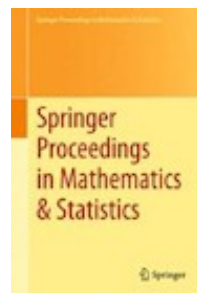


The 53rd Southeastern International Conference on Combinatorics, Graph Theory and Computing: *Successfully Building Community in a New, “Hybrid” World*

Communicated by Fred Hoffman and Maria Provost

The Southeastern International Conference on Combinatorics, Graph Theory, and Computing (SEICCGTC) is an international meeting of mathematical scientists, held annually in March during Spring Break at Florida Atlantic University (FAU) in Boca Raton, Florida. The conference includes a program with plenary lectures by invited speakers, as well as contributed papers by participants. A valuable part of the conference is the opportunity afforded for informal conversations about the methods participants employ in their professional work in business, industry, and government. Conference proceedings appear in the series Springer PROMS.



The 53rd meeting of the SEICCGTC was held in the Student Union Building and Live Oak Pavilion on the Boca Raton campus of Florida Atlantic University, March 7–11, 2022. This year, we organized a “hybrid” meeting with a total of 260 people in attendance. One hundred and thirteen people attended “in-person,” while 147 people attended virtually on the Whova platform. A few people attended part of the conference on site, and part of it from another location. A total of 236 participants downloaded and enjoyed some, if not all, of the conference on the Whova platform. The majority of the contributed talks, 112, were presented virtually, while 51 were given in person. The five invited plenary speakers had all intended to participate in person, but two of them had to switch to virtual participation for personal reasons.

Conference participants were welcomed by Dr. Teresa Wilcox, Interim Dean of the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science and by Dr. Stephen Locke, Chair of FAU’s Department of Mathematical Sciences.

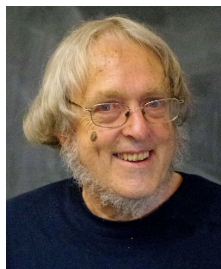
Invited plenary speakers



Dr. Bela Bajnok
of Gettysburg College,



Dr. Steve Butler
of Iowa State University.



Dr Peter Cameron
of the University of Saint Andrews,



Dr. Karen Collins
of Wesleyan University,



Dr. Jennifer Quinn
of the University of Washington,

Dr. Bajnok and Dr. Cameron appeared virtually; the others appeared in person. Dr. Collins presented one lecture, and each of the other invited speakers presented two plenary lectures.

This year’s special sessions were on “Graph Reconstruction” (organized by Leslie Hogben) and “Matroids and Rigidity Theory” (organized by Daniel Bernstein and Zvi Rosen).

The conference was expertly coordinated by Dr. Maria Provost. Superb technical support was provided by Andrew Gultz.



Fred Hoffman Maria Provost Steve Locke.

Receptions were held for in-person participants on three evenings, at the Live Oak Patio on Monday and Tuesday evenings, and on Thursday evening at the FAU Club. The conference banquet was held Wednesday at the Pavilion Grille, a little over a mile from campus.



In the history of SEICCGTCs the 53rd was the first time it was held in hybrid mode. Attendance was either physically present on-site or remote via the virtual conferencing platform. It enjoyed a large number of attendees that totaled 260 and included 76 students. This was a decrease from the 293 that attended the fully virtual 52nd SEICCGTC.

A survey was made available in early March, 2022 to 260 participants who had attended the 53rd meeting of the SEICCGTC. Seventy-one responses to the online conference satisfaction survey were received for a response rate of 27.3%. Of the total 71 survey respondents, 46% attended virtually, while 25% attended in person, and 12% attended both virtually and in person. Eighty-five percent of those who responded to the survey stated that they would prefer to attend the SEICCGTC 54 “in-person.” The most significant finding of this study is the importance of collegiality among friends and colleagues and collaborators.

The conference received partial support from the National Security Agency. Other sponsors included CRC Press/Taylor-Francis, Springer Nature, and The Institute of Combinatorics and its Applications.

We feel that the hybrid effort was successful, but we think that an in-person event is more desirable.

