

## **OCNS Board of Directors 2022 Meeting Notes**

5 September 2022 9:00 - 13:00 EDT/NY time

15 September 2022 9:00 -13:00 EDT/NY time

Online on zoom

present (taken at the beginning of meeting one): Volker Steuber (VS), Astrid Prinz (AP), Leonid Rubchinsky (LR), Shailesh Akuputtan (SA), Anthony Burkitt (AB), Eirini Mavrtsaki (EM), Anca Doloc-Mihu (AD), Ingo Bojak (IB), Maurizio de Pitta (MP), Cengiz Günay (CG), Fleur Zeldenrust (FZ), Rodica Curtu (RC), Gennady Cymbalyuk (GC), Christoph Metzner (CM), Malin Sandstroem (MS)

### **Approval of the agenda and addition of points**

- Agenda posted on Slack, Thomas & Shailesh added items, Gennady: revisit board of directors titles (and their display on the website) - specifically “assistant” title

no further additions, agenda approved.

### **Approval of 2021 Board Meeting minutes (not received yet - refer to meeting notes?)**

- still pending

### **Legal matters**

- VS thanking AP for her sustained positive contributions as PC chair, President & past President.
- VS identifying directors rotating off and expressing thanks to all of them (Volker, Leonid, Jim, Laure, Anca, Rodica, Jorge, Fleur)
- clarification: Directors roll over end of calendar year, PC members and chair after the annual meeting

### **Election of a new Treasurer:**

- we have received one self-nomination: Gennady Cymbalyuk
  - Summary of treasury duty and requirement for treasurer to be located in the US
  - AP thanking LR for his excellent service as Treasurer - especially guidance on how to preserve finances in a healthy state; VS also thanking LR and LR thanked VS for guidance & support.
  - LR supporting GC nomination & expressing that he thinks he’s a strong candidate
- 13 in favour, 2 abstained - Gennady duly elected as new Treasurer

### **Nomination committee:**

Shailesh, Eirini to stay on, Cengiz to join as the new third member.

Discussion: Criteria for the vetting application of candidates for the board of directors

- SA: the formal criteria (OCNS membership and some activity in comp neuro) are not very strict/ do not allow excluding candidates that were deemed unsuitable
- AP: What were the concerns with previous candidates? Note, that some people are of the opinion OCNS leadership was a bit in-bred
- EM: computational background/ activity wasn't always deemed sufficient; VS: recollecting very junior candidate from Africa, also a senior candidate from India who was data analysis only
- In the end everyone was accepted as candidate
- IB: Existing criteria seemed enough to reject these candidates
- FZ: Shouldn't we make a formal job profile - IB: But not too detailed; EM: maybe requiring 1-2 years compNeuro experience ... VS: But one wouldn't want to be too restrictive, junior people for instance make huge contributions; AB: People who apply could be required to have attended at least one meeting, so they know how the meeting works and what it's about; VS, SA: But would that exclude people we would want, also people from disadvantaged countries might be excluded
- MP, EM, VS more in favour of requiring attendance/ engagement; SA: re-emphasized disadvantaged backgrounds
- MP: people might apply just for prestige

VS proposed: nomination committee to prepare a refined set of criteria to be completed/ approved by email.

- SA: What can we do about the gender balance (last year all male candidates)
- VS: What can we do about it - tried last year without much success to encourage female candidates
- FZ: one issue is female candidates not applying to roles that are named/ stated bombastically; more appealing if clear role descriptions are available
- AP: would directing candidates to current board membership be helpful (fairly inclusive)
- IB: Include text about inclusivity in candidate solicitation
- MP: highlight female scientists in part of the meeting annually to build participation and hope to filter through to director level
- CG: female members of the board are rotating off - anything we can do to keep previous better balance visible on the web?
- EM: Should we have a director who focuses specifically on EDI? FZ in favour, AP, VS also positive
- AP: remember that while with director candidates we are at the mercy of who applies, PC has always recruited with an eye on EDI.
- IB: One could have a quota for male/female directors as well ... in principle;
- VS: we are already struggling for candidates; quota would make that worse
- No big enthusiasm in the room for a quota approach

VS concluded:

