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# European Women in Computing

For several years, ACM-W has been an active advocate for women in computing. With ACM's increasing international membership, regional Councils have been created and groups within them are taking up

this same mission. Two years ago, the ACM Europe Council formed ACM-WE to sponsor European initiatives for women in computing.

Europe, of course, is by no means homogenous with respect to the involvement of women in computing, although many commonalities exist. A goal of ACM-WE is to promote an image of computing that would be more attractive to women. In addition, we seek to provide information about the many different kinds of careers available to women to help them envision a future in computing.

Inspired by events such as the Grace Hopper and ACM-W celebrations in the U.S., one of the first activities of ACM-WE was to create a European conference that would encourage women in their computing careers. The first ACM-WE *womENCourage* conference was held last March in Manchester, England. Attracting more than 200 attendees (both male and female) from 28 countries, this event sought to highlight technical accomplishments of women in the field as well as to provide opportunities for young women to meet others and develop professionally. Technical keynote presentations from women in computing as well as posters from young women currently studying computing furthered these goals.

A special emphasis was placed on providing networking and career opportunities for the next generation of computing professionals. Through funding from industry supporters and ACM-W, 54 computing students from 26 countries received travel stipends

that allowed them to participate in the conference. A conference highlight for these participants was the career fair, featuring our seven industrial supporters (Google, Intel, Facebook, Bloomberg, Microsoft Research, Yahoo! Labs, and Cisco). An "unconference" feature also allowed attendees to cluster into facilitated discussion groups around topics selected that day by the participants themselves.

The second *womENCourage* conference will be held in Sweden, Sept. 24–26, 2015, hosted by Uppsala University. We invite anyone who wishes to help organize the conference to contact us at [acm-w-europe@acm.org](mailto:acm-w-europe@acm.org). Volunteers are welcome to help both with technical aspects (program committee positions) as well as operational aspects (such as career fair organization and networking events arrangements).

In addition to the *womENCourage* conferences, we are establishing *Friends of ACM-WE* to bring together industry, universities, and non-government organizations to help increase the visibility of women in computing. We will be looking

to these organizations to donate time, expertise, and experience to help realize our mandate of the full engagement of women in computing. ACM-WE also is working to establish a Distinguished Speaker series featuring senior women in computing. Technical talks and informal group discussions will help students see and be inspired by women who have established successful careers.

ACM-WE supports not only early career professionals but also women in senior levels of computing. As part of this endeavor, we are working to establish a pipeline of European women who will serve in leadership positions within ACM and also become recognized for their computing achievements through ACM Senior Member, Distinguished Member, and ACM Fellow status. We encourage all European computing professionals to become members of ACM to be eligible for these honors.

With the support of the ACM Europe Council, and in collaboration with ACM-W on best practices, ACM-WE is actively working to encourage women to pursue opportunities in computing, providing them with role models and mentors, and working to increase the prominence of technical women in leadership roles. Join us for a better future!

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