



GCC2018 Call for Hosts

This document is the formal call for proposals to host the 2018 Galaxy Community Conference.

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Submission Process

Proposals to host the 2018 Galaxy Community Conference should be emailed to Dave Clements <clements@galaxyproject.org> **by November 30, 2016**. Applications will be reviewed by Dave Clements, Jeremy Goecks, Anton Nekrutenko, and James Taylor, all of the core [Galaxy Team](#), and a host will be selected and confirmed no later than December 30, 2016.

Eligibility

Any organization in North America may submit a proposal to host the 2018 Galaxy Community Conference (GCC2018) (GCCs in *odd* years are held outside North America).

Event Scope

GCCs are multi-day, multi-event conferences. They typically include 2-3 days of hackathons, 2 days of training that may overlap with the hackathons somewhat, and a 2 day meeting. GCC training features multiple concurrent tracks covering a full range of topics, from *using* Galaxy to updating the code. The meeting typically includes keynotes, accepted talks, lightning talks, posters & demos, vendor sessions, and birds-of-a-feather gatherings.

GCC's have drawn between 200 and 230 total participants every year since 2012. Most participants will attend both the meeting and some or all of the training. Participants can typically register for any set of non-overlapping options they choose, with around 180-200 attending the meeting, and the same attending the training.

Each GCC has had a different set of events. We started with just a two day meeting with space for lightning talks and breakouts. Over the years we added a Training Day, poster sessions, vendor/sponsor exhibits, birds-of-a-feather sessions, a conference dinner, a keynote speaker, a coding hackathon, a second day of training, a data hackathon, and a software demo session.

Information about all past GCCs is available online. The websites for the previous 6 GCCs are:

GCC2017: <https://gcc2017.sciencesconf.org/>, Montpellier, France (still under construction)

GCC2016: <https://gcc2016.iu.edu/>, Bloomington, Indiana, United States

GCC2015: <http://gcc2015.tsl.ac.uk/>, Norwich, United Kingdom

GCC2014: <http://galaxyproject.org/GCC2014>, Baltimore, Maryland, United States

GCC2013: <http://galaxyproject.org/GCC2013>, Oslo, Norway

GCC2012: <http://galaxyproject.org/GCC2012>, Chicago, Illinois, United States

Proposal

Please limit proposals to no more than 16 pages, including pictures and supporting documents. Pithy is good, but informative is more important. Feel free to link to any information that is already available online. Proposals should cover several key areas, at whatever level of detail is known at the time of the proposal.

Event Summary

Please describe what you would like to see offered at GCC2018. This can be the same set of events offered at previous GCCs, or a combination of new and old events. Each year is different from, and an improvement on, previous years.

At minimum, the proposal should contain support for at least

- One or two concurrent hackathons lasting 2 or 3 days.
- Two days of training.
- Two days of meeting.

These events have typically been presented over 5 days, starting first with the hackathons, and ending with the meeting. However, other arrangements and durations have been suggested by some participants and will be considered (see, for example, the Hackathons section below)..

Specific dates are not required at this time, but if you have specific options then please include them. Past GCCs have been in May, June, and July. Whenever possible, we try not to overlap with other conferences such as BOSC, ISMB, and SMBE that a significant percentage of attendees are also interested in.

Training

We've experimented with a couple of different ideas for training lately, and not all of them have been successful. Every year the evaluations say we want more training. Prior to GCC2015 we had a single day of training, with multiple tracks covering topics across the using to administering Galaxy spectrum. At GCC2015 the standard training day was preceded by an additional day of training with a single track of *using Galaxy* topics. This was a great success with over 70 people registering for the added day.

At GCC2016 we expanded to two full days of training, each featuring five tracks. This enabled us to offer 30 training sessions on over 25 topics. However, it also had serious downsides. First, several sessions had low attendance (less than 15), which is discouraging for instructors. Second, while we doubled the topic pool, we did not double the instructor pool. Many instructors ended up teaching 3 or more sessions. This is exhausting to instructors.

For GCC2017 we are going back to the GCC2015 model: We'll start with one day of using Galaxy training in a single track, followed by a second day of using and administering Galaxy training, offered in multiple tracks.

Any submission that proposes going back to two full days of multi-track training should include specific suggestions for addressing the problems we encountered at GCC2016.

