

Minutes
CACS/AIC annual meeting
May 16-18, 2010
Fredericton, New Brunswick

Present: John Bate (Manitoba), Ken Barker (Calgary), David Hughes (Brock), Eric Neufeld (Saskatchewan), Amir Asif (York), Nora Znotinas (Wilfred Laurier), Gregory Dudek (McGill), Jackie Rice (Lethbridge), Gord Simons (Royal Military College), Mario Marchand (Laval), Rick Giles (Acadia), Gabriel Girard (Sherbrooke), Mark Green (UOIT), Xue Dong Wang (Regina), Doug Howe (Carleton), Mike Shepherd (Dalhousie), Owen Kaser (UNB Saint John), Stephen Howard (PEI), Sheridan Houghten (Brock), Sudhir Mudur (Concordia), Guy Tremblay (Quebec á Montreal), Kalpdrum Passi (Laurentian), David Taylor (Waterloo), Bob Tennet (Queen's), David Hughes (Brock), Bob Mercer (Western Ontario), Ed Brown (Memorial), Patrice Marcotte (Montreal), Craig Boutilier (Toronto), Deborah Stacey (Guelph), Kevin O'Neil (Thompson Rivers), Fuhua Lin (Athabaska)

Guests: Peter King (CSAC), Michelle Craig (Outreach Committee)

A preliminary executive meeting was held on the evening of May 16.

The annual general meeting was called to order at 1:02 May 17.

Welcome from the host

Dr. Ali Gorbani welcomed the attendees and gave an overview of the University of New Brunswick, and of the schedule of the meeting.

Change of Executive

K. Barker presented a list of the old executive. We need to replace several people, including the treasurer (who moved to India). We also need to replace the BC, Prairies, Ontario, Quebec, and Atlantic regions.

Eric Neufeld is willing to continue as the Prairie representative.

Ali Gorbani is willing to extend his term to 2011.

Mike Shepherd will not wish to take over as President in 2011 when Ken Barker's term expires.

Financial report

No audited financial report is available at the moment.

Proposal from the President: Review the report in the AGM, and defer the approval of the audited report to the executive.

The draft financial report was presented.

Some bank charges, student awards for the video contest, 2 trips, 3 faculty awards, and other minor expenses occurred this year.

Most fees have been received. We will not pursue missing ones, most of which are from smaller institutions who may be facing financial difficulties.

Balance is now \$275,529.16.

Comment: We should find a good way to put this money to good use. It's now more than needed to keep for emergencies (such as a repeat of the Memorial lawsuit on software engineering).

Ken B. : We have the initiatives that could spend the money, but they have not gotten enough of an activity level to make much of a dent in the balance.

Comment : The bank balance is not that large if we start hiring people to do things for us (such as the web site)

Motion: THAT for 2010, the AGM allow the Executive to approve the financial report, once audited, as long as it is not significantly different from the one that was presented . (Ken Barker / Eric Neufeld)

CARRIED

Report of the Awards Committee

A report was presented by Ken Barker on behalf of Gord McCalla. (A copy will be on file.) Three awards were made under the "Outstanding Young Researcher" category. These will be presented this year at CASCON in Toronto. In the future we should aim to have it at the CACS/AIC meeting. The winners receive \$1000 plus travel expenses.

For the future: The committee would like a "public abstract" to aid publicity. This would be non-technical. Referees reports should be a part of the submission. The deadline date should be earlier (suggestion: Dec. 1). There should be "up to 3" rather than "3" winners since the number of applicants were small.

Q: What is the purpose of the prize, and why only young researchers. A: The other disciplines have such things, and CS is put at a disadvantage in interdisciplinary competitions. It gives us visibility. Other prizes for established researchers are proposed.

Other potential prizes for the future: Distinguished Service Prize (CRA has one), Outstanding Computer Science Researcher (could recognize a larger list, initially, to get it off the ground)

"Capturing pioneers": Should get stories, and recognize their contributions. Is this a reasonable mandate for the awards committee? A: It could be if called a "Founders Award" or something. It is a different sort of thing, though.

Q: Why is there no award for teaching recognition as well as service and research? There was some support, but the opinion was also expressed that this is not as suitable for a national level. But there are existing awards such as 3M.

