



The new AAI News Column appears in this issue for the second time. We welcome your feedback, particularly requests for information that would be valuable to you. Please send suggestions for future news columns by electronic mail to aaai-office@sumex-aim.stanford.edu or by US Mail to the AAI office.

—William J. Clancey & Claudia Mazzetti

Council Committees

During the Fall, the Executive Committee reviewed the current composition of the existing committees and suggested changes for some committee chair positions. The Execom devised a method of chair rotation that ensures continuity and progression.

The Committee decided that the current chair will remain on the committee in a steering capacity for 2 years. The new chair will be the standing chair for the same period of time and will nominate his/her successor. This procedure will apply for the following committees: Finance, Publications, Fellowship, Scholarship, Conference and Workshops. The other committees, Nominating, Program, and Symposium, usually rotate chairs annually.

A committee must consist of at least two members of the Executive Council, in addition to the chair, who is ultimately responsible for determining who participates on his committee.

New Committees

The Executive Council organized and/or nominated new committees in recent Council meetings. The charters of the new committees are:

Fellowship Committee: Committee will solicit, review and monitor nominations for post-doctoral fellowships which will be for a two year span.

Scholarship Committee: Committee will review and select students to receive grants to attend the National Conference on Artificial Intelligence.

Symposium Committee: Committee

is responsible for the selection of topics and their chairs and overseeing the Series's program development.

These charters may be expanded by the Council at any time. The committees were approved by a mail vote of the Executive Council during January, 1988.

New Committee Chairs

The following people were nominated as committee chairs and also approved by a mail vote.

Scholarship: Raj Reddy (acting); Symposium Series: Hector Levesque; Nominees to the Fellowship Committee are still pending.

The following chairs for standing committees were approved.

Conference: Howard Shrobe; Finance: Bruce Buchanan; Workshops: Peter Hart. Nominees to the Publication Committee are still pending. The chairs of the Nominating and Program Committee have not been nominated.

The Council thanks the past chairs for all their work over the years (however, they will be still serving in a steering capacity for the next 2 years!). They helped form the tenor and direction of the AAI's programs and services and without their energy and creativity, those formative programs could have faltered.

The Executive Council will hold its next scheduled meeting on Thursday, afternoon March 24 in Palo Alto. Suggestions for discussion can be sent to this column.

Symposium Public Forum

There will be a public forum on Wednesday evening, March 23, 1988,

at 8 PM in Kresge Auditorium, Stanford University, providing a summary of discussions in the individual meetings. This plenary session should be useful for those who are unable to attend all three days or who wish to learn about each symposium in the series.

Nominees For 1988 Elections

Members of AAI are requested to submit nominations for the 1988 election of President of AAI and council positions (1988-1990 period) to Pat Winston (Past President and Chair of the Nominating Committee).

North American Special

AAAI is now able to offer a lower membership fee to Canadian and Mexican members. They no longer need to pay an extra \$15 dollars for mailing because we now have a second class permit for the magazine.

Student Volunteers Needed For AAI-88

AAAI-88 will be held August 20-26, 1988 in beautiful St. Paul Minnesota. Student volunteers are needed to help with local arrangements and staffing of the conference. To be eligible for a Volunteer position, an individual must be an undergraduate or graduate student in any field at any college or university.

This is an excellent opportunity for students to participate in the conference. Volunteers receive free registration at AAI-88, conference proceedings, a "staff" T-shirt, and are invited to the volunteer party. More importantly, by participating as a volunteer, you become more involved and meet students and researchers with similar interests.

Volunteer responsibilities are varied, including conference preparation, registration, staffing of sessions and tutorials and organizational tasks. Each volunteer will be assigned twelve (12) hours.

If you are interested in participating in AAI-88 as a Student Volunteer, apply by sending your name & electronic mail address, US mail address, telephone number(s), dates available, student affiliation, and advisor's name to: feifer@SEAS.UCLA.EDU or Richard Feifer, UCLA Center for the

Study of Evaluation, 145 Moore Hall, University of California, Los Angeles, California 90024.

Future Conference Sites

1989: IJCAI-89, Detroit, Michigan, 1990: AAAI-90, Boston, Massachusetts; 1991: AAAI-91, Anaheim, California; 1992: AAAI-92, not yet confirmed.

