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ICAPS 2016 Council Meeting Minutes
June 12, 2016
King's College
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Attendees:

  - Brian Williams, as President-elect, ran the meeting in Chris Beck's absence, due to illness.
  - Blai Bonet (skype)
  - Ronen Brafman
  - Amanda Coles
  - Minh Do
  - Patrik Haslum
  - Malte Helmert
  - Joerg Hoffmann
  - Angelo Oddi
  - Wheeler Ruml

Non-Council Attendees:
New members: Dan Magazzeni, Scott Sanner
ICAPS 2016: Andrew Coles (the rest accounted for above: Dan, Scott, Amanda)
     [Item 5.2]
ICAPS 2017: Stephen Smith, Laura Barbulescu, Jeremy Frank, Mausam [Item 5.3]
ICAPS 2018: Matthijs de Weerdt [Item 6]


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Agenda

Time: 12:00 - 17:30, June 12, 2016
Location: King's College
     156 Strand, London WC2R 1ES, UK.


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12:00 Lunch
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12:30 - 12:45
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Item 1: Formalities (Chris)

1.1 Review and approve minutes of the 2015 Council Meeting
(http://www.icaps-conference.org/index.php/Main/ExecutiveCouncil?action=download&upname=minutes15.pdf)

1.2 Welcome of new Council Members:
   Dan Magazzeni
   Scott Sanner

1.3 Welcome of new Officers:
   President-Elect: Malte Helmert
    (Chris to read motion on Malte's election into the minutes).

Conference Liaison: Minh Do
    Competition Liaison: Patrik Haslum
    Secretary: Alan Fern

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Brian went through action items
Fall meeting: Action item "make template for program booklet" assigned to Dan and Amanda.
Fall meeting:
  Question of backup funds - nothing specific has happened;
    Ronen: it was pretty much agreed that it should be done.
Fall meeting: Question of disseminating acceptance rates; no specific action, for conf liaison to keep in mind.

Minutes (both meetings) approved.

Scott (vision): Push for learning in ICAPS (not take over); low acceptance rates for learning papers; collaborate with ICML.

Dan (vision): Attract students, attract more participation from Asian countries.

Malte: As discussed on mailing list.

Minh: Keep up the good job that Malte has done, keep a pipeline of future ICAPS proposals.
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12:45 - 13:30

Item 2: Strategic Issues, Part 1

- Report on outreach (Chris) [15mn]
- Report on awards committee process (Brian) [10mn]
- Evaluation of two Council meetings per year (Wheeler) [10mn]
- Update on Video Archive (Minh) [5mn]

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Chris:
Motion 1: change bylaws (item 3);
Motion 2: approve Malte's candidacy for president elect (by email April 1); will email that.

Chris: (report on outreach)
- plansopt workshop at AAAI'15
  - few OR participants
  - good set of papers
  - Brian: worth continuing?
  - Chris: ask people who were there
  - Malte: there was a follow-up workshop proposed for AusAI'15,   but was cancelled for lack of participants; people were interested but
    not enough to go to australia.
  - Action item: Brian to talk to Sylvie, Christian Muise to see what is happening.
- cluster of sessions at INFORMS in november
  - disappointing outcome (lack of interest from OR people)
  - INFORMS has an AI society; consider how to interact
  - Chris' suggests: engage with president of this society
  - Brian: What about CPAIOR?
  - Chris: great idea, CPAIOR would be interested in getting more AI people.

Brian (on planning comp. for logistics robots in simulation):
- outreach activity, trying to get interest from robotics
- hurdle to get planning used in robotics; you have to get roboticists interested in using it.
- robocup has a logistics track; use that platform to ground planning in robotics (simulator based on robocup stuff exists)
- idea is to provide an execution architecture and simulator, along with a competition to generate interest.
- Tutorial this year; competition at ICAPS 2017.
- outreach from robocup to planning; making planning visible to robotics
- thinking of having a set of masters classes on robotic system, planning and execution in place of summer school next year (2017); potential
  issue: moving robots from europe to north america; time for people to work on hardware.

