



## Minutes of the SIPTA General Meeting at the ISIPTA'2021 conference, 9 July 2021

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The President, Jasper De Bock, opens the meeting and asks participants to join the zoom meeting if they wish to vote during the meeting.

### SIPTA Articles & Bylaws

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The President starts with introducing the proposals from the EC and also from SIPTA Members, which had been sent to members for review. The President thanks everyone who made various useful suggestions.

Most proposals are approved with no objections. A few points are discussed in more detail during the meeting.

- The President presents points 1. & 3. from the voting document.

The suggestion was put forward by Gert de Cooman to change "imprecise probability" to "imprecise probabilities" in the name of the society, similar to the original "imprecise probabilities project" name. The argument for this change is that the society deals with imprecision in probabilities rather than imprecision in the concept of probability.

The President mentions Erik Quaeghebeur (not present) votes no as they do not see why this was necessary. The President opens the floor for discussion. Gert de Cooman mentions that the original name of the society also had "probabilities", and mentions a number of successive name changes, and details the argument. The plural refers to actual probability values, whereas the singular might be more naturally interpreted as the concept of probability. Arguably, the society deals with imprecision not in the concept of probability, but in imprecision of the probability values. Thomas Augustin asks for native speakers to share their opinion, as in German, the argument would go the other way around.

A discussion is had, and native speakers are consulted. It is argued that imprecise probability refers more to the abstract. Marshall Abrams reiterates Gert's statement that the society for imprecise probability could be interpreted as a society which thinks imprecisely about probability. Marshall Abrams states this does not seem the most plausible interpretation to him, but people do not know what imprecise probability is, and using the plural would remove ambiguity, to the extent that this ambiguity might be present, even though it may make no big difference. Thomas Krak mentions that the book "introduction to imprecise probabilities" has this specific spelling. The Secretary, Matthias

Troffaes, mentions it is the same with Peter Walley's book. Jason Konek mentions that the plural indicates there is a big family of frameworks that we are interested in.

Kevin Blackwell says it is completely neutral to his ears but the plural is suggestive of a collection of probabilities, while the singular sounds more general. Catrin Campbell-Moore mentions the plural makes her think of imprecise probabilities of events rather than a collection of models, whilst the singular makes her feel more about the model. The singular also feels more community-like.

The President emphasizes that we need a 2/3 majority in the vote. The Secretary states that 2/3 constitutes 28 out of the 41 people present if everyone votes. Serafin Moral states that one of the zoom "participants" is a virtual laptop and should not be counted. The President explains the voting procedure on zoom and asks to raise any technical issues promptly. The President wonders how abstentions should be counted. The Secretary suggests to count on the fraction of people who vote yes or no. From non-present members, the President confirms that one no and two yes votes are to be recorded. Gert de Cooman states that abstentions need to be explicitly taken into account, as in they do not take part in the denominator. Catrin Campbell-Moore asks for people to actively abstain. The Secretary suggests for people to raise their hands if they abstain. Marshall Abrams asks whether abstentions effectively count as a no. Gert states they are not counted. Jasper confirms that abstaining means not participating.

The Secretary counts 17 (+2) yes, 1 (+1) no, and notes 11 abstains. Ryan Martin confirms the numbers. The amendment is approved with majority of 19 against 2.

(One member asked to change their abstain vote to a no vote afterwards in chat as they had not understood the impact of abstaining resulting in a majority of 19 against 3; this has no effect on the outcome.)

- The President presents Points 4. & 5. from the voting document.

The President explains that the society is also concerned with indecision and indeterminacy, and this change suggests to include this into the articles. The Secretary states that there is a decision here as to whether we use the term "indecision" or the term "indeterminacy" as the key word. The President suggests to vote on both amendments in one go, as indeterminacy in decision making already entails indecision. The amendment is approved.

- Points 2. & 20. & 6. & 18. & 24. & 26. & 22. from the voting document are presented by the President and approved unanimously with no objections.
- Point 25. from the voting document is presented by the President. The Secretary mentions this clarifies some confusion that happened this year with the elections. The amendment is approved unanimously with no objections.
- Points 11. & 15. from the voting document is presented by the President, to make the society more robust against situations when the society cannot organise a SIPTA conference, or needs to do this

virtually. Point 17. from the voting document is presented next by the President. This amendment disentangles the terms of the EC from the SIPTA conferences and instead ties it to the general meetings. The President mentions some feedback from Erik Quaeghebeur, as the amendment as circulated does not specify that we should still have a general meeting approximately every 2 years. The President therefore suggests to vote on the amendment however where we keep the phrase ... **will be approximately two years, beginning ...** Gert de Cooman asks whether a general meeting has to happen every year or every two years at least, as per Swiss law. The Secretary informs the meeting that there is a legal requirement of a yearly financial report, but cannot recall a requirement that the whole society meets every year. The Secretary points out the article can be approved regardless of these legal requirements, since the article does not say when we have general meetings, so we can approve this even if there is a concern. Teddy Seidenfeld confirms there's no legal requirement for the society to hold a yearly general meeting. Point 21. is presented by the President to allow the school and conference to be held outside the usual period. No objections are noted and all points are approved unanimously.

