

MINUTES / NOTES

IEEE Robotics and Automation Society Administrative Committee (AdCom) Meeting

Virtual Meeting

Monday, 25 March 2024

9am - 12:30pm

Agenda: <https://agd.ieee.org/mpt/Agenda.aspx?eid=18658>

1. Meeting Called to Order, and Welcome (P Wensing)

2. Roll Call and Review of Consent Agenda (P Wensing)

Attendees:

● 18 Elected Members (Voting Members)

Class of 2026: Greg Dudek, Barbara Mazzolai, Tetsuya Ogata, Marcia O'Malley, Yu Sun, Michael Wang

Class of 2025: Alin Albu-Schaeffer, Sabine Hauert, Yasuhisa Hirata, Lydia Kaviraki, Eiichi Yoshida, Hong Zhang

Class of 2024: Fumihito Arai, Arash Ajoudani, Allison Okamura, Karinne Ramierz-Amaro, Inna Sharf, Kenji Suzuki

● 5 Society Officers (Voting Members):

Aude Billard, Frank Park, Enrica Tricomi, Patrick Wensing, Tony Maciejewski

● Not Attending (Voting Member):

Nancy Amato

● 10 Non Voting Members:

Darwin Caldwell, Jing Xiao, Andra Keay, Katja Mombaur, Bram Vanderborght, Kyujin Cho, Ludovic Righetti, Chad Jenkins, Jen Jen Chung, Seth Hutchinson

● RAS Staff and Guests:

Lukrecija Lelong, Terence Martinez, Amy Reeder, Patrick Hanna, Grace Zhao, Nicholas Milton, Suzanne Dubsy, Hugo Rodrigue

3. Approval of Agenda (Including Consent Agenda and Standing Orders) (P Wensing)

Including:

- Approval of Past Minutes: 9 January 2024
- Nominations Committee & 2024 Schedule

4. Welcome and Agenda Details - Status of RAS (A Billard)

- ICRA @ 40
- At least 2 AdCom members per board finalized

5. RAS Talent Program (T Martinez)

- Site is in testing for SSO (Step 1 out of 5)
- Job board and Career Fair sample screenshots from testing
- Career Fair
 - Direct messaging and meeting scheduling tool
 - ICRA 2024 will be Asia market
- Discussion & Questions
 - Discussed participation of MCE to support the process
 - Discussed how this process is more value added than previous practice of providing names/resumes to exhibitors
 - When will we be up and running?
 - We are pushing for that answer
 - Will it be implemented on an external platform or our IEEE platform?
 - It is external - Nayler

6. Conference Activities Board (D Caldwell)

- Presented on full slate of AVPs and new AdCom members @ CAB
 - 5 new members of AdCom + the CASE SC chair
- Presented on need / plans to better engage with CASE
- ICRA@40
 - One off
 - Single track
 - GC is Stefano
 - Funding
 - Working to limit costs as the cost for recent ICRA and IROS for attendees has been high
 - Trying to support the most eminent roboticists to attend
- IROS 2024
 - Submissions closed
 - 3350 papers submitted - 400 more than 2023
 - MOU has been approved as of March 25th morning.
 - Drafting a charter - now called "Operations Manual"
 - MOU is for two years, and so IROS 2026 still in limbo.
 - RSJ paid the deposit for the venue for IROS 2026
 - Still having issues with 2024/2026 because we are waiting for approval on the Operations Manual
 - Transfer of journal papers to the conference was blocked since MOU was not signed but should be resolved now
- CASE@30 - this is the 30th anniversary of CASE
- Discussion & Questions?
 - Mentioned how CASE does not allow student registrants to upload a paper, which is requiring students to register at full rate. Discussed how this is usual, that registrations can be transferred. Discussed whether it should be possible for

students to upload directly as a standard practice. No additional comments were communicated by AdCom aside from the two members who raised this item.

