



Minutes of the General Assembly Belief Functions and Applications Society (BFAS)

Shanghai, China

16 October 2021

Assembly: 47 participants (26 on-site and 21 on-line) including the following board members:

1. Thierry Denoeux (President)
2. Frédéric Pichon (Treasurer)
3. Anne-Laure Jousset (Secretary)
4. David Mercier (Webmaster)
5. Zhunga Liu (Webmaster)
6. Sebastien Destercke

Regrets

7. Prakash Shenoy
8. Zied Elouedi (Communication)
9. Fabio Cuzzolin (Communication)
10. Johan Schubert (LinkedIn Group)

Saturday, October 16th, 17h00—17:50 (UTC + 8)

Thierry Denoeux (BFAS President) opened the 2021 BFAS General Assembly, presenting remotely. Six items are present on the agenda: *Missions of the society, Partial board renewal, Report of the BFTA school 2019, Approval of financial statement, Next event: BELIEF 2022, IJAR best paper award.*

T. Denoeux recalled the mission of the BFAS, which is to *promote belief functions theory and tools through different means* (conferences, schools, special sessions, special issues, LinkedIn group, supporting actions like student grants, etc).

T. Denoeux then presented to the Assembly the current composition of the BFAS board of directors (partially renewed in 2019) with its 10 members:

- **Thierry Denoeux (President)**

- **Anne-Laure Joussetme (Secretary)**
- **Frédéric Pichon (Treasurer)**
- Fabio Cuzzolin (Communication)
- Sébastien Destercke
- Zied Elouedi (Communication)
- Zhunga Liu (Webmaster)
- David Mercier (Webmaster)
- Johan Schubert (LinkedIn group)
- Prakash Shenoy

In 2021, five members have reached the end of their term (F. Cuzzolin, Z. Elouedi, Z. Liu, F. Pichon and J. Schubert) and can run again together with possibly new candidates. Elections will be organized by the end of 2021 to renew the board.

A.-L. Joussetme (BFTA school 2019 chair) then provided a brief report about the last BFAS event, namely the BFTA school that was held in Sienna, Italy, in October 2019. The event gathered a total of 32 participants, including 10 lecturers, 17 students and 5 regular attendees. Over 3 days, 14 lectures were provided while the participants had the chance to enjoy landscape and wineries of Tuscany, and the beautiful city of Sienna. The event was sponsored by the International Society of Information Fusion (ISIF) for 5000 euros which were used to cover travels and hosting fees for the lecturers, and the BFAS for 3430 euros offering 7 student grants covering registration fees. The event concluded with an almost balanced budget with a slight deficit below 500 euros.

Frédéric Pichon (BFAS treasurer) presented the 2019 and 2020 financial statements and forecasts for 2021. The 2019 budget exhibited a positive balance of **14843.37€** (including **10006.25€** on the saving account), while the positive balance in 2020 was of **15327.39€** (including **1005837€** on the saving account). Finally, the expected balance in 2021 is **17226.79€**, which includes the incomes from the BELIEF 2021 conference. Over the last three years, the main expense is the 2019 student grants.

A vote was organized among Assembly attendees, both on-line and on-site. Two distinct questions were asked: (1) Do you approve the 2019 and 2020 financial statements? 16 on-line over 21 raised their hand through the Zoom application, while all 26 participants on-site raised their hand. To remove the ambiguity of the 5 abstentions on-line, attendees connected but maybe not in front of their screen, a second question was asked: (2) Do you disapprove the 2019 and 2020 financial statements? Nobody neither in the room nor on-line raised their hand.

The BFAS financial statements for the years 2019 and 2020 have been formally approved by the Assembly.

T. Denoeux reviewed the list of action items collected at the last General Assembly in 2019 in Sienna, and updates were discussed on the following topics:

- **Support to students for conferences and schools**
 - 7 grants have been awarded for the School in 2019

- **Joint action with other societies**
 - Joint organization of BELIEF 2018 and SMPS in Compiègne (FRA); Joint organization of BELIEF and Granular Computing and Three-Way Decisions in 2020; Tutorial presentation at the FUSION conference, S. Le Hégarat (2020) and F. Pichon and A.-L. Jusselme (2020, 2021). Besides, BFAS members are regularly invited to present tutorials on belief functions at different conferences such as SUM (2020, F. Pichon), which is a step toward establishing more formal links with other societies.
- **Develop communication**
 - D. Mercier (webmaster) updated on the creation of two distinct mailing lists: One (members@bfas.org) reserved for active members and another one (mailinglist@bfas.org) gathering the previous one and including in particular past members and reaching out to a broader community interested in Belief Functions.
 - The idea of developing a Youtube BFAS channels seems attractive to many: Short videos presenting basic material such as how to do basic combinations could be posted (D. Mercier), but also material derived from the schools (T. Denoeux). F. Pichon mentioned the possible issue in dealing with rights and authorization with people. S. Destercke highlighted that it is also a nice way to archive BFAS material.
- **Fund visiting projects by society members**
 - This initiative had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 restrictions.
- **Define important problems deserving a prize if resolved**
 - Still pending.

T. Denoeux presented the location of the next BELIEF conference, which will be in Paris, France, at the end of October 2022, while the exact date will be decided soon. The event will be organized by Sylvie Le Hégarat (Paris-Saclay University) and Isabelle Bloch (Sorbonne University). The venue (still to be confirmed) would be the SCAI center on the campus of Sorbonne University (downtown Paris). The committee will be announced soon.

Finally, the best paper award sponsored by the International Journal of Approximate Reasoning (IJAR) journal was presented by T. Denoeux, BFAS president and IJAR Editor in Chief. The IJAR best paper award is delivered each year. An award committee selects the best papers based on the highest scores in the reviewing process, and favoring young researchers as first authors. This year, three papers were recognized with even first rank, while a prize of 1000 euros will be shared amongst the awardees. The papers and authors are:

- Zheng Tong, for “Fusion of evidential CNN classifiers for image classification” by Zheng Tong, Philippe Xu and Thierry Denoeux
- Leonardo Cella, for “Valid, model-free possibilistic inference” by Leonardo Cella and Ryan Martin
- Kuang Zhou, for “Evidential clustering based on transfer learning” by Kuang Zhou, Mei Guo and Arnaud Martin

The meeting closed at 17h50 (UTC+8)

Compiègne, France, 6 November 2021

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'T' followed by a cursive name, all underlined.

Thierry Denoeux, President

La Spezia, Italy, 17 October 2021

Anne-Laure Jusselme, Secretary