

# FAccT Conference By-Laws

This document consists of the By-Laws for the Conference on Fairness Accountability and Transparency (FAccT).

## Document History

- This document was ratified by the FAccT Steering Committee on January 8, 2020.
- In accordance with Clause 26, the conference name was changed from FAT\* to FAccT on January 25, 2020.

Definitions of conference governing bodies:

- *Executive Committee (EC)* - holds decision power analogous to an executive board
- *Steering Committee (SC)* - analogous to an advisory board
- *Strategic Plan (SP)* - a separate document that provides strategic guidance for the FAccT conference and community
- *Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Chairs* - chosen by the EC to serve roughly two-year terms implementing the diversity and inclusion goals stated in the Strategic Plan
- *Sponsorship Chairs* - chosen by the EC to serve roughly two-year terms, and tasked with managing the conference's relationships with external sponsors that provide funding for the FAccT conference and other activities
- *General Chairs (GC)* - chosen by the EC to organize the conference for a given year
- *Program Committee (PC) Chairs* - chosen by the EC and GC (for a given conference year), with input from the D&I Chairs, to serve roughly one-year terms organizing the technical program of a given conference
- Others as decided by the GCs and PCs
- *Conference Affiliates* (or simply, *Affiliates*) - professional organizations that FAccT partners with to host the yearly conference. As of January 2019, this is the ACM.

These bodies, their composition, how they are selected, and their roles, responsibilities, and interactions, are defined below.

### **1. The composition of the Steering Committee**

The SC should be large enough to encompass a representative sample of the community and small enough to be effective. Having 25-40 people from the FAccT community accomplishes this goal. Importantly, the SC should be composed of a diverse group of people per the diversity goals outlined in the Strategic Plan.

### **2. How members are rotated on and off the Steering Committee**

SC members can serve up to two consecutive 2-year terms. It is assumed that a member will serve both terms unless they specify otherwise, which they may do at any

time. If an SC member is inactive (defined as not regularly attending the conference and/or participating in decision making over email), the EC may ask them to step down at the end of their first 2-year term. In extreme cases of inactivity or other behavior detrimental to the FAccT community, the EC may ask SC members to step down in the middle of a term. Terms of new and old members should overlap in order to keep institutional memory and avoid situations where all members enter/leave the committee at the same time.

Members of the FAccT community, including current EC and SC members, may nominate someone to enter the SC, and self-nominations are allowed and encouraged. Calls for nominations will be widely disseminated via the community communication channels, including but not limited to the announcement mailing list and the conference Twitter account. The EC should then form a Selection Subcommittee composed of SC and EC members to choose new SC candidates from the nominated pool. The Selection Subcommittee should consist of 3-5 members of the SC and 1-2 members of the EC. New SC members should be chosen in accordance with the conference by-laws and the diversity goals outlined in the Strategic Plan. The Selection Subcommittee has the authority to decide which SC candidates will be offered positions on the SC, and they must produce a document for the EC documenting their decision making process so that it may be reviewed (e.g., stating how the decisions align with the Strategic Plan). After the EC has reviewed and approved this document, the Selection Subcommittee will reach out to SC candidates to inform them of their selection.

People formally appointed to serve on the EC, as well as people serving as GCs, PC Chairs, and D&I Chairs, are automatically granted membership on the SC. Time served in these roles is also counted as time served on the SC.

People who rotate off the SC are eligible to serve again two years after their exit date. However, a person may re-enter the SC earlier if they are selected to serve as a GC or PC Chair, or by special dispensation of the EC.

### **3. Responsibilities of the Steering Committee**

Members of the SC are expected to attend the yearly conference as well as the SC meeting that will be held there. Members of the SC are expected to strongly advocate for the FAccT community within their networks, promptly give input to the EC as requested, approve the appointment of new members to the EC, and approve changes to the by-laws.

### **4. Changing the By-laws**

Any changes to the by-laws will be up for a vote by the SC and can only be ratified if (1) approved by a  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority of the people who voted and (2) at least half of SC members vote.

## **5. The composition of the Executive Committee**

The EC should consist of 7-9 people in total. Ideally, the EC should be composed of a diverse group of people per the diversity goals outlined in the Strategic Plan. However, the EC may be less diverse than the SC, due to the smaller size of the EC, and the membership rules outlined below.