**Action:** nomination committee to work on improved solicitation wrt EDI

- EM: what about director for EDI?
- But we need to watch numbers: Can only have 25 directors, which we already have
- MP: Should we make a role description first?
- EM: Should we try an EDI committee instead? IB: But committee is a recipe for getting nothing done
- FZ: Maybe VS idea to make education & training chair an education, training & EDI chair is viable
- MS as incoming education & training chair would be in favour

- VS: As a chair of an EDI committee or in isolation; MS would prefer a light-touch committee
- VS: volunteers for EDI committee? AP nominated MP who is happy to participate; VS: Let's delay finding more members until new directors are elected -> finish by email

**Action:** VS, MS to find more members for EDI committee by email after new directors have joined

### **Election of new President:**

- VS: have two good nominations for president so far: Leonid & Thomas
- TN: while having been with OCNS in different roles for a long time feel I have some more to contribute; LR: I trust that the board will make the best choice;

After discussion, the board voted to appoint Thomas Nowotny as President.

- VS: Opening the position of VP; nominate LR but LR declined
- Any self-nominations for VP?
- AP encouraged TN to describe the role; TN: described the role (See online)
- After reflections - decided to ask for self-nominations for the second board meeting on 15 September and make decisions / elect VP then

### **CNS Meetings**

#### Report on CNS\*2022 (Tony - LOC Chair)

The CNS\*2022 meeting was held in the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC), Melbourne, Australia, on 16th -20th July 2022, with approx. 200 attendees. The program consisted of Tutorials (all day Saturday 16th July), Main Meeting (evening Saturday 16th July - midday Tuesday 15th July), and Workshops (midday Tuesday 15th July - Wednesday 16th July). There were 8 tutorials (one of these was a showcase talk), and 6 workshops. The main meeting consisted of 4 keynote talks (1 hour each by Michael Breakspear, Tara Hamilton, Joseph Lizier and Kristin Sellers), 4 Featured Oral presentations (30 mins each), and 18 regular Oral presentations (20 mins each). Two Poster Sessions, each with 60 posters, were held on the Sunday and Monday afternoons (3 hours each session). The annual OCNS Members Meeting was held late on the Tuesday afternoon. Social events included a Welcome Drinks, held in the MCEC Foyer following the 1st Keynote talk on the Saturday evening, the Conference Dinner, held at a nearby restaurant, Aerial, on the Sunday Evening, and the CNS Party, held at the Cellar Bar "Fall from Grace" on the Monday evening. Feedback from participants at the meeting was very positive, and there was a lot of interaction throughout the meeting between PhD students, postdocs and faculty. The local organization ran smoothly, facilitated by a fairly large group (30) of local student and postdoc volunteers.

- VS: Thought was one of the best-organised meetings & many thanks to AB for spearheading that
- AB: Very happy how it went and expressed thanks to directors and local organising committee
- overall excellent meeting
- AB: supportive local CompNeuro community makes a real difference, VS: Let's keep that in mind

(AB left meeting - late night in Australia)

## CNS\*2024 and CNS\*2025

- VS: Meeting in █████ 2024 is going ahead as planned
- CNS2025 to be in █████ in spite of concerns about costs; after request from VS, costs were somewhat reduced & local organizers secured a grant (details to be confirmed)
- LR: quite optimistic about █████ meeting - might break even or even generate a little bit of profit.
- VS/LR: can/should registration fees be increased; LR suggesting to bring them back to the level of 2018 (there had been a dip and freeze since)
- Brief discussion - aspects: fees generally not particularly cheap but there is no waste we could cut on the cost side; while high fees are problematic for disadvantaged groups; however, for addressing this the general fee structure may not be the right instrument; IB: Do we need to consider the affluence of local communities at the meeting location; MP: ideas to secure income: Ask for a cut of airline fares from local/dominant airline (?) - other attendance modes (online), could generate additional income. TN: But online offerings are often expected to be free/cheap while doing hybrid has also additional costs; FZ: There are other reasons for hybrid: people who can't travel, environmental impact of travel; MP: online elements would not have to cover all parts of the meeting, and there could be large pools of online attendants, e.g. for tutorials, keynotes; fee could be quite cheap \$20-\$50.
- GC also supportive of hybrid due to people who can't travel; IB: But if online option too attractive, could kill off the physical meeting
- VS: suggesting to continue revisiting the issue; GC re-iterating support for hybrid; CG: there is no alternative to doing hybrid - people should want to be at the physical meeting if they see the value - shouldn't be forced to. LR: hybrid is expensive & difficult to organize (while online only is cheap) and charging high fees for hybrid components might also not be the right thing to do ...
- VS: Need to continue the discussion - one issue with hybrid are poster sessions. What are other meetings doing (e.g. Bernstein)?

