

Dec 4, 2024 | RAS Virtual AdCom Meeting

1. Meeting Called to Order (P Wensing)
2. Roll Call and Review of Consent Agenda (P Wensing)

Attendees:

AdCom Class of 2024: Marcia O'Malley

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

AdCom Class of 2026: Arash Ajoudani, Fumihito Arai, Allison Okamura, Inna Sharf, Kenji Suzuki

Society Officers (Voting Members): Aude Billard, Frank Park, Patrick Wensing, Tony Maciejewski, Nancy Amato, Helen Wang

Non-Voting Members: Darwin Caldwell, Jing Xiao, Katja Mombaur, Kyujin Cho, Ludovic Righetti, Chad Jenkins, Jen Jen Chung

RAS Staff and Guests: Amy Reeder, Kyung Mi Bae, Grace Zhao, Terence Martinez, Nicholas Milton, Patrick Hanna, Lukrecija Lelong, Jasmine Park, Dikai Liu, Peter Corke, Denny Oetomo, Hanna Kurniawati, Yasuhisa Hirata, U-Xuan Tan, Cecilia Laschi, Yan Wu, I-Ming Chen

3. Approval of Agenda (Including Consent Agenda and Standing Orders) (P Wensing) [Full agenda at: <https://agd.ieee.org/mpt/Agenda.aspx?eid=19046>]

Passed

4. IROS 2028 Proposal Introduction (D Caldwell)
 - Noted that an IROS steering committee meeting was held in Abu Dhabi for IROS 2028 site selection, but RAS AdCom must approve their decision.
 - Three site options were considered at that previous stage (Singapore, Sydney, and Perth), with Perth eliminated.
 - AdCom vote will proceed with a vote on the suitability of each site, and on preference between the remaining two.
5. IROS 2028 Proposal: Sydney (D Liu & P Corke)
 - Full presentation details are available in the agenda
 - Questions from AdCom were fielded following the presentation

6. IROS 2028 Proposal: Singapore (I. Chen & Y. Hirata)

- Full presentation details are available in the agenda
- Questions from AdCom were fielded following the presentation

7. IROS 2028 - Evaluation and Vote (D Caldwell)

- Both Sydney and Singapore received strong support as being suitable for IROS 2028. The AdCom majority preference was for Sydney.

8. President's Report - Status of RAS (A Billard)

- RAS passed 20,000 members - still 5th biggest, but very close to 4th
- Scrutiny has ensured that we reduced our surplus; it is only about \$500K USD
- Emphasis on expense tracking - ideally on a bi-monthly basis
- IROS
 - The charter has been signed by RAS, RSJ, SICE. IES signature pending
 - Dec 2024: Negotiation of MOU has started
- Topics for Long-Range Planning in January 2025
 - Publications: Removing overlength page fees, and considering removing conference proceedings
 - Conferences: Sustainability, and RAS strategy for conference sponsorship
 - Industry: Sponsorship packages, talent fairs, and an RAS portfolio for industry
 - Science and Technology watch board: Creation, goals, and structure

9. PAB Presentation of Procedure for Double-Anonymous (B Vanderborght)

- Recent survey: 70% of people voted in favor of double-blind
- IEEE has made the industry standard switch from double-blind to double-anonymous
- **Original Motion:** *Starting 2025, RAS will transition all fully RAS sponsored journals and conferences and support the transition for co sponsored journals to support double anonymous review where applicable.*
- Discussion
 - Clarification was provided that technically co-sponsored conferences will not be required to follow double anonymous.
 - Assurances were made that we will transition slowly and not punish editors who don't immediately adopt double anonymous.
 - Clarification was provided that PaperCept requires some modification to support double anonymous review.
 - A friendly amendment was made to the original motion to note that we will **start** the transition in 2025.

- Concern was raised regarding the wording of “where applicable” being imprecise.
- Due to the scope of modifications suggested, the motion was withdrawn and will be reintroduced during the PAB report.

10. Financial Activities Board - Financial Overview of Society (T Maciejewski)

- Access to surplus
 - Previously, we could spend 50% of the previous surplus. This year it ended up being \$1.43M. We did not need this money.
 - \$26M in RAS reserves: Half of it was made on investment from the previous year’s surpluses.
 - Moving forward, RAS will allow us to budget negative up to 1% of reserves
- We will have more monitoring of what boards are doing and spending in an effort to actually spend it all.
- Discussion
 - Concern was raised regarding the new surplus policy – an emphasis was placed that we have never used the 50% of the previous year’s surplus since we always have a surplus in the next year again. We need to be less conservative in our budgeting.

11. Publication Activities Board - 2024 Financial Summary (B Vanderborcht)

- **Motion:** *Starting 2025, RAS will start to transition all fully RAS sponsored journals and conferences and support the transition for co-sponsored journals and conferences to implement double anonymous review.*

Motion passed

- Journals would still be profitable (except RAM) without overlength.
- The 2025 PAB budget will include a new paper management system and redesign for the magazine.
- The remaining details were referred to the slides available.

