

## **2018 ICAPS Council Meeting**

June 24, 2018, Delft University of Technology – Science Center

### **Attendees:**

#### *Council Members:*

Amanda Coles, Minh Do, Alan Fern, Jeremy Frank, Patrik Haslum, Malte Helmert, Dan Magazzeni, Wheeler Ruml (via skype), Scott Sanner, Brian Williams

#### *Non-Council Attendees:*

ICAPS 2018: Sven Koenig

ICAPS 2019: J Benton, Dave Smith

*New members:* Gabriele Röger, Matthijs Spaan

## **Item 1: Formalities**

### **1.1a Review and approve minutes of the 2017 Summer Council Meeting**

Approved.

### **1.1b Review and approve minutes of the 2017 Fall Council Meeting**

Approved.

### **1.2 Welcome to new Council Members:**

Matthijs Spaan, Technical University Delft

Gabriele Röger, University of Basel, Switzerland

### **1.3 Welcome to new Officers:**

President-elect: Dan Magazzeni

Conference Liaison: Minh Do

Competition Liaison: Scott Sanner

Secretary: Gabriele Röger

## **Item 2: Fiscal Treasurer's Report**

Wheeler Ruml:

A recent snapshot shows that balance is just fine.

Have previously determined that it is prudent to keep \$150K in account and we are doing that.

2015-2016 tax returns were filed late — we were able to avoid large penalty.

2017 filed on time.

Summary: Prudent amount of money in the bank. If council has initiatives, we can pursue them.

Brian: We have \$150K in bank. Assume that we remain net zero what is the interest.

Wheeler: No interest and we pay \$5K to AAAI.

Alan: What is the advantage of going through AAAI?

Wheeler: They are able to accept NSF money.

Brian: It is a big hit to need to pay and not get interest.

Wheeler: Willing to look into getting an accountant and feels that AAAI is doing a good job. They are timely in responding and dealing with requests. They have an accountant.

Brian: Is an action item warranted here.

ACTION ITEM (Matthijs): Followup on insurance.

ACTION ITEM (Wheeler and Jeremy): Look into alternatives to AAAI.

### **Item 3: Strategic Directions**

#### **3.1 Making the ICAPS conference easier to organize**

Wheeler:

We should take time to make sure the conference is fun and well run.

Make sure guidelines for organizers are updated every year.

Spreadsheets about stats from every year is out there.

There are lessons learned that sometimes appear in reports

Wants to make sure someone is in charge of maintaining the knowledge

Wheeler: Is it the role of the conference liaison to maintain guidelines.

Malte: Yes, but has a lot to do already. Would be nice to codify procedures to help chairs. But some risk of becoming stale. Digging through email chains is sometimes the main way to get information.

Matthijs: One idea is to have a personal email box so not all messages are mixed up.

Jeremy Frank: Like idea of specialized email box for each year.

Matthijs: Planning to archive the emails himself.

Brian: Very difficult to manage these processes. Even just managing the council meetings is a large amount of work requiring many emails.

Matthijs: many times felt like he didn't know standard practices

J: Doesn't have direct access to reports from previous years.

Minh: J was sent access to council site where reports are.

Malte: Reports are long and tedious and it would be nicer to have summaries.

Amanda: Often it is most useful to talk to organizers from two years ago because difference in US and non-US.

Brian: many organizations have transition periods between position passes.

Daniele: One of the most difficult things was to set costs when organizing. Organizers are afraid to commit too much.

Matthijs: Also a question of how many people will show up.

ACTION ITEM (Malte): Make it a priority during his term to document practices.

### **3.2 Video Archiving**

Minh: When conference is done organizers send videos to Minh and Gabi and then put videos on icaps-conference.org.

2009-2016 are complete.

2017 are on a hard drive from Laura and they will be going up.

All videos are on a Youtube channel right now. Not clear how video consent form is managed. Would be good to formalize the process.

Matthijs: Tried to get consent on registration form — checked that every presenter consented.

Minh: Would like to have that info for the conference guidelines.

Minh: Where do we store the forms?

Malte: We at least need an email from organizers that says everyone gave permission

### **3.3 Improvements to the secretarial process**

Gabi: Web-Site is a bit old fashion now. Would like to make it more structured.

#### **Topic 1: Replace web-site with more modern design.**

Brian: Web is the best place to educate about planning in general and show why it is important.

J: For ICAPS 2019, part of the site allows people to showcase their work. Put up to attract people in bay area.

Minh: Should also show the ICAPS materials (e.g. videos)

ACTION ITEM (Gabi): Gabi will take this on.

#### **Topic 2: Manage documents in a different way.**

Gabi: Dropbox or Google Drive would be nice but is not legal for many types of personal information.

Jeremy: Google has Google At Work, which is used for businesses.

