

Computational Models of Argument (COMMA)

Steering Committee By-Laws

Adopted 29th May 2008, amended 21st October 2024

Article I: Purpose

The Computational Models of Argument (COMMA) conference is intended as a regular forum for the presentation of research on this topic.

The COMMA conference shall take place every two years and be managed by the Steering Committee in accordance with these bylaws. Other activities consistent with this purpose may be pursued, at the discretion of the Steering Committee.

Article II: Steering Committee Officers and Members

The Steering Committee shall have the following Officers, serving four-year terms, beginning January 1 following the COMMA conference at which they were elected:

1. President. The President shall (a) supervise the affairs of the COMMA conference; and (b) chair all meetings of the Steering Committee.
2. Vice-President. The Vice-President shall assist the President, and chair all meetings in the President's absence. In the event the President is unable to complete his or her tenure, the Vice-President shall assume the powers of the Presidency for the balance of the President's term of office.
3. Secretary. The Secretary shall keep (a) correct and complete minutes of the meetings and (b) a current register of members of the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee shall consist of these three Officers, plus five additional members serving staggered terms of four-years, beginning January 1 following the COMMA conference at which they were elected. The President and the Vice-President should not serve two consecutive terms in the same position, but the Vice-President may succeed to the Presidency.

A member of the Steering Committee, including Officers, should serve at most two consecutive terms. After a break of at least two years, a former member of the Steering Committee may become a member again under the same conditions as new members.

All Officers and Steering Committee members shall be elected by a vote of the current Steering Committee members at the biennial meeting during the COMMA conference.

Article III: Meetings

The Steering Committee shall meet during each COMMA conference, and at such other times as it may from time to time determine.

Article IV: Elections

Candidates for the positions of Officer and Steering Committee members shall be nominated by the members of the current Steering Committee. The members of the current Steering Committee are unrestricted in their discretion to nominate candidates, but shall take care to obtain an expression of willingness to take on the responsibilities of the office from the candidate prior to nomination.

Election to the position of Officer is by simple majority of all Steering Committee members present. If no candidate receives a majority vote on the initial ballot, a second ballot shall be held between the candidates who received the most votes in the initial vote. If no candidate has received a majority after the second vote, the President shall select the Officer from the among the candidates who received the most votes.

Election to the additional, non-officer positions on the Steering Committee is by ordering the number of votes cast for each candidate. Each member of the Steering Committee gets a number of votes to cast equal to the number of positions to be filled, and the candidates who received the most votes are elected. No more than one vote may be cast by a member for each candidate. Proxy votes are not allowed. Ballots shall be secret if a member present so requests. In the event of a tie, the current President shall select the new members from among the candidates with the most votes.

In the event that the Vice-President, the Secretary or a member of the Steering Committee is unable to complete his or her tenure, the Steering Committee shall appoint persons to fill the vacant position until the time of the next biennial meeting, at which time the vacant position will be filled by the regular election procedure.

Article V: Steering Committee Responsibilities

The Steering Committee shall be responsible for setting policies and procedures governing the COMMA conference. These policies and procedures shall provide for (but are not limited to): (a) the selection of the location and approving the date of forthcoming conference; (b) the selection of a General Chair and a Program Chair for forthcoming conference; (c) deliberating with the local organizers of the conference about the budget and conference fees; (d) selecting the publisher of the conference proceedings; and (e) all other decisions necessary for the management of an international academic conference.

The Steering Committee shall be responsible for initiating other activities consistent with the purposes of the COMMA conference. These activities may include (but are not limited to): (a) the sponsorship or co-sponsorship of additional conferences and workshops; (b) an affiliation with a professional journal; (c) the publication of a website; and (d) the establishment of working relationships with other groups active in the field.

A quorum for meetings of the Steering Committee shall consist of five members. Decisions shall be determined by a majority of those present. For matters arising at times when it is not feasible to call a meeting, decisions of the Steering Committee may be made by votes sent to the President or the Secretary by email. A quorum for such email voting shall consist of five members, and decisions shall be determined by a majority of those voting.

Article VI: Amendments

These By-Laws may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of members of the Steering Committee at a duly constituted meeting.