Approved June 6, 2026

March 13th, 2026
RAS AdCom Meeting (Virtual)

Agenda: https://agd.ieee.org/mpt/Agenda.aspx?eid=19834

Notes:

1. **Meeting Called to Order (Wensing)**

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

   In attendance:

   Class of 2026: Gregory Dudek, Barbara Mazzolai, Marcia K. O'Malley, Yu Sun, Michael Yu Wang

   Class of 2027: Arash Ajoudani, Eduardo Bayro-Corrochano, Mariagrazia Dotoli, Dongheui Lee, Jee-Hwan Ryu

   Class of 2028: Antonio Bicchi, Peter Corke, Lydia Kavraki, Serena Ivaldi, Hyungpil Moon, Zhidong Wang

   Society Officers (voting): Nancy Amato, Kyujin Cho, Aude Billard, Patrick Wensing, Tony Maciejewski

   Society Officers (non-voting): Karinne Ramirez Amaro, Chad Jenkins, Jing Xiao, Jim Ostrowski, Sabine Hauert, Katja Mombaur, Hong Zhang, Allison Okamura, Hugo Rodrigue, Jen Jen Chung, Frank Park

3. **Approval of Agenda (Wensing)**

   One item removed from consent and moved to the main agenda:
   Motion: IAB Support for Standards Implementation Groups

   Remaining consent agenda including:
   Minutes: October 25th, 2025
   Minutes: December 8th, 2025
   Minutes: January 11th, 2026
   Motion: RAS Journal to Conference Transfer Extension for AIM
   Motion: Retirement of TC on Smart Buildings
   Motion: Renaming of "TC on Model-Based Optimization for Robotics" to "TC on Optimization for Robotics"

   Motion Passed

4. **Welcome and Agenda Details (Amato)**

5. **State of the Society & Budget Update (Amato)**
    - Reviewed outcomes from the February IEEE meeting series
        - IEEE Transactions on Soft Robotics approved: launch within a year
        - The requested funds transfer to the IEEE Foundation for sustainability grants was not approved; to be considered later in the year
        - Academic Industry Partnership Grants were not approved at this time due to concerns raised by IEEE
    - Provided conference updates
        - The IROS MOU and Charter have been agreed to by all participating societies and are ready for signature
        - Safety concerns were raised regarding upcoming RAS conferences, including RoboSoft 2027 in Abu Dhabi and ICRA 2028 in Guadalajara
    - Reviewed IEEE policy updates related to conference travel and registration
        - Travel reimbursement remains allowable with receipts, but registration reimbursement is not allowed for 100% IEEE conferences
        - Complimentary registration codes may be used based on qualifying criteria
        - CAB will review implications for conference finances and update guidance
    - ○ Reviewed the 2025 RAS budget situation
        - RAS moved from a projected small surplus in late 2025 to an estimated operating deficit of approximately $900K
        - Cause: negative conference adjustments (ICRA 2025 and IROS 2024)
        - Discussed corrective actions / procedures
    - Noted that RAS's overall 2025 financial position is expected to remain strong due to an estimated $4.7M share of IEEE investment income

6. **ICRA Steering Committee Review of ICRA 2028 (Amato)**
    - Discussed concerns regarding ICRA 2028, currently scheduled for Guadalajara, Mexico
        - Recent safety concerns in Guadalajara and Jalisco were noted
        - Additional concerns were raised regarding coordination among key organizing committee members
    - Discussion emphasized that the concerns include both attendee safety and conference planning feasibility

    - ***Motion:*** *The ICRA Steering Committee is requested to assess the safety and feasibility of holding ICRA 2028 in Guadalajara, Mexico and report back to AdCom at ICRA 2026 in Vienna with its findings and, if concerns are found to be substantive, recommendations to ensure the success of ICRA 2028. If the ICRA SC determines it is not advisable to hold ICRA 2028 in Guadalajara, then it should also provide recommendations for changes as necessary.*

      Motion Passed

7. **Financial Activities Board (Xiao)**

- Nothing to add beyond previous budget discussion.

