IEEE Robotics and Automation Society AdCom Meeting Minutes
Salons George, Leuven, Belgium
Sunday May 17, 1998

LIST OF ATTENDEES

T. Fukuda, President; Co-Chair, Micro Robots & Cellular Robots Tech. Comm.

S. Hsia, President Elect; Chair, Long Range Planning Comm.; etc.

G. A. Bekey, Past President; Chair, Nominations Comm.

G. N. Saridis, Founding President

D. E. Orin, Vice President for Finance

K. Kosuge, Vice President for Member Activities; Chair, Int'l Affairs Comm.; etc.

Y. F. Zheng, Vice President for Technical Affairs; Program Chair, 1999 Conf.

A. A. Maciejewski, Secretary; Chair Constitution and Bylaws Comm.

R. A. Volz, Editor of Transactions

K. P. Valavanis, Editor of Magazine

R. Snyder, Managing Editor of Magazine

W. R. Hamel, Chair, US Member Activities, Trans. Mechatronics Treasurer

N. Caplan, Chair, Conference Board

S. Sugano, Co-Chair, Meetings Comm.

T. J. Tarn, Co-Chair, Conf. Liaison (Spons.), Neural Networks Liaison

G. Giralt, General Chair, 1998 Conf.; AdCom member

P. Dario, Prog. Chair, 1998 Conf.; AdCom; Co-Chair, Medical Robotics Tech. Comm.

B. Carlisle, General Chair, 2000 Conference

O. Khatib, Program Chair, 2000 Conference, AdCom member

W. H. Kwon, General Chair, 2001 Conference

B. H. Lee, Program Chair, 2001 Conference

R. D. Klafter, Chair, Awards Comm.

A. M. Erkmen, AdCom; Co-Chair, Education Comm.

T. Tsubouchi, Co-Chair, Education Comm.

P. J. Eicker, Chair, Robotics and Intelligent Machines Coordinating Council

H. Moraff, Co-Chair, Long Range Planning Comm.

J. Slater, Chair, Standards Comm.

A. C. Sanderson, Chair, RAS/SMC Merger/Cooperation Comm.

A. A. Goldenberg, AdCom member

A. Kusiak, AdCom member

R. C. Luo, AdCom; Chair, Sensor Integration & Fusion Tech. Comm.

L. C. Fu, AdCom member

B. Siciliano, AdCom member

A. K. Bejczy, AdCom member

H. N. Koivo, AdCom member

V. J. Lumelsky, AdCom member

S. Yuta, AdCom member

K. Y. Goldberg, AdCom member

H. Hashimoto, AdCom member

C. S. G. Lee, AdCom; Chair, Conf. Liaison (Co-Spons.); etc.

S. Lee, AdCom; Chair, Assembly & Task Planning TC; etc.

J. Billingsley, Chair Agricultural Robots Tech. Comm.

G. D. Hager, Co-Chair, Computer & Robot Vision Tech. Comm.

K. M. Lee, Chair, Manufacturing Automation Tech. Comm.

G. Menga, Chair, Programming Environments in Robotics & Automation TC

J. Yuh, Chair, Underwater Robotics Tech. Comm.

K. Tanie, Chair, Virtual Reality in Robotics Tech. Comm.

1. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The meeting was called to order by President Fukuda at 1:05 p.m. A motion to accept the agenda and the minutes of the Dec. 14, 1997 AdCom meeting without any changes was passed by the AdCom.

2. **REPORT ON STATUS OF THE SOCIETY**

Fukuda opened his report by reviewing some of the items that were discussed at the TAB meeting. This included a proposal for a new publication on multimedia to be voted on at the next TAB meeting and a new publication policy that would require a limit of two years from submission to publication. He also announced that the TAB had approved the new Field of Interest statement for the Society.

3. VICE PRESIDENT FOR TECHNICAL AFFAIRS REPORT

Zheng, Vice President for Technical Affairs, provided a report on the activities of the technical committees (Attachment A). He opened by noting that an article was published in the March 1998 issue of the Robotics and Automation Magazine that introduced the technical activities of the Society. He then commented on how most of the technical committees have been active or very active, however, he reminded the AdCom of the new policy for replacing inactive technical committees. In particular, if a technical committee does not provide a report for a period of one year, then the chair will be replaced. If the technical committee does not provide a report in the subsequent year, then that technical committee will be removed. Zheng then reported on the Distinguished Lecturers Program noting that both Professor Tarn and Sanderson had recently given lectures. He then announced the resignation of Professors Arimoto and Bekey, who were thanked by the AdCom, and the appointment of Professor Valavanis. While discussing the activities of the individual technical committees, the question of registering a logo with IEEE for the Auto-ID Technical Committee was addressed. The general consensus of the AdCom was that it would not approve of paying for the $1K registration fee.

