

Minutes of ICAPS Executive Council Meeting on September 23, 2007

council members attending:

Mark Boddy
Amadeo Cesta
Enrico Giunchiglia
Rao Kambhampati (from 3:55 to 4:15)
Craig Knoblock
Sven Koenig
Karen Myers
Kanna Rajan (from 3:30 to 4:00 by phone)
Reid Simmons (from 3:30 to 4:00) by phone)
Steve Smith
Sylvie Thiebaut (from 3:35 to 3:55)
Manuela Veloso (until 4:45)
Shlomo Zilberstein

visitors attending:

Maria Fox (until 4:15)
Ioannis Refanidis
Jussi Rintanen

Note: A small number of topics have been slightly re-grouped to provide some continuity of topics.

The pre-meeting started at 3:00.

The council discussed the advantages and disadvantages of holding ICAPS in September versus June (including that classes in Europe are in session in June, while classes in the US are in session in September), with the idea to keep the date approximately the same for all ICAPS conferences in the near future. The council agreed that ICAPS can be held in September without causing major problems.

Mark reported that many ICAPS attendees requested printed proceedings despite the agreement between ICAPS and AAAI that provides free downloads of published ICAPS papers from the AAAI-maintained ICAPS publication webpages. Manuela requested that there be a way of getting printed ICAPS proceedings mailed.

The council discussed having another summer school on planning and scheduling, ideally directly co-located with ICAPS. Two ideas were discussed, namely having the summer school for only two days immediately before or after ICAPS

(ideally in combination with the doctoral symposium) or every evening during ICAPS (since many graduate students from the US will not be able to spend a whole week away from school in September). Amadeo and Ioannis will investigate the feasibility of offering a summer school in conjunction with ICAPS 2009 in case their proposal to host ICAPS 2009 were accepted. Maria will approach one potential funding source and organizer.

The council discussed the new features of ICAPS 2007 (such as having parallel tracks and session commentators) and agreed that it would be good to allow the participants of ICAPS 2007 to express their opinions in a web survey, which should allow participants to state that they do not have a strong opinion. Amadeo and Ioannis will investigate the feasibility of such a web survey and conduct one, if possible in case their proposal to host ICAPS 2009 were accepted.

Craig called the main meeting to order at 3:40 and determined that there was a quorum.

The council unanimously approved the meeting minutes of the executive council meeting in 2007.

Craig reported that he invited all organizers of the ICAPS conference next year and the proposers of the ICAPS conference in two years to the meeting. The council approved of this practice.

Ioannis reported that it is not clear yet whether ICAPS 2009 and CP 2009 will co-locate. This prevents them from deciding on the exact location in their proposal to host ICAPS 2009 in Greece. They are investigating one location in downtown Thessaloniki (in a hotel with limited space) and one location outside of town (with more space). They expect to receive some sponsorship money from European sources but likely less than previous ICAPS conferences. The council members were asked whether the proposers of the ICAPS conference in two years should leave the meeting at this point, but noone wanted them to leave. Then, the council approved the proposal to hold ICAPS 2009 in Greece unanimously.

The council expressed major concerns that only one application to host ICAPS 2009 was submitted. The council suggested to remove the requirement of working out conference co-locations from future applications. All council members should promote future calls for proposals. The council approved the call for proposals to host ICAPS 2010 unanimously.

The council suggested to get more young researchers involved in ICAPS and its organization, which could be facilitated via a townhall meeting.

Craig determined that there was no quorum any longer from this point in time on and important issues therefore need to be resolved via votes by email.

The council discussed whether nominations for the influential paper award should be from a more limited range of publication years. Rao made the motion that the nominated papers should have been published from 12-13 years before the year of the ICAPS conference in which the influential paper award is awarded but older papers can be nominated as well. An informal poll showed that all council members but two were in favor of the motion. Craig will conduct a ballot by email.

Mark reported on ICAPS 2007: ICAPS 2007 received a respectable amount of sponsorship money, mostly from the US and mostly to support the participation of students. ICAPS 2007 expects to make a surplus. ICAPS 2007 had 8 workshops, all of which were well attended, and 5 tutorials, all but one of which were well attended. The doctoral consortium included more than 30 students but the International Competition on Knowledge Engineering for Planning and Scheduling had only a small number of participants. ICAPS 2007 received 136 submissions to the main conference, of which 30 submissions were accepted for oral presentation and 15 submissions were accepted for poster presentation. The decision whether to accept submissions for oral or poster presentation was based solely on how broad the interest in the submission was perceived to be. Oral presentations were given 25 (= 20 + 5) minutes of time during an oral session and up to 8 pages in the proceedings, while poster presentations were given 5 minutes of time during an oral session to advertise the paper, a spot in the poster session, and up to 8 pages in the proceedings. ICAPS 2007 dedicated two ambassadors to promote two underrepresented areas of planning and scheduling, with limited success. ICAPS 2007 made a distinction between application and system papers with slightly different acceptance criteria from algorithm papers. The distinction between application and system papers was an important but fine one and caused some confusion among the authors. ICAPS 2007 and CP 2007 ran completely in parallel with one joint session and two joint invited speakers. The coordination between the organizers of ICAPS 2007 and CP 2007 went fine despite different executive structures and different organizers. ICAPS 2007 did not have a workshop-only registration fee.

