MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING SOCIETY FOR LEARNING ANALYTICS RESEARCH

Date: March 21 2024, 12.30 pm JST
Location: ICC Kyoto Convention Centre
SoLAR Members attending: 311
SoLAR Executive attending: Bart Rienties, Blazenka Divjak, Nia Nixon, Ioana Jivet, Olga Viberg, Rogers Kaliisa, Mohammad Khalil, Abhinava Barthakur, Kathryn Bartimote, Lisa Lim, and Grace Lynch

Agenda

1 President Welcome – Professor Bart Rienties

Professor Rienties opened the AGM, thanking everyone for attending the first fully face to face meeting since 2019.

2 Approval of minutes

Motion: Approve AGM Minutes from 2023 as circulated moved by Bart Rienties and seconded by Ioana Jivet. ***MOTION: PASSED***

3 President's report – Professor Bart Rienties

Professor Rienties started with thank you to the hosts and organizing committee for LAK24, the SoLAR community, authors and reviewers and then proceeded to details for the Annual Report for 2023. Highlights from 2023 to be expanded during the reports from the different areas included:

2023 Google Scholar Rankings, top 20, only conference	Extensive financial support for students and scholarships
CORE Ranking A for LAK	SoLAR Job Board
Increased communication avenues (Nexus Blog, Webinars, Podcasts)	First ECR grant completed and second awarded

3.1 Solar Membership

Professor Rienties provided information about current SoLAR membership. Currently, there are:

Individual Members	333	Newsletter	Around 5,700
Student Members	176	Institutional	18

- Geographic representation of SoLAR members strong with 41 countries represented
- Members from Asia increased 2.5 times due to LAK being held in Japan, North America still has the highest representation, followed by Asia, Europe and Australia.
- One new Institutional member: Southern New Hampshire (USA)

3.2 Overview of SoLAR financial position

Professor Rienties referred to the financial report that had been previously circulated to members. Summary from 2023 Financial Information presented as of 31 December 2023 in CAD:

- Net assets overall: $246,307
  - Revenue 2023: $444,809 (budgeted: $263,000)
  - Expenses 2023: $479,666 (budgeted: $357,300)
  - Net result 2023: -$34,857

The 2023 reference budget is to assist with comparing 2023 actuals with the 2024 proposed budget. It highlights that due to conservative revenue estimation a higher loss was anticipated but the increased

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expenditures for LAK23 and LAK24 were offset by a higher LAK23 revenue, some LAK24 revenue brought forward, and higher interest.

At the time of budget preparation there was uncertainty on LAK23 expenses due to mode finalization, and LAK24 expenditures that had to be made in 2023 with regards to the Kyoto convention center.

While 2023 is the first year that SoLAR has shown an operational loss this is primarily due to the costs we had to incur for LAK24 (i.e. 58K). As outlined when all the costs and expenditures were shown SoLAR made a small profit at LAK23 despite the substantial additional costs for running the hybrid conference. The projected budget for 2024 has taken into consideration the actuals from 2023 in estimating expected revenues from memberships, conference and sponsorships. While this budget still projects a small operating loss, as we have seen from the 2023 actuals, SoLAR is prepared to manage a deficit budget due to its strong reserves rather than reduce critical expenditures on scholarships, events, handbook, journal and working groups.

Professor Rienties emphasized SoLAR's strong commitment to supporting students to date with a total of $314,938 USD:

- LASI Eric Duval scholarship: $124,605 USD provided to support 149 students to date
- Doctoral Consortium scholarships: $130,250 USD provided to support 105 students
- LAK conference scholarships: $24,750 to support 110 recipients
- SoLAR membership scholarships: 113 recipients for a total of $5,800 USD

For 2023 the financial support provided was $48,180 USD:

- 19 Conference scholarships awarded - with 2 fully supported including travel, accommodation and registration to attend in person from Morocco and Uganda, 17 online participants from South Korea, Brazil, Kenya, Hungary, Portugal
- 9 DC student scholarships with 4 others supported by NSF
- Early Career Research Grant

Motion: *To accept the 2023 Financial Report as circulated and presented moved by Bart Rienties and seconded by Nia Nixon.* ***MOTION: PASSED***

4 Goals for 2024 and onwards

4.1 Strategic Goals 2023 to 2025

New Strategic Plan goals for 2023 - 2025 announced:

1. Develop sustainable models for SoLAR major events 2024-2025
2. Assist individual and institutional members with embedding learning analytics in practice
3. Develop an engagement plan to work and/or collaborate with industry and its rapid pace/development (e.g., AI)
4. Continue to increase the diversity and inclusivity of the SoLAR Community

Progress against goals include more support for local/regional LASIs, new 24 hour virtual event LAP, more LAK conference scholarships, increased support for ECR grant and deeper engagement with individuals in underrepresented areas. Developed a new strategy with greater support for SIGs.

4.2 Awards Committee

The Awards Committee works from LAK to LAK, sets-up awards and corresponding nomination processes and eligibility criteria. For 2023/2024 awarded two Emerging Scholar Awards: Namrata

Srivastava(North America) and Antonette Shibani (Australasia). The Community Work Award was given to Rebecca Ferguson. Due to limited nominations an Emerging Scholar award for Europe was not given.

4.3 Executive team 2024

Professor Rienties introduced the 2023 Office Bearers:

- **President:** Bart Rienties, The Open University, UK
- **Vice President:** Blaženka Divjak, University of Zagreb, Croatia
- **Vice President:** Olga Viberg, KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden
- **Treasurer:** Abhinava Barthakur, University of South Australia, Australia
- **Secretary:** Ioana Jivet, FernUniversität in Hagen, Germany

2024 Members at Large are:

- Rogers Kaliisa, University of Oslo, Norway
- Lisa-Angelique Lim, University of Technology Sydney, Australia
- Mohammad Khalil, University of Bergen, Norway
- Kathryn Bartimote, University of Sydney, Australia
- Namrata Srivastava, University of Pennsylvania, USA
- Marie Reid, EduLearn Connect, Bahamas

Professor Rienties announced the new Chairs of all the Working Groups and highlighted with thanks all the community members who have been assisting across the various groups. Professor Rienties presented Certificates of Appreciation and Recognition for Excellence in Service to Retiring Members –Paul Prinsloo, Isabel Hilliger, Nia Nixon and Adele Smolansky. He also announced there will be an upcoming nomination and election for a new student member on the Executive Committee.

5 Announcements

Professor Rienties announced events and calls planned for 2023.

- LAK25 will take place March 3 - 7, 2025 in Dublin, Ireland.
- Nominations for the Executive will open in November 2024.
- Early Career Research Grant increased 50% to $15,000 CAD and applications open on 27 March

6 Open Discussion

Suggestion from the floor was to create a statement and change SoLAR's ByLaws that all bids for major events must provide a statement regarding human rights so that no attendee is made to feel unsafe.

There was a question on why no Emerging Scholar Award was given in the Europe region. Professor Rienties reiterated that the Awards Committee felt the single nominee was not ready at this point in time and offered to discuss further one on one after the meeting.

There was discussion on the standards of reviews for LAK and it was felt more training needed to be undertaken and there needed to be increased investment by Senior PC members to train the next generation of reviewers. One suggestion was that there should be consequences for providing a bad review such as the individual is unable to submit a paper to LAK. Another suggestion was to run a survey with all authors and reviewers at LAK on how to improve the review process as input for next year's PC chairs.LAK needs to maintain high quality research and high quality reviews contribute to high standards.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 1.30 pm JST

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