4. VICE PRESIDENT FOR MEMBER ACTIVITIES REPORT

Kosuge, Vice President for Member Activities, opened his report (Attachment B) by providing some membership statistics for IEEE which indicated that both overall membership and student membership were increasing (with non-US student membership overtaking US student membership). He then informed the AdCom of the "Nominate a Senior Member" program where societies are given $10 for every new senior member they obtain throughout 1998. Klafter pointed out that an additional incentive for becoming a senior member is that to be eligible for fellow grade a member must have senior status for at least a year. Kosuge also notified the AdCom that IEEE was now making email aliases available to all members. He then turned to a discussion of the Society's membership statistics. Unfortunately, the Society's membership has been monotonically decreasing for a number of years. To counter this trend, he discussed several actions: the affiliates membership initiative under Hamel's direction, a proposal to provide free Society membership to new members joining at IEEE conferences, and forming a membership activities committee. Kosuge closed his report on a positive note by announcing that the April 1998 membership statistics represent a 4% increase over the same time last year.

5. VICE PRESIDENT FOR FINANCE REPORT

Orin, Vice President for Finance, provided a financial report (Attachment C) that included information in five areas: (1) 1997 income and expenses, (2) 1998 budget, (3) 1999 preliminary budget, (4) the All Society Periodicals Package (ASPP) and (5) long term investments. He opened his report by noting that 1997 was the best year ever with a surplus of $313.4K, including the biggest ICRA surplus ever ($126.3K), resulting in a total net worth of $788.9K. This represented the second straight year

of surpluses after having been placed on the IEEE watch list. The 1998 budget and 1999 preliminary budget estimate a surplus of $72.8K and $127.3K respectively.

Orin then reported in detail on the impact of the All Society Periodicals Package (ASPP) which represents a significant amount of income for all societies. He noted that according to IEEE Marketing & TAB Products, IEEE prices are 40% of the market value and that there is little correlation between price and the number of subscribers. Based on these observations, IEEE Marketing & TAB Products recommends aggressive price increases. It was emphasized that such price increases would make money from *nonmembers* to support member activities. With this in mind, IEEE recommended a nonmember price of $295 for the Robotics and Automation Society's Transactions (7% increase over $275 for 1998) and $95 for the Society's Magazine (16% increase over $85 for 1998). Orin then presented a motion from the Financial Activities Board to accept these recommendations, which was passed unanimously by the AdCom.

Orin then reported on the Society's long term investments. He reminded the AdCom of the two investment options, i.e., short term (cash at T-Bill rates) and long term (stocks, bonds, etc.), and that $125K was transferred to long term investments on April 1, 1998 (as approved by the AdCom in December of 1997). Citing an IEEE Investment Advice guideline that recommends 60-70% of a society's reserves be in long term investments, Orin presented a motion from the Financial Activities Board that $125K of the assets for the Robotics and Automation Society be transferred from short term funds to the IEEE long term investment funds during the next investment window (July 1, 1998). He noted that this would still leave an anticipated minimum cash balance of $125K. The AdCom then proposed that the Financial Activities Board look at developing a mechanism by which the Vice-President for Financial Activities would have the authority to transfer excess cash to long term investments at the earliest opportunity. After this discussion, the motion to transfer $125K was passed unanimously.

6. **PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Tarn, Chairman of the Management Committee for the Transactions on Mechatronics, opened the Publications Committee report by noting that his committee has negotiated an agreement that starting from this year the ASME Dynamic Systems and Control Division, the IEEE Industrial Electronics Society, and the IEEE Robotics and Automation Society would be equal partners in the Transactions on Mechatronics. Next year, ASME will be bringing in another division, however, they would not obtain an equal share until the year 2000. Hamel, Treasurer for the Transactions on Mechatronics, then presented his report, noting that the Transactions on Mechatronics was doing very well financially due to a strong number of subscriptions and the income from the ASPP. He proposed listing the journal as being interdisciplinary in order to further increase subscriptions by making it available to other societies. Actions for 1999 include an increase in the page count, an increase in the nonmember subscription price, and the establishment of its own cost center. Tanie, Chairman of the Virtual Reality in Robotics Technical Committee, then discussed a proposal to

publish an electronic journal entitled "Virtual Reality in Robotics and Automation." Several questions remained to be answered about the implementation of this proposal and it was decided that Tanie would present the details of his specific plan at the next AdCom meeting.