In general, the EC should be composed of (1) GCs, D&I Chairs, and PC Chairs from previous FAccT conferences and (2) at-large members chosen from the SC (e.g., people who have not previously served in an organizational role for a previous FAccT conference). The EC should have 2-3 at-large members at any given time. The EC may also include ad-hoc members as necessary to fill specific needs or address unique challenges.

## **6. How members are rotated on and off the Executive Committee**

EC members serve a single 2-year term. If a case should arise where half or more of the EC members reach their term limit simultaneously, existing members may remain on the Executive Committee for one or more additional one-year increments, subject to a majority vote by the EC.

The current GCs, D&I Chairs, and PC Chairs are not members of the EC but are expected to consult and coordinate with it while planning for the conference. Each year, the EC will invite at least one (but possibly more, depending on staffing needs) of the GCs, D&I Chairs, Sponsorship Chairs, and/or PC Chairs from that year to rotate onto the EC. The EC is responsible for ensuring that these individuals rotate onto the Committee in a timely manner.

Nominees for at-large and ad-hoc membership on the EC will be nominated by the EC, and their selection should be based on strategic and diversity goals. Each nominee will be approved by (1) a  $\frac{1}{2}$  majority of the SC members who voted as long as (2) at least half of SC members vote.

## **7. The responsibilities of the Executive Committee**

The EC is responsible for ensuring that the FAccT conference occurs every year, for setting and executing the strategic vision of the conference as outlined in the Strategic Plan, and for the long-term health and success of the conference community. The EC shall manage the process of selecting conference locations, GCs, D&I Chairs, Sponsorship Chairs, and PC Chairs (as detailed below). Further, the EC shall ensure that the GCs, D&I Chairs, Sponsorship Chairs, and PC Chairs are satisfactorily executing on their responsibilities and take appropriate action when necessary. These actions may include removing GCs, D&I Chairs, Sponsorship Chairs, or PC Chairs if (1) their further involvement imperils the conference and/or (2) they are failing to execute their responsibilities. A GC, D&I, Sponsorship, or PC Chair can be removed by a  $\frac{2}{3}$  vote of the EC.

The EC is also responsible for:

- Liaising with the SC,
- Working with conference affiliates and/or other external partners,
- Helping with fundraising as needed,
- Passing on institutional knowledge to GC, D&I, Sponsorship, and PC Chairs,
- Scheduling and administering the annual SC meeting and dinner,
- Hosting the town hall discussion at each FAccT conference,
- And communicating its own activities to the broader FAccT community

... among other executive duties.

#### **8. The selection and responsibilities of the D&I Chairs**

The EC manages the process of selecting D&I Chairs. The D&I Chairs should, ideally, have strong working relationships with the EC, since they will be collaborating closely. Further, the selection of D&I Chairs must abide by the diversity goals outlined in the Strategic Plan.

Each D&I Chair serves a single two-year term, with the option to extend to a second two-year term by mutual agreement of the D&I Chair and the EC. It is envisioned that there will be two D&I Chairs at any given time, recruited one year apart, so that rotation of the D&I Chairs is staggered and institutional memory is not lost. Additional D&I Chairs may be recruited as needed to ensure that their responsibilities are being faithfully executed.

The D&I Chairs report directly to the EC, and are expected to work closely with the EC, as well as GCs, PC Chairs, and other people involved in conference organization, to ensure that the diversity goals in the Strategic Plan are implemented throughout the conference planning process. Specific guidance about these responsibilities are outlined below.

#### **9. The selection and responsibilities of the Sponsorship Chairs**

The EC manages the process of selecting Sponsorship Chairs. The Sponsorship Chairs should, ideally, have strong working relationships with the EC, since they will be collaborating closely; it is strongly suggested that at least one of the Sponsorships Chairs also be a member of the EC. Further, the selection of Sponsorship Chairs must abide by the diversity goals outlined in the Strategic Plan.

Each Sponsorship Chair serves a single two-year term, with the option to extend to a second two-year term by mutual agreement of the Sponsorship Chair and the EC. It is envisioned that there will be two Sponsorship Chairs at any given time, recruited one year apart, so that rotation of the Sponsorship Chairs is staggered and institutional memory is not lost. Additional Sponsorship Chairs may be recruited as needed to ensure that their responsibilities are being faithfully executed.

