

RAS Technical Education Program Leads the New Tech Revolution

By Paolo Fiorini

In the media and in various technical discussions, robotics is described as the new technological revolution that will impact everybody's life in a way comparable with the introduction of computers and cellular phones. As experts in this area, we may or may not agree on the exact time of this revolution, but we certainly agree that the moment in which robots will become pervasive devices is getting closer.

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Similarly, a second point is that robotic technologies will create jobs, and we need to empower students with the necessary competences. Thus, the IEEE Robotics and Automation Society (RAS) has given increased attention to education, to competitions, and to all those activi-

ties that generate enthusiasm and attention and, hopefully, attract students to robotics. To emphasize this interest, the summer and winter schools addressing doctoral training have been renamed the Technical Education Program (TEP), to indicate RAS's broader interest in education and training in robotics.

The RAS TEP program is organized to fund three schools per year, one in the amount of US\$40,000 and the other two at US\$20,000 each. The topics are proposed by the school organizers, and the largest support is assigned on a rotating basis among the three geographical areas of RAS: the Americas (Area 1); Europe, Africa, and Middle East (Area 2); and Asia, Australia, and Pacific Rim (Area 3). The yearly deadline is approximately one month before the IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation (ICRA) to allow the proposal review and the selection of the RAS-TEP awards during ICRA. At the end of each school, the organizers send a report to the RAS Education Committee describing the school results in quantitative terms, and the Education Committee is charged with assessing the quality and

impact of the school to better organize future programs.

We received 15 submissions for 2015. Each proposal was evaluated on three main measures: technical quality, organization structure, and financial aspects. The evaluation was carried out by a panel of representatives from the Member Activities Board and the Technical Activities Board in two steps.

The RAS Education Committee is pleased to announce the 2015 supported TEPs:

- the Summer School on Agricultural Robotics in Sydney, Australia, in January 2015
- the Second International Summer School on Social Human-Robot Interaction in Mariehamn, Finland, 24–28 August 2015
- the Summer School on Experimental Methodology, Performance Evaluation, and Benchmarking in Robotics in Benicassim, Spain, 14–18 September.

For more information and details on the educational opportunities available through RAS, please visit www.ieee-ras.org.

Digital Object Identifier 10.1109/MRA.2014.2334933
Date of publication: 10 September 2014