## Financial Matters

### Treasurer's Report (Leonid)

#### General financial update

Overall, OCNS continues to be in a financially healthy state.

This year we needed to tap into our reserves, which are expected to be in the USD250-300k range. The major factor is smaller-than-originally-expected attendance for CNS2022 (probably as a result of covid pandemic). The remaining reserves are still large enough to provide financial stability if the next year meeting will draw many participants (as expected of the European location).

In the longer term, I can see two concerns.

First, it appears that OCNS may be shifting to renting space and services from professional organizations rather than universities and also engaging professional meeting organization companies. This drives the cost up. It was not a big issue for CNS2022 and will likely not be for CNS2023 and CNS2024. But OCNS needs to be aware of in the future.

Second, inflationary trends in the world are driving the meeting costs up.

As a result, I suggest increasing the registration fees. Back in 2019 we could afford to decrease the fees. 2022 fees were kept at the 2019 level. Let us raise the 2023 fees back to the 2014-2018 level. It will be an increase of some 10-15%. I also suggest raising the membership fees by a small amount (few dollars~10%-15%). The Board can reevaluate the fees in a year or two.

#### Technical issues

Overall, there are no technical concerns.

We adjusted to the new payment processor – Payroc. Some functionality is different from that of the prior one, credit card refunds are harder to do and there were a few weird glitches, but overall things are working smoothly. Thanks to OCNS Webmaster Shailesh Appukuttan for superb technical support.

Our standard activities (such as 2021 tax declaration submission) were completed as usual.

### Discussion of financial report from LR

- some discussion around some individual items, especially where payments were made in one year for costs of future meetings (i.e. deposits for future venues, e.g. paying deposits for Australia in 2020); also, publication costs at times lumped for two years in one financial year ...
- LR to recheck publication cost entries based on query by IB - eventually resolved to be correct within the board meeting but 2022 publishing costs not yet accounted for
- CG: Would it be possible to also record the true meeting costs for each year? LR: possible but not within this spreadsheet
- CG: liked professionalism of Australia meeting - is this the future; LR: Note that Australia was local scientific organisers and professional services; Leipzig professional organisers as well, could be expensive; AP: Distinction between professional services and fully professional organisation very important: Element of local scientific organisers very important.
- VS: has combination of local scientists and municipality; MP: This might be an Italian thing where certain venues automatically lead to involvement of municipality

Conclusion of fee level discussion:

**Action: GC, board:** decide fee levels in December

### Use of Sched platform in future meetings

- VS: Is this discussion completed? Any disadvantages? TN: Author order messed up on the App; GC: Costs? LR \$200 2022, less than \$1000 in 2020 with 1800 attendants. No objections to continuing using Sched.

### Program Committee Report (Christiane)

- We had no Conmaster malfunctions this year; as far as I can tell everything went smoothly
- The committee worked very well as a team and was able to create a great program under some time pressure due to delegating and members stepping up to do their part.
- We had 146 submissions (90 less than last year). Of these 65 chose “oral preferred”.
- The committee unanimously rejected one poster due the topic of the submission. Several papers were later retracted by authors not able to travel to Melbourne.
- We selected 4 submissions for featured orals and 18 for contributed orals based on reviewers’ comments, diversity of contributions and session topics.

- We have 5 members rotating off.
- We were able to have a good gender, career and geographic balance (with more speakers from Australia which seemed reasonable). We realized we did not pay good enough attention to duplicate oral presentations from the same lab. Some of these issues arose because several talks were withdrawn late in the process when authors decided not to travel and had to be suddenly replaced. We will set a better system in place next year to deal with this. Overall I think we have a smooth process that allows to create a fair and good program.
- We again had a late submission date and the review process was later than in previous years but overall this seems to work well.

So we need suggestions for members of the PC and 2023 will be my last year as chair.