CSAC Report

Peter King gave the report in the absence of Tim Lethbridge. A report was presented to the AGM. (A copy of the slides will be on file.) Input is sought from the attendees. There is room on the CSAC committee for new people, and by examining other institutions you will gain knowledge that benefits your own. There are currently no members from BC, Atlantic Canada, or smaller institutions. CSAC is a member of the "Seoul Accord" which means that CSAC itself is in some sense "accredited" and our accreditations (CS and SE only at the moment) are recognized in many other countries. There is a

movement toward “outcome based” accreditation. Consultation is encouraged, and volunteers were requested to read the draft documents. Joint accreditation is being considered which will allow the CSAC review to also satisfy other types of reviews, such as provincial reviews. Discussion point: should there be a national body that combines academic and industrial interests? Input is encouraged on this point as well.

Comments: You cannot have outcome-based accreditation on top of, or in addition to, the current style. CIPS/CSAC has not been too successful in pushing the value of accreditation (it is not required in any way as is Engineering’s accreditations).

NSERC preparatory discussion

The “scatter graph” was shown (it is on the NSERC web site). There is a large variance, with an instance of a \$100K grant dropping to 0 (not necessarily in CS), and many others going to/from 0. Figure 3 (first renewals) shows a lot of 0’s on first renewals. The overall CS success rate was 64.2%, which may mean (unclear) that the total number of funded people may drop. This may give fewer but larger grants, which may be the objective. Don’t forget that the accelerator grants are also given out but not reflected in the data. People may have to learn to obtain funding from other sources rather than rely primarily or exclusively on NSERC DG’s. Both success rates and funding levels were lower at smaller institutions than larger ones. There are potential problems with people receiving 0 when they have commitments to current grad students, and the reluctance to take on new students in the last year or two of a grant for this reason. Anticipated response from NSERC: “it’s the University’s problem”. One answer received: apply in year 4 instead of 5.

UCOSP Initiative (Michelle Craig)

Undergraduate Capstone Open Source Projects (slide presentation available)

The groups can be geographically distributed (4-6, with 2 per institution). More of a real-world experience. They work with an existing large code base. There are willing mentors in that community. It avoids IP issues. In the past year there were 43-45 students in 9-11 institutions. (Q: Who runs this?) There is one in-person “code sprint” at the beginning. It is a 1-semester course. Big cost: the travel to the code sprint. Also TA support, some administration. There has been industrial support (\$60K over past 2 years). We now need to hire an administrator (half time) – part of the job would be fundraising. (O’Reilly has said they would provide \$35K for the next year.) There is a 3-person committee willing to co-ordinate it (U of T, U of T, U of Alberta). Requests: Need 3rd-4th year students, and a faculty contact at participating institutions. TAs are needed. Recruitment of industry sponsors would be valuable, perhaps to fund travel for students. Recruitment of mentors for projects are needed. How is CACS/AIC involvement needed? Sponsorship and endorsement is valuable. Financial support might be needed for administrator or TAs or travel. \$10K is the maximum asked for. Q: How is this different from Google’s “summer of code”? A: This is for course credit. Comment: A CACS/AIC “brand” would be valuable for some visibility for the organization. Comment: There could be a benefit to outreach activities as well. The website can be found by Googling UCOSP. There may be problems at some institutions with giving a grade for work that had been evaluated by an outside person. Some institutions may need extra work like a written document. CACS/AIC taking this over may remove the perception that this is a U of T-centric program. Comment: U of T would like the cost and support to

be spread around and become a national program. CIPS might be interested in assisting with this under its “engagement” initiative (support not direct involvement).

Is there support in the room for CACS/AIC sponsorship of such a program? There were many positive comments around the room. We should put enough money into it to “brand” it.

We will revisit this issue tomorrow.

NSERC discussion (part 2)

The table of “values of bins” was presented. The range for CS was \$85K (bin A) to \$15K (bin J) – 10 bins were funded. (15/20/25/31/34/43/51/60/74/85). Only a subset of the people in the “J” bin were funded. (The other disciplines had different cutoffs at the lower ends, and even unfunded people in higher bins.) All of this data is available from NSERC’s site. Almost all other disciplines are higher in all bins than CS (exception: Math and Stats). Some reallocation is clearly still needed.

Ministry of Industry is accepting input on “the digital economy” – perhaps we should tell them about the lower level of funding in CS as reflected in the NSERC tables. Perhaps lobbying NSERC itself is the wrong level. It might be a good idea to look into having a registered lobbyist in Ottawa, or the assistance of one. The drop from \$Nk to \$0 causes particular problems, and perhaps talking to NSERC directly on that topic might be valuable.

Comparative number of grad students per faculty by discipline would be a valuable statistic to gather. The cost of grad students is the main component of NSERC DG’s (or should be).

