

Mar 28, 2025 | RAS Virtual AdCom Meeting

Agenda: <https://agd.ieee.org/mpt/Agenda.aspx?eid=19266>

Notes

1. **Meeting Called To Order (Wensing)**
2. **Roll Call and Review of Consent Agenda Items (Wensing)**

In attendance:

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

Class of 2026: Gregory Dudek, Barbara Mazzolai, Yu Sun, Michael Yu Wang

Class of 2027: Eduardo Bayro-Corrochano, Mariagrazia Dotoli, Dongheui Lee, Allison Okamura, Karinne Ramirez Amaro, Jee-Hwan Ryu

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

Society Officers (non-voting): Darwin Caldwell, Jing Xiao, Ludovic Righetti, Katja Mombaur, Bram Vanderborght, Kyujin Cho, Jen Jen Chung, Seth Hutchinson

RAS Staff and Guests: Grace Zhao, Patrick Hanna, Taraja Arnold, Kyung Mi Bae, Terence Martinez, Nicholas Milton, Amy Reeder, Jasemine Park

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

Consent Agenda Including:

Motion to Revise ICRA Conference Awards

Motion to revise RAS Bylaws

Motion to revise RAS Policies & Procedures Manual

Motion to Approve 2 New Technical Committees

Approval of Past Minutes (January 12, 2025, December 4, 2024, September 27, 2024)

Motion to Amend Past Minutes: July 31, 2024

AdCom Board Assignments - March 28, 2025

Motion Passed

4. **Welcome and Agenda Details (Billard)**
 - a. Emphasized the role of AdCom, as a legislative body
 - b. Previewed the key items in the Agenda
 - c. Discussed the need to consider how to distribute funds in relation to the January motion on overlength fees in a balanced way

5. **State of the Society (Billard)**
 - a. Reached over 20,000 members (15% women)
 - i. Mentioned goal to keep track of gender distribution across all boards
 - b. Over 10,000 journal paper submissions
 - c. RAS finances
 - i. Loss of \$300k due to of RAS University (working with IEEE to let this come from reserves)
 - ii. 2024 – net deficit
 - iii. 2025 -- \$300k projected deficit
 1. Reserve balance 26 million

6. **Human Rights and Ethics Committee - Updated Scope (Righetti)**
 - a. Proposing to close dormant existing ethics and human rights committee
 - b. The current focus of the committee is work ethics problems (covered by IEEE)
 - c. We would like to change the scope and maybe the name of the committee
 - d. Updated name/scope to reflect that our mission is to benefit humanity
 - i. New name proposal: Responsible research and innovation in robotics and automation
 - ii. New scope:
 1. Propose actions to promote ethical practice and social responsibility
 2. Monitor misuse of robotics and automation and plan ways to address it
 - e. Discussion:
 - i. Points raised that we should focus on educating rather than adjudicating the community.
 - ii. Discussed relationship with Science and Technology Watch Board

7. **RAS Support for Sustainability Robotics (Mazzolai & Billard)**
 - a. An emerging field combines two important topics
 - b. Two Missions: Raising awareness, supporting the growing community
 - c. Proposed Actions: Education & Training, Publications
 - d. Sustainability Robotics encompasses 2 key dimensions
 - i. Sustainable Robot Design
 - ii. Robotics Solutions for Sustainability Challenges
 - e. Proposal for TEP on sustainability robotics to be distributed on a large scale on multiple topics related to sustainability
 - f. Proposed ties in with RAM Column for visibility

- g. Discussion: Discussed first starting as a TC and perhaps by expanding scope of the TC on sustainable automation

8. Ad Hoc on Sustainability and Climate Change Report from Ekodev (Billard & Righetti)

- a. \$150K surplus from 2023 ICRA - at the time, the general chair said to allocate these funds for tree planting
- b. No decision has been made about how to use these funds
- c. Proposal to use these funds
 - i. Education, action, and impact
 - ii. 30k for education: Support the development of educational materials
 - iii. 30k for sustainability award: Would be awarded yearly for 3 years
 - iv. 50k for travel awards: Provides low-carbon travel options such as trains
 - v. 10k for data, statistics, and software
 - vi. 30k for high-quality hybrid conference infrastructure
- d. Comments/Discussion: AdCom discussed the relative amounts in the different categories proposed, with consensus that the travel awards should be reduced and funds instead allocated to support for hybrid conferences.
- e. **Motion:** *To allocate the \$150K surplus from ICRA 2023 as follows: \$30K for Educational activities, \$30K for the Introduction of a Sustainability Award, \$50K for Travel Awards, \$10K for Data, Statistics and Software, and \$30K for High-Quality Hybrid Conference Infrastructure.*
 - i. **Motion to Amend:** Move \$20K from travel awards to hybrid conference.
Motion to Amend Passed
 - ii. **Amended Motion:** *To allocate the \$150K surplus from ICRA 2023 as follows: \$30K for Educational activities, \$30K for the Introduction of a Sustainability Award, \$30K for Travel Awards, \$10K for Data, Statistics and Software, and \$50K for High-Quality Hybrid Conference Infrastructure.*
Motion Passed