- VS: thanks CL and the PC members for their hard work; meeting was very high quality overall with a great selection of talks; but one issue to address is the issue around diversity of talks as there were many talks from the same lab (as mentioned in the report); use this opportunity to discuss TN's proposal for guidelines regarding diversity of oral presentations ...

(FZ left)

### Discussion of TN proposal for guidelines for diversity of talks:

Largely agreed with the points made (some details edited); main item of discussion: What to do with the guidelines - publish openly as a guide to the PC? - to be picked up next time;

- Side issue: Publication chair's lab banned from oral presentations due to automatic membership of PC: To be resolved: publication chair is not acting member of PC, i.e. not involved in picking oral presentations so the lab should not be barred. - No objections

### Tutorial Planning (Anca, Maurizio)

On site event hosted:

- 7 tutorials (4 whole-day and 3 half-day)
- 1 showcase
- There were 10 good proposals submitted and accepted, but then 3 cancelled due to lack of funding for travel from their institutions

Positives:

- All tutorials had more than 10 people attending in the room
- 3 tutorials had around 30 attendees in the room (almost at capacity; T3, T5, T7)
- big attendance from Australian colleges & research
- more than 100 attendees per total during the tutorials day
- 4 new tutorial presenters (groups) from Canada (UHN Krembil Brain Institute), Australia (University of Sydney), U.S.A. (Laureate Institute), France (Inria)

T1	NEST simulator	~15
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T2	Models of neuron-glia interactions	~12
T3	Active Inference and applications	~25
T4	NEURON models	~10
T5	Neural dynamics	~30
T6	GPU enhanced NN	~15
T7	Spectral analysis of neural signals	~25
T8	Showcase: Brain Dynamics Toolbox	~20

Negatives:

- Flights being delayed and canceled caused attendees and speakers to come directly from airport after (some 40h) long flights

## Workshops and Symposia Planning (Srikanth, Jorge)

General info:

- We had a small but excellent quality set of workshops this year. A total of 6 proposal received, all of them accepted. For comparison purposes, Seattle had 11 workshops and Barcelona had 22.
- Topics included: neuron-glia interactions, info theory, bio-inspired AI, macroscopic brain dynamics, analysis of neural dynamics, axonal transmission. More details: <https://www.cnsorg.org/cns-2022-workshops>
- Organizers/main contacts: 2 from Australia, 2 from Europe/UK, 2 from US/Canada.
- Also diverse in duration: 2 half-day, 2 full-day, and 2 1.5-day workshops.

Participation:

- Speakers: most (4) workshops had the majority of speakers present at Melbourne, while the remaining two had the speakers distributed between in-person and online.
- Attendance:
  - Neuron-glia interactions: ~15 attendees
  - Info theory: ~30
  - Bio-inspired AI: ~25
  - Macroscopic brain dynamics: ~25

- Analysis of neural dynamics: ~20
- Axonal transmission: 10~15
- There were no major problems with Workshop organization. Technical staff were reachable for any problem.

Important discussion points:

- several workshop organizers expressed interest in hosting many (or even all) remote speakers for their workshops. This poses a challenge for OCNS: we want to keep the physical attendance to workshops high, but online participation (for either speakers or attendees) is probably here to stay and other meetings (Cosyne, Bernstein) have already allowed or are considering online workshops.
- How should OCNS deal with this? I.e. extra-reduced fee for online participants/speakers, creating a new modality of submission (online workshops), allowing for a certain number of remove attendees/speakers...

## **Publications and Communications**

### *Special interest groups (SIGs) (Shailesh)*

OCNS currently has two working groups:

- (1) Software working group (co-chaired by Ankur Sinha and Shailesh Appukuttan)
- (2) Student and Postdoc SIG (co-chaired by Fleur Zeldenrust and Malin Sandström)  
- Fleur has provided an update on the latter separately.

The Software WG has been active since the past couple of years, and has organized a number of events. One of the primary objectives has been to ensure engagement with the community around the year, and offer a platform for discussing development of scientific tools. With this in mind, the WG has been organizing 'developer sessions' where tool owners discuss their development pipelines—to disseminate various development practices, and help potential contributors get started. As these sessions can seem a bit technical, and beyond the interest of most end-users of the tools, we have decided on shortly commencing 'showcase' sessions, where tool developers get the opportunity to demonstrate the functioning and utility of their tools for end-users. Recordings of all sessions are uploaded on the INCF training space, for perpetual access.