Hackathons

The GCC Coding Hackathon has been held since GCC2014. The GCC Datathon has been held since GCC2015. These two events have always met concurrently and in close proximity to each other. Ideal hackathon spaces have a place for each hackathon to gather as a group, and then have space to spread out into smaller groups. GCC2016 had an ideal hackathon space at the Indiana University Library: there were two larger meeting rooms, and then lots of smaller meeting spaces with tables and whiteboards.

A serious suggestion that came out of GCC2016 was to move the hackathons to the two days after the main conference. This would address some drawbacks, and add some advantages. A serious drawback it would address is that under the current setup many hackathon participants are distracted by preparing their training materials and/or their conference presentations. Having it after also enables people to get a better idea what to work on during the hackathons.

Finally, something to be avoided at all costs: Do not overlap the hackathons with a multi-track day of training. Many hackers are also teachers, and this tends to decimate the ranks of the hackathons.

What's in a name?

There is some research and a lot of anecdotal evidence that "hackathons" are not seen as welcoming events. Many people see them as being hostile to novices, and as being something competitive. In reality, Galaxy Hackathons are as collaborative as we can make them, and one of the key gains from them is that (more than anything else we do)

they expand the Galaxy contributor community. However, getting people who are new to the community to see past the hackathon name can be a challenge.

The move to “Datathon” is a first step to address these concerns. We would welcome any rebranding suggestions you may have as part of the proposal.

Facilities

Please describe facilities that would be used for GCC. Facilities should include

- A large meeting space for all attendees
- Smaller spaces for training, birds-of-a-feather, hackathons, and informal gatherings
- Robust wifi in all spaces is essential - expect everyone to be connected simultaneously
- High foot traffic areas for vendors/sponsors to have exhibits
- Space for posters and/or demos
- Space for catering

Ideally, events happening on the same day would be physically close to one another. Pictures are helpful here. *Floor plans and maps are really helpful here.* Multiple options for facilities can be given.

Lodging

Proposals can include lodging or not. Not including lodging makes the conference much easier to manage, but also makes it less attractive to participants. Please describe what, if any, lodging will be available for the conference. Including an inexpensive option such as dorms makes the conference significantly more attractive to students and postdocs, and to others who are containing their costs (which is most people). Inexpensive lodging options that are easily accessible from conference facilities also lead to a much tighter sense of community during the event.

Dorms, if significantly less expensive than other options, can also be an opportunity to generate revenue.

Hotel options can also be included in proposals. Ideally lodging is within easy walking distance of conference events, and if it's not the proposal should include options for transporting people.

Local Institutional Support

Having local people who are committed to the success of the event is absolutely key. It is essential to have several people from the host organization on the event organizing committee. It is also very helpful to have local admin support for things like managing paperwork and catering. Finally, having buy-in (even enthusiasm) from senior administration at the host organization can go a long way towards smoothing bumps.

(Dave Clements, the Galaxy Training and Outreach Coordinator also provides a great deal of organizational support for GCCs, taking on most responsibilities that do not require a local presence. Dave has been doing this since GCC2011.)

Transportation

Please address how hard or easy it is for people to get to the event, and how participants will get around, once they are at the event. If lodging is included in the proposal, please describe travel between lodging and the event.

Ideally, the event will be within 2 hours of a major airport, and lodging and event facilities will be within easy walking (or rapid transit) distance of each other.

Finances

Estimates of the more significant expected costs should be included, if available. Large expenses tend to be for facilities, taxes, lodging, session recording, and sometimes networking/IT support. Estimates for catering don't need to be included (but can be). Catering is a large expense, but it is expected to be a relatively similar cost across hosts.

If any local financial sponsorships are likely, please describe those as well. These have been a huge help at several past GCCs.

Finally, please include a proposal for how financial losses or excess revenue would be handled. We have used a variety of arrangements in past years (and our last revenue shortfall was GCC2011). Our starting suggestion for each year is to split the responsibility for shortfalls, or any excess funds, between the hosts and the Galaxy Project. Over the years there have been two hosts who passed the entire surplus back to the Galaxy Project: the 2012 surplus was used to defray costs for GCC2013, and the 2014 and 2015 surpluses were used to set up and fund the Galaxy Community Fund, which is used to support things like project outreach and scholarships.

