IFAAMAS Board Elections 2022 Statement: Dengji Zhao

Bio: Dengji Zhao is a tenure-track Assistant Professor at ShanghaiTech University, China. He received double Ph.D. degrees in CS from Western Sydney University and the University of Toulouse in 2012, and received double M.Sc. degrees in Computational Logic from Technische Universität Dresden and Universidad Politécnica de Madrid in 2009. Before joining ShanghaiTech, he worked as a postdoc at Kyushu University (mentored by Makoto Yokoo), Japan, and the University of Southampton (mentored by Nick Jennings), UK.

Most of Zhao's research is on algorithmic game theory, especially mechanism design under social networks. His recent research has stimulated the study of mechanism design by considering the interactions between participants. He has several seminal work in this research direction and has offered four related tutorials at AAAI/AAMAS/IJCAI.

Service to the AAMAS community: Dengji has been very active in the AAMAS community.

- He has attended 5 AAMAS conferences since 2014 and co-authored 9 AAMAS papers, including one at AAMAS 2021 Blue Sky Ideas track (*Mechanism Design Powered by Social Interactions*).
- He served on the AAMAS (Senior) Program Committee for 8 times since 2013 (only missed two years). He also served as PC/SPC in other major AI conferences for 20+ times, including AAAI, IJCAI and ECAI.
- He is the IJCAI 2022 Competitions and Challenges track co-chair, the program co-chair of the 2021 International Conference on Distributed AI, and the workshop chair of PRICAI 2021. He has also co-chaired 3 workshops at IJCAI 2015 and 2020.
- He has offered 5 tutorials at IJCAI 2018/2019, PRICAI 2018, AAMAS 2019 and AAAI 2022. He has been organizing a regular online seminar with Bo An in China to promote AAMAS to the Chinese community.

Goals: If elected, Dengji is passionate about **making IFAAMAS richer** (more sponsorships) and **promoting AAMAS to be the best conference** as other major AI conferences like AAAI and IJCAI in Asia, especially China.

- **Make AAMAS research more appealing to the industry and attract more sponsorships**: our community didn't attract the industry's attention as much as other major AI conferences like AAAI and NeurIPS. Our research do have many applications in robotics, e-commerce, smart manufacturing, smart cities and etc., especially when AI reaches the stage where multi-agent systems become the foundation. Thus, we could interact more closely with the industry to help them to understand the important of our research, and to incentivize them to help the community to prepare better for the future needs. For example, Chinese companies are actively sponsoring AI related events like AAA/IJCAI and they could also support us. I have also been collaborating with the people from the Chinese big tech companies such as Alibaba, Baidu, DiDi and Huawei. All my seven graduated master students are now working in the related big tech companies.
- **Make AAMAS more appealing to the young researchers, especially in Asia**: we have seen a big jump of the number of submissions in other major AI conferences in the past years, but AAMAS has been relatively still. We know that deep learning is the main factor for the jump, but AAMAS also covers learning, especially RL and multiagent learning. Another reason is that AAMAS is not well perceived in certain regions, e.g., in China, AAMAS is not ranked by China Computer Federation (CCF) as good as AAAI, IJCAI etc. (also the proportion of the PC members of AAMAS from these regions is very small). This largely affected researchers' willingness to submit their work to AAMAS, especially when their ranking is used to evaluate their grant applications. This again affects the community to attract more young researchers. Dengji is willing to dedicate his effort to promote AAMAS in the underrepresented regions (not just Asia). He has been actively doing so in China in the past years and hope to do more under the support of IFAAMAS.
- **Represent Asia**: For the 18 members remaining in the board, only three are from Asia-Pacific (Haris from Australia, Svetlana from Singapore and Michael from New Zealand) and only Svetlana is from Asia. Especially, the board has never had a representative from a Chinese university. Given that about ¼ of the submissions of AAAI/IJCAI are from China (about the same as the US), we believe that China and Asia is a big potential for the growth of the AAMAS community.