Brian (on awards process):
- problems with submission rates (influential papers)
- document to be circulated by email
- Chris' proposal:
  - 3 committee members (small, committed)
  - rotating terms (3 year term, chair in last year)
  - president elect acts as liasion
  - committee responsibilities:
    - encourage nominations
    - chair to advertise for nominations
    - discuss and decide on awards
- this year:
  - Martin Mueller (chair), Dave Smith (to chair next year), Scott Sanner
  - PhD: 1 award, 3 hon. ment.
  - Infl. 1 award, 2 hon. ment.
- Malte: how to generate cand. papers for infl. award
  - use citations if not enough nominations; citations are not the criterion, just a way to find more nominees.
- Scott: pursuing nominations (individual emailing) generated 3 additional nominations (for thesis award).
- Scott: hon. ment. for infl. award because no award last year.
- Patrik: discussed hon. ment. for infl. award, decided against
- Malte: same issue, asked the authors if they wanted it
- Brian: more awardees means showing more diversity of work
- Scott: timeline for this years process worked well.
- Chris: need to separate awards committee from council; as much as possible committee members should not be on council, represent
  diversity; concern is perception (must be seen to be free of bias)

Wheeler (on 2 council meetings / year):
- tried first time this year (fall 2015); meant to pass wisdom from last set of ICAPS chairs to next, after conference is all done.
- conference call; logisitics went well.
- Dan & Scott: feedback from prev. chairs was useful; Scott: prefer written feedback; Amanda: a bit too late for program chairs.
- Ronen: program chairs can meet at ICAPS
- Ronen: It doesn't have to be a council meeting; meeting between prev. and current chairs (program and conf can be held separately)
- Brian: good to go through action items, so council meeting is useful
- Wheeler: council's two roles: strategic, running ICAPS; this meeting is (mainly) for the second role; following year's chairs will have
  been selected (by the time of the fall meeting) and can also join.
- Brian: should have a strategic component to the meeting (helps follow up on action items)

- Ronen: split it into separate meetings (scheduling problems)
- Malte: agrees with Ronen
- Minh: conf. liasion needs to be there, but can report to rest of council.
- Malte: president can poke people to get action items moving.
- Scott: ideal time is september (general agreement)

Minh (on video archive):
- started some years ago
- Malte & Minh have been tracking down video recordings
- 2009 - 2014 now stored by both (around 270 Gb ICAPS video)
- size from each year is growing
- mainly an archiving function, so things aren't lost; not depending on any service provider
- working with Gabi on a website for organising videos; organised by year; tutorials - invited talks - technical talks; links to
  existing online (youtube, videolectures) if available.
- ready to be made public, will send link
- TODO: there are videos not yet online anywhere (esp. from 2013); want to upload them; also a lot of other planning-related video
  on the web that is not ICAPS recording (eg Coles and Rao have course videos online) - should this be included? Website
  improvements: videolectures did good (linked slides, abstract)
  - can we do this? (volunteers?)
- Wheeler: how will this site work for "outsiders"? can we separate out tutorials?
- Wheeler: there should be a council position for preservation and dissemination of planning videos (the job needs to be long-term);
  should there be an "outreach liasion"?
- Minh: there is an ICAPS youtube channel.
- Malte: there are ICAPS social media accounts, keys given to each confs' organisers; this should be in conference guidelines
- Amanda, Minh: have created some new accounts, these need to be added to the collection.

Action item: Wheeler and Minh to draw up a plan for what to be done.

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13:30 - 13:45

Item 3: Vote on Change to Bylaws Concerning President-Elect Eligibility
     (Chris) [15mn]
       See attached draft.

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Chris: putting into the bylaws what we did this year (emailed before
     the meeting).

Motion passed.

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13:45 - 14:00

Item 4: Treasurer's Report (Wheeler) [15mn]

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Bad news: failed to file a tax return; we'll pay a penalty.
Good news: we have plenty of money (finance summary sent by email); end of year balance is steadily growing;
- per year (conference) figures to be taken with a grain of salt
- we do have recurring expenses (O(5k) / year).

On the question of how much ICAPS balance should be: at the least, enough to secure a venue (and other expenses) for next ICAPS. The
prudent minimum is the cost of running an entire ICAPS; estimated average is $150k (high variance, upper end is ~$200k).

Ronen: conferences (can) have insurance.
Wheeler: council members are liable for ICAPS liabilities.
Ronen: look into insurance for council members (action item).

Wheeler: council can encourage conference organisers to "bet" on sponsorship (which may not eventuate) and be backed by ICAPS up to
$10k or $30k.

