



Fall News from the Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence

AAAI Statement Condemning Racism

The AAAI Statement Condemning Racism and Calling to Action that is included in this issue was posted on the AAAI website and sent to AAAI members on June 22, 2020. It was signed by all the members of the Executive Council and members of the AAAI Committee on Diversity and Inclusion. For more information on AAAI's commitment to diversity and inclusion and recent activities of the committee, please see aaai.org/Organization/diversity-inclusion.php.

Join Us for AAAI-21, IAAI-21, and EAAI-21!

The Thirty-Fifth AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence (AAAI-21), the Thirty-Third Conference on Innovative Applications of Artificial Intelligence (IAAI-21), and the Eleventh Symposium on Educational Advances in Artificial Intelligence (EAAI-21) will be held virtually from February 2–9, 2021. Registration information will be available in early November at www.aaai.org/aaai21.

AAAI will feature all the same programs as in the past, including an extensive technical program, demonstrations, poster sessions, invited talks, student programs, tutorials, workshops, and opportunities to connect with sponsors and exhibitors. Details about the virtual format will be available on the website as the conference approaches. Opportunities to participate will continue to

be available after September, especially through the workshop and exhibitor programs.

The chairs of the event are Qiang Yang (AAAI-21 general chair), Kevin Leyton-Brown (AAAI-21 program co-chair), Mausam (AAAI-21 program co-chair), Neil Yorke-Smith (IAAI-21 conference co-chair), Meinolff Sellmann (IAAI-21 conference co-chair), Lisa Torrey (EAAI-21 symposium co-chair), and Michael Guerzhoy (EAAI-21 symposium co-chair). For more information about the events, please see www.aaai.org/aaai21.

AAAI-21 Workshop Program

The AAAI-21 Workshop Call for Participation is now available at aaai.org/Conferences/AAAI-21/ws21. The recommended date for workshop submissions is November 15, unless otherwise noted at the individual workshop websites. Submission requirements vary for each workshop. Please consult the individual workshop description for complete information about where to submit your paper and a link to the workshop supplementary website, where more detailed information will be available.

Be a AAAI Sponsor, Exhibitor, and Job Fair Participant!

AAAI invites you to participate as a sponsor, exhibitor, and job fair employer at AAAI-21. AAAI-21 will offer unique

virtual opportunities for all sponsors to connect with researchers and students. Your participation will give you instant visibility to this diverse group of AI professionals, representing a host of research areas such as search, planning, knowledge representation, reasoning, natural language processing, robotics and perception, multiagent systems, statistical learning, and deep learning, as well as applications in diverse domains such as healthcare, sustainability, transportation, and commerce. In 2021, AAAI will highlight research with a special track on artificial intelligence for social impact, as well as focus areas on Neuro-Symbolic AI, AI Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic, and AI for Conference Organization and Delivery. Sponsors and exhibitors will enjoy a host of benefits, including complimentary technical registrations. The AAAI/ACM SIGAI job fair is a place for students and professionals looking for internships or jobs to meet with representatives from companies and academia in an informal “meet-and-greet” atmosphere. This is one AAAI's best attended programs. November 15, 2020 is the preferred deadline for notification of intent to participate.

For complete details about all of these programs, please visit aaai.org/Conferences/AAAI-21 or write to AAAI at aaai21@aaai.org.

Join Us for AIIDE-20

The Sixteenth AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Interactive Digital Entertainment (AIIDE-20)

AAAI Statement Condemning Racism and Calling to Action

As a scientific society, AAAI is against the violence against Black people and the systemic racism that has gone unaddressed for too long.

There has been a never-ending fight for equality and inclusion for people of color. History and current events show how systematic racism promotes the idea that those who are not in the majority deserve less. Many people of color are afforded less opportunity, less education, and less freedom because of this racism. George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and a multitude of others had their lives taken because of this racism. Enough is enough. We can no longer sit on the sidelines and just say the right words and ignore the problems. We can no longer let our colleagues, neighbors, and fellow human beings receive anything less than respect and equal treatment. All of us must stand with and beside people of color and let their voices be heard. We cannot speak for those whose lives are at risk simply because of their race, but what we can do is ensure that education, opportunity, justice, and the freedom to live is afforded to each and every person.

AAAI is committed to make a change. We endorse the call to action from Black in Computing (blackincomputing.org) and clearly and unequivocally reaffirm that diversity, equity, and inclusion are critical to the well-being of our society.

We believe words must be backed up with actions that reaffirm to those in the minority that they are valued for their ideas, their cultures, their differences, and their similarities. We foster diversity and inclusion for each and every person.

AAAI is committed to:

Continuously listening, learning, supporting, and advocating for Black communities, Indigenous communities, and communities of color who continue to experience the damaging effects of racism and are severely underrepresented in the computing community.

Examining the role of AI and computer algorithms that increasingly shape our society and perpetuate racism and bias. AI is uniquely able to shape society, but needs do so in ways that promote justice and eliminate systemic inequities.

