**CRA-W Best Practices:**
**Guidelines in Running an Inclusive Conference**

**Steering Committee: Opportunities and Responsibilities related to Diversity, Inclusion**

- Demographic balance of Steering Committee:
  - Balance along many dimensions: Seniority, topical expertise, geography, academia/industry, gender/racial/ethnic balance, disability status, academic lineage and many more.
  - Ensure good mix of long-term expertise with flow of new people. Avoid cronyism: Use algorithmic and term-limited approaches to constitute the steering committee. For example: PC Chair and General Chair from 1,2, and 5 years ago. Elected representative from each sponsoring entity.
- Institutional Memory:
  - Maintain year-over-year data on metrics relevant to conference diversity & inclusion: Women & URM authors, keynote speakers, panelists, session chairs.
  - Registration counts: student, industry, academic/faculty. Geographic and gender/racial/ethnic mix in registrants.
  - Track trends over time. In some cases, setting measurable targets or goals can be motivational.
- Organizing Committee:
  - The Steering Committee appoints the main conference organizers. Do so with diversity and inclusivity as key goals.
  - When creating the organizing committee, be aware of the specific roles assigned to individuals. Avoid a situation in which the "housekeeping" roles are all assigned to women or other individuals from underrepresented groups. The goal is to achieve diversity across many roles, including those of high technical prestige.
  - Consider having a member of organizing committee responsible for lack of bias.
  - "We tried but they turned us down." For both organizing committee and also program committee (see below) be ready with "spare" names. Since there are so few of them, women and underrepresented minorities are asked to do disproportionate amounts of service, and are often forced to say no at a higher rate.
- Conference Organization and Logistics
  - Onsite daycare OR help attendees identify local babysitters and offer a mechanism for reimbursement.
  - Travel support for accompanying nanny/caregiver
  - Consider Accessibility issues as well:
  - http://www.sigaccess.org/welcome-to-sigaccess/resources/accessible-conference-guide/#website

- Conference Code of Conduct: Ethical behavior and harassment issues.
  - Uphold and increase awareness of sponsor codes of conduct where available (e.g. ACM, IEEE, AAAI, USENIX, etc.)
  - ACM: https://www.acm.org/special-interest-groups/volunteer-resources/officers-manual/policy-against-discrimination-and-harassment

- IEEE: https://www.ieee.org/about/corporate/governance/p9-26.html
- IEEE: Section 9.26 https://www.ieee.org/documents/ieee_policies.pdf
- NIPS: https://nips.cc/About
- ACL: https://www.aclweb.org/adminwiki/index.php?title=Anti-Harassment_Policy
- Write your own code of conduct if sponsoring entity does not have one. Here is a good resource:
    - http://geekfeminism.wikia.com/wiki/Conference_anti-harassment/Policy_resources
- Publicize code of conduct on conference webpage and in opening session or start of each day.
- Remind US university students and faculty that their University's "Title IX" obligations include anti-harassment policies and reporting procedures that apply to faculty, staff, and student behavior at conferences and their home campus.

- Offer in-person or online "unconscious bias", harassment, and ethics training materials for steering committee members and major conference organizers.
    - Either before conference (e.g., ISCA 2018) or during conference (HPCA/CGO/PPOPP 2018)
    - Prioritize candidates for PC and organizing positions who have availed themselves of such training. SIGS or TCs should track who has completed training.
- Document conference and steering committee policies on a public webpage

**Program Committee**
- Selection of PC Members:
    - As above, ensure broad demographics along many dimensions.  Seniority, topical expertise, geography, academia/industry, gender/racial/ethnic balance.
    - "We tried but they turned us down."  For both organizing committee (see above) and also program committee, be ready with "spare" names.  Since there are so few of them, women and underrepresented minorities are asked to do disproportionate amounts of service, and are often forced to say no at a higher rate.
- Review Process
    - Encourage double-blind reviewing processes.
    - http://www.cs.utexas.edu/users/mckinley/notes/blind.html
    - Single versus Double blind reviewing at WSDM 2017 https://arxiv.org/abs/1702.00502
    - Effectiveness of Anonymization in Double-Blind Review https://arxiv.org/abs/1709.01609
    - Although not perfect, automated review assignment tools may (if used with care) offer improvements over inviting reviews from "people we know". http://torontopapermatching.org/webapp/profileBrowser/about_us/
    - Sponsoring entities (ACM/IEEE/AAAI/USENIX level or SIG/TC level) can provide default submission and review management software that voluntarily tracks demographics at submission time.  Kept blind from reviewers and PC members, but can be used to assess percentages from different demographic groups and track long-term trends in author representation and diversity.  (It is