On-Line Abstracts

We asked Danny Bobrow to report on the current status of his investigation of an on-line abstract service for AAAI. Here is his report.

"In July, I was delegated to look at what it would take to bring to AAAI members some on-line capability to search abstracts in the AI field. Since then, I have located three sources of such abstracts, and talked with key personnel in each organization. I have also talked with Bob Kahn at the Corporation for National Research Initiatives about possible roles NRI might play in this process. Everybody claims to be anxious to help. The following is a summary of what I have learned so far:

AI Abstracts, edited by Yorick Wilks, New Mexico State University, Published by Blackwell Ltd., London

Current collection. about 2000 abstracts, created or received on line. (Back through part of 1986). *Coverage:* Major journals, conferences, research center report series.

Search services: None available.

Policy on use of database: None

Provision for supplying full text: None

Business Focus. Providing a quarterly journal of abstracts

Turing Institute Abstracts, Published by Turing Institute, Glasgow.

Current Collection: about 30,000 abstracts, back to 1984.

Coverage: Major journals, conferences, research center report series.

Search services. Available with dial-up to Glasgow (no network connections). Turing Institute uses BRSSearch for full text search, a commercial software package that is reported to cost about \$50K.

Policy on use of database: None. Would be willing to consider ideas.

Provision for supplying full text: They guarantee to provide to subscribers full text copies of any article whose abstract is received.

Business Focus: Providing a complete library and search services for organizational subscribers. Members of the organization get on-line search access, and some limited number of full-text retrievals a year. These are distributed by post in Europe. Limitation not well formalized. They have no US distributor for their service, and have not thought about how to separate costs of abstract retrieval service and full text availability.

EIC Intelligence, Jim Kollegger, President New York Current collection: about 4000 abstracts, created or received on line. (Back through 1985).

Coverage: Major Journals, conferences, Research Center report series, plus more popular sources.

Search services. Available as a Dialog database (Base Number 238). None directly with them. They are willing to connect to networks and update database on-line.

Policy on use of database: They sell their database, in formats determined by the customer. They have delivered their data base to a number of corporate clients. They are willing to make special deals, especially with organizations like AAAI. They will add to the database (going back in time if we request it).

Provision for supplying full text: They have microfiche available for full text delivery. Libraries currently subscribe to this service.

Business Focus. Providing general information services. They do not have computers, but rather view themselves as wholesalers of information. They do have fiche subscriptions, where they pay royalties to publishers whose fiche they have caught.

In our continuing investigations, we will be considering the following issues: Comparative tests of the EIC Dialog database and the Turing Institute Database. How do we measure quality, and what do we want out of the database? What are appropriate alternatives for providing search services to the community. Should the AAAI office try to run search software on their Sun workstations? Is the

National Research Institute a better initial candidate for running such a service? How would this relate to proposals for the national digital library? Would one of the Universities like to take a lead in providing this service to the community, with the idea that it would use it as a testbed for new retrieval services? Or an industrial organization?

What search software should be used? How do we get the community to make it better, and yet protect the database for the providers?

How much money would AAAI make available annually to support this service? Is \$2-5 per member possible and adequate?

How could we grow this service? This depends on who runs it. If AAAI ran the service, and got the fiche from EIC, would they have the staff to provide hardcopy output? Would we want a separate charge? Or would we try to get requested papers on-line in some way (e.g., scanners, recognizers)?

To take the next steps to make this real will require someone who can give some significant time to the enterprise. Is there a volunteer with appropriate talent, ambition and energy?"

If you have information that could help AAAI in setting up an on-line abstract service, or better yet, wish to participate in establishing the service, please contact Danny Bobrow at Xerox-Parc (Bobrow.pa@xerox.com).

AAAI Workshops

In the first AAAI-News column (Winter '87-'88) we included a table of workshops sponsored by AAAI. We neglected to mention that most of these workshops were co-sponsored by other organizations, sometimes more than one. The AAAI is grateful for these collaborations. Indeed, the program is designed to foster growth of specialty areas, particularly by supplementing funding from other areas of support.