Improving current policies and practices in appointing people for leadership roles in AAAI and AAAI sponsored conferences, and remaining open to recommendations for other policies and practices that should be reviewed. The objective is to identify existing forms of bias and discrimination, racial and otherwise, and to create ways to bring down barriers that prevent equal participation.

AAAI has been long committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion and will increase its efforts to be an instrument of change for the AI community. The AAAI Diversity and Inclusion Committee is a key catalyst of these activities and welcomes your contributions and ideas. The annual AAAI conference holds a variety of programs to be proactive in this respect. In 2020, several new events resulted from a call for community proposals, including research and career mentoring events, access to education, improving the pipeline, and addressing differently abled members of the AI community. AAAI has a budget allocated for diversity and inclusion programs, which has been increasing every year. But we can do much more.

AAAI pledges to support the Black in Computing movement and the many other organizations in being an instrument of change in our field and in our society. We invite all of our members to be a part of the change within and beyond the AAAI community.

will be held virtually October 19-23. AIIDE brings together researchers and practitioners who work in AI for entertainment, including game designers, creative technologists, media artists, and academic and industrial AI researchers. This year, AIIDE especially encourages submissions to respond to the theme of “Foundations for Shared Progress.” The program will also include a slate of invited speakers, technical paper presentations, a poster and demo session, a doctoral consortium, and the annual Starcraft AI Competition. The Playable Experiences track will continue this year with two systems with articulable innovation in the use of AI directly affecting the user’s experience, including *Why Are We Like This?* by Melanie Dickinson, Max Kreminski, Michael Mateas, Noah Wardrip-Fruin (University of California, Santa Cruz) and *0DayDreams: What Do Machines Draw When They Daydream?* by Sabine Wieluch (bleeptrack).

The main conference program will be preceded by two workshop days on October 19-20 during which time three workshops will be held: *Experimental AI in Games*, *Intelligent Narrative Technologies*, and *Artificial Intelligence for Strategy Games*.

The full conference program and registration information is available at aiide.org. The early registration deadline is September 18. Preregistration is required for access to the virtual platforms. For more information about registration, please see www.aiide.org, or write to aiide20@aaai.org.

HCOMP 2020 This Fall

The Eighth AAAI Conference on Human Computation and Crowdsourcing will be held virtually from October 26–29. HCOMP is the home of the human computation and crowdsourcing community. It is the premier venue for presenting the latest findings from research and practice into frameworks, methods and systems that bring together people and machine intelligence to achieve better results. While artificial intelligence (AI) and human-computer interaction (HCI) represent traditional mainstays of the conference, HCOMP believes strongly in fostering and promoting broad, interdisciplinary research. The field is particularly unique in the diversity of disciplines it draws

upon and contributes to, including human-centered qualitative studies and HCI design, social computing, artificial intelligence, economics, computational social science, digital humanities, policy, and ethics. We promote the exchange of advances in human computation and crowdsourcing not only among researchers, but also engineers and practitioners, to encourage dialogue across disciplines and communities of practice.

HCOMP-20 will include technical talks, poster sessions, and a doctoral consortium. The conference will feature three keynote addresses. Artist Anna Ridler will present a talk on *Using Machine Learning in an Artistic Context: Classification And Its Consequences*, Julia Noordegraaf of the University of Amsterdam will present a talk on *Amplified Intelligence: Uniting Human and Machine Intelligence in Cultural Heritage Workflows*. The final keynote address, *Is that Significant?* will be given by Chris Welty of Google Research. As in past years, HCOMP-20 will also include a Works-in-Progress program. The HCOMP-20 workshop program will be held on the day immediately preceding the main conference, October 26, and will include two meetings — *Data Excellence*, and *Rigorous Evaluation of AI Systems*.

Registration is available at the HCOMP-20 website (www.humancomputation.com/attend.html). For full details about the conference program, please visit the HCOMP-20 website (humancomputation.com) or write to hcomp20@aaai.org.

AAAI Fall and Spring Symposia

The AAAI’s 2020 Fall Symposium Series and partial 2020 Spring Symposium Series will be held virtually from Wednesday – Saturday, November 11–14. November 11–12 will be devoted to the four spring meetings that were postponed to the fall time frame, and November 13-14 will include six new fall symposia.

2020 Spring Symposia

Applied AI in Healthcare: Safety, Community, and the Environment

AI Welcomes Systems Engineering: Towards the Science of Interdepend-

ence for Autonomous Human-Machine Teams

Deep Models and Artificial Intelligence for Defense Applications: Potentials, Theories, Practices, Tools, and Risks

Towards Responsible AI in Surveillance, Media, and Security through Licensing

2020 Fall Symposia

AI for Social Good

Artificial Intelligence in Government and Public Sector

Cognitive Systems for Anticipatory Thinking

Conceptual Abstraction and Analogy in Natural and Artificial Intelligence

Physics-Guided AI to Accelerate Scientific Discovery

Trust and Explainability in Artificial Intelligence for Human-Robot Interaction

The Fall Symposium Series will also feature a general plenary session, in which the highlights of each symposium will be presented on Thursday, November 12.