The Sponsorship Chairs report directly to the EC. They are responsible for maintaining relationships with existing sponsors (e.g., by fulfilling any obligations upon which funding was contingent, such as writing reports), acquiring additional funds from existing sponsors, and recruiting new sponsors. The Sponsorship Chairs are responsible for ensuring that new sponsors align with the strategic vision laid out in the Strategic Plan, and for communicating conference policy with sponsors (e.g., the prohibition on co-branded side events, see below).

Furthermore, the Sponsorship Chairs are expected to work closely with the GCs to craft the conference budget. The goal of this collaboration is to ensure that conference registration costs remain very low, which is a key component of the strategic vision and diversity goals in the Strategic Plan.

#### **10. The selection of the General Chairs**

The EC will manage the process of selecting GCs for each year's conference in a fashion that fulfills the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan. The EC shall put out a call for self-nominations to be GC (which must be paired with a proposed location for the conference; see below). The self-nominations are then presented to the SC during the annual SC meeting, or very soon thereafter, and decisions shall be made by the full SC.

The SC will be given the opportunity to vote on each nominee. The nominee that receives the most affirmative votes from the SC members that voted shall be approved. In the case of a tie for most affirmative votes, all tied nominees shall be approved. Additionally, any nominee that receives affirmative votes from at least a ½ majority of SC members who voted shall also be approved. This process ensures that at least one nominee will always be approved, and encourages the approval of multiple nominees; this will grant the EC some flexibility to determine the final winning nominee from amongst the accepted nominees, and provide backup options in case an approved nominee cannot meet their obligations as GC.

At the time of voting, the EC is responsible for reminding the SC of FAccT's strategic vision and diversity goals as outlined in the Strategic Plan, which are expected to inform the voting process.

The GCs shall be selected approximately 2 years in advance of the conference.

#### **11. Choosing the conference location**

The EC will manage the process of selecting a conference location in tandem with the selection of GCs and in accordance with the Strategic Plan. When a GC self-nominates, they must include a proposal for a location to host the conference. GCs are encouraged to host the conference at their home location, although this is not required.

GCs are encouraged to work in pairs, due to the amount of work required to run the FAccT conference. However, this does not preclude a bid by a solo GC or trio of GCs. It also does not preclude adding additional GCs after a bid is accepted, subject to approval by the EC.

The GCs and location are selected in tandem by the SC, using the voting process stated above. At the time of voting, the EC is responsible for reminding the SC of FAccT's strategic vision and diversity goals as outlined in the Strategic Plan, (e.g., locations should be chosen that encourage a diverse set of global participants in the conference). Other considerations include, but are not limited to, the availability of travel visas, minimizing travel costs for participants, etc.

## **12. Responsibilities of the General Chairs**

The GCs are the primary executives for each year's conference. They are responsible, working in coordination with the EC, for the successful execution of each year's conference and for advancing the community's Strategic Plan through that year's conference.

The specific responsibilities of the GCs include, but are not limited to: filing paperwork with the conference affiliate(s) to officially instantiate the conference (e.g., the PAF and TMRF for ACM); drafting the conference budget, getting the budget approved by the conference affiliate(s), and seeing that costs are managed throughout conference execution; securing the venue, catering, audio/visual equipment, and blocks of hotel rooms; interfacing with the conference affiliate(s) to setup the conference registration website; recruiting staff and/or volunteers to manage logistics at the conference (e.g., the registration desk, microphones, etc.); and instantiating and maintaining conference web pages hosted at [fatconference.org](http://fatconference.org).

The GCs are encouraged to build a team to help them accomplish these responsibilities. The team may include a mix of professionals and volunteers filling roles like Local Chair, Budget Chair, Registration Chair, Web Chair, etc. The GCs are expected to work closely with the D&I Chairs to ensure that their team is diverse, and that accommodations at the conference are made for a diverse audience (e.g., kosher/halal/vegetarian food options, gender-neutral bathrooms, etc.), in accordance with the diversity goals outlined in the Strategic Plan.

The GCs will work with the EC and D&I Chairs to select the PC Chairs for the conference, as outlined below. The EC, GCs, D&I Chairs, and PC Chairs will work together to identify and recruit keynote speakers for the conference, as outlined below.

The GCs are expected to work closely with the Sponsorship Chairs to ensure that the conference's expenditures are reasonable and sustainable, and that sufficient

sponsorship money is available to keep registration costs low, in accordance with the diversity and inclusion goals outlined in the Strategic Plan.