- Mentioned that now that MOU is resolved, IROS can be an RAS-approved conference (eg., with RAS banner on the website).
- Industry day at ICRA@40?
 - No update yet

7. Educational Activities Board (C Jenkins)

- Working on Board composition
 - 5 AVPs, 1 in place
 - Selma Sabanovic for Robotics History Project
 - Aisha Walcott for TEP
 - RAS U AVP in planning process and then will put AVP in place afterwards (post feedback from AdCom on RAS Uni plan)
 - Student experiential learning and competitions AVP
 - One more AVP not mentioned
- Robotics history project
 - \$100,000
 - Test run at illinois to work on data and working with other services (ieee tv) and experimenting on footage
 - In preparation for ICRA@40
- Technical Education Program (TEP)
 - Announcement out with deadline of April 15th
 - Fall or Summer school
 - \$200,000 to support the programs (\$15k-25k each)
- RAS U
 - Who is the audience/customer? User profiles?
 - Small working group on requirements
 - Alpha in fall, beta by January 1st, 2025.
- Discussion and Questions
 - Noted that it would be good to give time for more depth to discuss RAS U at ICRA.
 - Discussed status of the two previously planned classes. It is uncertain if they are going to move forward. EAB wants to make sure RAS U has the right scope and vision before proceeding.
 - Discussed how the approved funding for this initiative goes away by end of 2025, and so we need to be able to use it.
 - Any updates on TEPs from last year?
 - Uncertain whether if it will be the right model moving forward
 - Want to make sure that it is relevant before using (PES University)

8. Financial Activities Board (J Xiao)

- 5 new adcom members + all ExCom + past Fin VP
- 5 motions out of FAB meeting to be voted on at AdCom

- Looking for motion proposals for either this year or next, if multiple year process, FAB wants a quarterly plan of spend.
- RAS 2024 Budget
 - Closing out 2023, Terence is pushing for the information from IEEE
 - Update on budget requests from Technical Activities
 - Tracking expenses across boards
 - Looking to move funds around as needed if a board needs more funds and another is underspending
 - Working to allocate RAS charges (e.g., in Concur) to specific boards
 - Working to determine a cadence (monthly or quarterly) for tracking finances
- Discussion & Questions:
 - How do we find out about the surplus for 2023?
 - The information that Terence is waiting for, also an issue for TC on conferences. Tony confirmed about 2.32 Million. (\$1,160,000)
 - Discussed how currently we have a budget with \$1.5M of surplus for 2024.
 - Mentioned that the AdCom meeting at the end of July is important for finances of the next year. Discussed how this may not be a good time of year, and so we may need to shift the timeline for financial motions.
 - If financial motions are due before ICRA, how will boards approve if they are meeting at ICRA before the FAB meeting at ICRA?
 - FAB will discuss about having board meetings and the motion deadlines

9. Technical Activities Board (K Cho)

- Increased communication with TCs to report on initiatives and spending.
- Planning to have TAB meeting Online before ICRA on 4/25 and just a lunch at ICRA
- Staggering emails to clusters for review, including AdCom members in process
- TABXSAC dinner planned for ICRA
- New Triennial Review schedule
- Directly uploading activities to the website via a form submission, rather than producing a report.
- New form created where TCs submit their annual plan for activities and funds.
 - About half have filled this out and requested funds
- New Welcome Kit Manual for ICRA
 - Asking for TC related keywords to create more connection between TC activities and other areas of RAS like pubs
- Some conference surpluses have been issued and some are in progress.
- Discussion & Questions
 - Positive feedback given regarding welcome kit, and suggested to integrate with InfoVaya
 - Positive feedback given regarding the support given to TC to bolster their activities