To facilitate planning, we ask that all participants register by October 16, although registration will remain open after that date. For registration information, please contact AAAI at fss20@aaai.org or visit AAAI’s web site at www.aaai.org/Symposia/Fall/fss20.php.

2021 Spring Symposium Series

AAAI will present the 2021 Spring Symposium Series, from Monday – Wednesday, March 22-24, 2021. The meeting is tentatively planned to be held at Stanford University. However, plans for an alternate virtual format will be announced, if necessary, later this fall. The nine symposia will be as follows:

Artificial Intelligence for K-12 Education, organized by Zitao Liu, Jiliang Tang, Yi Chang, Xiangen Hu, and Diane Litman

Artificial Intelligence for Synthetic Biology, organized by Aaron Adler, Rajmonda Caceres, Mohammed Eslami, and Fusun Yaman.

Challenges and Opportunities for Multi-Agent Reinforcement Learning, organized by Christopher Amato, Frans Oliehoek, Shayegan Omidshafiei, and Karl Tuyls (this symposium was rescheduled from Spring 2020)

Combining Machine Learning and Knowledge Engineering, organized by

Andreas Martin, Knut Hinkelmann, Hans-Georg Fill, Aurlon Gerber, Doug Lenat, and Frank Van Harmelen.

Combining Machine Learning with Physical Sciences, organized by Jonghyun Harry Lee, Eric Darve, Peter Kitanidis, Michael Mahoney, Anuj Karpatne, Matthew Farthing, and Tyler Hesser

Leveraging Systems Engineering to Realize Synergistic AI/ML Capabilities, organized by William Lawless, Ranjeev Mittu, Don Sofge, Thomas Shortell, Tom McDermott, James Llinas, and Julie Marble.

Machine Learning for Mobile Robot Navigation in the Wild, organized by Xuesu Xiao, Harel Yedidsion, Reuth Mirsky, Justin Hart, Peter Stone, Ross Knepper, Hao Zhang, Jean Oh, Davide Scaramuzza, and Vaibhav Unhelkar.

Operationalizing AI Ethics and Implementing Machine Ethics, organized by Anand Rao, Kay Firth-Butterfield, Virginia Dignum, Steven Greidinger, Vivek Nallur, and Graham Finlay.

Survival Prediction: Algorithms, Challenges and Applications, organized by Neeraj Kumar, Russ Greiner, Thomas A Gerds, and Mihaela Van Der Schaar.

For additional information, and links to the supplementary websites for each symposium, please see www.aaai.org/Symposia/Spring/sss21.php.

Submissions for the symposia are due to organizers on November 1, 2020. Notification of acceptance will be given by December 3, 2020. Registration information will be available in January 2021. Please contact AAAI at sss21@aaai.org with any questions.

First Call for Nominations for 2021 Executive Council

The 2021 Nominating Committee is seeking nominations from the AAAI membership for the position of AAAI Executive Councilor. In 2021, AAAI members will elect four new councilors to serve three-year terms on the AAAI Executive Council. All elected officers and councilors are required to attend all council meetings each year (usually 1-2 in person and 2-3 via telecon), and actively participate in AAAI activities. Nominees must be current members of AAAI. The Nominating Committee encourages all regular AAAI members in

good standing to place an individual's name before them for consideration. (Student and institutional members are not eligible to submit candidates' names.) The Nominating Committee, in turn, will nominate eight candidates for councilor in early spring. In addition to members' recommendations, the committee will actively recruit individuals in order to provide a balanced slate of candidates. AAAI regular members will vote in late spring, and the new members of the Executive Council will be installed in the summer of 2021.

Information about where to submit a candidate's name for consideration will be mailed to all members in the fall of 2020. Nominators should contact candidates prior to submitting their names to verify that they are willing to serve, should they be elected. The deadline for nominations is March 1, 2021.

ACM/AAAI Allen Newell Award

AAAI congratulates the recipients of the 2019 ACM/AAAI Allen Newell Award, Lydia E. Kavraki of Rice University and Daphne Koller of Stanford University and Insitro. Lydia Kavraki is recognized for pioneering contributions to robotic motion planning, including the invention of randomized motion planning algorithms and probabilistic roadmaps, with applications to bioinformatics and biomedicine. Daphne Koller is recognized for seminal contributions to machine learning and probabilistic models, the application of these techniques to biology and human health, and for contributions to democratizing education. The ACM/AAAI Allen Newell Award is presented to an individual selected for career contributions that have breadth within computer science, or that bridge computer science and other disciplines. This award is accompanied by a prize of \$10,000, provided by ACM and the Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence, and by individual contributions.

