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2017 ICAPS Council Meeting

June 18, 2017

CMU Campus – Gates Hillman Center
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Attendees:

Council Members:

Blai Bonet, Amanda Coles, Minh Do, Carmel Domshlak (skype), Alan Fern, Patrik Haslum, Malte Helmert, Dan Magazzeni, Angelo Oddi, Wheeler Ruml, Scott Sanner, Brian Williams

Non-Council Attendees:

New members: Laura Barbulescu

ICAPS 2017: Stephen Smith, Laura Barbulescu, Mausam

ICAPS 2018: Matthijs Spaan, Sven Koenig, Gabriele Roger

ICAPS 2019: J. Benton, Siddharth Srivastava

Item 1: Opening Matters (Brian)

Brian welcomed Laura to council and Wheeler as treasurer.

Unanimous approval of 2016 fall and summer minutes.

Item 2: Vote on Distinguished Service Award (Malte)

Malte: Suggested as a biennial award (2017, 2019, 2021 ...)

Questions: Who nominates? Who selects? Who runs the process?

Patrick: At most or exactly? Malte answers "at most".

Brian asks whether we want it? Seems to be agreement.

Blai: Is it for the planning community or ICAPS?

Malte: Makes sense to have it related to ICAPS.

Brian: Agree it should be ICAPS.

Patrick: We want to make sure the call for nominations does not make it seem like we will do this every two years.

Brian: Perhaps we can phrase the call such as "we will evaluate ..."

Scott: There are many people that could be named now. We have a backlog now.

Malte: Every year may not be sustainable.

Voted on having next call in 2019. Unanimous for 2019.

Malte: Who should be responsible for selecting?

Brian: Do we have a separate award committee or does the council do it. Awards committee already has a big job.

Blai: Perhaps a vote of all past council members. But the call needs to be very clear.

Brian: Went around room and asked if people are ambivalent or strongly supporting.

Summary: Most ambivalent, but think there should be a process

Brian: Asked for volunteer to start the process.

Blai: would like to join team, but not clear about call for the award

Angelo: would like to participate

Dan: willing to participate

Wheeler: Proposes every 3 years.

Item 3: Parting Wisdom: “So long, and thanks for all the fish” (Carmel)

Was unable to connect with Carmel. Skipped this part.

Item 4: If I Could Do One Thing (Amanda)

4.1 “firehose [2mn]” presentations

Brian described process.

Presentation of topics.

Alan: Increase the amount of learning related research at ICAPS.

Amanda: Improve recruitment and retention of women in the ICAPS community.

- Provide support for students to attend and participate in ICAPS
- Have a support scheme based on more senior women
- Have more prominent female speakers

Angelo: Establish a tight connection with the Autonomous Learning Community. With a focus on intrinsic motivation.

- Dedicated workshop.
- Create a viable roadmap there.

Blai: 1-year agenda (only one year left)

- Support for assignment software
- Looking forward for more robust and stable distribution
- Also have valuable experience with Guidebook that is still used by AAAI.

Brian: Cultivate a diversity of planning perspective and innovations, by encouraging regional groups to experiment

- Encourage students and faculty to think about social networking experiments that leverage their regional goals and skills
- Secure ICAPS funds to support regional networking experiments
- Put out a call for proposals for small amounts of seed funds
- Share results of experiments
- Shlomo and Brian are looking into a New England event

Daniele: Connect ICAPS more to the Robotics community. Side effect is to open ICAPS to the Asian colleagues

- Organize an ICAPS in China/Japan/Singapore

Laura: Increase the participation of women in the community

- Maybe a women's mentoring event like AAAI
- Build a sense of community

Malte: Has already served his time. Widen the perceived and actual scope of ICAPS and fight the perception that ICAPS = PDDL.

- Externally: spread the message that ICAPS is welcoming of all kinds of planning
- Internally: change our reviewing habits and embrace diversity of problems, formalisms, methods, and "paper cultures"

Minh: One ICAPS website to rule them all. A comprehensive and authoritative source of P&S research for P&S practitioners - from beginner to experts

- One council member in charge as coordinator
- Build set of requirements
- Outsource to third-party to build a website template
- Coordinate individual efforts

Patrik: Competition can be a tool. Maybe learn from robocup.

Scott: More learning at ICAPS.

Wheeler: Connect with robotics and uncertainty

Three main topics where selected.

Laura summary of Women @ ICAPS theme

- Start some event next year where woman can come together.
- Put together a committee to think about how to attract females.
 - How to get funding?

Alan & Scott on Machine Learning and Robotics @ ICAPS

- Get our people in front of others.
- What problems can we pursue to get interest.
- Robotics workshop has worked well?
 - ICRA
 - IROS
- Organize a workshop at ML conference
 - Deep planning
- Benchmark competitions?

