HRI Leadership: policy and procedures

One of the primary tasks of the steering committee is to plan the future conferences. Particularly, the key part of this task is to find appropriate people for primary positions, who form an organizing committee and lead the preparation activities for a conference.

There are a couple of issues to be considered. 1) As the general chairs will lead the organizing committee, they should have committee members whom they can work well with. 2) Continuity is the important. People view the series of HRI conferences as continuous events, and expect continuity on many important conference design features, such as the conference aim, scope, submission category, review process and criteria, and form of presentation. Thus, the steering committee is responsible for supervising the primary decisions (e.g., primary positions and conference design). 3) The conference proposal process needs to be visible and fair.

A proposal-based process is used to propose an HRI conference location, committee, etc. This document states the details of the conference proposal process, the conference preparation process, and the important conference related expectations/common sense.

HRI Conference Principles
- Overall conference governance principles:
    - The steering committee sets the high level guidance, and approves the primary conference positions (the primary conference positions include the general co-chairs, the program committee co-chairs, local arrangements chair, and the finance co-chairs) based on the steering committee's selection of a conference proposal.
    - Conference organization (general chairs, other chairs, location, etc.) is provided by the proposers, and the steering committee selects/approves the proposal.

Conference proposal procedure

1. The steering committee prioritizes conference location regions. Currently, the conference rotates each year between North America, Asia, and Europe.

2. The steering committee requests conference organization proposals two years and six months in advance of the conference (e.g., proposals for 2013 must be provided and approved by the steering committee at the 2011 HRI steering committee meeting). Proposals are due to the steering committee co-chairs four months prior to the steering committee meeting. The steering committee co-chairs will work with the proposers in order to ensure a complete proposal is prepared. The proposal will be sent to the steering committee three months prior to the steering committee meeting.

3. The proposers are required to submit the proposal no later than four months prior to the HRI conference steering committee meeting. The proposal is to include, at a minimum, the following information:

   - The names, contact information, and qualifications of the following conference chair positions:
     - General co-chairs
     - Program co-chairs (including all program-related chairs, such as Video co-chairs and LBR co-chairs)
     - Financial chair
     - Local arrangement chair
     - Publications chair

     * It is useful to prepare ACM/IEEE member numbers at this point. General chair and Financial chair should be a member of either ACM or IEEE.

   - Conference theme (or, ideas for conference theme)
   - Location (city and proposed conference site)
   - Dates
   - Any major changes from previous years (e.g., submission category, target acceptance ratio, paper presentation format).

   Individuals listed for the chair positions must be confirmed in their agreement to serve. If no proposals are forthcoming, then the steering committee co-chairs will solicit nominations from the steering committee and the community.

4. The proposals will be circulated to the steering committee mailing list for discussion. At the HRI conference steering committee meeting, the committee will discuss the proposals, provide suggestions for improvement, and vote on approval. In the event that multiple proposals are received for the same conference, the proposal receiving the majority committee vote will be selected to organize the conference.
    * people who has a conflict of interest (listed as organizing members in proposals) will not vote.
5. After the acceptance, any changes to the approved proposal (e.g., replacing individuals in primary chair positions) require steering committee approval.
6. The steering committee can allow reasonable exceptions to these procedures if the exceptions aid to maintain the quality and continuity of the conference series.

Definition of HRI Conference chair roles and expectation

- Basic principle:
    - HRI follows the ACM model.
      http://www.acm.org/sigs/volunteer_resources/conference_manual/conference_manual-toc
      Unless specified below, we grant that common sense for the chair positions and apply the general governance structure from ACM to the HRI conference.

- Conference's aim:
    - Initial guidance:
        - HRI is to remain a single track conference, unless the steering committee approves a change to a multiple track conference.
        - HRI is to continue to be a very selective venue (e.g., 20-25% acceptance ratio in 2009-1020) in order to ensure the highest possible paper quality.

- Overall conference committee:
    - The conference committee should reflect the diversity of the HRI community and broadly represent a variety of research disciplines, organizations (academic, government, industry), geography, and experience (young researchers to senior scientists).

- General chairs:
    - The general chairs prepare the conference proposal to be reviewed by the HRI steering committee.
    - General chairs should represent complementary research areas and, when possible, geographical diversity. Ideally, one general chair should be from the general geographic area where the conference will be held.

- General chairs need to be senior people[1]. General chairs should be people of judgment and vision, meaning that they understand trends in current HRI research, but see where the field can grow.
- At least one general chair must have good management skills.
- General chairs choose other conference chairs.
- One of the general co-chairs will handle the program chair duties for any paper submissions for which both program chairs have a conflict of interest.
- Past practice:
  - Continuity of knowledge.
    It is important to maintain conference continuity. This is not a requirement, but often in the past HRI conference general chair is chosen from one the prior year's program co-chairs. It may be possible to include an Advising chair.
  - In the past, often one general co-chair was selected and asked to help choose a co-chair.

- Program chairs
  - Program chairs must be able to work independently from general chairs, but also most keep the general chairs informed of the program chair activities.
  - Program chairs must be people of experience and judgment, meaning that they understand how to recognize both important trends in research and papers of importance/quality.
  - Program chairs must have served in a prior HRI conference chair position or as a steering committee member.
  - Program chairs typically will have served on prior HRI program committees at least twice.
    - Since it is our desire to bring in others from different fields, for example, it is also appropriate to have a senior person from another related field who has headed up conferences and were on the HRI program committee once.

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[1] Seniority: there are diverse definitions and common sense of seniority. Here in this document, we do not intend to refer to particular definition of seniority as the requirement, e.g. one in US academia. For example, in case of a person outside US academia, a person who is similarly senior in their convention/system must be considered as senior. A person who is well established and well built reputation as a researcher would be considered as senior too.

- o Program chairs must be good managers and should represent various research and geographic areas.
- o Seniority may be an essential qualification for program chairs, especially since they may be required to make unpopular decisions.
- o The program chairs should be published in respected HRI venues and have a reputation as scholars in the field.
- o Past practice:
    - ▪ Continuity of knowledge.
      It is important to keep continuity. Typically, program co-chairs have been chosen from people who have served as program committee members for a few years or more.
    - ▪ In the past, often one program chair was selected and asked to choose a co-chair with whom they could successfully work.
    - ▪ In the past, the program chair was selected independently from the general chair. This practice seems problematic, so from preparation for HRI 2013, this guiding principle was revised.

- • Finance chairs
    - o The financial chair must have excellent management skills and work with the conference chairs and conference committee to ensure that the decisions made are financially responsible.
    - o The financial chair must also be able to work with IEEE and ACM as well as conform to the respective guidelines and work with representatives from these communities.
    - o Finance chairs serve for at least two years. During the first year, the chair is a secondary training position. During the second year the individual is the person primarily responsible for managing the finances, while also training the co-chair.
    - o Past practice:
        - ▪ The finance chair was typically trained as a co-chair the first year, and then took responsibility for the second and possibly the third year -- training a new finance chair. There is a learning curve for being finance chair and it's nice to have some continuity.

- Preparing conference
  - See a separate document for "conference preparation procedure / expectations".