AAAI Elects New Executive and Councilors

AAAI is pleased to announce and congratulate the new President-Elect and slate of councilors for the AAAI Executive Council.

President-Elect:

Francesca Rossi (IBM Research, USA)

Incoming Councilors (through 2023):

Edith Elkind (University of Oxford, UK)

Susan Epstein (The City University of New York: Hunter College, USA)

Laura Hiatt (US Naval Research Laboratory, USA)

Barry O'Sullivan (University College Cork, Ireland)

In addition to the newly-elected councilors, the eight councilors elected in 2018 and 2019 will continue their terms of service during the coming year. For a complete list, please refer to www.aaai.org/Organization/officers.php.

AAAI extends a special note of thanks to our immediate Past President, Rao Kambhampati, for his many years of service to AAAI, including the last six as President-Elect, President, and Past President. AAAI also thanks the four retiring Councilors, for their dedicated service and generous donations of time: Eugene Freuder (University College Cork, Ireland), Claire Monteleoni (University of Colorado Boulder, USA), Cynthia Rudin (Duke University, USA), and Matthijs Spaan (Delft University of Technology, Netherlands).

AAAI Executive Council Meeting

The AAAI Executive Council meeting took place on February 8, 2020 at the New York Hilton Hotel, New York, USA

Attending: Yolanda Gil, Bart Selman, Rao Kambhampati, David E. Smith, Eugene Freuder, Cynthia Rudin (remote), Matthijs Spaan, Cristina Conati, Eric Eaton, Ayanna Howard, Ariel Procaccia, Yiling Chen (remote), Judy Goldsmith, Chad Jenkins, Brian Scassellati, Eric Eaton, Maria Gini, Ashok Goel, Charles Isbell, Sven Koenig, David Leake, Mausam, Fei Sha, Vincent Conitzer, Francesca Rossi, Richard Tong, Mike Hamilton, Carol Hamilton.

Not Attending: Claire Monteleoni.

Yolanda Gil brought the meeting to order at 9:05 AM, and welcomed everyone. The minutes of the November 26, 2019 meeting, which had been circulated ahead, were approved.

Committee Reports

The members of the Executive Council introduced themselves, noting on which committees they served and if they were the chair of a committee. Gil announced that she had established monthly meetings of the committee chairs, which she hoped would facilitate the work of the committees between formal meetings of the Executive Council. Committee chairs will follow up with email or online meetings for their committees throughout the year to meet their goals and charges. AAAI will be creating a website for each committee to alert the community to their initiatives and activities. Several special interest mailing lists have been established, and committees are encouraged to request one for people interested in their activities.

Awards

Rao Kambhampati reviewed the awards overseen by the Fellows Selection Committee and the Executive Council Awards Committee, including the Distinguished Service Award and the Classic Paper Award. He noted that there continue to be issues for the Fellows Selection Committee surrounding the importance of outstanding service in the field versus very well-known research, and that it was often difficult to find a good balance among candidates with a limit of 10 new Fellows per year. The quality of the Senior Member nominations was high, but Kambhampati would like to see the number increase, as well as the number of nominations for all awards and honors.

AAAI Squirrel AI Award: Gil reviewed the current plans for the new AAAI Squirrel AI Award for Artificial Intelligence for the Benefit of Humanity. Richard Tong of Squirrel AI joined the meeting for this discussion. The two organizations are in the process of finalizing the process for funding the award; Squirrel AI has provided the full funds for the first award to be given in 2021, along with \$100K in administrative funds for the promotion, organization, and selection of the award.

The Call for Nominations will be announced at the AAAI-20 Opening Ceremony. Nominations will be due May 24, and it is hoped that the winner will be announced in September or October of 2020. Gil will serve as the chair of the selection committee, and

has issued extensive conflict-of-interest guidelines that will govern all members of the committee. Members will include Yoshua Bengio, Tara Chklovski, Edward Feigenbaum, Robin Murphy, Barry O'Sullivan, and Lan Xue.

Bart Selman suggested that Gil consult with ACM about promotion strategies for the Turing Award, and she will also engage a communications consultant to assist with this task. Gil thanked Tong for all his help during the award development phase, and for the trust that Squirrel AI has placed in AAAI and other sponsoring organizations to ensure a successful award. Matthijs Spaan inquired about whether there was an option to have no award presented in 2021 if a worthy nomination is not received. Gil noted that this option is detailed in the Call for Nominations.

AAAI/SIGAI Dissertation Award: Bart Selman reported on the progress with the AAAI/SIGAI Dissertation Award. The committee received twenty nominations – all from top-ranking schools – and is currently reviewing these. The final selection process is not expected to be complete until later in the year. Given that this is the first iteration of the award it was decided that the process should not be rushed in order to announce the award at AAAI-20.