Gabi: Would like to use a version control

Malte: Internally council can do informal sharing

Jeremy: Do we believe that git is better from a legal standpoint

Jeremy: Someone needs to decide on folder structure and such

ACTION ITEM (Gabi): assess the current folder structure

#### **Topic 3: how to deal with confidential information in minutes**

Gabi: Do we need so much details?

Gabi: Doesn't want to have two versions of minutes

Brian: likes detail

Malte: Not sure we want a detailed and non-detailed version, just get something that we are happy to share publicly.

Brian: May want to have a fall meeting, since other meeting is so packed with material.

### **3.4 Recruitment and retention of women within ICAPS**

Amanda: We are having a woman's lunch. Break up into small groups and discuss topics that they would like to talk about. Have a talk by Sheila.

Brian has asked what ICAPS can do to help.

Chris Beck indicated the Rina Detcher would be good to have at next ICAPS.

Amanda: If males are allowed to register for woman's lunch then there is some risk of becoming male dominated.

Brian: Used to be that students would enter community and then stay in community, but now often go off into industry. Suggests that the senior Ph.D. students can become leaders as well. Also try to bring this up at the community meeting.

Wheeler: What about an ICAPS organized by only women.

### **3.5 Multi-disciplinary planning council**

Malte: Should the ICAPS council be just responsible for running ICAPS? Should we have a council for promoting planning?

Malte: Lots of people in AI doing things similar to what we are doing, but not under the planning umbrella. How do we get involved in larger discussion?

Malte: Currently does not have a concrete proposal or activity.

Brian: There was concern w/ ability of people coming out of ICAPS to get faculty positions. At that point asked how pervasive we want planning to be. Rao was concerned with AI=ML=DL. Brian found that planning is a term that resonates with people (as opposed to reasoning).

ACTION ITEM (Brian): Try to rope in people to start a Dagstuhl conference.

### **3.6 ICAPS missionaries**

ACTION ITEM (Scott): Organize individuals or at most pairs responsible for certain communities.

Tentative decision about pairs.

ML (Scott, Alan)

Robotics (Dan, Sven)

AAMAS / Multiagent (Matthijs, Jeremy)

Controls (Jeremy, Brian)

Activities should include: 1) At least one crossover tutorial, and 2) At least one crossover workshop

Held a Planning & Learning WS at ICML this year.

Actively soliciting submissions to ICAPS from targeted people

Malte: Journal track has tried to find champions in different areas to recruit people. Also Dagstuhl workshops can be very successful.

Brian: Struck by amount of cross-over at the summer school. Suggests summer school activities can be quite effective.

### **3.7 Planning in the broader AI community**

Daniele: Showed numbers of planning papers based on section headings in recent AAAI and IJCAI proceedings. 6% or less core ICAPS planning

Malte: Number of papers appears to be increasing, but drop in percentage is due to larger number of ML papers

Jeremy: What is the end game?

Brian: Want a rich vibrant community. Controls went through a cycle where they defined a box and solved the box. AI was then the exciting thing. Controls community reinvented themselves---embraced hybrid systems and broadened themselves. We need to also broaden out more to get more people attending.

Jeremy: People need jobs. Need to be using tools to do cool tasks.

Daniele: Strategy 1) need to get students interested in planning, try to encourage teaching planning, 2) engage in public debate about AI. Malte: two calls for a CERN for AI - one was just machine learning and the other was "no no not just ML". Result of a EU call with a very large budget.

Daniele : Should engage in public dialog

Brian: AAAI council has been engaged in public dialog.

Malte: Gerhrard Wickler and Austin Tate taught a Cousera course.

### **3.8 Ideas for future planning competitions (Scott, Patrik, Matthijs) [10mn]**

Scott: Competitions have had an amazing impact on research at ICAPS. AI is booming and nobody has noticed ICAPS. What competitions can we run that will drive research?

What is the challenge that will be the equivalent of Deep Learning game changer?

Future planning competition ideas:

Sparkle Competition - ensemble

Data Track

High impact application areas

Auto driving

Safety

Conversational planning

Malte: attracting attention possibly with Atari

Jeremy: NASA Astrobees has a simulator available

## **Item 4: Hello and Goodbye**

### **4.1 If I Could Do One Thing (new members)**

Gabi: Improve the retention of woman.  
Improve networking among woman.  
Have female role models in positions of high visibility.

Matthijs Spaan: ICAPS technology being more relevant for AI in general and RL in particular  
To achieve need to:

- 1) Explicitly invite a wider audience
  - 2) Organize ICAPS-tech-themed events at sister conferences
  - 3) Make the council more inclusive.
- Possibly consider a AAAI-style model where "community" nominates new members

### **4.2 Parting Wisdom: "So long, and thanks for all the fish" (Blai, Brian)**

Brian: Prior concerns was getting students hired. Now the field has dramatically changed  
We have become much more diverse and it is important to manage breadth.  
Still need to work on being viewed as the "melting pot" for broad set of planning techniques

Matthijs : noticed RSS has grown. We don't manage to attract many people outside of academia.  
How can we attract more and more industry to ICAPS.

