Minutes of SPCOM-TC Meeting at ICASSP-2016

[Approved by the TC in June 2017]

Wednesday, 22 March 2016, 7:20-10:45am
Shanghai, China

In attendance: 18 TC Members, 1 Associate Members, 5 other

Erik G. Larsson (Chair), Wei Yu (Vice-Chair), Waheed Bajwa, Biao Chen, Chong-Yung Chi, Min Dong, Feifei Gao, Shi Jin, Eleftherios Karipidis, Wing-Kin Ma, Matthew McKay, Urbashi Mitra, Chandra Murthy, Alejandro Ribeiro, Mathini Sellathurai, Sergiy A. Vorobyov, Rui Zhang, Wei Zhang

Tim Davidson (Associate Member)
K. V. S. Hari, Dionysios Kadogerias, Christopher Mollen**,** Bhaskar Rao, Wei-Ping Zhu (non-members)

Formal Apologies: 5 TC Members
Philippe Ciblat, Joakim Jalden, Michael Rabbat, Wolfgang Utschick, Pengfei Xia

Absent: 7 TC Members
Yindi Jing, Markku Juntti, David J. Love, Ahmed Sadek, Milica Stojanovic, Weifeng Su, Cihan Tepedelenlioglu

Minutes written by Wei Yu.

1. Welcome from the Chair
Erik Larsson called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance. Quorum was confirmed.

2. Approval of the Agenda
The meeting agenda was distributed by email prior to the meeting. Urbashi Mitra moved the motion to approve the agenda. Mathini Sellathurai seconded. All were in favor. The agenda was approved.

3. Approval of Minutes of Meeting at ICASSP 2014
The minutes from ICASSP 2014 was distributed by email prior to the meeting. No concerns were raised regarding the accuracy of the minutes. Urbashi Mitra moved the motion to approve the minutes. Mathini Sellathurai seconded. All were in favor. The minutes were approved.

4. Approval of Minutes of Meeting at ICASSP 2015
The minutes from ICASSP 2015 was distributed by email prior to the meeting. No concerns were raised regarding the accuracy of the minutes. Urbashi Mitra moved the motion to approve the minutes. Mathini Sellathurai seconded. All were in favor. The minutes were approved.

5. Highlights of the Chairs report
Erik Larsson reviewed the Chair's report for 2016. The full report was distributed prior to the meeting. The highlights of the report were as follows:

- **Membership**: The TC had a vote of thanks for the retiring members. On behalf of the TC, Erik Larsson especially thanked Tim Davidson for his leadership and mentorship, and

further congratulated the three re-elected members, the four new members, and Wei Yu as newly elected Vice Chair.

- **Subcommittees**: Erik Larsson reviewed the subcommittee structure.
- **Representation on IEEE boards:** Erik Larsson reviewed the TC's representations on various IEEE boards. In particular, Urbashi Mitra discussed the nomination process for the Editor-in-Chief position for the IEEE Transactions on Wireless Communications. Past service as Associate Editor and on the Executive Editorial Board of the journal were seen as useful experience for candidates. Nominations were encouraged.
- **Awards:** Congratulations were offered to TC members for winning awards. The TC made four nominations for best paper awards, two of which were successful. The TC made two nominations to society-level awards, but they were not successful. Urbashi Mitra inquired whether unsuccessful nominations were automatically reconsidered in future years. Tim Davidson replied that they were not, and the TC needed to re-nominate.
- **ICASSP:** Paper submission statistics were reviewed. The number of submitted papers in SPCOM was in the 200-range for ICASSPs in Europe or North America, but closer to 100-range for ICASSPs in Asia or Australia. Our papers represented about 9% of the total ICASSP papers.
- **SPAWC:** This year's SPAWC had a record number of paper submissions.
- **GlobalSIP:** Michael Rabbat was a co-organizer of a symposium on signal and information processing over networks. Zhi-Quan Luo was organizing a symposium on distributed information processing, optimization, and resource management over networks.
- **TC review**: The review was remarkably positive as compared to 2012. Minor revision of by-law was requested. Our measures for encouraging diversity for under-represented groups were well received.
- **Award Deadlines:** No Marconi award nominations were made this year. Better effort on Marconi nomination is needed next year. Urbashi Mitra provided some perspectives on the paper award selection. It was suggested that more than one paper should be nominated. There had been tendency for the same set of authors/topics to come up each year. More detailed nomination letters emphasizing impact would be helpful. Citations and h-index were looked at closely, but this had the tendency to be a function of the paper topic. Matthew McKay stated that as committee we should avoid looking at the citation count as the sole measure for award nomination.