As we did for CNS\*2021, we continued organizing free online software tutorials prior to CNS\*2022, but at a much larger scale. The intention was to offer something to the community members, as part of the annual CNS event, who could not attend the in-person event. In all, we conducted 16 tutorial sessions, covering a variety of computational topics, across 5 days (June 27 - July 1); two weeks prior to the on-site event. We had a total of ~200 registrants, but observed a much reduced actual turnout - as is

common for free online events. We are also helping organize a networking session on 'Diversity and inclusion in Neuroinformatics' at the INCF Neuroinformatics Assembly 2022 (September 13).

Meetings are conducted every month; these are held twice on the same day to enable participants from different time zones to attend - big thanks to Ankur Sinha. We have also set up a dedicated mailing list (~200 subscribers), via INCF, and a chat room (Matrix/Element/Gitter) for better communication with the interested audience, and to keep them informed of the planned activities.

Further details can be accessed here:

<https://github.com/OCNS/SoftwareWG/issues?q=>

<https://ocns.github.io/SoftwareWG/>

### *comp-neuro mailing list*

The comp-neuro mailing list cannot continue to be hosted by the current team at Antwerp, and needs to find a new home in the coming months. We had contacted some people to see their interest in taking over this project, but either a lack of interest and or technical feasibility issues has led them to turning it down. We checked with INCF if they would be open to hosting this mailing list, but they were not too keen.

More recently, we have been looking at paid cloud hosting options. There are some interesting possibilities that offer flexibility with regards to location of data servers (US/Europe). All existing content can be moved over. The mailing list can be hosted under the 'cnsorg.org' domain name, thereby also providing a more evident link between the two. The expected annual spend, ~100 euros, is not much, and has been already approved by Leonid (OCNS treasurer). I find such paid cloud services more reliable in terms of server uptime (as compared to the institutional servers I have encountered), and also more accessible from anywhere in case interventions are required. If required, we can still contact known teams/researchers to gauge their interest in taking this up, before deciding on going for a paid host. An announcement for the same, for wider reach, could be made on the mailing list itself.

### *Report on interaction with INCF and Neurospaces (Leonid, Malin, Shailesh)*

*(short update from Shailesh)*

As mentioned above as part of the update on SIG, the software WG has been working closely with INCF. An INCF hosted mailing list is now being used by the WG. Recordings of all sessions, including regular developer sessions as well as CN linked free online software tutorials, are uploaded to the INCF training space.

## **Miscellaneous and matters arising**

### *Proposal for ticketing system*

OCNS gets the maximum number of support-related requests in the months prior to the annual CNS event. We currently have several contact emails available to the community members, such as one for the webmaster (for general and website related issues), treasurer (for money related issues), membership (for new membership applications and renewal related issues), and quite a few more. It has been found that users often tend to send emails to multiple addresses in the expectation of a faster

response. This then involves us internally forwarding the requests to one-another. Also, many times, certain issues require multiple board members to resolve them. In such cases, all the info needs to be forwarded over to get them up to speed. Another problem is when a particular board member, handling one of the support emails, is unavailable for some time (e.g. I had to be away for 2-3 weeks a month before CNS 2022) and unable to monitor these emails.

I have been wondering about setting up a ticketing system (paid or self-hosted) that would streamline this process and also give a more professional approach to handling these issues. Tickets can be filed against a single email contact (e.g. [support@cnsorg.org](mailto:support@cnsorg.org)). Tickets can then be auto-tagged and assigned to teams based on the subject of the ticket, can be moved between different teams (e.g. membership->treasurer), or handled between multiple teams. This would also allow somebody else to step-in and manage the tickets when the concerned person is unavailable for longer periods. I had been looking into the available options, and it appears that even the free version of services (e.g. Freshdesk) would suffice for our needs. If we do wish to consider going down this path, I can set up and have us all test these systems, before we make a decision to completely move over.