8. **Science and Technology Watch Board (Okamura)**
    - Reviewed the current structure and emerging activities of the Science and Technology Watch Board
    - Discussed the need to better communicate the Science Committee's work
        - STB is coordinating with the Media Services Board, RA-Magazine, and other venues to disseminate short-form outputs and analysis
    - Reviewed FY26 budget status, noting that spending to date has primarily supported policy analysis, with communications and technology analysis expected to ramp up.
    - Discussion focused on how STB might help the community think about "robotics futures"
        - Suggestions included identifying open scientific challenges, involving the broader community through surveys or invited perspectives, and using the website or magazine to support active discussion
        - It was noted that roadmaps may come from national, industry, or other sources, and that STB can help clarify the source, audience, and purpose of these efforts
        - AdCom members encouraged STB to keep the scope focused so the board's work remains effective and its message is not diluted

9. **Educational Activities Board (Jenkins)**
    - Robotics History Project
        - EAB reported that 35 robotics history interviews had been collected as of 2025 and are now featured on the RAS website and IEEE.tv.
        - EAB plans to collect an additional 15 to 20 interviews in 2026, including at ICRA and other venues.
    - Technical Education Program
        - The Technical Education Program remains the largest EAB budget item.
        - The 2026 program received a record 40 proposals from 15 countries across 4 IEEE regions.
        - The program has been split into different types of support in response to RAS membership growth and varied needs, including practitioner-oriented education for student chapters and smaller support for developing regions that may not yet be ready for a larger TEP event.
    - STEM outreach
        - EAB highlighted recent growth in STEM outreach at RAS conferences, including outreach activities at Humanoids 2024, ICRA 2025, and a successful event at SII 2026 in Cancun.
        - EAB is planning additional outreach activities for ICRA 2026.
    - Competitions
        - EAB has a small current competitions budget of $30K
        - Competitions provide strong return on investment through student engagement and EAB hopes to expand support in this area, coordinating with CAB and MAB.

- RAS University and budget discussion: In response to a question about the low planned spending shown for RAS University, it was clarified that RAS University spending is expected to grow.
    - Three external course contributors are each expected to receive support and that additional development work is continuing.
    - A release is planned before ICRA, including a sustainability course, along with other courses such as multi-robot systems and UAVs.
- TEABxSAC Dinner
    - In response to a question, Jenkins explained that the dinner connects EAB, TAB, and SAC activities, encourages student participation in technical committees and student activities

10. Conference Activities Board (Ramirez Amaro)

- Highlighted activities underway across CAB
    - CAB is reviving the conference portal and improving archival access to past conference information
    - A standardized conference organizers report template is being developed to improve post-conference reporting and identify issues earlier
    - CAB is preparing a conference organizers workshop at ICRA 2026 to cover roles, responsibilities, sponsorship applications, publications, technical programs, and finance
    - CAB is reviewing technical quality criteria for RAS-sponsored conferences, including program committee expectations, review practices, conflict-of-interest handling, and acceptance-rate guidance
- Discussed the need for a clearer RAS refund policy for conference registrations
    - Current practice varies across conferences, and there is no consistent RAS-wide policy
    - Discussion supported developing guidance for cases such as visa delays or denials, health issues, and personal or family matters
    - AdCom feedback emphasized that visa issues are increasing, that denial letters may not always be available, and that evidence of timely visa application should be considered
- Discussed options for authors unable to attend in person
    - Suggestions included considering video presentation, hybrid options, or potentially allowing presentation at a different RAS-sponsored or co-sponsored conference
    - CAB will continue developing guidance and may bring a motion forward at ICRA
- Briefly noted additional conference-related issues
- CAB is also reviewing safety concerns related to RoboSoft 2027 in Abu Dhabi and is asking the relevant steering committee to consider alternative venues.

