

Title: Innovations and Opportunities in Liberal Arts Computing Education

Abstract: Organized by members of the SIGCSE Committee on Computing Education in Liberal Arts Colleges, this Affiliated Event will promote connection and collaboration within the liberal arts computing community. This full day event will be split into two sessions. The morning session will focus on topics covering the breadth of opportunities and challenges faced by liberal arts computing educators. These topics may include innovative courses, curricula, co-curricular programs, DEI initiatives, academic and career advising, faculty recruiting and retention, and other issues as identified to have a specific liberal arts perspective. Topics for discussion will be solicited from the community at large and selected submissions will be presented and discussed at the event. Accompanying materials and/or notes will be added to the Committee's growing repository of materials. The afternoon session will be held in an "unconference" format, with proposals accepted for working group topics from the community as a whole. Possible topics include but are not limited to the role of CS faculty in coordinating computing across an institution, identifying a focused "liberal arts" CS core out of the larger CS2023 core, community efforts to advocate for the value of CS education research within tenure and promotion review, and course-specific topics such as implementing specifications grading or implementing inclusive teaching practices. Throughout the event, sessions will give participants an opportunity to learn about work already taking place within the liberal arts computing community as well as to engage in Q&A and breakout discussions. Opportunities for networking with others in the liberal arts CS community will be emphasized. All interested faculty and students are welcome.

Proposers:

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Event URL: <https://computing-in-the-liberal-arts.github.io/SIGCSE2025-Affiliated-Event/>

Significance and Relevance of the Event Topic/Purpose: The SIGCSE Liberal Arts Committee is charged to support and represent faculty teaching computing as a component of a liberal education. This includes a commitment to providing opportunities for members of our community to gather, share information, collaborate, and discuss our goals. Our annual affiliated event prior to the Technical Symposium, dating back to 2020, has become an important venue for information sharing and draws consistent, strong attendance. In recent years, this event has provided opportunities for the liberal arts community to discuss the ACM/IEEE CS2023 curricular guidelines, allowing the Committee to advocate for a liberal arts perspective with the CS2023 Task Force and develop guidelines for how liberal arts institutions might best work with CS2023. Previous affiliated events have also led to working groups and publications growing out of presentations and breakout discussions.

Intended Audience and Attendance: The intended audience consists of faculty teaching computing as a component of a liberal education. We expect these faculty will come primarily but not exclusively from liberal arts colleges. Attendees may also include graduate and undergraduate students with an interest in liberal education. Based on email list membership, survey responses, and participation in past Committee events, we anticipate approximately 40-50 attendees.

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Expertise of Organizers: The event proposers represent the leadership of the ACM SIGCSE Committee on Computing Education in Liberal Arts Colleges and have participated in or been Working Group leaders for previous Technical Symposium Affiliated Events sponsored by the Committee. They are also the authors of several publications on liberal arts CS education and have developed and led liberal-arts focused workshops at several SIGCSE and CCSC conferences.

Rough Agenda for the Event: This event will be broken into two sessions, each a half day. The morning session will focus on topics submitted by the community at large, as described in the abstract above. Submissions should either: (a) describe an innovation (a course, curriculum, program, etc.) with information about why it was adopted and how it has been successful; or (b) describe an issue/challenge with context and analysis to provide a useful or novel understanding of that challenge. In all cases, submissions should clearly demonstrate the connections to a uniquely liberal arts philosophy or context. Those submissions most suitable to adaptation/adoption across institutions will be given preference for presentation and discussion. Submissions that support efforts to broaden participation in computing will be particularly encouraged. Selected submissions will be briefly presented, roughly 10-15 minutes each. Breakout sessions will then be used to allow attendees to discuss these topics in small groups with the presenter and other interested attendees. The sequence of presentations and breakout sessions will be determined based on the topics of the accepted submissions and breaks will also be scheduled to facilitate more informal conversation.

The afternoon session will be held in an “unconference” format, in response to community feedback about the desire for time to connect and collaborate on projects of shared interest. Within this session, participants will select between topics, which can be organized in a workshop, working group, or discussion group style. Information about both the topics and the format of the group collaboration will be shared in advance. Members of the program committee will sponsor groups on topics known to be of interest, such as those highlighted in the abstract. In addition, a solicitation for topics and facilitators will be sent to the broader community and invited during the event itself.

Modality and Event Time Preference: This will be an in-person event. We prefer to hold this as an all-day event (morning and afternoon) on Wednesday, prior to the Technical Symposium. Depending on sponsorship and available funding, a coffee break with refreshments may be provided.

Audio/Visual and Room Setup Requirements: We will need to have a basic projection system available along with at least one microphone. A round-table room setup that can accommodate about 50 people would be ideal.

Laptop Optional