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## **Part II of the meeting 15 September 2022, 14:00 (GMT+1)**

VS welcomed participants

### **Election of a vice president:**

LR has reluctantly agreed to self-nominate (workload concerns)

VS explained that Sched schedule management needn't be a task for the VP

LR explained that he sees it as his duty to support OCNS

LR elected Vice President

### **Executive committee membership:**

VS suggests that additional 2 members of executive committee are Program Chair and Webmaster

no objections - executive committee confirmed in the usual structure (president, vice-president, past president, treasurer, program chair, webmaster)

### **OCNS Membership**

#### Report on membership

209 faculty members (2021 217, 2020 189, 2019 235)

118 postdoc members (2021 141, 2020 155, 2019 209)

182 student members (2021 212, 2020 266, 2019 317)

2503 inactive members (2021 2323, 2020 2081, 2019 1778)

### **Review of membership numbers:**

VS noted that active member numbers are down but points out that this correlates strongly with attendee number.

AP: Have we recently done a purge of inactive members (as they cost on the memberclicks account)

LR: not sure whether and what the cost @ memberclicks might be after recent changes at the company.

LR also remarked that there might be an issue with privacy laws (GDPR ...)

SA: we have not deleted old member information; once in a while we get explicit requests & only in those cases we have deleted

VS: Should we send an email to ask for members permission to hold their personal data?

RC: we also have people who apply for membership but do not pay, so enter as inactive; why?

EM: Inactive members: could there be people that changed institution and hence are duplicated. Should we set a reminder for updating membership? Should there be a membership drive, e.g. through twitter, linkedin ...

AP: GDPR might be the larger issue; VS - if data is required for running the organisation or for legal reasons then that will be allowed under GDPR

LR: duplicate accounts exist & they should be purged; Also, keep in mind that non-member fees are major part of income - so would it be problematic to increase membership too much?

VS - but we are a member based organisation ...

VS: Actions: email about consent to store data?

LR: need to keep up to 10 years data of financial transactions - but it is not clear whether this constitutes a valid reason under GDPR to keep the entire personal records of inactive members?

-> need to look into this:

**Action:** VS, TN, LR, SA to look into this further

### **Update from Malin Sandstroem: INCF liaison**

- joint working group on Comp Neuro software
- otherwise relationship unchanged; a number of shared members between the two organisations
- EDI session on INCF congress went well - a lot of speakers and not enough time for discussion
- Ankur Sinha will bring ideas to software WG
- VS: Would an EDI session be sensible at CNS meeting? MS: Might be a good idea

**Message to the PC:** INCF has run a successful EDI session (MS: partially initiated by shared SW WG). Can we consider an EDI session at the next CNS conference

**Action:** TN to communicate to PC.

MS: SW SIG free tutorials were well attended and that would/does help diversity - VS: good to continue

LR was on INCF governance board - will end in a year's time; LR thinking the communities have a good overlap and we should nurture this connection

VS: Do we need replacement for LR as INCF board member;

LR: Not necessarily - there is only one representative from bronze level membership, so not necessarily OCNS

MS: INCF gets requests to certify tools as standards - but they are tools, not standards; Is this something where OCNS can play a role? VS: Can be problematic as choices might be idiosyncratic; MS: could try to find objective criteria like quality of documentation.

VS: Skeptical about objectivity

SA: SW SIG had a plan for guidelines/ table for tools. But WG also found it problematic - now just a list of existing tools; but planning showcase sessions for tools

VS: Would it make sense to allow user comments on tools list?

SA: There are problems: User comments need to be moderated; SW tools are constantly changing (feature lists became outdated)

VS: More food for thought for the SW SIG

MS: A minimum check could be done to at least weed out the bad ones;

VS: Would like to invite the SW SIG to report back to the board.

**Action:** SA to bring the topic back to SW SIG

## **CNS\*2023 Planning**

TK: Had session with Conventus planning company; main issue is rising costs. Last budget estimate was 2 years ago; new budget \$300K instead of \$200K. Mainly the increase is due to inclusion of audio-visual equipment/ services and all possible rooms. Need to make a more realistic estimate for the number of rooms needed. Would be good to nail down the booking very soon to avoid further price hikes. When we have rooms, needed equipment, Conventus will contract the venue.

Discussion:

AP: We can't do final numbers for tutorials and workshops - could do estimates but how flexible is the venue?

TN: What are the AV equipment items and staff items if we want to reduce costs?

Maurizio: What are the estimates for person numbers at breaks etc; introducing a cap to make workshops and tutorials more competitive could be a positive

VS: selection on workshops is nothing new - already done e.g. in Paris

LR: If we do the combined meeting with ICMNS we might need more rooms in parallel, hiking costs  
Also, it now looks as if we might be losing money with CS2023.