### **13. Selecting dates for the conference**

The conference will be held once a year. The GCs, in consultation with the EC, must attempt to strike a balance when choosing dates between (1) historical continuity and (2) avoiding overlap with related events.

### **14. The selection of the Program Chairs**

The EC, GCs, and D&I Chairs will jointly manage the process of selecting PC Chairs. The PC Chairs should, ideally, have strong working relationships with the GCs and D&I Chairs since they will be collaborating closely. Further, the selection of PC Chairs must abide by the diversity goals outlined in the Strategic Plan.

The PC Chairs should be selected approximately 1 year in advance of the conference.

### **15. The interaction of the Diversity and Inclusion Chairs, Sponsorship Chairs, General Chairs, and Program Committee Chairs with the Executive Committee**

The EC will give advice and support to the D&I Chairs, Sponsorship Chairs, GCs, and PC Chairs on a variety of issues. The EC is meant to be a resource, since it includes D&I Chairs, Sponsorship Chairs, GCs, and PC Chairs from previous years. The by-laws below detail specific cases where the EC must approve decisions made by the GCs, D&I Chairs, and PC Chairs; in other cases the GCs, D&I Chairs, and PC Chairs have autonomy.

### **16. Responsibilities of the Program Committee Chairs**

The PC Chairs have the primary responsibility of managing the construction of the scholarly program of the conference. This includes developing the Call for Papers, establishing a website to facilitate submission and review of papers, and organizing a Program Committee (PC) to review submitted papers. The PC Chairs have full autonomy to develop the Call for Papers, subject to the review policy stated below.

The PC Chairs will form a PC. The PC Chairs are free to organize the PC as they wish, although the PC will likely have some hierarchy, i.e., with area chairs helping to organize reviewers in different areas or disciplines. As per the Strategic Plan, the PC chairs should be sensitive to the interdisciplinary nature of the conference and organize the reviewers and review process in a way that respects disciplinary expertise as well as cross-cutting contributions. Furthermore, the PC Chairs must work with the D&I Chairs to ensure that the composition of the PC embodies the diversity goals stated in the Strategic Plan.

The PC Chairs are responsible for ensuring that accepted, archival manuscripts are published in the conference proceedings, and made available in time for the conference.

The PC Chairs may work directly with the conference affiliate(s)/publisher(s) to accomplish this, although it is strongly suggested that this task be delegated to a dedicated Publication Chair. As of January 2019, the publisher for the conference is ACM.

In addition to managing the main research track of the conference, the PC Chairs may also create and manage (or delegate management of) additional tracks that support other forms of scholarship or engagement. Examples include, but are not limited to, a doctoral consortium, a poster session, tutorials, workshops, etc. These additional tracks should be developed in close consultation with the GCs and D&I Chairs, as outlined below, to ensure that they are logistically feasible, and facilitate the strategic vision and diversity goals of the conference as stated in the Strategic Plan.

The PC Chairs, in consultation with the D&I Chairs, have autonomy to select people to fill various program selection roles, including but not limited to Track Chairs, Tutorial Chairs, Doctoral Consortium Chairs, Poster Chairs, Publication Chairs, award selection subcommittees, etc. The PC Chairs must abide by the diversity goals outlined in the Strategic Plan when choosing these roles. Individuals who fill these roles are free to act with autonomy within their organizational domain (e.g. Tutorial Chairs may make decisions about the Call for Tutorials, recruit reviewers, etc.), subject to the strategic vision and diversity goals of the Strategic Plan.

#### **17. The design of the conference program**

The EC, GCs, PC Chairs, and D&I Chairs are responsible for developing a high-level plan for the conference program that presents an overview of how time will be divided. This includes, but is not limited to: how many days the conference will be; how many and when keynotes will take place; if, when, and how many non-paper presentations/activities such as tutorials, posters, and panels will take place; whether paper presentations will be single- or multi-track; etc. It is expected that, through iteration and discussion, the PC Chairs, GCs, D&I Chairs, and EC will come to consensus on the structure of the program, e.g., to ensure that it maintains appropriate continuity from previous years, is feasible logistically, within budget, and embodies the strategic vision and diversity goals of the Strategic Plan.

The PC Chairs and their designated organizational chairs have full autonomy to select the content and people that will appear in the various sections of the program, subject to the reviewing rules stated below. For example, the PC Chairs are responsible for constructing the paper program, the Tutorial Chairs are responsible for constructing the tutorial program (if tutorials are part of the overall program), etc. The sole exception to this rule is the selection of keynote speakers, as stated below.

