

## Minutes of the BCS IRSG Committee Meeting

17 September 2019

University of Bedfordshire, Luton Campus, Luton.

### Present

Stefan Ruger [SR] (Chair), John Tait [JT] (Minutes), Ingo Frommholz [IF] (Treasurer), Andrew MacFarlane [AM].

### Via Google Hangouts Video Conference

Udo Kruschwitz [UK], Yashar Moshfeghi [YM], Haiming Liu [HL], Craig MacDonald [CM], Dyaa Albakour [DA] (left 18:00), Steven Zimmerman [SZ] (observing), Phillip Mayr-Schlegel [PMS], Joao Magalha [JM] (joined 17:30) Jochen Leidner [JL] (joined 18:15).

### 1. Apologies

Frank Hopfgartner [FH], Martin White [MW].

### 2. Minutes of Previous IRSG Committee Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the 14 May were accepted as a true record.

### 3. Matters arising (covered under appropriate agenda item where possible)

#### 3.1 Actions for the previous meeting:

Action Number	Action	Action on
May 19.01	Contribute to IRSG Informer.	Continues as Action Sep 19.01
May 19.02	SZ to liaise with DA re PHP update for Informer Wordpress instance.	Done
May 19.03	SR to address with BCS HQ re process for sending Chair to ECIR and handling KSJ Award recipient expenses.	Continues as Action Sep 19.05
May 19.04	HL and IF to confirm availability of suitable premises for the meeting and confirm date with JT and SR.	Done
May 19.05	JT to revise and update the CfP for One Day Meetings and circulate to the usual lists.	Done
May 19.06	JM to arrange video conference with Miguel Martinex (Signal AI), the ECIR 2020 organisers and with SR and JT (representing IRSG) to progress the proposed prize.	Done
May 19.07	UK to approach Tony Russell-Rose about taking over and refreshing the spreadsheet to record Search Solutions Speaker approaches and responses.	Done

May 19.08	CM to make arrangements to move the IRSG committee list to the BCS service.	Carried forward as Action Sep 19.09
May 19.09	Secretary to ask for expressions of interest from members of the committee in serving as IRSG ICTIR Steering Committee Rep.	Done
May 19.10	UK to approach Marti Hearst (ACL President) re more formal involvement in the award of the Association for Computational Linguistics.	Carried forward as Action Sep 19.13
May 19.11	SR to approve amount and payment method for FDIA organisers (YM, IF and HL) to receive partial travel support.	Done
May 19.12	JT to circulate draft ECIR 2021 Call for Proposals to the committee for comment.	Done
May 19.13	JT to circulate the Call for Proposals to host ECIR 2021 through the usual lists.	Done

#### 4. Other Matters Agreed by email

None

#### 5. Consideration of Bids to Hold 2021

Only one bid had been received by the deadline, and the chair expressed disappointment at that given the number of acceptable bids received by the extended deadline in 2018.

Each member of the committee was asked to give their view of the proposal received, and whether it could be accepted, perhaps subject to some conditions.

There was **unanimous agreement** that the proposal from Lucca to hold ECIR 2021 should be accepted subject to the following issues being clarified or resolved:

- a. making the submission dates for papers later and/or the notification dates for acceptance earlier if possible;
- b. clarifying the arrangements for the Karen Sparck Jones Lecture;
- c. making clear whether the prices put forward are rough estimates or quotations, especially for student accommodation, the extent to which budgets are dependent on sponsorship targets being reached, and how the conference would be affected if targets are not met;
- d. arrangements for the Programme Committee Meeting – a face-to-face meeting of the whole committee was thought to be redundant in this day and age, although face-to-face meetings between the General Chairs, PC Chairs and Short Paper Chairs were potentially useful;
- e. further details about travel to Lucca, including connections to/from Pisa and other major international airports;
- f. confirming institutional support including the willingness of a senior individual to sign contracts for booking venues etc.;

- g. attempting to increase student support: a proposal for SIGIR friends should be considered, and other sources investigated.

It was **agreed** The Chair and Secretary should discuss these with the proposers and only come back to the committee if the issues could not be satisfactorily resolved.

**Action Sep 19.03** SR and JT to contact Lucca Proposers re above issues.

The discussion also brought to light some broader issues with the ECIR bidding process, in particular, consideration should be given to calling for and accepting bids for two years.

**Action Sep 19.04:** Secretary to add this to the agenda of a future meeting.

## 6. Chairs Report

An agreement has successfully been concluded between the BCS and Signal AI to provide sponsorship for the next three years for an Industry Impact Award at ECIR. Agreed contracts await final signature.

On behalf of the group the chair thanks Signal AI and Dyaa Albakour for their efforts and generosity in making this award happen.

Discussions with HQ re authorisation for payment of Chair's attendance at ECIR, payments to KSJ Award recipients etc. were continuing. (**Action Sep 19.05**).

Finally, on behalf of the committee the chair had attended a meeting open to all members groups concerning "New Beginnings" for the BCS. He confessed himself more confused about the purpose of the meeting and its intentions at the end than at the beginning.

## 7. ECIR 2019

Final accounts had yet to be prepared, due to some items awaiting approval from the funding agencies, although a final report was very close.

**Action Sep 19.06** PMS to circulate final ECIR 2019 financial report to the committee.

It was noted that it had been agreed to pass the surplus from ECIR 2018 in Grenoble directly to Lisbon for ECIR 2020 since in view of the timing of the transfer this would simplify accounting processes for Cologne.

## 8. ECIR 2020

JM reported the Call for Papers had been distributed in several relevant places. A call for reviewers would shortly be issued.