6.1 **Transactions** Volz, Editor of the Transactions, gave a report on the status of the Transactions including statistics on submissions, review time, and page charges (Attachment D). He noted that the backlog of papers was coming down slowly (from 85 to 60) in the last two years due to an increase in the page budget. He reiterated that IEEE TAB wanted to have all papers published within two years of submission. To deal with the current backlog Volz presented a motion from the Financial Activities Board to approve 1248 pages for the 1999 Transactions. The motion was unanimously approved by the AdCom. Volz then presented another motion from the Financial Activities Board to approve $12.5K per year for the next two years to participate in OPERA (an on-line service that will allow electronic access to the Transactions). The motion was unanimously approved by the AdCom. Volz then discussed the rejection of our proposal for a new transactions and introduced Luh to report on the deliberations of a committee chaired by Desrochers that was formed to discuss the role of automation in our society. Luh presented several suggestions for increasing the emphasis of automation in the Conference (increased program committee representation), Transactions (additional editors, associate editors, and special issues), and on the AdCom. There was then a general discussion that focused on the fact that automation was much more than simply manufacturing. Volz closed his report by thanking Goldenberg for all of his work on the Transactions during the past 15 years.

6.2 **Magazine** Valavanis, Editor of the Magazine, reported that the Magazine was doing very well. He noted that his goal was to have one special issue and three regular issues each year, however, recently that ratio has been reversed. This is due to a 75% rejection rate and so he encouraged the AdCom to submit more manuscripts to the magazine. He also pointed out that the review time was on the order of three to four months. Snyder, Managing Editor of the Magazine, reported on the finances of the Magazine noting that the $11.9K advertising revenue for June 98 was the highest ever. She reported that the net cost of the Magazine for 1997 was $40.4K which is less than the net cost of the last Newsletter in 1993 (revenues have offset both the increased cost of producing a Magazine and the increase in pages that started in 1996).

7. CONFERENCE BOARD REPORT

Caplan, Chair of the Conference Board, opened his report by reviewing the definitions of technical cosponsorship and technical cooperation which currently require a $500 G & A (General and Administration) fee. He then presented the following motion: The G & A fee for cosponsored conferences will be calculated as 5% of the product of the projected income times the Society's share of the conference. The motion was seconded by Kusiak and unanimously passed by the AdCom.

7.1 **1998 Conference.** Giralt, the General Chair for the 1998 Conference, opened his status report on the 1998 conference by thanking the members of the European Honorary Organizing Committee, the IEEE Advisory and Organizing Committee, the Conference Promotion Committee and the Conference Liaisons for all of their help. He pointed out two novel features of the conference including a European grant fund that provided 32 full grants and several partial grants to members of Eastern Europe and the South Mediterranean. He then provided the latest registration figures that included 750 for the total conference, 231 for the workshops, and 52 for the tutorials. Paolo Dario, the Program Chair for the 1998 Conference, then presented his report on the technical program. There were 962 papers submitted and 596 papers accepted for 149 sessions (13 parallel tracks) including 3 new video sessions. This represented an increase in submissions and a slight decrease in the acceptance rate as compared to the last three Conferences. He then presented charts and statistics on the distribution of paper submission and acceptance, as well as a flow diagram of the review process. He noted that the thorough and fair review process resulted in a high quality technical program with both depth and breadth.

7.2 **1999 Conference.** Zheng, the Program Chair for the 1999 Conference, gave a brief status report on the 1999 Conference to be held in Detroit on May 10-15. He noted that all preparations were on schedule and that the Call for Papers had been mailed, the program committee has been formed, and the web site had been created.

7.3 **2000 Conference.** Khatib, the Program Chair for the 2000 Conference, gave a very brief update on the 2000 Conference to be held in San Francisco on April 23-27. He noted that the hotel rate for the conference would be $149 ($169 for a double) and that most of the conference organization positions had been determined.

7.4 **2001 Conference.** Kwon, the General Chair for the 2001 Conference, gave a brief update on the 2001 Conference to be held in Seoul, Korea on May 21-26 (Attachment E). He noted that despite the economic crisis in Korea he was confidant that the Conference would be a success. He presented a letter from the Korea Exhibition Center guaranteeing the use of the ASEM Convention Center for the Conference as well as a letter from Samsung that pledged a donation of $50K (based on the current exchange rate) in support of the Conference.

7.5 **2002 Conference.** Sanderson, the General Chair for the 2002 Conference, presented a proposal for the 2002 Conference to be held in Washington, DC. The proposal has received preliminary approval from the Conference Board and is scheduled for final approval at the next AdCom. Peter Luh would be the Program Chair and one suggested theme of the Conference is "New Frontiers in Robotics and Automation."

7.6 **2003 Conference.** Luo, the General Chair for the 2003 Conference, presented a proposal for the 2003 Conference to be held in Taipei, Taiwan tentatively scheduled for April 29 - May 5.