12. Conference Activities Board (D Caldwell)

- Presentation:
 - ICRA 29: Milan and Cape Town have been shortlisted
 - IROS
 - Charter pending IES signing
 - Sydney was recommended by IROS steering committee at IROS 2024
 - ICRA Handbook - in progress
 - Competitions to be grown: \$100k allocated for 2025
 - ICRA 2024 - healthy surplus at 9.2%

- IROS 2024 financials are expected in late December
 - Attendees overwhelmingly RAS (3.7% IES members only)
 - Presented ideas on developing RAS in the Global South
- Discussion
 - Discussed the possibilities of unifying registration across conferences

13. Educational Activities Board (C Jenkins)

- TEP: Budget of \$100k for 2 seasonal schools. Underspent money used to support ICRA@40 in South Africa
 - 2025 budget of \$200k to support 6 schools and ICRA 2025 Satellite
- Robot History project
 - Focus on the collection of oral histories
 - 2025 plans: Improvement of site and processing of current content
- RALI/RAS U: New initiative funding for educational content development
- On track for spending in 2024.
 - Would like to continue conference colocated activities support in 2025
 - Joining the TABxSAC dinner

14. Technical Activities Board (K Cho)

- Increased spending from 33% to 68% usage of budget
- Progressing triennial reviews. 18 targeted, 11 completed, 3 scheduled, 3 postponed, 1 no response
- TEABxSAC dinner: Growing in size. The goal is to hit 750 attendees.
- Working groups:
 - 11 proposals and 4 accepted
 - 1 would like to become a new TC - Art in Robotics
- TC Engagement
 - Only 36 have shared plans and budget
 - 24 are not spending money – multiple methods discussed to handle this
- New initiatives
 - TC Continuation process and new co-chair approval processes
 - TC social at ICRA 2025 in place of the banquet
 - Searching for a venue to give each TC a spot

15. Member Activities Board (K Mombaur)

- 2024 Budget
 - Improved spend vs previous years, but still room for improvement
 - IDEA Grants - Overspent
 - Chapter grants - Overspent
 - Considering increasing the budget
 - DL Program - Underspent: Will be reduced to allocate the funds to other programs
 - Member Events @ Conferences - Underspent

- Events were cheaper than anticipated even though more events were hosted this year
 - SPARX - Underspent
 - Projects started with some difficulty with visas and delays, 2025 should be smoother.
 - Looking to do more events with Scholars at Risk
 - Member Support Program - Underspent
 - a. The forecast is to hit 75% of the budget
 - b. Statistics & challenges details in slides
- 2025 Planning
 - Will over-budget up to 40% to avoid underspend
 - Application calls for 2025 beginning NOW in 2024
 - Also, increasing the promotion of the programs
 - Increasing DEI data collection
- SAC - Increasing Co-Chairs for regional representatives
- Discussion:
 - We have many structures in place to accelerate programs moving forward
 - Suggestion that a main goal should be increasing visibility (in newsletters, etc.)
 - Noted that timing is key to getting applicants

Motion: Extend the meeting time by 30 minutes.

Passed.

16. Industrial Activities Board (A Keay)

- Overview of the 2024 budget
 - Forecast - spending over, still waiting for Nov-Dec actuals
 - Standards: Increasing travel awards for students
 - Entrepreneurship (Startup Showcase)
 - Good feedback on manufacturing workshops (5)
 - Want to improve marketing materials for IAB activities
 - Exhibitor Experience (Industry Forums)
 - Lack of continuity in conferences
 - Industry Advisory Group at ICRA each year should help here
 - 2024 industry data and roadmaps (discretionary): Still need to develop a report
 - 2025 Events
 - Target list expanding on 2024 – Based on continuous feedback from industry exhibitors and AdCom members
 - Outline of Activities for 2025 and Estimated Budget
 - IAG approved for \$45k for bringing members to ICRA
 - No questions or comments from AdCom

17. Media Services Board (L Righetti)

- Social media engagement is mostly through the Social Media Ambassadors and Spectrum
 - Attendance at IROS was canceled due to last-minute changes
- The website is behind schedule by about a month and may not be able to spend all the allocated money for this year
- Provided links for different website designs for feedback.

18. IEEE Nominations and Appointments (S White)

- IEEE TAB is the biggest board
- Many committees with a board composed of all the Society Presidents, along with other members
- Past or present society presidents can apply for many different positions
- Those who have not served as a society president can also apply to serve in various positions
- To nominate yourself or a colleague, visit ta.ieee.org, log in using your IEEE credentials, click volunteer engagement > volunteer opportunities > become an IEEE volunteer

19. New Business (P Wensing)

- Aude thanked those retiring AdCom members for their years of service and acknowledged the new ones with terms to begin in 2025.

20. Next in-person Adcom Meeting: 12 January 2025, Switzerland (P Wensing)

21. Meeting Adjourned (P Wensing)