

Liège, July 10th 2017

Dear friends and colleagues of the "*Structures in Fire*" community,

This newsletter is first to inform those of you who could not come to Princeton in June 2016 about the outcome of the ninth international conference SiF'16.

The number of proposals that we received has again increased from the previous conference because 250 extended abstracts were sent for review. Each abstract was reviewed by three reviewers from the list of 59 reviewers who served for this conference. Owing to the fact that we now organise two parallel sessions in the afternoon, 150 abstracts could be accepted which led to 120 oral presentations and 16 poster presentations.

The papers have been printed in full extent in the proceedings. Each delegate receives a paper copy as well as an electronic copy on a USB key. For those who did not attend the conference, the proceedings can be found at: <http://www.structuresinfire.com/corpo/conferences/sif16.pdf>. Not less than 210 delegates attended the conference, coming from 30 different countries, 80% of them from outside the USA.

An informal meeting was held at the end of the conference during which the delegates could express their views and suggestions for improvement of the future SiF conferences. The minutes of this meeting are reproduced as an annex to this message.

On behalf of the steering committee, I express my warmest thanks to Maria Garlok and her team for the excellent conference they have organized.

Don't forget to visit our website maintained by Paulo: www.structuresinfire.com. You can find interesting information such as the proceedings of previous SiF workshops and conferences. Don't hesitate to contact Paulo if you want to contribute to the web site with relevant information.

The steering committee has decided that the next SiF conference in 2018 will be organized by Ali Nadjai from FireSert, Ulster University, Belfast, from June 6 to 8. Please note these dates for yourself and help us advertising the conference. A web page dedicated to this conference can be found here:

<https://www.ulster.ac.uk/conference/structures-in-fire-2018>.

I will serve as chairman of the scientific committee for this 10th conference. Information for submitting the extended abstracts as well as letters of invitation to belong to the scientific committee will be sent soon. Any volunteer willing to serve as a reviewer can send me an e-mail with some information about his field of expertise and research activities in the domain of structures to fire. Please take care to type "SIF18" in the "object" field and get back to me if you don't receive acknowledgment to your message.

Proposals for hosting SiF'2020 should be sent not later than one month before the start of SiF'2018 (no proposal has been received so far). The objective is to announce the location of SiF'2020 at SiF'2018. According to our rotation from continent to continent, SiF 2020 will be held in Asia (our definition being anywhere outside Africa, America and Europe). The bid form with the rules can be downloaded here:

<http://www.structuresinfire.com/corpo/conferences.html>

Andy Buchanan, who had organized the second conference (at that time still a workshop) in Christchurch in 2002 and has served on the steering committee since it was created in 2006, has decided that the time has come to step down from the committee. We want here to thank him for the time he gave to the SiF movement, for the number of contacts that he established when introducing different delegates to one another, for the smile that never left his face and for the excellent presentations that he gave in our conferences. He has been an inspiring example for many young and not so young researchers. Andy is still active (he published the second edition of his best-seller recently) and we will surely see him again in our conferences.

The steering committee has decided to propose to Kang Hai TAN to replace Andy in the steering committee. Kang Hai is Professor at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. He has organized the fifth SiF conference in 2008. We are particularly pleased that he accepted our proposal and we are looking forward to collaborate with him for the SiF movement.

We look forward to meet you in Belfast.

For the steering committee

Jean-Marc Franssen

Sif Conference, Princeton University, 2016
Minutes of discussion at the closing ceremony, Friday 10 June, 2016.

In general, great satisfaction was expressed about the Princeton Conference.

Things that worked well:

- Informal breakfast supplied every day. Excellent for networking and a prompt start.
- Posters in the same venue as the coffee breaks.
- Voting for the best poster competition.
- One-minute poster commercials. There could be a little break between each one.
- Lunch in a separate venue was great, not too far to walk.
- The buffet style conference dinner with minimal background music and very short speeches. Lots of time for networking and chatting.
- A hard copy book, plus a memory stick, worked well for the proceedings.
- The 12+3minute presentations worked well. No big support for 10+5minutes.
- The balance of single sessions and double parallel sessions was fine.
- It was good to have inexpensive dorm accommodation close to the conference venue.
- Double-sided name tags were excellent.

Simple ideas that could improve the conference:

- Circulate a list of participants' names to everyone, early in the conference.
- Ask the moderators to repeat all questions from the floor, for clarity.
- Have a student breakfast, or some other get-together for graduate students.
- Circulate some PDF presentation files after the conference, if authors agree.

Suggestions for bigger changes:

- Find some time for more focussed workshops, perhaps more parallel sessions at certain times, or post-events on the Saturday morning after the conference.
- Find a better way for reviewers to communicate their comments to authors. Not easy.

Item for future information:

- The application deadline for the organization of SiF conferences is one month before the next conference. This should be clear on the SiF website.