Conference

Sven Koenig, the chair of the Conference Committee, reviewed some of the recent foci of the committee, including the responsibilities of the new position of General Chair, issues surrounding the growth and scaling up of the conference, revisions to the review process, and reproducibility considerations for AAAI papers. The committee has used data collected in recent surveys and from 2020 program chairs to guide their discussions. They have also been very focused on ethical issues in the submission and reviewing process, the effects of the coronavirus during the days leading up to the conference and how to serve the community that cannot attend the conference, and diversity programs and issues related to the conference.

Francesca Rossi, the 2020 General Chair, gave an overview of the recent activities of the organizing committee, as well as some conference highlights. She reviewed the accommodations made in light of the coronavirus crisis,

including streaming of AAAI plenary sessions, the collection of videos and posters for presentation from authors who cannot attend, and the availability of online connections in each of the session rooms. Health concerns have been addressed by having a nurse in the registration area and providing hand sanitizer and gloves to attendees, as well as full instructions about safety measures and nearby health facilities. Carol Hamilton noted that AAAI is in the process of providing full refunds to people who could not attend due to travel restrictions. At least one author per accepted paper must remain registered.

In addition to the standard programs being presented at the conference, Rossi reviewed some of the highlights of the program, including the Turing Award recipient talks and panel, two fireside chats, the AI Debate, the History Panel, and a special surprise on the final morning. She thanked all the chairs, subchairs, and volunteers for their contributions in making the final program so exciting.

Vincent Conitzer and Fei Sha, AAAI-20 Program Chairs, reviewed the program committee and reviewing statistics for the conference. There were 162 area chairs, 453 senior program committee members, and 6,065 members of the program committee. Session chairs volunteered to run 126 sessions at the conference. As in the past, each paper received 3 reviews, although the chairs introduced a summary reject process that eliminated some papers early in the process for submission violations or lack of relevance to the AI field. They noted that IJCAI employed a stringent summary reject process for 2020, eliminating 50 percent of the submitted papers at that stage. IJCAI required that any rejected papers from other conferences be submitted with reviews. There was some concern that this system was too aggressive. AAAI makes the submission of reviews optional.

Conitzer and Fei also reviewed the challenges encountered with regard to the dual submission policy. They coordinated with several sets of conference chairs to weed out papers that had been dually submitted, resulting in about 20 violators, and subsequent summary rejects. They suggested that the conference invest in tools to detect

plagiarism more efficiently. However, available tools often do not address the issues encountered at submission time, as they are designed for published work. The chairs noted that the entire field is experimenting with many solutions to the explosion of papers, as well as associated policy violations. Key issues revolve around privacy issues, and the need to share data without violating author or reviewer rights to privacy. Authors and reviewers must be notified ahead of time if their data is going to be shared.

Submissions to the conference rose by 25 percent from 2019 to 2020. In addition, acceptance rates went up to 20.6 percent. Acceptance rates were fairly steady geographically, compared to 2019. The largest areas of growth were machine learning, vision, natural language processing, and knowledge representation. The chairs noted that the list of keywords should be updated for 2021.

The chairs noted that other ethical issues arose during the bidding and assignment phase of the review process. Some papers had to be rejected due to collusion in the bidding process; over 400 papers were examined for this kind of behavior. A solution to this problem is needed for the future. There should be real consequences for authors and reviewers for these types of violations, but it is very difficult to prove. Charles Isbell suggested that a simple warning ahead of time that the conference is checking for collusion circles may help, but he emphasized that there must be consequences for offenders. Adding something to the Call for Papers about ethical behavior would be appropriate. Rao Kambhampati suggested that writing an article for Medium about this kind of behavior will raise awareness of the problem. Rossi noted that this a community-wide problem, and an independent study group should be formed to address the problem. Cooperating with other conferences in the AI field will help identify problems and solutions.

Peter Stone, the outgoing Conference Chair, thanked Rossi, Conitzer, and Sha for their incredible efforts to address all the challenges faced by the 2020 organizing team. He reviewed the General Chair role, which was created this year to assist with a variety of several programs, such as the debate and history

panel, the invited speakers program, the industry program mentoring and outreach programs, the sponsorship program, publicity and social media functions, and the overall conference schedule. The General Chair appointed chairs for all of the special programs, and worked with them throughout the conference preparation time to ensure their success. Gil thanked Peter for his guidance during his tenure as Conference Chair, and the Executive Council gave all a standing ovation.

Koenig reported that the 2021 conference will retain the position of General Chair, which will be filled by Qiang Yang. Program Chairs will be Kevin Leyton-Brown and Mausam. Koenig is in the process of recruiting a general chair and program chairs for 2022.

The Conference Committee will meet during the conference, and will discuss ways for the 2021 conference to structure their organizing committee to deal with the incredible workload that has developed in recent years. The positions of workflow chairs will continue, and the committee is considering the introduction of associate chairs, who will address specific issues, such as ethics violations or virtual presentation options. Koenig is working on the development of a conference manual for positions on the organizing committee.

