Minutes of the ICAPS 2009 Executive Council Meeting on September 18, 2009

ICAPS officers attending:

Chris Beck (via skype)
Enrico Giunchiglia
Sven Koenig
Derek Long
Lee McCluskey
Karen Myers (via skype - joined at 3:10pm)
Jussi Rintanen (via skype with technical difficulties)
Sylvie Thiebaux
Shlomo Zilberstein
Adele Howe (via skype)

visitors attending:

Amedeo Cesta
Carmel Domshlak
Maria Fox
Hector Geffner
Alfonso Gerevini
Malte Helmert
Ioannis Refanidis

Adele Howe and Daniel Borrajo were elected as new council members via email before the meeting.

The council meeting started at 2:00pm.

Enrico announced that the next council meeting will be held on May 11, 2010 at 2pm in Toronto.

Carmel reported on the Summer School on Automated Planning and Scheduling in 2009. The attendance was high, and many students received stipends due to donations from a variety of sources. A large number of these students then registered for ICAPS 2009. It was relatively easy to find funding for US students (from NSF) but rather difficult to find funding for European students. ICAPS could think about applying for a Network of Excellence grant from the European Union to fund European students although these grants are very competitive.

Amedeo reported on ICAPS 2009. ICAPS will have five tutorials, nine workshops (including two workshops with unusual topics, namely security and robot planning), one knowledge engineering competition and one doctoral consortium. ICAPS will provide free food to encourage social interactions among its participants. ICAPS will be a two-track event with highlights being presented in a single track, such as the presentations of the best papers and highlights from the competition. ICAPS will likely have a balanced budget. It took initiative to find good tutorial

speakers. It might be worthwhile to allow for shorter tutorials, perhaps integrated into the main conference program, and give tutorial speakers free registrations. Doctoral consortium students will be mentored in small subgroups during the doctoral consortium and then present posters in a single track during ICAPS. Applications will be highlighted with short talks and subsequent demonstrations during the application showcase in a single track during ICAPS.

Alfonso reported on the technical program of ICAPS 2009. ICAPS invited submissions of both long (= regular) and short papers. Authors from 32 countries submitted papers. The innovation of having short papers worked out well. One of the short papers was even nominated for a best paper award. ICAPS had senior program committee members who could provide additional reviews, initiate discussions among program committee members, provide input on borderline papers and provide calibration across papers. The innovation of having senior program committee members also worked out well. ICAPS received 160 submissions and accepted 33.6 percent of the long paper submissions and 36.8 percent of the short paper submissions. ICAPS will have three invited speakers, including one who will speak on robot planning. Suggestions to future conference organizers included clarifying the role of short papers to authors, strengthening the presence of application papers and ensuring that all reviews are both provided in a timely manner and provide constructive advice.

The council had a longer discussion on the selectivity and inclusivity of ICAPS with the result that the conference guide should remain unchanged. However, a paragraph should be added to the conference guide to ensure that conference organizers encourage application papers, perhaps via having applied researchers on the program committee, mentioning applied papers in the call for papers or establishing special application tracks.

The council approved the minutes of the council meeting in 2008 unanimously.

The council approved unanimously to pay AAAI for their services. Shlomo reported that ICAPS will pay AAAI for disbursing student scholarships only on a need by need basis.

Enrico suggested that additional candidates for the council can be nominated from the chairs of all previous ICAPS conferences, including its predecessors ECP and AIPS. There is no restriction on the number of nominations. The council unanimously agreed with this interpretation.

Enrico proposed that the president of the council can

advance up to $50,000 to conference organizers. The council approved this proposal unanimously.

Enrico reported that the bylaws need to get changed. The location of the principle office needs to get changed to San Mateo County, and the meeting date of the council needs to get changed to the day before the ICAPS conference. The council approved these changes unanimously. Enrico and Karen will go over the bylaws to identify additional changes. The council will then vote on them by email.

Hector and Carmel reported on ICAPS 2010, which will be held in May 2010 in Toronto. The paper submission deadline will be in December 2009, prompting a worry of receiving fewer submissions than in the past. ICAPS will be co-located with AAMAS, KR, FOIS and NMR. Not all conferences will be held in the same hotel but there will be a joint ICAPS-AAMAS day. ICAPS will have as many single tracks as possible. Technical papers will be up to eight pages long. There will be no posters but there will be short papers, which will be similar to senior papers at AAAI and be reviewed according to different standards than the regular (= technical) papers. There will likely be a competition on plan and activity recognition. There will be short tutorials in parallel with workshops. There will be no free lunches but a banquet and a cruise.

The council discussed whether reviews from certain groups of reviewers are more detailed or punctual than others, whether it is desirable that authors have an opportunity to submit rebuttals and what the advantages and disadvantages of different conference management systems are. Overall, the council was happy with the current system (including the timeliness and quality of the reviews) but ultimately gives the conference organizers a substantial amount of freedom in making decisions with regard to these issues, as detailed in the conference guide.

Malte reported on their proposal to hold ICAPS 2011 in Freiburg. The paper submission deadline will be in November 2010. The doctoral consortium will be held before the tutorials and workshops. There will be two tracks but a single track for the presentation of the best papers. There will be posters only for students of the doctoral consortium. There are two venue options, namely a central university building downtown or the more remote computer science building. No lunch will be provided with the first (preferred) option, but lunch would be provided with the second option. The council discussed the proposal, considered it to be very comprehensive and unanimously approved it. It suggested to keep the registration fee small, possibly through an extensive sponsorship effort. It also suggested to have a Summer School on Automated Planning and Scheduling in 2011, especially since there will not be

one in 2010. The council also discussed options for encouraging the submission of several proposals for organizing ICAPS 2012.

Derek and Maria discussed their effort to create a virtual alternative for ICAPS. There are two issues, namely how to archive the talks and how to allow for social interactions among participants. NSF promised funding for a workshop to study the second issue. Derek and Maria brought some equipment to ICAPS 2009 to record some talks to be able to study how the resulting online material will be used. The council applauded the effort to allow for virtual participation in ICAPS, is willing to provide funding to allow for experimentation with new technologies and considers it desirable to put planning tutorials online. It discussed whether to consult with a lawyer to improve its understanding of the legal issues created by virtual conferences but did not reach a decision on this point.

Karen reported that ICAPS has not yet filed the tax report for 2008 since some of the ICAPS 2008 surplus still needs to be transferred to ICAPS. The ICAPS reserves have now reached a desirable level. Karen researched options for investing the ICAPS reserves in an interest-bearing account. Most banks require the ICAPS officers to be present in person during the opening of the account. The SRI credit union does not have this requirement and provides competitive interest rates. The deposits are FDIC insured. The council unanimously approved the plan to open an interest-bearing account and deposit $80,000 in it. It also commented that the ICAPS reserves now allow future conference organizers to be less conservative and the council to fund selected initiatives that benefit ICAPS.

Enrico reported on insurance requirements. Every conference should have liability insurance of an amount that depends on its location. Sylvie will collect information on past practices, ask for suggestions from AAAI and add a section on insurance to the conference guide. The council discussed whether to have insurance for actions of the ICAPS officers but decided against it.

Sven reported on the ICAPS Influential Paper Awards and the ICAPS Best Paper Awards to be presented at ICAPS 2009. The council confirmed that it is up to the conference organizers whether to give free conference registrations to the award winners. Therefore, the call for award nominations should not contain statements promising free conference registrations.

The council adjourned at 6.15pm.