Brian: much of the attention in robotics is based on a focus on autonomous vehicles

Sven: can't force industry to be interested, so we need to become more broad

Jeremy: we know there are lots of applications of planning that we don't hear a lot about

## **Item 5: ICAPS 2017, 2018, & 2019**

### **5.1 ICAPS 2017 report and survey results**

Jeremy:  
Strong set of tutorials  
9 workshops  
239 abstractions, 203 papers  
Mausam did a scan to make sure there were not obvious problems  
A few track changes.  
Submissions on an upward trend.  
Did not cram everything into a single EasyChair and it was a bit awkward.  
Individual track acceptances were not micro-managed.  
Invited talks were tremendous

Dave Smith: was there complimentary registration  
Malte: there is a priority list for complimentary registration  
Lead reviewer mechanism got mixed feelings.

### **5.2 ICAPS 2018 report**

Gabi:  
280 abstracts  
223 papers submitted  
8 rejected without review

3 papers retracted

Reviewer Model: 3 reviews per paper and a lead reviewer to lead discussion and write summary

Difficulty using EasyChair for this model

Would suggest an SPC model

Malte: The SPC was never complained about. Moving to 2017-2018 model seems to be based on a theoretical concern

Sven: Like leading reviewer model, but switching causes problems

Dave Smith: switching between tasks was difficult

Acceptance Rate 27.7%

Fast Track 2018 : 3 suggested and accepted only one, lots of overhead for little gain

Malte: Rationale for fast track was to give a pathway for non-standard papers. Did it help anyone get into the conference?

Gabi: Perception of authors what is appropriate for a special track is often different from the opinion of the track chairs

Gabi: Moving papers across tracks is a problem (issues show up late and track chairs disagree on whether move is appropriate)

Jeremy: did not like tracks in 2017 and it is worth reminding ourselves why we have tracks—to get people to submit papers that they may not otherwise.

Sven: should think about whether PC chairs should submit papers and whether awards can be given to themselves

Sven: would be good to standardize awards

Gabi: difficult to get reviewers to recommend best papers

Gabi:

25% more attendance this year

Sponsors : 48K EUR

Net positive of 25K EUR

Possible Returns: KNAW, Saarland, ICAPS, students (100 EUR)

### **5.3 ICAPS 2018 Summer School report**

Alan:

Theme was probabilistic planning.

Had 8 top-notch lecturers.

First year that the summer school had lab sessions. Each day had a 90+ min session related to the topic of the day.

Students appear to have liked the labs.

Would be interesting to have a competition aspect of the labs in future summer schools.

98 students (15 female) – 2x as many students as expected

26 countries represented

Financials:

Registration - 300 EUR

NSF - 8,400 EUR for US students

AIJ – 2K EUR (less than expected) Joerg Hoffman – 7K EUR

Total venue speaker cost – 30K EUR

Remaining balance for scholarships – 22,400 EUR

In hindsight may have decided to go with Delft for the cheaper costs (free meeting rooms). But decided to go with Nordwijk so everyone could be close together.

Malte: Liked setting. Maybe we don't need to make it cheaper since we had numbers.

#### **5.4 ICAPS 2019 preparation [logistics, budget, sponsorship]**

J Benton:

Will be held at UC Berkeley Campus

Workshops in different part of campus (pay \$1500 for 6 rooms per day)

Main Conference in Pauley Ballroom (\$2250/day with faculty support)

Hotels a bit expensive

Working on getting student dorms (\$100-\$150 per night)

Changed dates to avoid intersecting with RSS

Brian: Should we really adjust to RSS again

Daniele: Strongly supports the shift in schedule

J: Is probably going to go with the later date

Schedule

Nov 16: Abstract submission

Nov 20: Full paper submission deadline

Jan 25: Author notification

Web Site is Up

Soliciting applications or other work to highlight on web-site

Hired event management company

Open Questions: How to handle posters? Consider folding learning and OR track into main track?

Dave: We would need a way to have different review form.

Amanda: We are quite small for the number of tracks that we have.

#### **Item 6: ICAPS 2021 and Beyond**

Minh:

Normally look for one good proposal per year

Nail down 2020 before concentrating on 2021+

We have 2 proposals already (could have had 4)

Both proposals are flexible for either 2020 or 2021

#### **Item 7: ICAPS 2020 Discussion and Vote**

Presentation 1: Chile (by Jorge Baier)

Presentation 2: France (by Joerg Hoffmann)

Council vote unanimous for Nancy, France.