Stephen Cranefield
School of Computing, University of Otago, New Zealand

Background

I am a full professor in the Department of Information Science at the University of Otago, in Dunedin, New Zealand. I received my PhD from the Department of Artificial Intelligence at the University of Edinburgh in 1991. My research on multi-agent systems has addressed both practical agent programming issues (such as developing tools to help agent programmers work with ontologies and interaction protocols) and work on normative multi-agent systems (such as monitoring for norm violations and learning norms from observation).

Involvement with AAMAS and the wider AI community

My involvement with the AAMAS community began at the precursor conference Autonomous Agents in 2001, where I co-chaired a workshop and presented workshop and poster papers. Since then, I have attended 11 AAMAS conferences, served on the PC seven times and the SPC nine times (with one Best SPC Member award and another short-listing) and co-chaired seven workshops. I have also served as an Area Chair for AAMAS 2021, was the Publicity Chair for AAMAS 2012, the Finance Chair for AAMAS 2020 and 2022, and am a Finance Co-Chair for AAMAS 2024.

I am an Associate Editor for JAAMAS and have served on the IJCAI PC and SPC and the AAAI PC (gaining a Distinguished PC Member award in 2022).

Aims

If elected to the IFAAMAS Board, I would seek to find ways to achieve a greater balance between practically and theoretically oriented research at AAMAS conferences. I also believe that (as for computer science as a whole), AAMAS should continue to improve the culture of reviewing by actively encouraging and recognising constructive reviews. This could be done by introducing a "most constructive reviewer" award and providing a mechanism for sharing (when consent is given) reviews that embody the best in collaborative community building.

Finally, while I recognise the importance of face-to-face interactions at conferences, I believe we must support remote participation or to try other ways to reduce travel costs and carbon emissions, such as interconnected regional conference hubs. COVID no longer prevents us from meeting in person, but climate change is going to impact flight costs as well as social, institutional and personal attitudes to air travel. Changing our practices won't be easy, but it is time to make a start.