TK: Careful, the extra costs can reduce again by choosing rooms and AV/staff

LR: Always skeptical; banquet costs are usually included in the budget ...; we need to keep in mind Euro-dollar exchange rate;

TK: Exchange rate risk might be not as bad as we would make the contract with current exchange rate (note: not sure whether this argument works)

TB: His experience is that several estimates are good and signed on middle size with negotiated flexibility; could change things right up to the start of the conference. Even AV requirements during the conference.

TK: In terms of flexibility - if able to fix rooms and items and only keep attendees open that would be more difficult for the venue to raise prizes.

VS: In 2022 there was a person helping with this; TB: Georgia would update daily ...

TK: That's the role of CONVENTUS for 2023.

TN: The room choices should be straightforward to do - just needs some counting - synchronisation with workshop and tutorials chair;

Actions: TK - find out about AV equipment and staff costs; find out whether private recording is allowed  
TN - to put together a generic format with required rooms for the conference schedule (in liaison with workshop chair and tutorials chair)

TK: What standard of catering required?

TB: We planned only for 75-80% of attendants to show up

VS: No more than tea, coffee and a cookie required.

TK: Cloak room?

VS: not required

TK: Regular update meetings about the conference:

TN/VS: Who - President, VP, program chair, treasurer, local organiser, Tony as past local, VS as past president

co-organisation with ICMNS - appears to have died off, ICMNS will be in Berlin CNS in Leipzig;

TK to get in touch however, the potential for this unclear (are they still able to move to Leipzig)

TK: maybe we can do something light touch: co-advertising/ promotion

LR: overlap of communities is reasonable. co-promoting is certainly a good idea.

IB: could offer small discount for people who attend both meetings?

LR: but finances are tight

Conclusion - **Action:** TK to get in touch and find out any scope of liaising

### **Formalisation of ambitions for diversity**

reviewing document: ethnicity problematic: We do not have this information

IB: Uncomfortable to ask people for detailed information on race etc

VS: could guess ethnicity from names ... though not reliable

AP: can we ask whether people identify as "underrepresented"?

A more detailed discussion ensued.

Eventually, the board voted on the proposed guidelines:

"Two or more oral presentations from the same lab/group"

12 for bullet point 1 - carried

"Repeated oral presentations of the same presenter in consecutive years"

8 for bullet point 2 - carried

"Repeated oral presentations of the same lab/group in consecutive years"

6 in favour of, 6 against bullet point 3 - not carried

final version here:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1L7VZLbBXuK-b37H8R5znObEZXwqJts\\_8PD05flgFsE8/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1L7VZLbBXuK-b37H8R5znObEZXwqJts_8PD05flgFsE8/edit?usp=sharing)

**Action TN:** to settle ethnicity point with MS, pass on to PC (CL) - with information that it was discussed at length & a point on avoiding “Repeated oral presentations of the same lab/group in consecutive years” **was not carried**

## **Report from workshop chair (JM)**

one discussion point: Remote attendance/ remote workshops/ ...?

TK: many speakers dropped out and were remote; many more people could have attended if open to join by zoom

JM: we need clear rules to avoid problems with massive attendance, or no physical attendance, etc

VS: Need a clear rule set for sure;

CG: Simplest solution would be reduced fee for online attendance

TK: hybrid is dangerous - will reduce attendance, possible death spiral - not in favour for doing it in Leipzig

JM: need to distinguish online participants and online speakers; in favour of the latter; could set a ceiling number of online speakers

VS: Sounds like we are happy with what we had in Melbourne: only speakers online, not participating beyond their talk

CG: EDI dimension: excluding online only participants affects disadvantaged groups

TK: But jeopardises the principle of a physical meeting

FZ: people from Africa can be disadvantaged, might often not even be allowed to travel/ enter countries

VS: For now, it appears the “Melbourne solution” is the best compromise.