8. **NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Bekey, Chair of the Nominations Committee, opened his report by noting that he would accept nominations for new members of the AdCom until the end of July. He encouraged nominations that would maintain diversity in the AdCom. Klafter, Chair of the Awards Committee, then encouraged the AdCom to submit nominations for the Young Investigator award noting that it would be most appropriate if there were several nominations in the year that the award was first given. The deadline for nominations is January. Bekey then updated the AdCom on the status of the Pioneer award which was scheduled to be approved at the next TAB meeting.

9. **SOCIETY INFORMATION ITEMS**

Fukuda provided information on several items of interest to the Society, including the approval of the Society's new Field of Interest statement at the last TAB meeting and the activities of the ITS council. He then noted that IEEE and the IEEE Control Systems Society had each signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with SICE (Society of Instrument and Control Engineers) of Japan and that he proposed a similar MOU between our Society and SICE and also with RSJ (Robotics Society of Japan) (Attachment F). A motion to authorize the president to appoint a committee to pursue such an MOU with SICE and RSJ was made by Bekey, seconded by Bejczy, and unanimously approved by the AdCom. Finally, Fukuda asked that the Vice President for Publications look into the possibility of technical cosponsorship of the Journal of Robotics and Mechatronics.

10. **MEETINGS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Sugano, Co-Chair of the Meetings Committee, opened his report by reviewing the requirements for cosponsorship of meetings. He then presented proposals for cosponsorship of two conferences: MHS '98 and Intelligent Mechatronics '99. A motion to approve cosponsorship of these conferences was made by Fukuda and approved by the AdCom.

11. **PRESIDENT ELECT REPORT**

Hsia, President Elect, made a brief report on his vision for the Society. He commented on the very encouraging financial situation and noted that we must have a very thoughtful discussion on how to use our reserves wisely. He closed his report by noting that we must address the issue of increasing our membership.

12. **LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT**

Moraff, Co-Chair of the Long Range Planning Committee, provided a report on the discussions in this committee. He commented on the multi-faceted role of this committee including its responsibilities for providing member services, performing financial planning, and identifying emerging technologies. Examples of emerging technologies included "visuo-motor" robotics, nano technology, distributed robotics, and "embedded" robotics. Examples of member services included providing packages of tutorials, reports on emerging technologies, and high school outreach programs.

13. ROBOTICS AND INTELLIGENT MACHINES COORDINATING COUNCIL REPORT

Eicker, Chair of the Robotics and Intelligent Machines Coordinating Council, presented a brief report on the activities of RIMCC. He noted that he was currently working on a long range plan for robotics at the Department of Energy.

14. CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS COMMITTEE REPORT

Maciejewski, Chair of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, reported on discussions in the Executive Committee concerning changes to the Bylaws that would consolidate the duties of the Meetings Committee into the Conference Board. Caplan provided some background on the difficulties that had occurred due to the fact that the Meetings Committee and Conference Board have been operating independently. A motion to form a committee to draft amendments to the bylaws that would address this issue was made, seconded, and unanimously passed by the AdCom.

15. EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Erkmen, Co-Chair of the Education Committee, reported on the activities of her committee (Attachment G). She discussed plans for increasing the use of the internet for educational activities, increasing student involvement through design competitions and student conferences, and nominating Society members for educational awards.

16. STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Slater, Chair of the Standards Committee, reported on his plans for activating this committee and developing standards. There was general support for these activities as well as several suggestions for soliciting input from various industries and interested parties, as well as from the IEEE Standards Board.

17. INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Kosuge, Chair of the International Affairs Committee, gave a very brief report on his efforts to establish a "human network" using resources from IEEE.

18. NEURAL NETWORKS LIAISON REPORT

Tarn, the Neural Networks Liaison, reported that the Neural Network Council is in good shape ($1.2 million in reserves), however, several of their recent conferences have lost money. He also noted that they support 75 students annually to attend their conferences.

19. RAS/SMC MERGER/COOPERATION COMMITTEE

Sanderson, Chair of the RAS/SMC Merger/Cooperation Committee, reported that the current status is that there is no mutual interest in a merger of the societies but that both societies would like to see more cooperation in conferences, workshops, and publications. The recent approval of the SMC Transactions Part C possibly represents one mechanism for cooperation on publications. He also recommended that a Liaison

Committee be formed to explore future cooperation since the work of this committee was finished. Fukuda noted that he had spoken to the SMC president concerning such a committee and that three RAS members would be appointed.

20. **NEW BUSINESS**

President Fukuda reported that the Society's logo was not registered and is therefore not protected. A straw vote on whether the current logo should be registered or a new one designed was split 50-50. A committee consisting of Hamel, Snyder, and Hsia was appointed to explore new logo designs and to report back at the next AdCom.

21. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:33 p.m. to convene next on October 18, 1998 in Victoria, British Columbia.