- Point 12. from the voting document is presented by the President. Arthur Van Camp noticed a spelling inconsistency, and suggested to use **organise** instead of **organize**. The point is approved unanimously.
- Point 7. is presented by the President. Catrin Campbell-Moore asks whether it is clear what attendance means in the context of an online conference: there is a way of reading this as if "in person", what are the conditions for attendance, turning up for 2 minutes, etc.? The President emphasizes that it explicitly does not say "in person", but prefers not to add rules about how many minutes you need to be present. Gert de Cooman states there is a memory in the EC that you can interpret this in a very liberal sense and that there are implicit rules that are not explicitly formulated in the minutes or in the articles. The President asks if this refers to the article to allow the EC to invite additional members? Gert de Cooman states that this is not what he refers to.

Sebastien Destercke enquires about a fee for joining the SIPTA member. Then attendance would not be a requirement anymore. The President states this discussion is not yet finalized. Sebastien Destercke states that if such a fee were introduced, he could see a conflict of interest: if you pay a fee for SIPTA when registering for the conference, you might expect to become a member regardless of whether you attend or not, but this is just for the future.

The amendment is approved unanimously with no objections.

- The next few points concern cleaning up the articles for consistency between different points. Point 9. from the voting document is presented by the President. The President notes an inconsistency with the previous point. The Secretary suggests voting for the alternative where the phrase **have not registered for an ISIPTA conference or SIPTA school** is removed. Next, point 13. from the voting document is presented by the President. The President notes that Erik Quaeghebeur voted no on this article, but notes that Erik Quaeghebeur may not have realized this is not actually a change and instead making the article consistent with what is mentioned already elsewhere: if we were to remove

"participating", we would have to explicitly remove "participating" elsewhere too. The Secretary points out that we would never have approved anything in the past if we were to insist on a 2/3 majority from *all* members, and that we do not even have 2/3 present currently: historically, it has always been 2/3 of participating members. Kevin Blackwell asks for clarification about how abstentions are counted, referring back to what happened in the first vote. The President acknowledges this as a valid point, but proposes to revisit this in the next few years and to have a vote on that next time. Teddy Seidenfeld clarified the history of this article, and that the idea behind "participating" was to refer to people who were actively involved with the society in some way, without trying to put some term limits on membership. Gert de Cooman states we can do this in the bylaws, and then we do not have to wait another 2 years. The President points out that we do not have to wait 2 years anyway, since articles can be approved via a virtual meeting. Gert de Cooman states that the bylaws are for how you organise stuff, whilst the articles are for the general principles. The Secretary suggests to approve now to make it consistent with the rest, but then to revisit later. The amendments are all approved with no further objections.

- The President presents points 19. & 8. & 10. & 14. & 16. & 23. from the voting document. The point is approved unanimously.

## Finances

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The President notes that the society now has more flexible banking options through WISE and Paypal. This facilitates our finances as dealing with the UBS bank in Switzerland has been a source of difficulties in the past, with people physically having to go there at times to get things sorted.

The President hands the floor to the new Treasurer, Arianna Casanova, to report on finances. The Treasurer reports that SIPTA has 10447.25 EUR on UBS, with the only expenses were for managing the account. On the WISE account there is a surplus due to previous school and conference. On Paypal we have a zero balance as it is just used to pay for the web hosting.

The President is happy with the positive balance and mentions this opens some financial possibilities that we might start considering.

## The Past Two Years

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The President mentions a few special sessions that have been organised by members of our community: Enrique Miranda and Ignacio Montes organised a session on imprecise probabilities at IPMU 2020, and Alessandro Antonucci organised a special track on uncertain reasoning at FLAIRS 2021. The President thanks them for organising these, and asks members to keep doing these things as they bring imprecise probability to different communities.

In chat, Sebastien also mentions a special session at CMStatistics 2020 organised by Barbara Vantaggi and Davide Petturiti.