How to communicate this to chairs?
Dan: if we'd known this in advance, we could have reduced student registration fees.
Amanda: it's a psychological issue.
Fall meeting: $10k is an insurance, not a gift.
Wheeler: make it $30k as insurance.

Action item: Dan (and Amanda?) to make a proposal for how council insurance support should be formulated.

Action item: Chris to document process for calls for funding community participation/outreach initiatives.

Minh: why do we pay AAAI $4000?
Wheeler: they manage payment to students; they can receive (US) gov't grants; they're useful, questionable whether we could get that at lower
cost; we're not getting any interest on our reserve.

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==> 14:00 - 14:05 Stretch break

ICAPS Past, Present, and Future

14:00 - 15:30

Item 5: ICAPS 2015, 2016, & 2017

5.1 ICAPS 2015 report and survey results (Carmel/Ronen) [15mn]

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Ronen: everything is in the report.
    extra support by local org for local students attending (not part of budget)
Ronen: recording is a massive pain for the organisers.
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5.2 ICAPS 2016 report [program, participation, financials]

(Dan/Scott/Andrew/Amanda) [30mn]

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Andrew:

stats:
- registrations: 132 regular + 85 student
- surplus of ~10k GBP
- problem with using NSF sponsoship (restricted to US students)

Wheeler: can we increase student reg fees and pay them more support, as a way of redistributing sponsor money? (possibly, but there are
cons, e.g., bureuocracy of paying reimbursements)

Brian: European equivalent of NSF for sponsorship?
Malte: ECCAI sponsors more "big ticket" items, e.g., 40k euro for summer school (in 2011?)
Malte: more from local companies than federal gov't in 2011.
Malte: with EU, need to part of/tie into existing program (e.g., COST).
Joerg: depends more on the country you're in
Andrew: tried UK funding, didn't pan out

summer school:
- ~55 attendees, more varied than usual (e.g., robotics students)
- late sponsor money an issue
- no women speakers

- non-doctoral students in the DC
  - has happened before
  - useful (e.g., masters students in the US)

- not able to spend all NSF money (not enough US students)

Wheeler: decoupling student support from the DC helps with funding constraints.

Malte: criteria for inclusion in DC have not always been clear.

Scott (reporting for program chairs):
- growth of submissions in special tracks; some of it taking from main track.
- reviewer assignment: Blai's software + manual decorrelation.
- main track used lead reviewer model (called "scribe"); special tracks chairs wrote meta-reviews.
- 3 papers transferred to main track after acceptance.

Amanda: many applications track papers weren't considered "applied enough", but considered "too applied" for main track.

- only 5 short papers accepted
  - question of clarifying expectations on both sides (authors and reviewers)
  - consider long/short in reviewer assignment?
- 3 conditional accepted (under the radar)

Andrew: Hard to schedule accepted papers in 3 days x 2 tracks; couldn't schedule multiple poster sessions.

Note: Scott and Andrew have complete stats on slides (not captured here).
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5.3 ICAPS 2017 preparation [logistics, budget, sponsorship]
   (Steve/Laura/Jeremy./Mausam) [30mn]

>>>>
Steve:
- not clear that discretion to start/kill special tracks lies with program chairs.

Brian: conf chairs have the freedom to pursue what they want in terms of program, not constrained by council or history.

Ronen: Look at survey results; people like (longer) oral presentations, multiple poster sessions.

Re. timeline: try to fit between AAAI notification and IJCAI submission; seems not too constraining (up to chairs).

Wheeler: Separate student funding from DC participation?
Mausam: yes, if funding constraints allows.

Note: All details from Steve's slides not captured here.
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==> 15:30 - 15:45 Coffee Break

15:45 - 17:00

Item 6: ICAPS 2018 Discussion and Vote

6.1 Proposal pre-discussion [15mn] (proposal attached)

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Malte: some discussion on mailing list;
     most points made by Wheeler (council email list, 04/21/2016,
     Re: ICAPS 2018 proposal):
 0. team could have more females
 1. dc overlaps with tutorials
 2. nothing said about journal track
 3. chair/money for recording post-production
 4. high fee for credit card

Chris: Are sponsorship chairs experienced enough?
Wheeler: Can vouch for Will.
Joerg: Would be good if at least one prev. sponsor chair stays on (not Joerg).