Six workshop proposal had been received, and arrangements for the banquet were in progress.

Details of the jury for the Signal Award had yet to be agreed.

**Action Sep 19.07** SR to email current draft agreement between Signal and BCS to JM to ensure arrangements for the Jury are in line with that.

## 9. IR Days

Talmiri (to be held the next day, 18 September 2019) had attracted 4 Industry and 2 Student speakers and four poster presentations. There were 19 advance registrations and altogether about 25 participants were expected.

A Call for Proposals for further days had been issued with a deadline of 30 September 2019, and some expressions of interest had been received.

#### 10. Search Solutions 2020

The Tutorial Schedule had been distributed to the committee and was well liked.

**Action Sep 19.08** AM to contact BCS London Office to arrange an inspection of the new premises.

It was **agreed** fees for the whole event should remain at the 2018 level.

UK reported there were 7 confirmed speakers for the main event, and that JL was progressing the call for prize nominations.

It was **agreed** there should again be 5 student fee waivers.

#### 11. Constitution

A change to the constitution to allow proxy voting would be tabled in the AGM, on the following day, 18 September 2019.

#### 12. Mailing Lists

No progress had been made with reorganising the mailing list over the summer, so the relevant action was carried forward.

#### 13. Informer

MW had circulated a written report including plans for future issues prior to the meeting.

The committee noted their support for MW's new, pro-active approach to the Informer Editor's role.

#### 14. FDIA

FDIA had been embedded in ESSIR in Milan. The event was extremely successful with 12 posters and 7 presentations spread over two days. An attempt was made to match students with mentors, but unfortunately not all students could be matched up. ESSIR tutors were almost all present, a pleasing contrast with some previous FDIAs.

There was a short discussion of the need to proceed with care with moving FDIA to be closer to the Doctoral Consortia run at other conferences.

IF, HL and YM volunteered to try to organise a further iteration of the event, and this was **agreed** by the committee.

**Action Sep 19.10** IF to Initiate email discussion of form and venue of next FDIA.

#### 15. Strix Award

Pia Borlund's Strix Lecture on the 29<sup>th</sup> November will be recorded.

Registration is now open.

The deadline for nominations is 27<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

AM pointed out his three year term as Strix Award rep was coming to an end.

**Action Sep 19.11** Secretary to circulate Call for Volunteers to act as Strix Award rep.

## 16. ICTIR

A call for volunteers to act as the committee's rep on the ICTIR Steering Committee had been circulated. FH was the only person to put his name forward, so take on the role for the next three years, until the 2022 AGM.

**Action Sep 19.02** CM agreed to introduce FH as the BCS IRSG rep to the ICTIR Steering Committee.

CM reported the list had just wakened up with a discussion of hosting a future ICTIR jointly with ACM CHIIR.

The committee thanked CM for acting as its representative on the ICTIR Steering Committee for the past number of years.

## 17. Karen Spärck Jones Award

The deadline for the 2019 KSJ Award is 12 September 2019. Letters of support are due by 26 September 2019.

JL would be invited to join the panel as Chair elect. Remaining panel invitations would depend on an analysis of conflicts of interest.

Marti Hearst had not been approached formally about increased ACL involvement with the award due to the constraints of the timing cycle, so this action carried forward. (**Action Sep 19.12**).

[UK then left the meeting].

## 18. Finance

Special Funding Requests had been made to HQ for RUSSIR 2018 sponsorship (which had appeared in 2018/19 actuals but was budgetted for in 2017/18) and to support travel to FDIA. Both were granted. Overall the group was overspent by £170-00 in the course of the year, and had successfully accessed its rollover funding. This was considered very satisfactory outcome.

The Treasurer would report in more detail to the AGM the following day.

The Chair thanked the Treasurer for his work on the group's behalf.

## 19. Any Other Business

### *a. IRSG Website*

Dharmesh Faquir demonstrated work he had been doing to develop a new website for the IRSG using DROOPL, and to answer questions on the development and its implications from the committee.

### *b. Any other AoB*

There was no further business.

## 20. Next Meeting

17:30 (London) Monday 25 November 2019 at the new BCS London Offices, 25 Cophall Avenue London, EC2R 7BP. Google Hangouts access will be provided as usual.

## 21. Actions Arising From Meeting

Action Number	Action	Action on
Sep 19.01	Contribute to IRSG Informer.	All
Sep 19.02	Advise the ICTIR Steering Committee that FH is the IRSG representative from 1 January 2020.	CM
Sep 19.03	Advise proposers Lucca ECIR 2021 bid is successful subject to conditions being met.	SR & JT
Sep 19.04	Add consideration of accepting bids for two years in future ECIR Calls to the agenda of the November meeting.	JT
Sep 19.05	SR to address with BCS HQ re process for sending Chair to ECIR and handling KSJ Award recipient expenses.	SR
Sep 19.06	Circulate final ECIR 2019 financial report to the committee.	PMS
Sep 19.07	Email current draft agreement between Signal and BCS to JM to ensure arrangements for the Jury are in line with that.	SR
Sep 19.08	Contact BCS London Office to arrange and inspection of the new premises.	AM
Sep 19.09	Make arrangements to move the IRSG committee list to the BCS service.	CM
Sep 19.10	Initiate email discussion of form and venue of next FDIA.	IF
Sep 19.11	Circulate Call for Volunteers to act as Strix Award rep.	JT
Sep 19.12	UK to approach Marti Hearst (ACL President) re more formal involvement of the Association for Computational Linguistics in the Karen Spärck Jones Award.	UK

Meeting Closed 19:30