Koenig welcomed ideas from the Executive Council on how the organizing committees of the future can scale their procedures to deal with the ever-growing number of submissions, while still maintaining high-quality submissions, reviewers, and reviews. Gil thanked Koenig for all his efforts. She also extended her thanks to the AAAI staff.

Education Committee

Eric Eaton, the chair of the Education Committee, reported on the ongoing activities of the committee, including the launch of the AAAI Undergraduate Consortium (UC); the development of partnerships with various outreach organizations, such as Iridescent, which colocated some activities in New York; talks with AI Topics to endorse or support this resource; and improved student attendance tracking via the paper submission form. The 2020 UC was chaired by Jim Boerkoel and Memo Ergezer. Similar to the Doctoral Consortium, but targeted towards undergrads,

there were 60–75 undergraduates and 80–100 students overall in attendance. The program received 74 submissions, and accepted 12 students. There are plans to continue the program in 2021.

In addition, Eaton reviewed some of the planned future activities for the committee, including creating a curated collection of AI demos and videos to serve as educational resources. These would include ready-made introductions to AI concepts, interactive workbooks (for example, python notebooks), and step-by-step demos that could be used by the broad community and educators. In addition, the committee is exploring ideas for the establishment of an AI mentoring program comprising grad mentors for undergrads, faculty for grads, and industry and faculty mentors. Finally, a representative from AAAI will be working with ACM on revisions to the AI section of the next iteration of the CS undergraduate curriculum. Eaton will be recruiting new members to the committee in the coming weeks.

Gil suggested that AAAI, in addition to working with ACM on AI curriculum, could also establish best practices for the field. Michael Wollowski will serve as the AI and Education column editor for *AI Magazine*. Chad Jenkins has been working closely with schools and community colleges serving diverse populations, and could help connect these institutions to initiatives of the Education Committee. She also suggested engaging authors of AI textbooks to help with the establishment of best practices.

Ethics Committee

Ayanna Howard, the chair of the Ethics Committee, reviewed the challenges facing the committee, including the implementation of a formal process to review claims of unethical behavior. During the coming year, the committee will be reviewing the current codes, and looking at the possibility of drafting a set of ramifications for various infractions, establishing a review committee, and creating an appeals process. Gil encouraged the committee to keep the Executive Committee apprised of their progress.

The Ethics Committee is also working with the Conference Committee to establish a procedure for authors to address ethical issues in submitted papers.

Brian Scassellati noted that trying to enforce a blanket statement across international and cultural boundaries may be difficult, and there was some concern about outsourcing this judgment to senior program committee members. Sven Koenig agreed that central enforcement would create more uniformity in the review of ethical concerns. Gil suggested that authors should be asked to flag any ethical concerns in their papers—preferably in the introduction to the paper. Scassellati suggested that AAAI might follow up with ethical discussions at the next conference. Gil noted the importance of developing ethical guidelines for authors, particularly with regard to AI systems. Ashok Goel suggested that a column could be established in the magazine on ethics.

The Council summarized the discussion by recommending that the reviewing aspect of the ethics issue be addressed in the Conference Committee by revising the review form. Jenkins, Rossi, and Toby Walsh, who serve on the Ethics Committee, will work with Howard on creating a policy or process about how AAAI deals with issues and responses to questions about ethics. In addition, the Ethics committee will develop guidelines for authors.

Diversity and Inclusion

Maria Gini, Diversity and Inclusion Committee Chair, brought the Council up to date on the membership and activities of the committee. The committee includes Monica Anderson (University of Alabama), Rogelio Cardona-Rivera (University of Utah), Tawanna Dillahunt (University of Michigan), Chad Jenkins (University of Michigan), Melanie Moses (University of New Mexico), Anita Raja (Hunter College), and Shana Watters (University of Minnesota). They are active in holding workshops at the annual Tapia Conference on Artificial Intelligence Research is for Everyone!, as well as establishing numerous programs at the AAAI conference.

The programs at the conference, which were selected through a call to the community, were supported by \$50K in funding from AAAI (plus an additional \$40K for student travel scholarships), for which Gini thanked the Council. The programs were extensive, and included workshops on Diversity in AI, AI — Its Purpose and Power,

Humans — Our Purpose and Power, Try AI (for high school female students) and AI-Powered Robotics (for undergraduates). Other programs included lunches for Black in AI and LatinX in AI, a mentoring breakfast for women, and Mid-Career Diversity Tea and Cake reception for women. There were two special programs, including the DivinAI Hackfest: How Diverse are Top Artificial Intelligence Conferences? to raise awareness on the lack of gender and cultural diversity by gathering data from top conferences and calculating their corresponding diversity index, in terms of gender, geographical location and presence of academia versus industry, as well as Promoting Deaf Inclusion and Collaboration in Artificial Intelligence, an activity in which hearing participants of AAAI attempt to communicate specific computer science related topics to deaf participants using sign language.