Blai: Sven is right guy for closing ties with robotics; like a lot the public event thing; about sponsorship: William is very effective.
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6.2 Presentation, questions (Matthijs) [30mn]

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Matthijs:
- slides not captured here
- have organised public talks/outreach activities previously (BNAIC)
- DC on a separate day will cost ~50 euro / pp extra.

Malte: IJCAI 2018 will be july-august (Matthijs: has heard august); it doesn't seem to be decided yet.

Matthijs: cost of extra day is to open uni building; options (e.g., conf. hotel) may exist, but they will cost.
Ronen: also other issues with DC on separate day.
Brian: if it's easier economically, schedule on same day.

Re. Date:
Ronen: look at surveys; june is preferred
Malte: not too close to other conferences
Matthijs: early (june 11-15) is problematic, because uni still running; week of june 25 is exams time.
Amanda: need for extra rooms sprung up late; good to have capacity.

Brian: candidates for running summer school?
Matthijs: if people interested in organising summer school, we will help with local arrangements.

Brian/Malte/Ronen: organisers need to choose what is best for them (wrt facilities, cost, etc).
Malte: we should ask IJCAI 2018 about dates, postpone decision until we have better information.
Matthijs: if uni gets other request for using the space, we'll need to make fast decision.
Brian: june dates are safe wrt IJCAI, and in line with ICAPS tradition.
Matthijs: if summer school before ICAPS, july 9-13 week will work best.

Action item: Minh to ask IJCAI organisers about their dates.

Wheeler: 20k euro sponsorship seems a bit low.
Brian: most sources used this year would be available to 2018 as well.
Malte: summarising earlier discussion, err on the side of being more optimistic (use ICAPS as insurance).
Joerg: 35k euro would be a reasonable target.
Ronen: local companies/sources?
Matthijs: Dutch grant up to 7k.
Malte: need to collect and pass on knowledge and contacts re sponsorship
Brian: conf chairs also need to be involved in sponsorship, success of conf depends on it.
Ronen: ask people in the community for contacts/introductions.
Minh: you need to know the timeline for US agencies.

Ronen: Question of journal abstracts is resolved; no issue with publishing abstracts (only); extended abstracts will be a problem.

Malte: low percentage of women in the committee; anything that can be done? we have a list of candidates that you can ask if you have vacancies;
consider also roles like invited speakers for DC/summer school, invited speakers. (Malte to email list.)

Minh: Concrete plans for involving OR community?
Matthijs: learn from organisation of plansopt-15; invite people from the local OR community.
Brian: talk to Chris.
Chris: they already talked to me; had discussion with Sven and Gabi (recapping what was said earlier).
Brian: also interested in bridging with ML?
Matthijs: see what happens in 2017, follow on if successful.
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6.3 Debate and vote [15mn]

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Malte: we need to decide if we want to chase up someone to organise a summer school for 2018.

Brian: is that council's business?
Chris: no problem putting out a call.
Chris: if there is one in 2017, it's not vital to have it in 2018.
Brian: 2017 is not certain, better to have it two years in a row than too long a gap.
Malte: use community meeting to ask for volunteers.

Re. Sponsorship: confidence that William can manage.

Re. DC: council(ors) stated made point of view; ultimately for the organisers to decide.

Malte: vote & proposal accepted. Matthijs to make a short (5min) presentation for community meeting.
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 17:00 - 17:30

 Item 8: Other business

 8.1 Community meeting preparation [15mn]

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- awards
- announcements:
  - conference (2017, 2018)
  - logistics robot sim. competition
  - an update from Christian (?)
- discussion topics:
  - Brian: ML?
  - encouraging participation from Asia (China).
  - Minh: Qing Yang
  - growing the community (topics, geographically)
  - Angelo: scheduling is disappearing from ICAPS
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8.2 Thank departing members [5mn]

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Chris: thanking Ronen & Joerg Brian: thanking Chris
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8.3 2018 ICAPS Council Meeting <DATE?>
>>>>
Should be 2017.
Should be the DC day of ICAPS 2017; that should be the 11th.
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8.4 Other business
>>>>
Wheeler: Next years organisers should be invited to take part in all of next council meeting (except discussion/vote on following ICAPS).
Moved as a motion; vote and passed.
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17:30: Meeting ends