The President thanks Marco De Angelis for organising the school under very difficult circumstances, eventually organising a winter school which was a huge success. Sadly Marco De Angelis could not be here at the meeting, however the President reads of a statement from Marco De Angelis. Marco De Angelis reports on the school and reflects on all the positives from the school, and expresses his thanks to various people, especially the teachers who did a fantastic job, the participants (over 70 signing up, and on average over 40 attendants, including some very experienced people), the local team, Diego, Ander, Alex, and Scott for their amazing support, as well as Matthias Troffaes. The President reiterates his thanks to Marco and the Liverpool team for the excellent event.

The President is sad to reflect on the passing of Terrence Fine. The President states that he was a great mind in our community and we were lucky to have counted him among us. Teddy Seidenfeld gives a homage to Terrence Fine, talks about his work, his life, and his numerous intellectual and practical contributions to SIPTA, such as for instance the fact that we have posters and presentations for all contributions. Teddy Seidenfeld reminisces on some beautiful memories. A memorial session for ISIPTA'23 is planned.

The President continues with mentioning some of the work that has been going on behind the scenes besides articles and banking. There is a new website, including tutorials and video lectures on a whole bunch of different topics and encourages members to check these out. The President emphasizes that this was a massive effort, with the whole EC involved. The President mentions two people whose contributions he wants to highlight. Ignacio Montes as executive editor has spent a lot of time putting all the material together, blog posts, etc. Alexander Erreygers helped out a lot with the design and technical aspects of the website, which is especially appreciated as Alexander was not an EC member. The President thanks Cassio De Campos for setting up a new server for hosting the website. The President thanks Serafin Moral for having provided a server for 20 years.

The President thanks outgoing members (Matthias Troffaes, Alessandro Antonucci, Ignacio Montes, Gert de Cooman, Sebastien Destercke, and Georg Schollmeyer).

The President thanks the teller committee, Arne Decadt, Tathagata Basu, and Lilith Mattei, for all their hard work to organise the elections.

The President goes over the election outcome: Jasper de Bock is relected as President, Enrique Miranda is the new secretary, Arianna Cassanova is the new Treasurer, and Cassio de Campos is the new Executive Editor. In at-large, we have Henna Bains, Ryan Martin, Erik Quaeghebeur, Hector Diego Estrada Lugo, and Ullrika Sahlin. The President notes a large contingent of new people and looks forward to working with everyone.

## **The Next Two Years**

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The President mentions some plans for the future:

The President notes that currently we are a non-profit organisation, self-declared under Swiss law.

However, this comes with some problems in particular when dealing with banks, and we might consider getting registered to get a registration number. However this comes with some tricky issues, such as the ability to change the people in charge every two years. This will be looked into. The President asks for input on this from members e.g. from other societies would be much appreciated. No responses are noted from members at the meeting, and the President asks members to get in touch if they do have any thoughts.

The A in SIPTA: The President states that it is very normal that we have been quite theoretical because the fundamental aspects come first, but maybe we need to do something to attract more applications to the conference. The President invites thoughts from members. The Secretary suggest we could invite special sessions to future conferences, and some of these could be on specific applied domains. Gert de Cooman asks to take this away from the general meeting and states that the general meeting is not an ideal format for having discussions, and suggests to discuss this elsewhere. Sebastien Destercke suggests to propose practical challenges to which people could respond.

The President will do his best to improve visibility of imprecise probability and attracting people, noting that there's much more IP than what we have in the society so we should make an effort to reach out to these people.

Davide Petturiti promotes an invited session at CMStatistics 2021, organised jointly with with Barbara Vantaggi, and asks to email him for potential contributions by July 20th. Only an abstract is required (deadline 6 September), and it would be a good opportunity for the IP community to be involved.

The President presents the location of the next SIPTA school, which will be held in Bristol. Jason Konek gives an overview of the research group at Bristol and their work. Jason Konek presents the group on imprecise probabilities at Bristol, and the local organising committee. He presents some of the research his group is doing, and mentions inaugural conference on 21 and 22 October 2021, and states that one of the principle aims for the school is to draw more philosophers into the IP community, and to bring communities together. The plan is to start with a gentle introduction, interdisciplinary introductory topics such as scoring rules, and then more advanced sessions on decision making and more. On the practicalities, because funding is available, the aim is to reduce barrier to entry as much as possible, by keeping the fee low, waiving fees for students, and offer student stipends to help subsidise the cost of travel and stay.

The President declares that there has already been one candidate for the next SIPTA conference. However, the call for candidacies is open, so if you are interested, please get in touch with the President in the next two weeks.

The President thanks everyone for participating, for staying on and caring for the society, and thereby ends the meeting.

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Matthias Troffaes (Secretary), 9 July 2021