6. Report on SPAWC 2016

Mathini Sellathurai provided an update on SPAWC 2016. The number of submissions was excellent: 170 from the general call plus 15 special sessions with 90 additional papers. The special session chair did a great job. The results of paper review should come out soon, as visa processing can be time consuming due to UK immigration policy. Each TC member was assigned about 18 papers to review. The fact that the workshop overlapped with the July 4 holiday in the U.S. did not seem to have affected paper submission statistics.

The organizers struggled with the issue of whether the conference can be exempted from 25% VAT. Finally, IEEE allowed waiving VAT for registration, provided that the conference was organized through the university, but accommodation cost cannot have VAT waived.

Welcome reception would be held at the Civic Hall with a speech from the Edinburgh mayor on Sunday. Tuesday banquet would not be in the Edinburgh Castle, because the castle would be closed at 6pm; only a limited area would be accessible. The organizers asked whether a visit to

the Edinburgh Castle should be organized on Monday. (There was no strong opinion to ask the organizer to do so.)

8. By-law Changes

The By-laws were revised and distributed prior to the meeting. To comply with SPS policies, TC members now need to step down for 3 years (instead of one year) before being re-elected (with exception for the incoming Vice Chair). Vice Chair candidates can now be past TC members, as well as current members.

Urbashi Mitra moved the motion to approve the by-law change. Mathini Sellathurai seconded. All were in favor. The by-laws change was approved.

9. Policies and Procedures Revision

The Policies and Procedures document was revised and distributed prior to the meeting. Minor changes included refinement of the prose, clarification of the subcommittee structure and the Marconi award nomination process.

The ties in elections and paper award selection would now be resolved by approval votes first, then by a run-off. It was suggested that because we would now use approval votes as the tie-breaker, the approval votes should be cast with better consideration than in the past.

The workshop selection procedure was refined. Clarification was sought on the conflict-of-interest rule for workshop selection votes. It was decided that the international advisory committee members were not considered in conflict.

There was a discussion on whether it should be "more than" vs. "at least" half of TC members eligible to vote for workshop selection. The former is for single-proposal approval; the latter for multi-proposal approval/selection.

Question was raised on the definition of "TC members eligible to vote". According to SPS policies and procedures, in a face-to-face meeting at ICASSP, quorum means a majority of all TC members with voting rights. Provided that a quorum is present, a majority vote of the members present and entitled to vote shall be an act of the TC. Thus, "TC members eligible to vote" during a face-to-face meeting at ICASSP would mean all TC members present, excluding those in conflict. (SPS P&P 5.5.2, c-d)

Question was raised on whether workshop selection shall be made at ICASSP or by email votes. It was decided that selection shall be made at the ICASSP face-to-face meeting, except when a quorum was not present, in which case subsequent email voting should take place. It was noted that this would be different from awards selection, which would always be done electronically with the entire TC.

Urbashi Mitra moved the motion to approve the revisions to the Policies and Procedures with the amendment: "(workshop proposals) … are voted upon at the face-to-face meeting at ICASSP, except when quorum is not present, in which case the voting shall take place by email." Mathini Sellathurai seconded. All were in favor. The revised Policies and Procedures with the amendment were approved.

10. SPAWC Selection

Three SPAWC 2017 proposals were distributed prior to the meeting: from Greece, India, and Japan. Erik Larsson inquired whether the organizers would also be able to host SPAWC in 2018. The Greece team replied that they were equally happy with hosting SPAWC in 2017 or in 2018. The India and Japan teams replied that they were only able to host SPAWC in 2017, but not in 2018.

Given the desirability of a two-year lead for the SPAWC selection, Erik Larsson proposed to make decision(s) based on the top two ranked proposals. If Greece was one of the top two, then Greece would be awarded for 2018 and the other top-ranked proposal would be awarded for 2017. If Greece was not one of the top two, then SPAWC 2017 would be awarded to the top-ranked proposal; decision for 2018 would be deferred to the future. It was noted that precedence existed for decisions on two SPAWCs in the same meeting, for Darmstadt (2013) and Toronto (2014) SPAWCs. The TC unanimously approved the procedure.