10. Member Activities Board (K Mombaur)

- All board and committee positions filled
- SPARX
 - Mentors are being screened for fit
 - Mentee applications to open on April 1 with a deadline of May 10, 2024
 - Committee will select and match
 - Advocating for IEEE RAS to become a member of Scholars at Risk Network with a motion at ICRA AdCom
- EDI (WiE and SAC)
 - WiE
 - Decisions for IDEA award out at end of March 2024
 - Events for ICRA planned and planning for CASE, ICRA 40, and IROS
 - Issues noted with consistency in how we are handling / booking MAB events at fully-sponsored conference
 - RA-M Column article as well
 - SAC
 - Events for ICRA planned, planning for CASE, ICRA 40, and IROS
 - RA-M Column article as well
 - Working on new initiatives for local chapters
- Distinguished Lecturer Program, Chapters and International Activities Committee
 - DL Planned:
 - Certificates/plaques for DLs
 - New nomination schedule and streamlining the DL requests for events
 - CIAC
 - Featuring excellent chapter events on website
 - Review chapter initiative applications
 - Planning on chapter town halls (virtual)
- Young Professionals and Member Services Committee
 - YP
 - ICRA 2024 events and updated website and social media
 - Events in plan for other conferences
 - MSC
 - Polls for conference events
 - Childcare services
 - Life members interest into MSC
- Member Support Program
 - Both a registration discount program and travel support program
 - Divided budget between conferences and additional parameters
 - Targetted for ICRA, ICRA@40, IROS, Humanoids, CASE
 - ICRA 2024 progress
 - Reimbursements not possible with volume
 - Custom registration system also not adjustable for MSP
 - Recommend for standardized registration system
 - Using the budget on Travel Support grant instead

- Evaluation of applications similar to ICRA 2023
 - New trial of pre-booking accommodation and travel
 - Recommend to bring in IT infrastructure in house
 - Any candidate scoring more than 3 points is awarded a travel grant
 - Airfare and hotel stay
 - 196 recipients
- CASE 2024 progress
 - Organizers are able to implement registration discount
- Discussing with other conference organizers on MSP support
 - Recommending that conference organizers apply for MPS support by end of year for next year.
 - Looking to include other RAS co-sponsored conferences.
- Open issues for AdCom
 - Which conferences should be eligible for MSP/Travel Support?
 - Criteria rubric thoughts?
 - Split for TSP and MSP?
 - What is a good schedule for announcing and deciding on the TSP?
- Questions and feedback
 - Consolidated registration system is a great idea but difficult to implement across nations. Clear set of parameters needed and sent to CAB. Need steering committee assistance as well.
 - Same systems are repeated for conferences, Bram was also looking at the possibility of using OpenReview, could have better continuity with OpenReview
 - OpenReview may be able to solve many of these problems
 - If we can reduce surplus, can start including this into the regular budget (\$300,000 every year towards it) perhaps
 - Will send out a feedback form to AdCom on thoughts

11. Industrial Activities Board (A Keay)

- 4 AVPs appointed and looking to create connections to other boards
- International standards coordination meeting
- SPIRSE competition grants – 3 students travel grants to ICRA
- Focused now on activities at ICRA and CASE
- Future events
 - ASTP
 - SVR Investment Summit
 - RSS
 - CASE
 - ICRA @ 40
- Potential Events
 - IROS
 - GITEX
 - ROSCon

- CORL
- Humanoids
- IAB Resources
 - Brochure connecting industry to TCs
 - Brochure connecting industry to Standards
 - Post conference exhibitor survey
 - Flier - how to get involved with IAB
- Drafts
 - 3 ways IAB can provide Conference Entrepreneurship Activities
 - 3 ways IAB can provide Conference Industry Activities
 - Banners and other promotional materials

12. Publication Activities Board (B Vanderborght)

- New journals are in progress
 - IEEE Robotics and Automation Practice
 - IEEE Transactions on field practice
- Two plans
 - Administrative
 - Webpage
 - Paper review system
 - Publications
 - Marketing
 - RAM article on new journal
 - Branding and communication material
 - Announcements all over
- Asking for feedback on new journal areas
- Questions
 - Any updates on having one of the publications be fully open access?
 - TFR was supposed to be open source, but financial limitations prevented it
 - What is the motivation behind the new journals proposed?
 - Soft robotics is a growing field
 - Robot learning is a question from PAB since it is a popular topic despite no actual requests
 - Are we over-fragmenting the journals?
 - There is different focuses for each journal which can be guided by their board