11. Industrial Activities Board (Ostrowski)

- Reviewed current IAB activities and priorities for 2026

        - Standards activities include competitions, coordination meetings at ICRA, promotion of approved standards, and several potential new standards and study groups
        - Entrepreneurship activities include manufacturing workshops, a Spanish-language option, startup pitches, investor discussions, and coordination with IEEE Entrepreneurship
        - IAB is also working with the Science and Technology Watch Board on roadmaps and standards-related topics
    - Reviewed conference-facing industry activities
        - IAB will support exhibitor breakfasts, tech talk and innovation stages, entrepreneurship mentorship, industry program guides, and other industry-focused events at major RAS conferences
    - Reported progress on the Robotics Annual Report / industry data report
        - The report is close to publication, with future work focused on making it a regular annual report and improving data workflows
    - Reviewed grants, awards, and industry rewards program
    - Reviewed IAB budget status, noting that most spending is expected around ERF, ICRA, and IROS

12. Motion: Academic-Industrial Partnership Grants (Ostrowski)

- Presented a motion to increase the 2026 IAB budget forecast by $150K to support the Academic-Industrial Partnership Grants
    - The program consists of three $50K grants to academic institutions working with industry partners, with each industry partner expected to contribute $15K
    - Winners were selected and notified in December 2025, but additional IEEE approvals are still required
- Discussion clarified that the motion addresses the RAS budget allocation for 2026, while IEEE TAB and FinCom approval is still being pursued
    - Questions focused on confirming the industry partner contribution, whether the program would continue annually, and how best to explain the program's goals, benefits, and IP considerations
- ***Motion:*** *IAB motions to increase the 2026 IAB budget forecast by $150K to support the Academic-Industrial Partnership Grants*

  Motion Passed

13. Motion: IAB Support for Standards Implementation Groups (Ostrowski)

- Presented a motion to increase the Standards Activity budget line item by $16K to support two students forming a Standards Implementation Group
    - The group would develop sample implementations, use cases, documentation, and implementation guidance for standards nearing completion
- Discussion focused on scope, student selection, and expected outcomes
    - AdCom members emphasized the need for a transparent student selection process

        - The activity was characterized as a low-cost experiment that could be expanded in future years if successful
    - ***Motion:*** *IAB motions to increase the Standards Activity budget line item from $60k to $76k (+$16k) to fund stipend support of two students to form a Standards Implementation Group.*

      Motion Passed

14. Media Services Board (Hauert)

- Reviewed MSB plans for 2026, with a focus on improving the visibility of RAS activities both within the RAS community and to external audiences
    - MSB is working with board VPs, AdCom members, SAC, the ROBOTS Guide, conference publicity chairs, journal editors, IEEE Spectrum, and IEEE staff to better coordinate communications
- Reviewed website and social media activities
    - The new RAS website is live, with ongoing work to give volunteers editing access, improve dynamic front-page content, and address reduced Google ranking
    - RAS social media is active on Bluesky, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram, while X is currently on hold
    - MSB is using Loomly to coordinate social media posts and encouraged volunteers who need access to request accounts
- Highlighted planned communications activities (IEEE Spectrum collaboration, ROBOTS Guide, RAS Ambassadors, RobotTalk podcast, Science Communication training)
- Discussed broader communications priorities
    - MSB is considering whether to emphasize more inward-facing content for members, such as newsletters and technical highlights, or more outward-facing content aimed at the public and broader media
    - AdCom feedback focused especially on website usability, broken links, and difficulty finding content after the website migration
- Noted that additional website and communications support may require a future budget request.

15. Member Activities Board (Mombaur)

- Reviewed the MAB structure and noted that several MAB programs are affected by recent IEEE policy changes on conference registration support
    - The Member Support Program is most affected, especially the author discount component
    - Travel grants remain possible, but registration support can no longer be handled in the same way
- Discussed the impact on ICRA 2026 and other conferences
    - RAS cannot directly fund author registration discounts, though conferences may choose to provide discounts from their own budgets
    - ICRA 2026 will not receive RAS funding for AdCom and volunteer registrations, creating an estimated $100K impact for the conference