Malte on Broadening the Scope

Identify communities that would like to be represented at ICAPS

Actions:

- Need a liason to bring people into the community
- Tutorials and workshops
- Competitions
- Be careful in review process to not drive people away
- Web site

Groups were asked to send summaries of arguments to Brian.

4.2 Vote on extracted themes

Strategic themes:

Brian: In a world in which many sub-disciplines explore automated planning, how can ICAPS further shape and promote the larger discipline?

A multi-disciplinary planning council

Broaden our sphere of "planning" problems, methods and applications, to include those studied by other disciplines.

Embracing other communities is hard.

- CP tried to bring OR people in
 - Created a CPOR conference
 - Bringing people to table as equals
- One dimension is bringing people as equal.
- We don't have a good reward system for bringing people in

Wheeler: Maybe look at RLDM.

Brian: Discussion with AAAI President.

Increasing perception that AI = ML = DL

Planning in its most broad, common terms is one of the other most recognizable core element of reasoning systems.

Example of bringing communities together.

- Every few years bring people together to figure out the new problems and paradigms.
- International space science community comes together every ten years to create a decadal report.

Proposal: Have the ICAPS Council initiate a similar cross disciplinary strategic planning activity for planning research, and then go from there.

Malte: Likes idea of having a big wig committee.

- Concerned that some people may not feel it is necessary---they are already in good shape.

Blai: can we come up with a challenge problem for ML community

Dan: Today AI is machine learning---somehow address media. ML is a black box, but planning is not. So we should stress that point.

RESULTS OF VOTE AT END OF MINUTES

5.2 ICAPS Missionaries (Dan, Scott)

Scott: We want to have outreach.

Tutorials, Workshlops, Competition, Networks, Code Sharing

Dan: One idea is to create a committee to work on the outreach activities.

Need to understand how to select these people.

Brian: What are the gems that we have? Then start polishing them and cross them over when it is time.

Malte: Concerned about having a committee since it can happen that no one feels compelled to do anything.

"Committees" should be small.

Blai: AAMAS is another community to consider.

Brian: Dan and Scott will take what they learned here and make a proposal for how to proceed.

5.3 Nurturing Planning Systems (Malte, Minh)

Malte: There is a group at the **planning +robotics workshop at Daugstul** that does not feel at home anywhere.

Should we do something to make ICAPS friendlier to this group (maybe make it more systems friendly).

Special tracks should be folded into the main conference eventually.

Maybe a new track on planning systems?

Brian: Important that we understand the end game of a special track.

Laura: Special track planning and merging must come from council not conference organizers.

Blai: Worried about well-funded groups will dominate a track.

What is a system paper?

Malte: Can be close to application tracks.

Steve: Planning systems is often about architecture.

Brian: Maybe view robotics and applications as examples of systems papers.

Wheeler: Need to make sure we discourage bad reviewing. Possibly have a checklist of reasons to not reject a paper.

Brian: We need to have an impact on systems.

Amanda: Had some instances when an a main track paper goes to applications track.

Dan: We don't want to lose the marketing point of track.

Item 6: Progress on Action Items

6.1 Action: Plan for next stage of video archiving (Minh, Wheeler)

Minh: Currently videos stored on Malte & Gabi's server

- Automatic backup & sync

Brian: Should ICAPS rent cloud space.

Malte: Wait until it is necessary.

Now have a web-site

Minh: Started as a loosely organized effort by Malte and Minh

The foundation and some automated procedures have been established.

Best to have a dedicated video curator.

Would need to do

- Improve conference organizer guidelines
- Setup best practice for video recording
- Work with conference chairs to ensure
- Manage web-site and Youtube channel

Best Candidate:

- Gabi Roger
 - Extensive hand-on experience with equipment processing, and uploading ICAPS 14 videos.

Gabi:

- Not clear how long she'll be in the picture

Brian:

- Survey shows that people want videos up in a timely manner.
- Biggest issue is recruiting a curator and team

6.2 Action: Formulation of council insurance support (Dan, Amanda)

Dan: We don't get sponsorships early enough to set registration fees. There is actually a relatively stable set of funding that we can count on. \$33K is typical amount we can count on. We could tell the conference organizer in advance.

Brian: Need to decide what risk we want to take. Need to formally commit to providing ? amount as a safety net.

Blai: What if organizers don't get the money?

Brian: We need to have a way of monitoring the fund raising process.

Action Item: Steve will help Dan learn how AAAI deals with risk of exposure to officers.

Item 7: Fiscal Treasurer's Report (Wheeler)

Wheeler: We still need to file a statement of organization finances (in place of taxes). This is being worked on.

Don't have final numbers on 2016, but told they are positive.

Slightly more than \$150K in the bank. Can cover large parts of a conference. Approximate, but we are doing fine.

