
Meeting
IPAB STAFF MEETING

Date
Monday 28 April 2014

Attendees

(SV) Sethu Vijayakumar
(BW) Barbara Webb
(IV) Ivan Vladimir
(BF) Bob Fisher
(BB) Bas Boom
(MM) Michael Mangan
(VF) Vittorio Ferrari
(MC) Margarita Chli
(SR) Subramanian Ramamoorthy
(LP) Luca Del Pero
(MH) Michael Herrmann
(HL) Heather Low
(JP) Joanne Pennie
(SS) Steph Smith

Apologies

(SE) Steve Ewing
(TK) Taku Komura

Place
G.03, IF

Time
12:30

1. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes from the previous meeting, held on 16 January 2014, were agreed as accurate with no amendments requested. By way of an update from the previous meeting:-

Teaching:

Chris Williams will be teaching the Vision element of Robotics while Bob Fisher will deliver IVR.

Sabbaticals:

Taku, Bob and Barbara applied for sabbatical for 2014-15 and their applications were approved. Approval was agreed at a School level meeting, there was no IPAB representation on this occasion and therefore the impact of three sabbaticals from the same institute taking effect at once was not explored.

Bob has since agreed to delay his sabbatical for a year.

Taku has cancelled his sabbatical this year as his Royal Society Industry Fellowship starts in October.

Sethu requested that any future applications for sabbatical should be discussed with the Director in the first instance.

All

Sethu will attend a meeting with Johanna Moore and Dave Robertson on Thursday May 1. If anyone has any issues they would like him to raise/clarify at the meeting, please contact Sethu.

2. Arrivals and Departures

Sethu welcomed Margarita Chli to the group. Margarita joined IPAB in March 2014 as a Chancellor's Fellow.

Other new arrivals include:

Jasper Uijlings (Research Associate – Vitto)
Kostas Lagogiannis (Research Associate – Barbara)
Antoine Wystrach (Research Associate – Barabra)
Andreas Jaeger (Visiting from EHT Zurich – Margarita Chli)
Elena Stumm (Visiting from France – Margarita Chli)
Kenichi Fujimoto (Visiting from Uni of Tokushima – Sethu)
Fabio Previtali (Visiting from Uni of Rome – Ram)
Mariela De Lucas (Visiting on work experience from Heriot Watt – Ram)
Jose Luis Part (Visiting on work experience from Heriot Watt – Ram)
Michele Volpi (Visiting from Uni of Lausanne – Vitto)
Radhen Patel (Visiting from India, starting May – Bob)

Staff were reminded of the importance of keeping the IPAB webpage up to date and in particular, the people pages. Entries should include names and subject titles. Details of any changes should be sent to level1admin@ed.a.cuk for action. All

Level 1 Admin will continue to issue monthly reminders for changes to the webpage. SS

3. New Grants and Proposals, Research Opportunities

Robotarium G.03, IF (£6.1 million grant shared with Herriot Watt)

Vladimir presented the group with an overview of the equipment currently sourced/awaiting action for the Robotarium (copy of detailed table available from Vlad). Main points being:-

- PR2 Humanoid – contract still to be finalised prior to order being placed
- Baxter Robot – delivered and now located in Inspace
- Split Treadmill Platform -installed, following extensive delivery and installation process (including changes to flooring structures within G.03)

- Servers dedicated to Robotarium are now available to use
- A log system is in place in order to monitor what equipment is being used by who, Vladimir will take ownership of this system

VI

Staff were reminded to encourage use of the facilities in G.03 and Inspace as best as possible, although to note that they were research labs rather than performance spaces – we may consider having presentations at Inspace.

RAS CDT

September 22nd is Industrial Liaison Day with 30+ Robotarium partners invited to attend. Andrew Blake will be key note speaker. Planning for this is at preliminary stage.

In regards to CDT studentships, 3 rounds of interviews have been held with 5 offers being made across Edinburgh University and Heriot Watt (so far, 4 acceptances have been received).