16. Motion: Reallocation of MSP Author Discount Budget (Mombaur)

- Discussed reallocating $360K from the MSP Author Discount budget, since RAS can no longer fund author registration discounts under the new IEEE rules
- Discussion focused on keeping the funds aligned with the original intent of supporting members and authors
  - Some members suggested directing more of the funds to travel grants
  - It was noted that significantly increasing travel grants would create substantial administrative burden
  - Members also discussed whether the ICRA Robotics Festival should be supported, given its public outreach focus and potential precedent for future conferences
- The proposed reallocations were separated into individual motions
  - ***Motion:*** *to reallocate $55K of the ICRA MSP Author Discount Program to the 2026 ICRA Community Building Day*
    Motion Passed
  - ***Motion:*** *to reallocate $50K of the ICRA MSP Author Discount Program to ICRA 2026 competitions, under CAB*
    Motion Passed
  - ***Motion:*** *to reallocate $60K of the ICRA MSP Author Discount Program to the ICRA 2026 Robotics Festival*
    Motion Passed
  - ***Motion:*** *to reallocate $195K from the MSP Author Discount Program to travel grants in 2026*
    Motion Passed

17. Publication Activities Board (Zhang)

- Reviewed the structure and scope of PAB
- Five RAS journals are scheduled for PRAC review, with the RA-L review postponed due to timing constraints
- Reported that RAS journals are performing well: RAS journals generated more than $2M in net income in 2025, helping support broader Society activities
- Provided updates on new journals
  - IEEE Transactions on Robot Learning is scheduled to launch at the end of March 2026
  - IEEE Transactions on Soft Robotics has passed Phase 2 approval and is working on branding and marketing
  - RAS is a minor co-sponsor of the proposed Journal of Digital Reality, whose Phase 1 proposal is being resubmitted
- Discussed journal-to-conference transfer processes
  - The program has grown from RA-L to ICRA into a broader set of journals and conferences
  - Growth has created confusion around timing, responsibilities, and communication among journals, conferences, authors, PAB, and CAB

        - PAB has identified the main parties and workflow and will prepare written documentation, discuss it with PAB and conference organizers, and develop a web page and FAQ
    - Provided an update on the ICRA-IROS continuous publication model
        - The new transfer submission category has been implemented
        - Sharing editorial information and inviting prior AEs/reviewers to re-review have not yet been implemented
        - PAB will meet with the ICRA and IROS Editors-in-Chief to review the experiment and discuss next steps
    - The originally scheduled end time of the meeting was reached.
      Motion: *To extend the meeting by at most 30 minutes.*
      Motion Passed

    - PAB discussion clarified that journal-to-conference transfer eligibility begins with the conference being approved and then requesting participation in the transfer process.

18. **Technical Activities Board (Rodrigue)**
    - TC operating funds
        - TAB has $160K allocated for TC operating funds. To date, 36 TCs submitted forms and approximately $115K has been designated, with more requests expected.
        - Student representative participation increased substantially, with 77 representatives across 30 TCs. Due to the new registration policy, support will shift from registration discounts to travel support.
    - TABxStartups
        - TAB plans to continue TABxStartups at ICRA 2026, with support revised from registration discounts to travel support.
    - Conference and cluster support
        - TAB revised its conference support model to scale with attendance.
        - MRS was discussed because it is held every other year; TAB proposed providing full support in conference years and Blue Ribbon level support in off years.
        - Cluster operating funds are available, with several clusters still finalizing 2026 plans.
    - TC leadership and policy updates
        - TAB plans a lightweight midterm review process for TC co-chairs, focused on activity documentation and self-reflection.
        - TAB will conduct a second round of co-chair recruitment for three TCs.
        - TAB proposed allowing TCs to use up to $1,500 of their existing $3,000 operating fund for activities at financially co-sponsored conferences where RAS is the largest financial co-sponsor.

19. **Other/New Business (Wensing)**
20. **Meeting Adjourned (Wensing)**
21. **Next in-person AdCom Meeting: Saturday, 6 June 2026, ICRA Vienna, Austria (Wensing)**