VS: Thank you to the workshop chair for a great workshop program and organisation

## **Symposia**

Brief revision of what the original idea was; draw in new attendants but there are costs

VS: Original idea was to connect to experimental community, maybe AI / ML

LR: Idea was to draw in new people but maybe now is not the time

TK: Would make sense if it made a big bang - otherwise it is not worth it

VS: Maybe TK can think about it locally in Leipzig; Some provisional ideas - to look into it

VS/TK: ICMNS connection - draw ICMNS people into a symposium

MP: Is there a risk of biasing the otherwise broad meeting because of the symposium? Plus it costs money ... doubts that it will draw in a lot of people

**Action: TK to explore**

## **Tutorials**

Reviewed report (VS); No concerns

MP: problem with tutorials: day before the meeting - not all can make it; large number of tutorials -> few attendance; in favour of capping the number of tutorials and increase attendance/ tutorial;

TN: tutorials used to be invited from OCNs then proposal based but still with selection; Is the remit of the the tutorials chair;

VS: tutorials chair has some freedom to shape the tutorial program

Call for tutorials should be issued before end of year;

VS: MP to make a plan for tutorials and email to board

- financial support for tutorials has been variable over the years

## **Budget**

- registration fees: based on discussion from last meeting - raise fees back to 2018 levels.
- travel budget: LR: can be set later (in Spring) - when we have more information
- AP: raising reg fees is justified but communicate clearly that this is just reinstating 2018 levels.
- LR: however cheeky as back then the meeting was shortened
- TK: inflation is everywhere, nobody should be surprised

Overall - just communicate the fee raise sensibly.

Budget has been approved by the board (treasurer to revisit the exact budget for travel awards)

## **Special Interest Groups**

Two SIGs; software, and student & postdoc SIG

SA: brief report on SW SIG, including satellite tutorials (online, free) two weeks before the meeting; large number of registrations (100+) but turnout was much lower, about 20/ tutorial.

Maybe not enough publicity through OCNS channels, e.g. social media. Could better communicate that the SIG exists and what it does for OCNS/ the community

Developer sessions - more than 10 sessions have occurred; but not much growth potential there; new idea of a showcase series.

regular SIG meetings every month - twice a day for all time zones; mailing list hosted by INCF

VS: Thanks to SIG leaders - sounds excellent; would be worth making more noise about this good work through OCNS channels

Comp-neuro mailing list

VS: history: hosted in de Schutters group in Antwerp, moderated by Reinaud Maex - used to work fine but computers are end of life; Difficult to host in Hertfordshire, similar in Paris;

SA: 1 - tried people to host in their own lab, including Andrew Davidson but open public mailing list would not be possible with CNRS; hosting with paid cloud hosting - several options - roughly \$100 a year & data can be transferred, servers in US or Europe.

INCF option was not viable.

MP: how can one currently subscribe to comp-neuro?

SA: website has been down for a couple of months, so difficult right now. Mail the moderator.

another advantage of cloud hosting is that one can get the @cnsorg.org domain

(TN had to leave the meeting - LR took over making notes)

## **Education update**

On slack from Fleur

## **International Brain Initiative**

Renaud has nothing to report. We may reevaluate the connections with IBI later.

## **Confmaster**

It worked relatively well this year. While some problems came up, they were fixing them quickly. Confmaster is limited in customization and integration with memberclicks is not good, but we looked for alternatives in the past and didn't find anything good.

## **Abstract publication at JCNS**

This year abstracts will be processed soon. It is business as usual except that JCNS is raising prices. This may be a trend and we may need to reevaluate situation in the future. What JCNS is publishing now is not a classical open access, the abstracts are free to read but the publisher keeps the rights. Full open access will be much more expensive. While it is possible to put the abstracts on the OCNS website, many conference participants (such as young scholars) may see high value in a publication in a neuroscience-related journal with DOI. Not many neuroscience journals beyond JCNS publish abstracts (at least at this price).

## **Titles of Directors**

"Assistants" is to be changed to "Deputy Chairs", the website has been already updated. Regardless of the titles all Board members are OCNS Directors.

## **Election of new Directors**

With several Directors' terms ending and with Gennady and Leonid voted for Treasurer and Vice-President for 2023-2025 term, 5 new directors need to be elected. Nomination committee needs communicate with Vice-President for new director nomination and election to be done this fall.

The Board thanked Volker for his great service as President. Volker will continue to be a Board member as a Past President. This leads to current Past President Astrid leaving the Board. The Board thanked Astrid for many years of great service in different roles, including PC Chair and OCNS President.