

ACM FAccT Strategic Plan

This document describes the strategic goals for the ACM FAccT Conference, as agreed upon by the executive committee on January 15, 2019 and ratified by the steering committee on January 31, 2019. It also contains examples of tactical decisions we have made to implement our strategic goals as well as ideas for hypothesized future tactics. These tactics can serve as guidance for how each strategic goal might be operationalized.

On January 25, 2020, this document was revised to change the conference name from FAT* to FAccT.

These goals will be revisited at least every five years, or as circumstance demands.

GOAL #1: BE A TOP-TIER PUBLICATION VENUE: Ensure that ACM FAccT remains the top-tier publication venue for advancing the state-of-the-art in our research areas.

GOAL #2: BE AN INTERDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE FOCUSED ON COMPUTING SYSTEMS: Ensure that ACM FAccT is a conference that is both a 'home' for computer scientists and a 'home' to people from the many other disciplines necessary to advance our research area.

GOAL #3: BE OPEN MINDED ABOUT TOPICS WITHOUT COMPROMISING FOCUS: Strike a balance between a big-tent, adaptable philosophy and the maintenance of strong topical cores.

Current Topical Core: Research that seeks to understand and mitigate sociotechnical problems associated with computational decision-making systems.

Definition of Big Tent Philosophy: Our big tent philosophy is rooted in the broadest possible definition of the key terms in our topical core. Our conference should feature tremendous diversity in the computational systems studied, the sociotechnical problems considered, and the approaches to understanding, and mitigation employed. The computational decision-making systems studied may vary from those focused on direct allocative harms to those involving very indirect representational harms. The sociotechnical problems considered should have tremendous breadth, with the only bounds being that they be realistic over the near-term. Approaches to understanding and mitigating these problems should vary across many disciplines and paradigms (e.g. theory, practice, quantitative, qualitative, system-building).

Current Bounds: Work that does not have deep engagement with the social component of problems or that is focused on purely hypothetical sociotechnical problems are considered outside the bounds of the conference.

Adaptability: We should feel free to revisit our topical core and the bounds of our big tent as the field changes, but we should do so only very explicitly and with great care.

GOAL #4: INNOVATE AND LEAD ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION: Be recognized as leaders in diversity and inclusion across all facets of conference participation, including leadership, authorship, and attendance.

We seek to be leaders in promoting diverse participation across a number of axes including but not limited to:

- **Demographic:** ethnicity, gender, seniority, etc.
 - Both visible diversity and, to the extent possible, non-visible diversity (e.g., sexuality, disability, etc.)
- **Economic:** People doing excellent work in this space should be able to attend the conference regardless of their financial situation.
- **Family-friendly:** People who have dependents and those that do not
- **Geographic:** across country, across globe (especially non-West and non-Northern hemisphere)
- **Disciplinary:** CS versus not CS as well as within CS
- **Travel ability:** People who can attend the conference and those who cannot
- **Stakeholder Type:** Both those studying the topics of interest at the conference and those directly impacted by those topics should be given a platform at the conference.
- **Institutional:** Academic (R1, liberal arts, etc...), Industry (Size, Domain), Government, and Civil society (NGOs, Press, activists)

All these aspects of diversity should be taken into account during all conference planning discussions. This will likely mean a degree of joint optimization: some choices that advance diversity in one dimension might hurt diversity in another, and balances needs to be struck within a given instance of the conference as well as over time.

GOAL #5: MAINTAIN INDEPENDENCE OF GOVERNANCE: Maintain our status as an independent conference not beholden to anyone.

GOAL #6: GROW, RESPONSIBLY: Grow without compromising quality, community cohesiveness, and the other strategic goals.

GOAL #7: RESPECT THE GRAVITY OF THE RESEARCH TOPIC: Establish and maintain a culture of modesty out of respect for the gravity of the problems that are the focus of our community.

GOAL #8: AVOID BEING AN ISLAND: Work to ensure that the rest of computer science and related domains are engaging with our community's contributions and vice versa.