American Accounting Association

Strategic & Emerging Technologies section

Annual Business Meeting Minutes

August 6, 2012

President Graham Gal called the meeting to order at 2:09 p.m. 34 members attended.

Gal outlined the agenda and gave the president’s report. First topic for the president’s report was membership.

Gal noted that when the section received the list from AAA, membership was down 50%; however, the officers soon determined the drastic drop was due primarily to how long members had previously been kept on the list even when they were inactive. Nevertheless, they decided to survey non-returning members.

One issue was that the budget did not include dues memberships because of a system change, but that should not be a continuing issue per Brigitte.

Items of interest from the survey:

* Non-returning members are interested in some of the teaching and research at AAA but not enough to continue membership.
* Cost of AAA meeting is an issue – would like virtual meetings
* They want opportunities to research emerging technologies
  + Section is hoping to develop more opportunities through Transformative Technologies Workshop participant firms
  + Also want to develop a regional meeting presence, as some members can only attend regional meetings

Gal asked Robin to comment on a conference call with Julie Smith David regarding data availability from Financial Force. Robin said that is still on Julie’s plate and that Rob Reed from Splunk also may help.

The section supported videotaping of the Transformative Technologies Workshop and need to decide how widely to disseminate the video given that the section footed the $5,000 bill for the taping.

Back to the survey, non-returning members were asked whether they had attended research and paper sessions at the annual meeting and they noted that we don’t have any teaching sessions at the annual meeting.

Question was raised from a member in the audience as to why we don’t tape and post the sessions. Another member echoed that, suggesting we use a live feed such as Go To Meeting or Skype. The first member responded that recording would be better because some may not want live slide dissemination. A third member noted that recording or streaming sessions is just hard because someone has to do it. Also there may be other legal or union issues.

Question was raised from a member in the audience as to whether our membership issues would be resolved if we have only one AIS section instead of two. Gal postponed discussion on this question.

Gal noted that participation on the program sometimes drives membership and noted that international membership is especially down.

An audience member asked what membership is currently; Nancy Uddin responded that she was given a number of 217.

As a section we can decide whether we want to reach out to these non-returning members.

Strategic Direction: on council it was recommended that we advocate for AAA membership to include 3 sections.

Are there things that go on at AAA that we want the section to take a view on? Does the section care who teaches AIS? Should we present a position to AACSB?

In bylaws there is a question on whether the section should take and advocate positions.

Should we increase our international presence? How?

We need to increase journal submissions – our journal shouldn’t be a journal of last resort – it needs to be a top choice.

What research opportunities should we as a section facilitate? How?

Can the section say we have a research direction that distinguishes our section from the rest of AAA?

This year we ran the Transitive Technologies Workshop on Friday. We are working on trying to get it moved to Sunday for next year. Brigitte mentioned the issue of corporate people not wanting to come on weekends; Graham thinks we can work that out.

Reports and Bylaws report: Janie Chang reported on development of a survey of what technologies professors are using; hoping to get AAA to send the survey to all AAA members, not just IS/ET members. It is designed to be a 10 minute survey.

Research Committee report – Robert was absent, Gal reported in his place: Main question was whether to give back a session where he wasn’t sure the person could present; answer was no. Panels at this meeting are good. Guido Geerts is working on a paper of what SET are and what ET are. If people start to submit things to JETA, is there a way we can immediately identify it as NOT a JETA paper? Will finish with notion of what we are about.

Alex Kogan reported on JETA. He hopes to deliver the first volume by the end of the year. His official report will be on the website. Current status: 18 submissions, 8 1st round cycles completed, 11 in progress. No accepted papers so far; most had requests for major revisions. He would like to see more and better submissions. As for the editorial process, the submission fee has been eliminated and we haven’t had a problem with frivolous submissions. He has relied heavily on associate editors. When a paper comes in, it is assigned to an AE who seems most familiar. Rarely, he handles them himself. The AE chooses reviewers and also adds feedback, Kogan makes the final decisions. Kogan believes what we are seeing reflects the state of research in the area. He laments that many papers he gets have not reached an adequate level of maturity, but he tries to be lenient with that in the first round.

Another issue is difficulty in getting reviewers. It is not uncommon for people who have done work in the area and who are submitting papers to decline doing a review.

An audience member suggested the section provide free membership for reviewers. Kogan appealed to all of us to realize it is our responsibility as community members. He remembers when he was a young researcher he would never consider declining to review. Yet today many of the young researchers are declining. One paper still in the system has 14 requests for review; just to tell us how difficult this process is, and this is a primary reason we don’t complete the review cycle within 2 months (Kogan’s personal goal). None of the papers was completed within the 2 month target. Only 2 were done between 2 and 3 months; but most were done in 3-4 months so are still successful overall.

Vicky Arnold added a plea to the audience that when editors send a request to review, if you can’t review the paper to please respond immediately so the editor can move on to other potential reviewers. Kogan agreed and said it is a problem in the system that there is no way to send reminders to someone to whom you have sent a request to review. You can chase reviewers once they are assigned, but you can’t chase those to whom requests have been sent.

A member asked Kogan whether the aims and scope of the journal are going to be updated. Kogan is willing to entertain suggestions; there have been some rejections due to scope, but he is pretty open and leaves it to AEs and reviewers. Only in extreme cases would he make that judgment up front.

A member asked if we can discuss the future of JETA? Should JIS just go to 4 issues per year and get rid of JETA? If we don’t have enough research, then do we need less journals, which would suggest we should delete JETA and increase JIS.