Athina Petropulu presented the proposal to host SPAWC in Kalamata, Greece, by video, (due to the fact that she served as President of the ECE Department Heads Association in charge of the event, and was unable to arrive in Shanghai until that evening). Kalamata could be reached by air with regional connections, or by car in 2hr 10min from Athens. A shared taxi would cost 30USD. A question was asked about why not hosting SPAWC at a university campus. The organizers replied that this would be more complicated logistically. A question was asked about whether the recent refugee crisis has affected Kalamata. (The answer was no.) Questions were raised about the choice of dates and the proximity to the ISIT dates.

Chandra Murthy presented the proposal to host SPAWC 2017 at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bangalore. It was mentioned that India's visa process has simplified in recent years. Visa-on-arrival is now possible for citizens from a large number of countries.

Wei Yu presented the proposal to host SPAWC 2017 in Sapporo, Japan. The proposed dates were July 3-6, which would be immediately after ISIT 2017, but again overlapping with the July 4 holiday in the U.S. Sapporo is 1-1/2 hour by air from Tokyo with pleasant summer weather. The workshop would be hosted on the campus of Hokkaido University. A question was asked about the visa process for Japan. A question was asked about any lingering effect of the Fukushima nuclear accident. (The answer was that Sapporo is nowhere close to the site.)

With the conflicted TC members recused, discussions on the merits of the three proposals ensued in closed-door session. Voting took place according to the newly adopted Policies and Procedures, and with a secret written ballot. The meeting had quorum (with 18 TC members present), of which 4 TC members (Murthy, Yu, Mitra, Bajwa) had conflict. Thus, 14 TC members were eligible to vote. Matthew McKay and Christopher Mollen counted and cross-checked the votes. The preferences were as follows:

8 TC members voted in favor of Greece over India.
5 TC members voted in favor of India over Greece.
6 TC members voted in favor of Greece over Japan.
7 TC members voted in favor of Japan over Greece.
4 TC members voted in favor of India over Japan.
8 TC members voted in favor of Japan over India.

Greece received 13 approval votes. Japan received 12 approval votes. India received 12 approval votes. There was one ballot that did not contain approval votes.

The outcome was that Greece wins over India; Japan wins over Greece; and Japan wins over India. The votes were close.

Thus, SPAWC 2017 was awarded to Japan. SPAWC 2018 was awarded to Greece with exact dates to be approved at or before next ICASSP. SPAWC 2019 would be decided at ICASSP 2017. The India team was encouraged to submit a proposal again for 2019.

11. Awards Nomination

The upcoming award deadlines were reviewed, including the Distinguished Lecturer nomination by May 31, and paper awards and technical achievement awards by September 1. The TC members were reminded that the TC may not nominate its own members for awards, but a public track is available outside of the formal TC nomination. The TC members were urged to be very selective in scan reviews for paper awards. A rule-of-thumb would be that on average each TC member may find one paper worthy of nomination during a 3-year term on the TC. An opinion was expressed that the use of citation metric should be discouraged in deciding the paper awards.

12. Technical co-Sponsorship

During the recent voting on whether the SPCOM TC should recommend the SPS to co-sponsor ICUWB, not too many TC members cast votes. It was speculated that many TC members were not comfortable with taking a stand. Erik Larsson voiced the opinion that we should be careful about using the SPS brand name and should consider the history and the organizing team carefully when deciding on co-sponsorship. Urbashi Mitra mentioned that the SPS conference board did not give written directions, but it had become more stringent recently, which was why we were asked to vote and to provide a summary of comments. Each conference should be decided on the case-by-case basis. An opinion was expressed that the TC should focus its effort on SPAWC and ICASSP. Questions about GlobalSIP were raised. It was mentioned that sponsorship by SPS provided the possibility of travel grants.

13. SPCOM Video

SPS offers the TCs to create a promotional video to be distributed through online streaming. Many TC members have previously responded with ideas, but additional ideas would be appreciated.

14. SPAWC Name Change

It was suggested that SPAWC could change its name to “Symposium on Advanced Networking and Communications”, in order for it not to be too specific on “wireless”. Discussions ensued focused on two questions: (1) By stressing “networking” instead of “signal processing”, would the name change suggest that SPAWC would now focus on upper protocol layer? (2) Would the name change dilute the value of the SPAWC brand name?

15. SP-CUP

The education subcommittee is in charge of soliciting proposals for SP-CUP.

16. Electronic Voting

The TC would investigate the use of electronic voting, and investigate voting procedures based on social choice theory.

Urbashi Mitra moved the motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Alejandro Ribeiro. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 10:45am.