9. Financial Activities Board (Xiao)

- a. Last year's budget: Net loss of \$90K, mostly from ICRA@40
- b. Increase in the budgeted expenses for 2025 from 2024
 - i. If we use the entire budget, there will be a loss
- c. Want to make sure our spending is meeting our objectives
- d. New rule to request pre-authorization for any single invoice of more than \$25K
- e. The new IEEE budget policy is that we cannot have a deficit of more than 1% of the reserve balance – this places the max deficit at about \$260K

10. Science and Technology Watch Board (Park)

- a. Making progress with first two meetings -- working on signing people up
- b. The purpose of the board is technical leadership / similar to a control tower
- c. Meeting at ICRA
- d. Discussion: Discussed how findings will be shared in RAM columns, articles, panels at ICRA & IROS, roadmaps, interviews, press releases, and more

11. Educational Activities Board (Martinez)

- a. Presented upcoming activities
- b. Highlighted projects (see slides for further detail)
- c. Board Budget: Emphasized that RAS U will affect upcoming spending
- d. Discussion: None

12. Conference Activities Board (Caldwell)

- a. ICRA@40 was significant drain on CAB budget in 2024
- b. Discussed how other conference's final budgets are delayed, which makes planning challenging.
- c. ICRA
 - i. Discussed upcoming leadership changes for ICRA Steering Committee (New Chair Marcia O'Malley starts in July)
 - ii. ICRA 2029: Milan and Cape Town visits completed
 - iii. Noted ICRA 2025/2026 Satellite events options
 - iv. Discussed a few budget updates for ICRA 2026 Vienna
- d. IROS
 - i. IROS 2028 Sydney approved by IROS Exec Board
 - ii. IROS Future: Try to modernize procedures to align them with ICRA practices
 - iii. Conflict Resolution with IES
 - 1. Grievance letter submitted to the Conferences Committee
- e. Discussed CAB Review of Conference Sponsorship Criteria
- f. Feedback / Discussion: A suggestion was made to include Eduardo, Marcus, and Kyujin in the ICRA Steering Committee since they'll be general chairs of upcoming ICRA's

13. Industrial Activities Board (Keay)

- a. Update postponed

14. Media Services Board (Righetti)

- a. Continuing with Social Media ambassadors
- b. Discussed social media engagement strategies (which platforms to use)
- c. Noted continued partnership with IEEE Spectrum at ICRA
- d. Update on website redesign
 - i. Issues with the existing vendor asking for more money

- ii. Decided to end the agreement with the previous vendor and just agreed to continue using the designs we got with a new vendor
- e. Discussed shifted allocations with the MSB budget

15. Member Activities Board (Mombaur)

- a. Budget overview emphasized the Member Support Program and Chapter Grants.
- b. Raised issue about ICRA 2025 planning and concerns around travel
- c. Discussion:
 - i. AdCom discussed some concerns from members about holding DEI events in the US
 - ii. Conference leadership voiced support for those who choose not to attend ICRA
 - iii. Many others voiced support that RAS should take a stand for DEI Events.
 - iv. A separate meeting was scheduled to follow up on this topic.

16. Publication Activities Board (Vanderborght)

- a. Discussed status of the proposal for the Transactions on Robot Learning
 - i. Co-sponsorship with SMC, SPS, and CIS (40%)
- b. In earlier phases for proposing the Transactions on Soft Robotics
- c. Presented the status of recruiting new EiC for many of our journals.

17. Technical Activities Board (Cho)

- a. Mentioned budget changes due to the TEABxSAC dinner
- b. Overviewed the status of TAB x Startups plan
- c. TC Retirement process added to the bylaws
- d. **Motion:** *To nullify the previous motion (Motion: 2022-Oct-10) as we cannot continue having such multi-year financial motions in light of the new IEEE financial practice.*

Motion Passed

18. Motion for Additional Support for RAS TC Conferences (Cho)

- a. Motion withdrawn

19. Discussion: A balanced approach to giving back to the community (Billard)

- a. Discussion postponed.

20. Other/New Business (Wensing)

- a. None

21. Meeting Adjourned (Wensing)

22. Next in-person AdCom Meeting: 24 May 2025, Atlanta (GA), USA