the other two SIGCSE conferences, focuses solely on computing education research. It also is the only conference that is single-track,

Attendees of ITISCE 2017 at a winery tour and tasting. ITISCE organizers generally include a selection of optional tours before and after the conference.

and the typical room layout has attendees sitting at round tables during presentations. After each paper presentation everyone at the table engages in a discussion of the work, culminating in a question and answer session. In my experience, you learn as much from the other attendees at your table as you do from the question and answer session, since it's common that your table mates are familiar with interesting clarifications of or related work to the research presented. Like the other two conferences ICER offers the same kind of social events, including a reception, lunches, and a conference banquet, and the smaller size of the conference (recently between 100 and 125) makes meeting new people and old friends easy. Whether you're an experienced computing education researcher or you're simply looking to get started in the area, ICER has a lot of offer. In fact, in the latter case I would recommend attendance at the work-in-progress workshop that typically follows ICER, where you get a chance to get detailed feedback about your ideas for CS Ed research projects.

I hope that all of you reading this will attend at least one SIGCSE conference this year. 2018 marks the

fiftieth anniversary of the SIGCSE organization, and the SIGCSE Board plans some special events that will be announced both at the conferences and through the SIGCSE mailing lists. When you do attend one of the 2018 SIGCSE conferences, I encourage you to reach out to the SIGCSE Board members in attendance with your ideas on what we can do for the organization during the next 50 years. For more information on these SIGs, see the following websites ♦

SIGCSE: www.sigcse.org

SIGITE: www.sigite.org

SIGMIS: www.sigmis.org

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