Sponsorships and Vendors

GCCs have had strong vendor support since we first invited sponsors in 2012. Many sponsors return multiple times, and each year has also featured new sponsors. Each year the Galaxy Project works hard to identify and recruit sponsors for GCC. Conference hosts are also expected to identify and contact potential sponsors, especially those with a strong local presence or with whom the host has business relationships with.

Sponsorship packages are reconsidered and adjusted each year by the organizing committee.

Location & Host Organization(s)

Please include anything about the host city or organization(s) that makes this proposal particularly attractive.

FAQ

What are some of the costs in hosting a GCC?

There are many costs. Some of them are:

- Meeting room rentals (pretty much from 7am to midnight)
- Wifi charges (everyone gets wifi included, and it needs to be robust)
- IT support time
- The Conference dinner
- Catered lunches and breaks
- Sometimes catered breakfasts
- Projector and screen rental
- Poster board rental
- Power strip rental/purchase
- Minimum guarantees for lodging (if the proposal includes lodging)
- Lanyards
- Printed programs

- T-Shirts
- Session recording and packaging expenses
- We also like to comp the registrations for Training Instructors, members of conf committees, hackathon organizers, and the keynote speaker (we try to find an affordable-to-transport keynote speaker)
- Transportation if we have official lodging that is not walking distance to the conference
- Transport to and from conference dinner, if it is offsite.
- Sponsor booth material rental (sometimes) and setup (sometimes)
- Tax (sometimes, mostly in Europe)
- Payment and registration provider processing fees

Typically all costs are paid for out of conference revenues and sponsorship funds.

How much of a time commitment is hosting and organizing a GCC?

A lot, especially for the lead local organizer(s). The Galaxy Team representative (most likely Dave Clements) will take the lead on many things that don't require a local presence, but this still leaves an enormous amount of work to be done by the hosts, including working with catering, lodging, facilities, printers, security and IT. The registration web site is also typically handled by the host organization's infrastructure and that takes coordination as well.

This time commitment is most noticeable during these several peak periods:

- Just before early registration opens
- When early registration closes.
- Two weeks before the conference through the end of the conference.

You may also want to ask current and past host lead organizers how much time is involved:

Robert Ping <robping@iu.edu> (2016)

Dan MacLean <Dan.MacLean@sainsbury-laboratory.ac.uk> (2015)

Karen Reddy <kreddy4@jhmi.edu> (2014)

Geir Kjetil Sandve <geirkjetil@gmail.com> (2013)

Neil Bahroos <nbahroos@uic.edu> (2012)

It is a significant commitment of time.

How much does GCC compete with other Galaxy events?

GCC is the largest, but not the only, Galaxy community event. How do these smaller events compete for attendees with GCC? The short answer is that they don't. Recent years have seen regional events in France, Germany, Japan, Spain, and Australia. There is also a constant global stream of training events that use Galaxy. Most of these events are small and limited in scope, and if anything, increase the size of the community and the number of people who consider attending GCC. Larger events like the Galaxy Tokyo Workshop and the Galaxy Australasia Meeting tend to be held in locations that are distant from GCC locations - attendance from these regions at GCC is small to begin with.

Demographics

The sponsorship prospectus for the current year includes demographic information and is available on request. This is used to provide information to potential sponsors about this year's conference.

What if we are not in the United States?

Past years have demonstrated that GCC can consistently draw 200+ researchers when held in Europe or the United States. Galaxy, however, is a global project with a significant presence on other continents and in other countries as well. As a project we are committed to addressing the needs of these communities as well. Therefore we will consider proposals for holding GCC2018 outside of the United States. We realize that this may result in a drop in attendance that year.

If you are proposing hosting GCC2018 outside the United States, please include an estimate of the size of the regional community, and how many you think would attend the GCC. Please also describe any particular efforts to reach out to the regional and global Galaxy communities. The project will fully commit to promoting GCC to the Galaxy Community, no matter where the event is held.

Other Questions?

The Galaxy Project has a great deal of information about past events, how things have been done, and what worked and what hasn't. If you have any questions or concerns when preparing the proposal, please do not hesitate to send them to Dave Clements.

