MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY FOR LEARNING ANALYTICS RESEARCH

Date: 8th March 2018 at Sydney, Australia

Attendance: SoLAR Members at AGM (approximately 75)

SoLAR Executive in attendance: Stephanie Teasley; Xavier Ochoa; Alyssa Wise; Leah Macfadyen; Abelardo Pardo; Hendrik Draschler; Srecko Joksimovic; Rebecca Ferguson; Vitomir Kovanovic; Sasha Poquet; Chris Brooks; Hiroaki Ogata, Simon Buckingham Shum, and Grace Lynch

President called the meeting to order at 12.30 pm.

1. President's Welcome (Stephanie Teasley):

A huge thank you to hosts at the University of Sydney – all of the staff and volunteers – for their willingness to host and put in all the effort to make this event happen. Also, a thanks to the broader SoLAR community – students, reviewers, participants, without whom LAK could not happen.

2. Approval of Minutes from AGM 2017, 16th March 2017 at Vancouver, Canada

- Moved by Abelardo Pardo and seconded by Xavier O. Minutes approved as circulated.

3. President's report (Stephanie Teasley):

i. *About SoLAR Governance and Membership*
- Members of the Executive are elected by the membership each year.
- Introducing newly elected members Hiroaki Ogata and Simon Buckingham Shum, from the election by the membership. Outgoing Executive members are Alyssa Wise and Drew Paulin.
- 10 Institutional members with unlimited individual and student memberships
- 276 members from 30 different countries. This year 23% student membership; almost half of membership are researchers and faculty membership. 42% are women (not necessarily typical in comparison to similar societies). Increasing presence in Latin America and Asia; in other regions so far, we have no representation, and hope to grow membership.

ii. *Review of Activities for 2017*
- Approved process and policy for granting 'in cooperation' status on educational projects under the guidance of new Education Chair Hendrik Drachsler who will be calling on interested members from the large SoLAR community to serve on different working groups.
- Introduction of new Inclusion Chair to increase and support diversity. Nominations will be called shortly.

iii. *Journal of Learning Analytics*
- The Journal of Learning Analytics (JLA) is entering its 5th year and is the one of the highly cited research journal for LAK papers
- Editorial team: Alyssa Wise (NYU), Xavier Ochoa (ESPOL), Simon Knight (UTS) and Arnon Hershkovitz (Tel Aviv)
- Alyssa Wise provided further details on moving to double blind peer review, disseminating high quality research and practice in learning analytics, creation of an

editorial board and since eligible for Indexing in 2018 the process is in place to achieve it early 2019
- Upcoming issue has a special section on Temporal Analysis of Learning Data.
The editors encourage members to get involved, as reviewers, authors or guest editors of special sections (members are invited to submit topic proposals).

iv. Statement of financial position
SoLAR is a not for profit society and is in a strong financial position. For 2017 the closing balance was $170,106 CAD. SoLAR funds are used to support students through the Erik Duval Travel Scholarship to attend LASI and for SoLAR scholarships to attend in the Doctoral Consortium during LAK. The major transactions include membership and conference revenue, GIC for credit card security, administrative expenses, Journal, student scholarships, website and communications, professional and legal fees. It is important to keep a balance at approximately this level in case there is a major catastrophe which would necessitate cancelling the conference to enable the Society to continue to operate and not declare bankruptcy. To date 37 students have received Erik Duval Travel Scholarships of $27,000 USD and 46 students have received SoLAR Scholarships to attend the DC totalling $64,000 USD.

v. Events
Xavier Ochoa is the Chair of Events and Special Interest Groups. There are two SIGs at present – one is for Postgraduate Students led by Robert Bodily and Danielle Hagood which currently has 20 members. The other SIG is LACE which is the learning analytics community in Europe led by Rebecca Ferguson and Hendrik Draschler.

4. 2018 Executive
I am excited to announce the new incoming 2018 Executive:

Office Bearers		Members at Large	Retiring Members
President	Stephanie Teasley	Srecko Jokisimovic	Alyssa Wise
President Elect	Abelardo Pardo	Vitomir Kovanovic	Drew Paulin
Vice President	Xavier Ochoa	Rebecca Ferguson	
Treasurer	Sasha Poquet	Chris Brooks	
Secretary	Leah Macfadyen	Hendrik Draschler	
Executive Manager	Grace Lynch	Hiroaki Ogata	
Events Coordinator	Nicole Hoover	Simon Buckingham Shum	

5. Questions and Discussion from the floor:
- What are the conditions for nominations? Can students be nominated or nominate themselves?
  There is a student position on the Executive (elected by student members). Consideration of broadening this will come under the Inclusion Chair. Any SoLAR member can nominate themselves or another SoLAR member. All current terms are two years, with an option to run once again for two years. We use a rolling cycling of turnover so the whole Exec doesn't leave at once.

- How can people get involved in LAK next year?
  The review panel is considered and reviewed each year, so there is always space for new reviewers. There is a cycle of chair nomination from year to year.

- Will funds be directed towards the Inclusion Chair role?
  Discussions underway regarding funding options to support greater participation and inclusion.

- How do members participate in the strategic planning process?
  New position of Strategic Planning chaired by Vitomir will have opportunities for greater member contributions to ideas, priorities and working groups.

- Member applauds JLA initiatives and efforts to embrace practice as well as research; urges greater focus on 'making a difference' in learning environments and a stronger link to practice

- Each institutional member needs to consider how to promote learning analytics not only more within the institution but with other institutional members and would like to see greater interactions between institutional members and more potential benefits.
  SoLAR agrees that this is a continuing topic of conversation, notes that there is complexity because of the uneven field of institutions, wishes and contacts. SoLAR is working on putting in place more formal ways for members to give input.

- A suggestion: many hybrid approaches are evident, looking at the papers. How can people new to disciplines learn more about approaches and which methods to use?
  That is really the role of the Learning Analytics Summer Institutes (LASI) which have intensive workshops over 3 days to learn specific methodologies, etc. The next one is in June in New York City hosted by Teachers College at Columbia University and New York University.

- There is still a perception that SoLAR is very North American centric. What is SoLAR doing?
  LAK can only be where institutions bid to host. Sydney is a first experiment with 'further afield', and future bids are anticipated. Previous LAKs have been in Belgium, Scotland, Canada and the USA. Number of countries have hosted local LASIs including Australia, Spain, Hong Kong, Brazil and these events have been regular and well attended, and a number of regional events.

The President officially called the meeting to a close at 1.30 pm.