Gini would like to see more programs addressing LGBTQ issues in the future, as well as expanded programs for nurturing junior and mid-career researchers. She also asked the Council to consider making the current conference budget of \$50K for diversity and inclusion programs a permanent line item. In addition, the committee would like to establish an AAAI Conference Scholars program, specifically designated for increasing the diversity of undergraduate participation at the annual conference and their pursuit of careers in AI. As part of this program, a mentoring program will be established, whereby undergrads will be assigned to one mentor who will stay in touch with them throughout the year. In addition, programs will be expanded for graduate students and postdocs at the conference. This program will seek candidates from Summer research programs (for example, REU, DREU, iAAMCS, AccessComputing) and outreach at the Tapia Conference for Diversity in Computing. The inaugural group of AAAI Conference Scholars will be selected in Fall 2020. The funding (\$30K for scholarships and \$18K for graduate and postdoc programs at the conference) for this initiative was discussed after the Finance Committee report.

Finance

David Smith, Finance Committee Chair, reported that the Council had

unanimously approved several special grants since their last meeting via an email vote, based on the early projections for participation and revenue at AAAI-20. These grants included up to \$20K for AAAI ISEF award winner's participation at the conference; \$40K for diversity and inclusion scholarships; \$500 to support the DivinAI Hackfest; up to \$150K for communications consulting; up to \$5K for AAAI pins; and \$20K for a one-year renewal of AI Topics. Although the current COVID-19 situation had seriously affected the attendance at the conference and resulted in hundreds of refunds, Smith reported that the financial situation was still healthy because of the overall increase in participation initially. Attendance is expected to be down by a minimum of 850 people, and at least \$750K in revenue. However, the resulting number of participants is expected to be within the original budget projections. The revised projected deficit of \$219K for the overall AAAI budget is well within the accepted range, which is 3-5% of the operating reserve. Smith asked the Council to consider the funding requests of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, which they passed unanimously. Another request to establish an honorarium of approximately \$40K per year to support current volunteer activities for *AI Magazine* did not pass. The Council expressed concerns about the significant change in policy that the latter request would incur, and instead recommended the recruit of additional volunteers to assist with *AI Magazine* roles.

Policy and Government Relations

Bart Selman, Chair of the Policy and Government Relations Committee, reported that he and Gil had spent the last year working on the 20-Year Roadmap for Artificial Intelligence project in collaboration with the Computing Community Consortium. The goal of the initiative was to identify challenges, opportunities, and pitfalls in the AI landscape, and to create a compelling report to inform future decisions, policies, and investments in this area. Selman found good communication channels to US funding agencies, and was pleased with how the report was received. New funding initiatives have resulted. The committee is also aware of international initiatives, and

suspects that internationally focused organizations, such as the United Nations, may call on AAAI for information. If called upon, he recommended working with national organizations to provide reports in order to present a unified message and vision.

Communications

Judy Goldsmith introduced Julie Anixter of MagaDesign Group, who reviewed a proposal to launch a direct mail campaign to high schools or media outlets about artificial intelligence. Anixter works with the US Postal Service, and is seeking areas in emerging topics to sponsor Hackathons designed to perform outreach or create publicity. The project is specifically designed for organizations who are looking for a creative way to launch a communications campaign. The format can be digital, mail, or video, and because this is a public service, there would be no charge for consultation. Thirty students could work on a project to create a campaign, preferably to shape public opinion about AI. The USPS is also working with state governments and large corporations on this project, and could assist in the identification of a sponsor if one is needed.

Brian Scassellati, Chair of the Communications Committee, followed this presentation with an update on the activities of the committee. He clarified that the main charge of the committee is to ensure that accurate information about AI is available and is being circulated and reported. It is not an outreach committee in the traditional sense. To this end, the committee is responsible for ensuring that outside media, professionals, and industries have supported access to experts in AI and not just media pundits and/or doomsayers. In addition to the proposed Hackathon project outlined above, the committee has also been exploring a number of other current and future communications channels. AI Topics is in its 25th year, with the transition to its current i2k Connect model four years ago. It indexes 550 sources daily, logs over 11K visits each month from 199 countries, and produces the weekly AI Alert for the AAAI membership. The team is also working closely with *AI Magazine* to feature AI Topics in the new digital version. The funding request was approved for one year, and the second

year will be evaluated later this year when the 2021 budget is available. The committee is also discussing the best way to move forward with a communications consultant, who would be a permanent point of contact for the media, and is also considering how to contribute to the AAAS Leshner Leadership Institute for Public Engagement with Science, which has chosen AI as its topic for 2020. The committee would like to pursue the idea of media training for officers and program chairs, and plan to launch a Medium-like channel for members to get good pieces out into the public eye.