Spending \$10-15K per year on initiatives seems like it would be just fine.

Brian: How much should we try to spend each year?

Wheeler: On average spending \$7K would be reasonable.

Brian: Because we are incorporated in US, we need a US citizen for part of the job. Looking ahead we may need to have a vice-treasurer.

8.1 ICAPS 2016 report and survey results (Dan/Scott/Amanda)

Dan: # of submissions is growing. Seemed to be support for having more parallel sessions. Complaints that there was not much time for discussion at community meeting. Comments about having more student events.

Wheeler: Should upload talks before conference and then just mingle and have posters at conference.

Blai: Possibly reduce length of talks before moving to more tracks.

Brian: Survey does not give support for authors uploading videos.

Need to think about allowing more time for community meetings.

Malte: If we decide we want to keep all the award presentations then we need more time for the combined award and community meetings.

Maybe 60 min for community meeting. Ideally it would be good for organizers to let that meeting to be open ended.

8.2 ICAPS 2017 report [program, participation, financials] (Steve/Laura/Mausam)

Steve: Three special tracks: apps, robotics, learning, Journal presentation

7 tutorials

9 workshops

Budget Notes: used conference and events services group at CMU

- Managing poster session
- Catering
- Campus housing for DC students
- Registration and busing

Laura: Looked at numbers from previous years and had a low number of early registrations.

Large surge of late registrations. Probably could have had a smaller registration fee.

Steve: Question about whether AAAI prices for online proceedings is too high.

217 registrations

Received less sponsorship this year than we did last year (\$32,830)

Estimate a \$12.5K surplus

Mausam: New stuff

- When to start a new track?
- Workshop first?
- When should we stop a track?
- Started a learning track

Two new topics:

- HCI for planning
- Mixed initiative

Fast Track

- Request each workshop to recommend papers to invite to main track
- 6 suggestions (3 submitted, 2 accepted)

Review form addition on reproducibility.

Overall eval - no boderline

Didn't allow content on extra reference page. Allowed to purchase extra page.

Large set of problems with Easychair and Blai's format.

- Easychair changed format
- Ended up doing it manually.

Almost all reviews came in before rebuttals.

Acceptance Rates: 35% overall

8.3 Cognitive Robotics Summer School (Brian)

Brian: Help catalyze a sustained robotics planning and execution community.

Participants and speakers drawn equally from AI and robotics.

2/3 North American (50% robotics 50% AI)

Don't know how many were reached by streaming.

Tutorials and Talks:

- Day 1: Robust Execution
- Day 2: Motion Planning
- Day 3: Activity Planning

- Day 4: Perception and Manipulation
- Day 5: Planning w/ Uncertainty and Risk

Provided students with an architecture.

8.4 ICAPS 2018 preparation [logistics, budget, sponsorship] (Matthijs/Sven/Gabriele)

Submission deadline about 2 weeks after AAAI and notification before IJCAI deadline.

Malte suggest allowing more time for meta-reviews.

CPAIOR co-location

- Overlap completely
- Need to work out details still regarding locations
- Cross-visits allowed
- Share reception
- Separate dinner
- Same fee for ICAPS and CPAIOR per day

Has assumed a sponsored budget of 20K.

Ongoing issues

- Social event
- Public outreach
- Invited speakers
- Remote participation (could use universities resources 100 EUR/hour)
- Hotel arrangements (750 hotel rooms)
- Registration system (looked for cheaper registration systems)
- DC venue on Sunday (maybe go to a private venue)

Brian: Try to deconflict DC and council members to avoid disruption.

11.3 Other business

Malte: Proposal to invite upcoming chairs to council meetings. Unanimously approved.

Adjourned.

Meeting ends

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Results of Votes for Themes

Integration with Machine Learning (12 votes)

- Tutorials
- Submission to ICAPS
- Presence on popular AI sites
- Model Learning
- Critical Mass
- Impact on Applications
- Intrinsic Motivation/Goals and Lifelong Learning
- Strategic Roadmap

Integration with Robotics and Uncertainty (12 votes)

- Similar to ML

Student Support/Engagement (8 votes)

- Mentoring
- Engagement
- Financial Support
- Keeping Connections with Former Student in Industry

Women @ ICAPS (13 votes)

- Recruitment and Retention
- Finance?
- Mentoring
- Event @ ICAPS
- Prominent Female Speakers

Broad View of Planning Welcome (14 votes)

- Be Welcoming
- Review Culture

- ICAPS != PDDL

Regional Clusters (1 vote)

- Funding for Meet Ups
- Student Initiated

Online Presence (9 votes)

- One Web to Rule Them All
- Software/Infrastructure

Outreach to Asia (2 votes)

Use of IPC to Serve Other Goals (3 votes)