4. Budget and Resources

Portfolio managers report

Joanne presented the group with an overview of IPAB expenses (copies of hand out available). Main points being:-

- General spending is £10k per year (seminars, travel, hospitality miscellaneous)
- £60,000 has been approved as carry forward to be used towards funding the Robotarium Technical Admin role that is already being handled by Vlad. We will still manage a budget of £10K for the subsequent 2 years.

Planning

Following discussion regarding teaching related hardware, Bob agreed to take the lead in sourcing a 'wish list' of items which could possibly be purchased by way of updating current supply (suggestions included Lego Mindstorm, GPU cluster, Smartphone?). This is to be actioned if and when there is some leftover budget from Robotarium spend. There was also discussion of a compute cluster to be sourced, if budget allows.

BF

5. IPAB Seminars

Attendance

The group agreed that current attendance figures for the IPAB

seminars/workshops was very poor. Timing of the event was considered to be an issue and everyone agreed that offering some refreshments may encourage attendance.

It was agreed that for next semester, the following changes would be implemented:

- Later start of 1pm for refreshments (tea, coffee and cakes) with 1:15pm talk
(room availability to be confirmed – Inspace should also be considered as a possible venue)
- Increase from 2 to 3 student talks per session
- Schedule to include a mix of talks from staff, post docs and students

Sethu thanked Bas, who co-ordinated the last schedule of workshops and invited volunteers to take on the organisation of next semesters schedule. Jasper Uijling (JU) has now agreed to take this task on and will liaise with Bas accordingly regarding a hand over.

SS
JU

External speakers

Staff were reminded that external speakers can be invited from throughout Europe to deliver IPAB seminars (up to two nights' accommodation and (discounted) travel costs can be reimbursed). Depending on the cost incurred with each visit, potentially we could finance up to 6 external speaker visits.

Once the new co-ordinator has been confirmed and the next schedule of talks has been issued, staff can submit proposals for external speaker invites.

6. Student Issues

Sethu provided a brief overview of the student review process for Margarita.

Staff were reminded that although concerns with an individual's progress should be discussed during the student review meeting, it should not wait until then to be raised. Any concerns and possible issues should be raised immediately in order for the appropriate action plan to be put in place at the appropriate time.

The next student review meetings will take place in late August. Level 1 Admin Office will liaise with Sethu in due course regarding arrangements.

SS

Meanwhile Level One admin to initiate student review cycles over June/July.

Student participation in external conferences/seminars was discussed. There is an upper bound of £1500 per (non-grant funded) student during his/her PhD for student travel. Supervisors are requested to consider this limit when submitting student papers to conferences. Please verify with Director/Finance Admin whether the student is fundable for travel BEFORE submitting to conference. Where possible, funding would be made available to allow students to attend. However, in order to keep costs down, early planning was encouraged i.e. take advantage of early registration rates, volunteer opportunities which often come with a registration fee waiver etc.

9. Admin Issues

Neil McGillvary has been announced as Liz Elliot's successor. He will take on the role of Director of Professional Services. Neil's replacement has yet to be confirmed.

Heather Low continues in her role as acting supervisor for Level 1 and Level 2 admin office as well as finance officer.

Level 1 Admin Office administrators are Steph Smith and Magda Nowak. Staff were reminded to they can contact the admin office direct for any assistance they may require. Level 1 Admin office is based in room 1.37.

Joanne Pennie continues as Portfolio Manager.

10. Socials

As there have been no IPAB socials arranged in sometime, the group agreed it would be good to organise one. Margarita was nominated to take this forward with Vitto's assistance.

MC/VF

11. AoB

Sethu reminded staff that any help with CDT is welcomed and if anyone would like to discuss this further, they should contact Sethu.

12. Date of next meeting

The next (autumn) meeting will be held in late August. The Autumn meeting will be combined with the student reviews and an exact date will be arranged and confirmed in due course.

SS