

Women@GECCO 2016 Chairs' Welcome

It is our great pleasure to welcome you to the 4th Women@GECCO workshop.

The broad objective of this workshop is to bring participants of GECCO together to share in ways that will generate, encourage, and support academic, professional, and social opportunities in evolutionary computation. The workshop will foster, sustain and impart role models, and offer the opportunity to interact with others “in the same boat”.

We invite and encourage all faculty, professional and student members of the community interested in Evolutionary Computation to attend, regardless of gender.

Introduction

The workshop is a continuation of previous editions which have been held at GECCO in Amsterdam, Vancouver, and Madrid.

The goal of Women@GECCO is to provide a caring and sharing environment where the many pressing questions of women in the evolutionary computation field can be discussed openly. Workshop participation is not limited to women; indeed, a significant portion of our audience has consisted of men since the inception of the workshop. The main reason for this is that in the fast-pace of academia and research, many researchers, independent of their gender and identity, find themselves looking for effective ways to balance between a strive for excellence and a healthy lifestyle.

At the workshop we will address any new issues raised by the participants and continue discussion on questions posed at previous workshops:

- How can women be encouraged to enter the field of evolutionary computation?
 - How can we promote evolutionary computation to women choosing graduate degrees?
 - How can we efficiently disseminate evolutionary computation information to pre-college girls?
- What will help women in evolutionary computation remain in the field long term?
 - What are the different challenges along a career path?
 - What strategies will help parents navigate career and family responsibilities?
 - What changes can be adopted by women as a group, by our larger community with respect to our conferences and awards, or by our academic institutions with respect to positions and promotions?
- In what ways can senior women support more junior ones or peers support each other?
 - Sometimes women can feel isolated due to particular research settings or simply by being outnumbered. What can other women and men do to help?
 - Every woman's experience is different and shaped by cultural, societal, institutional and personal influences. Are there ways to support across these differences?

In collaboration with ACM, we will again provide mentors to all ACM-W scholarship recipients.

Schedule

The program for the **first session** (Thursday, July 21st, 2:00pm-3:50pm) is as follows.

- Introduction of workshop and participants
- Invited talk by Stephanie Forrest
- Science Slam: short performances of selected speakers
- “Ice-Breaker”: getting to know each other
- Open Discussion

An important element of the workshop is the opportunity to participate in a highly-interactive, open discussion session and exchange experiences and lessons with one another. We encourage both scientific as well as personal discussions. While the science slam and the invited talk typically have a rather scientific focus, the open discussion as well as the “ice-breaker”-session have a rather personal touch.

As in previous years, there will be a **second session** (Thursday, July 21st, 4:10pm-6:00pm) allowing for a more detailed and more interactive complementing discussion on work-life matters. This session can be attended independently of a participation at the main Women@GECCO workshop.

Invited Talk

The relevance of role models cannot be overstated. Over the years, our workshop has held an invited talk, where a female role model shares with us her passion for her field, in the context of her life and career story. This year we have the privilege to host Prof. Stephanie Forrest, who will also be presenting a plenary lecture at the main conference.

Stephanie is a leading figure in the field of complex adaptive systems, at the frontier between computing and biology. Her original research crosses the boundaries of these areas, with topics such as computational immunology, automated software repair, biologically inspired approaches to computer security, and the biology of software. Her work involves theory, practical relevance, public engagement and informing policy; making her a rare example of an all-round academic. This, combined with her friendly and approachable manner, makes her presence at our forum even more valuable. Her work and life are a constant source of inspiration. We warmly welcome the opportunity to listen to Stephanie this year!

Science Slam

Started at the Women@GECCO workshop in 2015, the science slam has proven to be a very successful and popular element of the workshop. Humorous and imaginative presentations ranging from role-playing with lego bricks to poetry combined both entertainment and scientific contributions in an engaging way and initiated lively discussions. We are looking forward to another round of very different creative presentations of interesting research projects.

Ice-Breaking Activity

To foster the networking aspect of the workshop, this year's Women@GECCO will feature a "Speed Dating" session as its ice-breaker activity (replacing the poster session run last year). The purpose of this activity is:

- To provide participants with an opportunity to meet new people.
- To create opportunities for interaction on an informal one-to-one basis (rather than a more intimidating group setting).
- To uncover and explore joint scientific interests, possibly kick-starting future collaborations.
- To facilitate spontaneous participation, as no significant preparation is required!

The format of the session will follow a speed-dating format, with introductions centered around an "elevator-pitch" of one's research. Anyone is welcome to join in!

Complementing Discussion on Work-Life Balance

We started a conversation on work/life balance in 2014 and have been continuing that discussion each year. This year, we want to continue that conversation and dive into discussing what each one of us expects or has expected from our first jobs and how to combine a successful career with a rich private life. We want to hear from you:

- What do you expect your work/life balance to look like in academia versus industry?
- What are / had you worried about for balance in your first job?
- What worked and what didn't the last time you started at a new job?
- What are your expectations for your first job's balance / what were your expectations?
- What do you think about the different kinds of schools and how the work/life balance would be there?

At this year's work/life balance conversation, we encourage everyone to join us and take a more active role in this discussion.

We invite everyone at different stages of their career from students, to early career participants, to more senior ones!

Online References

- Women@GECCO 2016 <http://sig.sigevo.org/index.html/tiki-index.php?page=Women%20at%20GECCO>
- Women@GECCO 2015 <http://www.sigevo.org/gecco-2015/workshops.html#wag>
- Women@GECCO 2014 <http://www.sigevo.org/gecco-2014/workshops.html#wag>
- Women@GECCO 2013 <https://sites.google.com/site/womengecco/>



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Women@GECCO 2016 Organization

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