International Committee

Matthijs Spaan, Chair of the International Committee, noted that the committee is exploring ways to hold an official AAAI conference event outside of the US. The most promising idea is to hold a meeting based on the AAAI Symposium model. A summer meeting might conflict with IJCAI, so the possibility of having the spring meeting in Europe was considered. Authors who are unable to attend the main AAAI conference may be able to present their work at this event. The international committee will follow up with the symposium committee chairs to get their thoughts.

Membership Committee

Chad Jenkins, Chair of the Membership Committee, reviewed the current charge of the committee, including discovering new and creative ways to increase membership; broadening participation through outreach to underserved communities and community colleges; and reviewing new chapter applications. The committee is also developing a proposal to establish a retired membership rate. Before making a recommendation, they will be gathering additional demographic information in the current membership and may possibly circulate a survey to assist with this effort. Gene Freuder reviewed some of the findings of the last comprehensive membership survey for the benefit of new Council members.

Publications

David Leake, the Publications Committee Chair, reported on another record-breaking year for the AAAI-20 proceedings with almost 1,900 papers and over 10,000 pages of content. He

thanked Mike Hamilton for all his work on AAAI publications. He also noted that AAAI will be transitioning the digital library from the AAAI server to the Public Knowledge Survey (PKP) server, which will enable automatic updates and provide a hack-proof environment. PKP is the developer of the Open Journal Systems software.

Gil and Leake reported on their recent meeting with ACM Publications to discuss potential joint publishing ventures. Given that the two organizations have disjoint memberships, this type of arrangement could be beneficial to both parties. The Publications Committee will be exploring the potential upsides and downsides of such an arrangement, including broader coverage, the impact on authors, open access, and other cost and risk factors. The specific focus of the meeting was the possible joint publication of journals on specific topics that do not already exist, such as AI Ethics and Society (AIES), where AAAI and ACM already have a joint conference, reproducibility, or other interdisciplinary areas. Both organizations would be represented on the editorial boards.

Gil noted that the benefit of a partnership could be a broader outreach to the computer science community, an enhanced international presence, and exposure to the professional community, all of which could help grow the AAAI community as well. ACM is interested in AAAI's ability to provide intellectual leadership in AI-related journals. The Council was very interested in pursuing this discussion with ACM, but emphasized the importance of an equal partnership and cobranding. Leake noted that they are seeking suggestions for the first journal, and the Council agreed that AIES would be a good collaboration. Other topics discussed at the AAAI/ACM meeting were the *AI Magazine* and the conference proceedings. The Council noted that as AAAI publications evolve, it is very important to establish a clear vision for the future and to define a balanced list of objectives.

In addition to publications, the AAAI/ACM meeting covered other possible areas of collaboration, such as: conference issues with regard to how to develop policies for ethics violations, as well as tools to handle exploding paper submissions; government policy in light of US

ACM's focus on general policies versus funding; educational initiatives in the K-12 sector involving CTSA; and diversity issues via the ACM Diversity and Inclusion Board, which now oversees ACM-W.

Ashok Goel, editor in chief of *AI Magazine*, presented a short overview of upcoming issues of the magazine, as well as a progress report on the interactive version. Ida Camacho, the *AI Magazine* editorial assistant, presented a walk-through of the current beta version of the site. The site is envisioned as a community gathering place. The issue of which portions of the interactive magazine might be offered for members only is still being explored. Goel is seeking feedback on the beta version from Council members and other conference participants. A soft launch is expected later this spring.

Other Business

CRA Report

Charles Isbell, AAAI Liaison to the Computing Research Association, reported that the CRA is in the process of developing a strategic plan. The plan will be discussed at the upcoming CRA Board meeting and eventually approved at the summer Snowbird meeting.

AAAI Conflict of Interest Policy

David Smith reviewed the current status of the AAAI Conflict of Interest policy. The purpose of the policy is to provide guidance to members of the AAAI Executive Council about disclosing any personal, professional or financial benefit when participating in AAAI discussions and votes. The policy provides procedures for disclosure, and how a conflict of interest will be determined and addressed, as well as procedures for how to handle any detected violation of the policy. Smith explained that the IRS now requires that all new nonprofit organizations have a conflict of interest policy in place. The Council reviewed the policy, and asked that all acronyms be spelled out in the final version. Pending those minor revisions, the Council unanimously approved the adoption of the policy as written.

Presidential Fellows Advisory Board

Gene Freuder reported that he had sent an open call for members of this new group to all Fellows. The PFAB will hold its first meeting at the AAAI-20

Conference. Their goal is to produce white papers on selected topics for consideration by the president. The PFAB is considering four themes at this

point, as reported in the last meeting. Freuder welcomed suggestion for additional topics or tasks for the board.



Fourth Conference on AI, Ethics, and Society

A Virtual Event

May 19–21, 2021

Submission Deadline: January 15, 2021

Notification: March 31, 2021

Final Version: April 30, 2021

For 2021, AIES will be a stand-alone conference, without colocation.

aies-conference.com/2021