Professor Michael Winikoff (New Zealand) — IFAAMAS Board Statement

Michael Winikoff is (full) Professor at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. Previously he was Professor (and Head of the Department of Information Science) at the University of Otago, in Dunedin, New Zealand. He received both his BSc(Hons) in computer science and his PhD from Melbourne University, Australia, in 1993 and 1997 respectively.

Michael has been active in the area of agents since 1999. He has published over 120 peer reviewed papers, including 9 full AAMAS papers. He is best known for his work in the area of agent-based software development including: the Prometheus methodology and associated tool support; foundational concepts for agents, in particular the importance of goals, different types of goals, and techniques for detecting and exploiting goal interactions; techniques for testing, debugging, verification, and maintenance of agent systems; and methods for designing and implementing flexible interactions, including both methods based on "interaction goals", and on Professors Yolum & Singh's commitment machine framework.

His involvement in the AAMAS conference includes attending every AAMAS except 2009, being on the PC (first in 2003, including receiving the best PC member award at AAMAS 2011), SPC (first in 2007), being scholarships co-chair for AAMAS 2011, program co-chair for AAMAS 2012, general co-chair for AAMAS 2017, and co-chair for the Engineering Multiagent Systems special track for AAMAS 2019.

Michael was on the editorial board for the International Journal of Agent-Oriented Software Engineering since its inception, became an associate editor in 2011, and has been Editor-in-Chief of IJAOSE since 2014. He is also a regular reviewer for JAAMAS, and joined the JAAMAS editorial board as Associate Editor in 2014. He also was co-chair of the DALT workshop (2007, 2008, 2010, 2011), ProMAS (2007), AOIS (2004, 2005), EMAS (2013), and is co-chair of EMAS 2020 and EXTRAAMAS 2020. He was on the DALT and AOSE steering committees, and is on the EMAS steering committee (formed by merging AOSE, DALT and ProMAS).

Finally, Michael was on the IFAAMAS board (2012-2018), including serving a term as secretary, and chairing the Victor Lesser Distinguished Dissertation Award.

Michael sees the AAMAS community as both strong and highly diverse. The AAMAS conference is highly-regarded, well-run, and has a very effective review process. While there is always room for some improvement, these aspects are strong, and ought to be preserved.

On the other hand, there are also some challenges that we face, including questions about industrial interest in, and adoption of, the work of the AAMAS community. Industry involvement in AAMAS appears to have dwindled in recent years, and a key challenge for the community, and IFAAMAS, is to seek to re-engage with industry players. When I was general co-chair of AAMAS 2017, Professor Larson and I worked to create initiatives to engage with industry, including creating new roles on the AAMAS organisation team ("Industry Engagement Advisors"), and exploring new ways of structuring the Innovative and Industrial Applications Track. However, this initiative requires more continuity, and I believe that the IFAAMAS board is the right place to do this, so it gets carried across from one conference to the next.