

## Conference on Learning Theory 2026: Preface

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This volume contains 191 papers accepted for publication at the 39th Annual Conference on Learning Theory (COLT 2026), held in San Diego, USA, on June 30–July 3, 2026. Each accepted paper was allotted a 10 minute talk as well as a poster presentation. The conference received a record-breaking 657 submissions, an increase of close to 20% compared to 2025. The review process was handled by a senior committee formed of 128 members, who served as both meta-reviewers and reviewers. An additional 188 program committee members served as reviewers. We are grateful for the efforts of these volunteers, who have maintained the high standard of COLT reviewing.

The best paper award went to “Optimal Reconstruction from Linear Queries” by Yuval Filmus, Shay Moran, and Elizaveta Nesterova. The Mark Fulk award for the best student paper was given to “Minimax Limits of  $k$ -Fold Cross-Validation via Majority” by Ido Nachum, Rüdiger Urbanke, and Thomas Weinberger. We thank those members of the reviewing committee who assisted us in making these decisions.

Like the previous year, the conference included a workshop and tutorial day, with 2 workshops, 6 tutorials and a community event. The open problem session included 5 open problems of which 3 were invited. In addition to the contributed papers, the conference program included invited talks by Shafi Goldwasser (MIT and UC Berkeley), Maria-Florina Balcan (CMU) and Robert Schapire (Microsoft Research).

Local organization was handled by Mikhail Belkin, Yian Ma and Amirhesam Abedsoltan (all at UCSD). The workshops and tutorials chair was Lydia Zakyntinou (Johns Hopkins University) and the open problems chair was Shay Moran (Technion, Google). We thank the COLT steering committee for their support throughout the organization process, including Pranjal Awasthi, Peter Bartlett, Clément Canonne, Dylan Foster, Surbhi Goel, Benjamin Guedj, Daniel Hsu, Gautam Kamath, Emilie Kaufmann, Shay Moran, Sasha Rakhlin, Karthik Sridharan, Matus Telgarsky and Tim van Erven. Lastly, thank you to the publication chair Wojciech Kotłowski (Poznań University of Technology) for arranging the proceedings.

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