Adjourned for the day at 5:03; Resumed at 9:00 May 18

Outreach Committee Report

Michelle Craig presented a report from the Outreach Committee (a copy is available). The two winning videos from the student contest were shown. The cost was below \$4,000, but there were donations of time and facilities from people and departments. Copies are available for websites. Publicity, both to encourage applications and to show results, was difficult.

Alberta has some success in getting Computer Science recognized as a high school subject, and a report on their efforts will be made available. Changes at both the major universities and within the high-school educational system had to be made.

Heads were encouraged to update the list of outreach representatives by sending in the name of their representative. December 5-11 is “Computer Science Education Week” (csweek.org) – in the USA officially. It is recommended to hold an event for HS CS teachers. Thursday Dec. 9 or Friday Dec. 10 is the target date for publicity. Plans should be communicated to the outreach committee. Five videos will be available from the US organization.

Website: stanley.cdf.toronto.edu/drproject/cacsaic/outreach is a Wiki, but access was under discussion. It is public for reading (but probably shouldn't be), but limited to the committee for changes (but perhaps should be more available).

NSERC Presentation (Jörg Sack)

A presentation on the Computer Science Evaluation Group (1507) was made by Jorg Sack (group chair). A pdf version will be made available. This was the first full year of implementation of the conference model. Q: Why was the average grant size 2nd lowest in CS compared to other disciplines? A: One reason is that we do not have a strong lobby effort. Another reason is the historical low level of post-docs which lowered our “cost of research in field” data. There is now an effort to determine other factors that may determine the total funding for each discipline in the future, which may be very important. There may be a “quality of discipline” measure introduced. The lack of awards and prizes in CS has been a negative factor, as have been the citation figures. The success rate for people returning after not being funded in the previous competition is part of a group with a 33% success rate. The graph for “first renewal” data showed a lot of increases, but also a lot of nils. In the data, the “moderate” and “insufficient” ratings were mostly due to the proposal, rather than the researcher or the HQP. The criteria for funding results in bin J, not all of which were funded, were: no rating below “strong”, early career researcher, good HQP score. They were not all funded due to the effect that would have on either the support of excellence at the top level, or the erosion of the minimum grant level. There was discussion of the difficulties faced by smaller universities, but there was reassurance that the arguments and factors were considered by NSERC. For the Discovery Accelerator grants, they are not targeted at people who are *already* leaders, but those who could *become* leaders.

A presentation on “What’s New at NSERC” was done by Anne-Marie Thompson. There is a move to establish a liaison committee between CS and NSERC. This is supported by CACS/AIC and we will participate, and desire to be a full and active partner. We must as a community been seen to have an impact in order to increase funding levels. Accountability is something in which we must play a role.

NSERC post-presentation discussion

We have to organize and lobby as a community to get our message to NSERC. It was felt that Jorg made a good presentation and that he represents and defends our discipline well. The issue of a sudden drop to 0, and its effect on graduate students in particular, did not come up. The evaluation of the discipline will be important, and we must treat it as an important exercise. A stronger and coherent national voice is needed. The importance of a lobbyist in Ottawa was stressed again. We need to increase our creditability as a group that represents all of CS in Canada. As for the funding of the bins, the final decisions were made by 4 people at the end of the process, which may not be representative of the views of CS as a whole. An increase in our level of citations could be helpful. The issue of people at the end of their funding career applying in order to “bring their money back” was raised again.

We need the liaison committee that Jorg was referring to, or at least two CACS/AIC members on such a committee, and others to co-operate with them in providing input. Jorg said that people who have served on a GSC (but not exclusively) would be preferred. Representation from big/medium/small institutions should be present.

We should agree to write a letter signed by all CACS/AIC members to the higher levels of NSERC to express our views.

CACS/AIC Business/Initiatives

A workshop on “grand challenges for CS in Canada” was suggested.

We need to replace/reappoint a Treasurer and the regional and CRA representatives.

Ontario – David Hughes willing to serve until 2012

Treasurer –Eric Neufeld would be willing, and having a Saskatchewan person would be advantageous.

Prairie – Will leave it open for now – there are a lot of prairie people on the executive already.

Atlantic – Ali Ghorbani will serve to 2012

Quebec – Gabriel Girard will serve to 2012

BC – Need a replacement for Bill Aiello: Kevin O’Neill willing to take over (to 2012)

CRA representative – Tamer will continue to 2011

It would be desirable to have a VP who would be willing to take over the President’s position at the end of Ken Barker’s term, but it is not necessary.