#### **18. The selection of keynote speakers**

The GCs, D&I Chairs, and PC Chairs are responsible for developing a list of potential keynote speakers. This list should take into account the diversity goals stated in the Strategic Plan. It is expected that, through iteration and discussion, the GCs, D&I Chairs, PC Chairs, and EC will come to consensus on the list of potential keynote speakers.

As speakers confirm or reject invitations, the GCs, D&I Chairs, and PC Chairs may need to revise the list in order to ensure diversity. The GCs, D&I Chairs, and PC Chairs are expected to keep the EC apprised of these changes.

The GCs, D&I Chairs, and PC Chairs may appoint designated Keynote Chairs to manage this process, in which case the Keynote Chairs are responsible for executing the above approval process before inviting keynote speakers.

**19. Members of the Executive Committee directly participating in the organization of the program**

As much as possible, EC members should avoid direct participation in the organization of the program, i.e., should not participate as Program Track Chairs or Program Committee Members.

SC members are free to directly participate in program organization.

**20. Eligibility to submit papers, tutorials, posters, etc.**

The PC Chairs are not allowed to submit jointly authored papers in the year in which they are chair, i.e., there must be at least one PC Chair who is not a co-author to oversee its review.

Similar restrictions apply to Tutorial Chairs, Poster Chairs, and other program selection roles, i.e., each submission must ultimately be governed by a chair who is not an author.

**21. Award format and eligibility**

PC Chairs are free to decide how many awards are given at the conference, and the focus of these awards (e.g., technical contributions, non-technical contributions, student papers, etc.). Similar flexibility is given to chairs of other formats (e.g., tutorials). However, care must be taken when considering non-archival papers for awards -- it does not make sense to have archival and non-archival work competing directly for the same awards, since only the former can be read in full by the public. Either non-archival papers should be ineligible for awards, or there must be separate award(s) for non-archival papers. All chairs should take care to ensure that awards remain valuable by limiting supply according to the norms of the academic communities present at the conference

Papers on which a GC, Sponsorship Chair, D&I Chair, and/or PC Chair is an author are not eligible for awards. Similar restrictions apply to awards given in other formats, e.g., posters on which a Poster Chair is an author are not eligible for poster awards, etc.

## **22. Reviewing policy**

Paper submissions are required to be reviewed using a double-blind process, and the review process must include a mechanism for identifying and avoiding conflicts of interest between reviewers and paper authors. Other formats (e.g., tutorials and posters) are encouraged to use double-blind review, but may choose single-blind if necessary. All formats must include conflict of interest mitigation in their review process.

## **23. Sponsorship policy**

FAccT only accepts unrestricted funds. In return for funds, sponsors will be acknowledged in conference materials (possibly including signage) but will not be given designated spots in the program or any input on the program. To maintain independence, the GCs (or their designated Sponsorship Chairs) are encouraged to solicit funds from a diversity of sources.

## **24. Co-located events hosted by third-parties**

In accordance with the Strategic Plan, FAccT does not co-brand or offer conference support for co-located events hosted by third-parties. This includes, but is not limited to, recruiting events, sponsored lunches and dinners, and after-hours parties. This policy applies to both sponsors and non-sponsors of the conference. It is the view of the FAccT community that these co-located events should be discouraged because they may be exclusionary, fail to reflect the gravity of the topics discussed at FAccT, or otherwise distract from the scheduled events at the conference (see the Strategic Plan for more details).

All representatives of the FAccT conference, including but not limited to the EC, GCs, D&I Chairs, PC Chairs, and Sponsorship Chairs, should remind third-parties of these policies when appropriate. This especially applies to sponsors, who should be reminded well before the conference.

## **25. Strategic plan**

The EC will be guided by a formal Strategic Plan and shall take input on the plan on a regular basis from the community (e.g. at town halls at the conference). The Strategic Plan shall also be made available to the SC for input. Any non-trivial change must be first proposed to the SC with adequate time for SC members to provide input prior to the EC vote. All changes must be approved by a  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority of the EC.

## **26. Name change**

This document will be amended by the EC outside of standard by-law change processes one time in 2019-2020 for one purpose: to change the name of the conference subject to the 2019-2020 name-change decision. This clause overrides all other relevant clauses.