13. Media Services Board (L Righetti)

- New members of the board
- Call for ambassadors for ICRA has been sent and closes today.
- Focusing on Social media, IT infrastructure, and website
- Consolidating Social Media channels onto the Loomly platform

- Working on the collaboration with Spectrum for Social media
- Created and provided the google shared drive: looking for feedback on the RAS Google Drive strategies
- Currently working to develop internal work for data analytics
- Looking to start a website redesign
- Larger IT project initiated by Bram – presently lacking help/responsiveness from IEEE IT team
- Questions?
 - Is there any strategy on which boards/committees have social media?
 - No, we are providing this as a management service for any group that has channels.
 - Can we reach out and invite IEEE Spectrum to ICRA@40 to help market it and do the same thing they are doing for ICRA?
 - Noted

14. RAS Motions Introduced (P Wensing)

15. Financial Motion: ICRA@40 (D Caldwell) - passed

- Registration limited to:
 - \$600 for RAS members
 - \$245 for RAS Students
- Exhibit/sponsorship estimated: \$400k
- Expected a deficit of \$300k due to highly limited registration fees
- This is proposed as this is a one off event and not an ongoing deficit
- **Motion:** Resolved to approve \$300K to support ICRA @ 40.

16. Financial Motion: OpenReview Pilot (B Vanderborght) - passed

- RAS needs to explore alternatives to Papercept
- RAS is exploring OpenReview
 - It is open source
 - Supports large conferences - even larger than ICRA
 - Has tools to help better identify appropriate reviewers for papers
 - Working on a conference payment system
- Propose investing up to \$70k to pilot OpenReview at an RAS conference
 - 50k for workflow engineer to fit OpenReview within IEEE requirements for conference proceedings etc.
 - 20k to pilot the process at humanoids 2024
- Questions:
 - Have you reached out to humanoids?
 - We are creating a sandbox and providing it for Humanoids to test
 - Unlikely to be this year due to timing
 - How much would we have to pay if it covered all conferences?

- The current request is to create the workflow but beyond that it is open source so anywhere from free to as much as we are willing to donate.
 - Does it forcefully share the reviewer information?
 - No, those that is an optional setting
- **Motion:** PAB requests up to \$70K to support the pilot use of OpenReview at a RAS-sponsored conference.

Motion to extend the meeting for 30 minutes (A Billard, second: G Dudek) :Passed

17. Financial Motion: MSB - RAS Website (L Righetti) - passed

- We intend to have a working group in charge of the website redesign
- Intend to have quotes next month, bare bones in summer, complete by end of 2024
- Questions:
 - What are the planned improvements?
 - Mainly graphics but some function, based on what the committee decides
 - This seems exorbitant
 - Yes, we will try to see if we can save more
- **Motion:** Budget \$100,000 for MSB to hire a company to redesign the RAS website.

18. Financial Motion: MSB - Support of Spectrum at ICRA 2024 (L Righetti) - passed

- Approached by Spectrum about hiring a videographer to capture video at ICRA
- Questions:
 - Do we pay for Spectrum?
 - No
 - What is the frequency of this?
 - This is a one time trial of this collaboration which we can expand later
 - Maybe add captions in different languages?
- **Motion:** Provide Spectrum ¥1,535,800.00 (about \$10,000) to hire a local videographer for video capture and editing at ICRA 2024 as per the attached estimates.

19. Financial Motion: IAB - Standards Activities (A Keay)- passed

- We have expanded our standards work significantly
- There is demand for more international collaboration work and student participation
- Want to increase current funding from the current 40k to 60k per year from 2025-2027
- **Motion:** IAB moves to support members' participation in standards-related activities, including study and working groups, student participation, and interactions with other standards bodies in the period of 2025 to 2027 of up to \$60K per year.

Next in-person Adcom Meeting: 18 May 2024, Yokohama, Japan (ICRA 2024)

Motion to Adjourn (A Okamura, seconded) - passed

Meeting Adjourned