Response: if we want to continue our research agenda in this area, we are better off having our own outlet. Kogan noted that Graham has done a good job reaching out to European authors and as a result are getting more design science research.

Gal said for this discussion to move forward, the question for us which has to do with strategic direction of the section and is not up to the publication committee, is to decide how to proceed. We have membership issues, we have a research workshop – why are those papers not coming to us in the end.

Another member noted that the issue raised is a serious issue. His school does not consider JIS to be a reasonable journal in which to publish. We need an A journal in AIS. AIS would be better served if there were synergies between the two journals. We have as many downloads and citations as the auditing section journal, but because we don’t have 4 issues per year it isn’t considered by some schools as an A journal. If JIS and JETA merge, we would have more citations than the auditing journal. Discussion ensued as to whether we could merge the journals but keep 2 separate sections in AAA in order to have more spots on council and more AAA meeting sessions. It was pointed out that currently the JETA and JIS editors are friends and, what might work today, would not necessarily work for the long-term.

Dan O’Leary said that this discussion is inappropriate to have been raised by one person in the audience and discussed in this ad hoc manner. His opinion is that if we delete the journal we may as well delete the section. He requested to be on any committee established to consider the future of both the section and the journal. He fears that this issue will tear the section apart and membership will plummet.

Kogan responded that a lack of diversity is a problem; 7 out of 15 presentations at the research workshop were by Rutgers.

O’Leary replied that this section has always been this way. Always on the edge of membership minimums, always have had trouble getting adequate submissions. He reiterated that one person should not be leading the movement from the floor for destruction of the journal and potentially the section. This is a much bigger issue that needs to be discussed in a different forum and this meeting needs to be moved forward.

Another audience member suggested our section should be reaching out to IS faculty as another source for members and for submissions to our journal.

Question was raised as to the workshop and journal. Kogan responded that the workshop is an opportunity for researchers to get feedback on early stages of research. Want to see those papers mature and get to the journal later on; haven’t been seeing that. He then said he has been monopolizing too much of the meeting and that we need to move on.

Region reports: Ohio – Akhilesh showcased SET, had 5 submissions and 2 workshops. Arindam Tripathy reported on the Western region, which had one workshop, hoping next year for more submissions

Treasurer report – Handouts were distributed; treasurer reviewed the handout summarizing cash flows; have a nice cash reserve – as a group need to decide what to do with it since we are not a for profit organization we should be using this money. Most of the income comes from the annual meeting, some from journal; biggest outflow is for the journal.

Kogan questioned what the revenue is – institutional subscriptions; since revenue is miniscule anyway, he believes we should make the journal open access to increase readership and citations; current system is ancient and other major endeavors in computer science and other areas are moving toward open access; if we own JETA as a section we can decide to do that. Gal directed that we should let the IP group handle how to proceed with that, would involve bylaws, etc. not a discussion to have as part of treasurer’s report

Treasurer discussed membership graph; clearly losing membership.

Audience member from Case questioned where the $10,000 per year appears on the report – treasurer pointed out this year’s amount as a separate line item under annual meeting Washington and said in previous years it was absorbed into the overall annual meeting line. She noted that the statements themselves are prepared by the AAA staff.

An audience member questioned what Case gets for the donations they make; response is basically advertisement/promotion of its products to faculty

Gal indicated that the executive council and strategic direction committee will need to do some work on some of the issues raised today. Also noted need to vote on bylaw changes. Audience member requested that in future, when asked to vote on bylaw changes, we should not have to go follow a link to get to what the language used to be. Show the old and the new side by side to make it easier.

Discussion as to whether our bylaw changes were demanded by AAA.

Vote to accept bylaw changes carried, no opposition.

Gal passed the floor to Ingrid Fisher, incoming president

Fisher showed and reviewed list of new officers and committee appointments. She is still looking for a membership person who will be enthusiastic about leading that committee.

She is also looking for a volunteer for someone to serve on committee to consider JETA. Dan O’Leary volunteered to serve on the JETA committee.

She is also still looking for a Southeast coordinator and for a Southwest coordinator; if anyone has ideas or suggestions, please contact her.

Someone suggested Hui Du for southwest.

Need to elect 2 at-large members for the nominating committee.

Steve Sutton nominated Dan; Dan accepted and motion carried with no opposition.

Miklos Vasarhelyi nominated Mike Alless; Mike declined.

Greg Gerard volunteered; motion carried with no opposition.

Fisher acknowledged the membership decline concern and noted one response to try to add value to members is to offer a design science research workshop prior to the 2013 midyear meeting in Fort Lauderdale to better communicate the types of research SET members conduct. Will be reaching out to local MIS faculty to try to draw them in.

Fisher noted that we do need to work on many of the issues discussed today – particularly the JETA differentiation – the question of shared committees with IS section has also been raised. She feels a little like she has been handed the wheel of the Titanic and doesn’t want to feel that way because she has high hopes for the section. She believes we should keep JETA separate – she thinks there is a distinction between the types of research published in JIS and JETA and she worries that if we merge them we will lose the ability to publish the JETA types of research.

Another idea she has for helping JETA with more research is a one day text analytics workshop to feed a special issue of JETA, possibly to be held at SUNY and co-sponsored with SET section.

Another goal is to work with Hussein Issa on getting membership up.

Dan Stone raised the question of shared committees; ongoing discussions.

Fisher hopes when she calls on us that we will help.

Fisher reported that the Saturday workshop went very well. The research workshop’s best paper award went to Christina Botchkay, accepted on her behalf by her husband, Roman Chychyla.

Meeting adjourned at 3:42 pm.