Motion: To elect the above slate of candidates **PASSED**

Website: Suggestion: Move it to Calgary and hire someone to bring it up to date and produce a functional website. A cost of \$8-10K was suggested.

Motion: That we budget \$10K to be spent to update the website and make it functional. This will happen through the University of Calgary (Mike Shepherd/Jackie Rice) **Carried**

In addition, the News section of the existing website should be fixed immediately, and an announcement of the Outstanding Young Researcher award winners be added.

UCOSP initiative: Funding for this year from O’Reilly is almost certain. We need longer-term funding and a plan for CACS/AIC to support it. Q: Do we want this to be a CACS/AIC initiative? (Strong support by show of hands was expressed.) Now we need a budget amount. Suggestion: become a “major sponsor” for a part (say \$20K) of the overall cost (of \$35k). There was more of a feeling that we should take ownership of it. There should be a review after some amount of time (say two years) to assess the effectiveness of this program. This could include a look at the number of participating students. There can be a budget which includes the expectation of industrial sponsorship, but we need to be the one to take the responsibility for it. The current “champion” at the U of T is Karen Reid. Q: What if there are cost overruns due to increasing popularity? A: We should put a cap on monetary contribution from CACS/AIC.

Motion: To provide a maximum budget of \$35K annually to support and take over ownership of the UCOSP initiative by CACS/AIC. A budget and a financial plan would be needed in writing from the initial organizer (Karen Reid at the U of Toronto), As well as an initial draft of a governance structure, and the expected outcomes of the program. It would be subject to annual review to be presented at the CACS/AIC AGM. (Dave Hughes/Dave Taylor) **PASSED**

Q: Are students being vetted? A: Yes, locally by their home institution. Q: Who will head up this initiative from CACS/AIC? A: We should conform to the structure that we use for other committees (such as the Awards subcommittee). Comment: We should evaluate the benefits to CACS/AIC in the future.

Video contest: The Outreach committee suggested that it not be done again in the coming year. Q: How was it publicized? A: It was sent to departments, and a poster was distributed at CACS/AIC.

Awards Committee: This year only the Outstanding Young Researcher awards were given out. The committee suggested that two additional awards be established as well.

Motion: That the Outstanding Young Researcher awards be given to *up to 3* recipients at the same value of \$1000 (plus travel expenses) in the coming year. (Dave Hughes/Mike Shepherd) **PASSED**

Discussion of the Outstanding Researcher prize: There may be better mechanisms for an initial award, since there would be a large group of worthy recipients. Suggestions: Have a larger number of “CACS/AIC Fellows” named. Or some other mechanism could be created to recognize more than one person. We would send this back to the committee with such a mandate. The idea of “Fellows” was supported by other speakers. This could also give CACS/AIC some visibility. Perhaps a broader set of criteria could be used that included teaching and service components. There could be several categories such as (Research) (Service) (Teaching). It could be valuable to have a person currently in attendance at the AGM on the Awards Committee. Naming people as Fellows would be more suitable from an organization that has a broader membership. Perhaps a “Canadian Fellow of Computer Science” (not mentioning CACS/AIC) would allow a future transfer to another organization. The term “medal” rather than “fellow” was suggested.

Motion: That the Awards Committee establish an annual award that recognizes some number (approximately 10) of people based on their contribution to the discipline of Computer Science in Canada, in several broad categories. The final proposal should be approved by the CACS/AIC Executive. (Mike Shepherd/ Eric Neufeld) **PASSED**

CCIT and the CCIT week: This was endorsed last year, and was to be reviewed again this year. Nothing seems to have happened in the past year, and they have had no contact with us. Suggestion: Do not renew the endorsement of CACS/AIC.

The Canadian version of the “Taulbee” survey: Do we need our own data for use within Canadian departments? Last year it was suggested that we add a few questions of our own to the CRA Taulbee survey, but this did not happen. Q: Would such a survey be useful? A: It can be used as “ammunition”. Comments: The Taulbee is targeted only at PhD-granting institutions. A “made in Canada” independent survey (perhaps using Taulbee for some ideas) might be better. The old one (now unused) was targeted to Canadian institutions. Show of hands: Should we be running a survey and would you respond to it? (February target) (David Hughes has volunteered to take the lead on this effort, but a small supporting committee may be required.) (There was broad agreement.)

Staffing of committees: We will need people on some committees (awards, outreach, survey). Department Heads should nominate people to serve. A list will be circulated, and people should respond with suitable names.

Next year's venue: McGill volunteered, subject to working out details.

There was a vote of thanks to Ali Ghorbani for hosting this year's meeting.

Adjourned at 3:25pm