Jussi reported on ICAPS 2008. ICAPS 2008, CP 2008 and KR 2008 will be held in parallel. Their surpluses, if any, will be split according to the number of registrations. Some smaller conferences will be held a couple of weeks earlier. ICAPS 2008 considers using a professional conference organizing company but their expenses are high. Currently, it looks like the registration fee will be around \$650, without taking workshop and banquet expenses into account. Therefore, ICAPS 2008 is trying to cut expenses, for example, for A/V rentals. No contracts have been signed yet. ICAPS 2008 is still working on the

following issues: a joint CD-ROM with the proceedings of all co-located conferences, joint invited talks, a joint registration fee, and the issues whether there should be parallel sessions and poster presentations.

Craig and Karen reported that ICAPS was granted non-profit status in the US by the IRS (with a probationary period of 5 years), which means that donations are now eligible for tax write-offs in the US. ICAPS needs to carefully maintain records of how its assets are used, including scholarship awards given to students. Enrico will investigate whether ICAPS can gain non-profit status in Europe as well.

Karen reported on the finances of ICAPS. ICAPS has a new accountant, who helped to file additional paperwork requested by the IRS. Karen and Craig are currently investigating where to set up an interest-bearing account for parts of the ICAPS funds. Craig will talk to AAAI to find out where AAAI currently keeps the ICAPS funds, with the intent to continue a close collaboration with AAAI.

Craig reported that 12 council members will retire in 2008. The ICAPS webpages have been updated with information on the terms of the current councillors. The council discussed how to best maintain diversity among the councillors in terms of geographic regions and research areas. It felt that the current nomination process does not give the council sufficient flexibility to maintain such diversity and suggested that the organizers nominate two of them and the president nominates one or two additional planning and scheduling researchers (after collecting suggestions from the planning and scheduling community). The council then elects two new council members from the nominees via secret ballot. Craig will draft a motion and conduct a ballot by email. Craig reported that new ICAPS officers will be elected in 2008 from among the council members. He will ask for nominations by email about 90 days before ICAPS 2008. He announced that the next meeting will be on Monday, September 15, 2008 from 2-6pm during ICAPS 2008 in parallel with the afternoon tutorials.

Shlomo reported on the ICAPS awards. The council debated whether there should be separate award committees for the influential paper award and the best dissertation award but agreed that both kinds of awards could be handled by the same award committee. The council agreed that the president, in consultation with the chair of the current award committee, should select the chair of next year's award committee from the members of the current award committee. Craig will consult with Malik and then select the chair of the ICAPS 2008 award committee.

The council encouraged future organizers to consider offering workshop-only

registration fees and to encourage submissions on scheduling and planning in robotics. The council encouraged future organizers to have a page limit of eight pages for submissions to the main conference. The council encouraged future organizers to treat poster presentations as first-class presentations in case there are poster presentations. The council encouraged future organizers to accept submissions based on their merit without hard a-priori limits on the acceptance rate. The council encouraged future organizers to give award winners cash prizes and no free conference registrations but to consider granting hardship requests by award winners, if possible. The council encouraged future organizers to invite the winners and runner-ups of the best dissertation award to present their dissertations at the conference and to involve them in the doctoral consortium. The council encouraged future organizers to reimburse tutorial presenters for their tutorial preparation expenses up to a small limit. The council discussed whether students should receive discounted registration fees for future ICAPS conferences but left the decision to the organizers since it depends on a variety of issues such as the amount of sponsorship money. The council encouraged organizers to consider granting hardship requests by students and their advisors, if possible. However, the council agreed that all of these decision are at the discretion of future organizers, who should take not only the recommendations of the council but also of the attendees (say, in form of the discussed web survey) into account. Shlomo will separate requirements and recommendations in the conference guide and incorporate the suggestions of the council into the conference guide, where appropriate.

Craig confirmed that Mark and Sylvie were elected as council members by email ballot before the meeting and announced the time and place for the executive council dinner.

The meeting adjourned around 6:00.