impossible to track gender or racial/ethnic data by examining author names alone.)
- Discussions during PC meeting
    - To reduce the risk of implicit bias, PC meeting discussions should remain blind. Conflicted PC member should leave the room without learning the paper or author identity.
    - Deliberately de-blinding a paper is a serious ethical offense. Conferences should develop and publicize policies for regarding how situations will be handled when Authors, reviewers, or PC members deliberately seek to "de-blind" a paper.
- Keynote Speakers and Panelists. Use SC resources (e.g., long-term list) to avoid repetitively inviting people or topics.

**Other Events**
- Consider holding co-located events with conferences, or interweaving diversity and inclusion events into the main conference program.
    - Avoid creating separate "diversity tracks" and seek to structure all events to welcome all attendees.
- Doctoral workshops, dissertation awards, mentoring workshops for graduating PhDs and new faculty. (Co-located events). Selection of speakers can show emphasis on diversity and inclusion.
- Student Poster Sessions (ACM SRC, CRA-E) for both undergraduate and graduate students.
- Consider events that reach out broadly to teaching-focused institutions and Minority-Serving Institutions (eg HBCUs, etc.)
- CRA-W Discipline-Specific Career Mentoring Workshop:
    - Funding: https://cra.org/cra-w/discipline-specific-mentoring-workshops-dsw/
    - Co-locating such diversity workshops with key conferences can improve the diversity demographics of the main conference.
- Consider that weekend events (e.g., a Saturday workshop before a Monday conference start) can be viewed as family-unfriendly, which can impact attendance and how they are received.

**Sponsoring Entities:**
- ACM, IEEE, AAAI, USENIX etc should use diversity/inclusion assessments as part of their periodic reviews of the health (viability) of a SIG (or TC for IEEE).
    - https://www.acm.org/special-interest-groups/volunteer-resources/program-reviews/toc
- Sponsoring entities should offer standard conference registration platforms that request (voluntary) demographic data (gender, race, ethnicity, seniority/degree date, etc.) as part of registering for a conference. Such data should be collected year by year and archived by the sponsoring entity.

**Broader Community Resources**
- Maintain diverse and inclusive and openly updatable lists of possible keynote speakers, program committee members etc. Expertise + Interests + past roles.
- A common place where people get "lost" is when they graduate with their PhD but do not

yet have a highly-visible post-PhD track record.  Maintaining an annual list of PhD graduates for the community (with long-term contact info) can help keep these people in view as they transition into their next role.

- Industry researchers are less likely to have web pages than academics.  Therefore, lists that include a long-term contact address and/or LinkedIn (or similar) page can help keep them visible and under consideration for PC membership and other roles.
- In some communities, groups like WICARCH (Women in Computer Architecture) or WiML (Women in ML) maintain these lists.  Long-term, it would be desirable for SIGs, TCs, or other similar entities to take on this workload.  At the very least, the SIG or TC should provide long-term hosting or links to publicize these lists.

**Conference-related Awards**
- Age-limited awards (e.g., "early career" awards) should have flexible allowances for family or medical leave.
- Avoid insider bias or cronyism in award committees.
  - Committees should abide by conflict-of-interest rules: https://awards.acm.org/awards-committees/conflict-of-interest
  - Committees should have algorithms for how new members are invited after nominations arrive, if too many committee members are conflicted with nominees. For example, there can be a documented invitation order for requesting previous committee members to return to serve another year.
  - Committees should be active in encouraging a diverse set of nominations from the community.
- Have documented term-limits for award committee members.
- Make award winners publicly visible (e.g., a webpage).  Sponsoring entities should track and publish demographics of award winners over time.
- Creating new awards for "diversity categories" may not be as effective or desireable as ensuring appropriate diversity among the winners of existing overall awards.