Professional SIGCSE Chapter - Getting Started

Here is how set up a Professional SIGCSE Chapter:

First, start meeting informally: lectures; discussion groups; and workshops, etc. This will give you a general idea of the level of interest in your area. Begin identifying people willing to serve as the nucleus, or core, of your group. Eventually your core must consist of ten people to petition for chartering as a SIGCSE Chapter.

Second, the core group members should become part of the ACM SIGCSE network by joining ACM or ACM SIGCSE. This core group should designate at least three acting officers: a chair, a vice-chair, and a Treasurer. These interim officers must be members of both ACM and ACM SIGCSE. Once formed, your general membership need belong only to your group (the officers of your group must always belong to ACM and ACM SIGCSE).

Third, the core group and its interim officers must complete a chapter request (http://campus.acm.org/public/chapters/AutoChap/) as follows:

   Step 1: Enter chapter name, chapter email address, chapter type (Professional), and chapter sub-type (SIGCSE).

   Step 2: Enter the names of three individuals to serve as Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer. These individuals must be ACM Professional Members and SIGCSE Members.

   Step 3: Enter chapter contact information (postal address and phone number).

   Step 4: Enter the names of at least ten (10) individuals willing to carry out the chapter's mission and participate in activities. A CSV file (comma-separated values) containing the last name, middle, first name, and email addresses of these members will be required through the automated charting application (Example: "Doe," "John," "johndoe@domain.com"). You may also enter each member name individually.

Once the completed application is submitted, SIG chapters require additional approval by volunteers; this secondary approval process will take up to 2 weeks. You will be notified via email on the approval of your chapter.

FOR UNITED STATES CHAPTERS: The IRS requires chapters operating in the United States to have an Employer Identification Number (EIN). The EIN will serve as proof of a chapter's nonprofit status and allow ACM to include the chapter in our annual group filing with the IRS. ACM will request an EIN on your behalf which you will receive upon chartering.

If you have further questions regarding starting an ACM chapter, please contact local_activities@acm.org

Startup Support
For help in the formation/recognition process and to coordinate the activities of all Chapters please contact the Chapters Committee of the SIGCSE Board. You can obtain the names of the committee members by contacting the SIGCSE Board at sigcse-chair@sigcse.org.

The Chapters Committee can also authorize important growth support, principally in the form of sending emails to ACM and ACM SIGCSE members in your area. If you want to contact local ACM and SIGCSE members about your chapter or an upcoming event, contact local_activities@hq.acm.org with a draft of the email you would like sent. ACM will review the draft and notify you if there are any issues, and send the approved email. Each chartered chapter is also eligible for a listing on the ACM SIGCSE Chapters home page (http://sigcse.org/sigcse/programs/local-chapters). A contact listing and email address on the SIGCSE website can be a tremendous boost for a new chapter.

Responsibilities of a Chapter
A chapter must hold a minimum of one meeting per year to be considered active. A chapter is also expected to set up AND maintain an online presence, for example a website or Facebook page. Finally, you should keep in regular contact with the SIGCSE Chapters Committee. It is important to let them know you are meeting and serving your constituency.

Once a year, an officer of your chapter must file an annual chapter activity report. This will be your most formal contact with ACM, our parent organization; ACM Headquarters will notify you at the appropriate time (usually June or July) of what and where to file. This annual report is also forwarded to the SIGCSE Board for information.

You will need to abide by the Professional SIG Chapters: ACM Bylaws, so every officer should read them.

Handy Hints
A few words of advice on getting your group together: Distribute responsibilities; forming a chapter and keeping up the momentum requires more than a few dedicated souls. Even "minor" tasks take time and energy and can contribute to burnout. Delegating responsibilities is a deceptively difficult skill; don't underestimate its importance. A well-structured organization whose officers and board members have well defined responsibilities will survive longer than one without such a plan.

Newsletters are vital to communicating with your members. During your formative period, one or two page timely newsletters are better than infrequent extravaganzas with stale news. It takes time to develop a really good, stylish newsletter. Your efforts might be better spent on energizing members.

Try to schedule regular meetings (for example, the first Tuesday of every other month at X place) so that interested individuals always have a rough idea of when and where you meet, and can plan accordingly. Many companies, libraries, and educational institutions will provide a meeting room at no charge.

Establish a fixed contact person or place or phone number for questions about membership and activities as soon as possible. A floating contact will frustrate inquiries and stifle enthusiasm. How can new members join if they can't find you? The Chapters Committee can help you by creating an email alias for your chapter on the SIGCSE web site.