

## **SACLA 2022 Chairman's Report published in the proceedings**

SACLA 2022, the 51st annual conference of the Southern African Computer Lecturers' Association, was hosted by the Department of Information Science, Stellenbosch University, on July 21–22, 2022, at the Protea Hotel Cape Town, Waterfront Breakwater Lodge in Cape Town, South Africa. It was the first time since 2019 that members of the Southern African computer education community could come together in person to share research findings and engage with colleagues from across the Southern African and international communities. In 2022, SACLA was also collocated, for the first time, with the annual research conference of the South African Institute for Computer Scientists and Information Technologists (SAICSIT), which gave delegates an additional opportunity to network with other academics in related fields.

In seeking to bring together computing lecturers, the organizing committee invited authors to submit research papers on a wide variety of computer education disciplines, including, but not limited to, the following:

- education-oriented research or classroom experience;
- innovative teaching techniques or pedagogical tools;
- curricular innovations or initiatives;
- curriculum adaptations for relevance to discipline/students;
- innovative industry-education collaboration interventions;
- program/curriculum design to address local opportunities and challenges;
- didactics and methods of teaching and assessment;
- ethical problems related to teaching and learning;
- transition of newly graduated school pupils;
- transition of newly graduated students into industry;
- international comparability of degrees and levels of knowledge/skills/performance;
- separation or combination of teaching and research; and
- post-hoc analysis of successes and failures in teaching and learning.

The International Program Committee consisted of 45 members, of which almost half were international (from outside South Africa). A rigorous double-blind refereeing process was followed for all submissions, where each submission was reviewed by at least three members of the Program Committee. Each paper was reviewed by at least one Program Committee member from outside South Africa. A total of 31 full paper submissions were received for consideration and, following review, 10 papers were selected for presentation at the conference and publication in the Springer volume. This represents a 32% paper acceptance rate which is consistent with prior volumes in this series. Authors of accepted papers received constructive criticism from both the reviews and the conference audience to improve the papers before inclusion in the Springer volume.

Additionally, the program chairs selected one paper and reviewer to receive awards for being the best submission and best reviewer, respectively. By placing emphasis on not only the best research work but also the best review, the program chairs acknowledge the hard work the Program Committee put into making the conference possible. The best paper was awarded to the paper “I feel like I am teaching myself”: An Exploratory Study of the Factors and Implications of Online Learning co-authored by Malcolm Garbutt, Pitso Tsibolane and Tristan Pillay. For the consistently high quality of her reviews, the award for best reviewer was issued to Lisa Seymour from the University of Cape Town.

In addition to the 10 papers accepted for publication, the organising committee invited two keynote speakers to deliver talks at the conference. These keynote speakers engaged the audience on topics relevant to computer education in practice and the publication landscape in South Africa. Joe Newbert presented a keynote entitled “Learning, Unlearning and Relearning Business Analysis” in which he outlined the gaps between higher-education graduates and industry expectations of them. Johann Mouton’s keynote was entitled “A Scientometric Assessment of the State of Computer Sciences in South Africa” in which he illustrated the state of the computing sciences field within the South African scientific community. Both these keynotes were invaluable to the conference audience. In addition to these keynotes, Dan Wells from EskomSePush presented an invited talk on how the popular load-shedding app EskomSePush was built and is maintained. With load-shedding a major current event in South Africa, this was well received by the audience. It was also good for computing educators to see the fruits of top graduating students in practice.

The conference also had an international panel led by Adriana Steyn which focused on the after-effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and illustrated how different academic institutions around the world are adapting to a post-pandemic world. This panel, in the spirit of new international collaboration, was presented via Zoom. The

organizing committee would like to thank all the speakers, delegates and authors for making SACLA 2022 a great success, and we wish the SACLA 2023 organising committee the best for their conference.

July 2022

Richard J. Barnett  
Daniel B. le Roux  
Douglas A. Parry  
Bruce W. Watson