Society Newsletter, Fall 2015
Brought to you by the ISLS Communications Committee

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Return of the ISLS Newsletter

The society has been undergoing some major transitions with online infrastructure and regular cycles of newly elected leadership. Because of that, the ISLS newsletter has lapsed for most of 2015 as people and responsibilities have changed. This is a transitional issue of the newsletter as the newly created Communications Committee
takes on responsibility for managing the newsletter from this point, along with other duties. It is with great appreciation that we now build on the hard work of preceding editors (including Eleni Kyza, Tamara Clegg, Maritza Lozano, and Cheryl Madeira) to bring you the start of a new, e-mail newsletter from the society. Previous editions of newsletters are available in the ISLS Newsletter Archive. Because this is a new format and tool for newsletter preparation, we are aware that some links will not work in some email clients. We apologize for the inconvenience and thank you for your patience.

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Message from the ISLS President

*Contributed by Carolyn Rose*

In this end of year reflection on the Society, we would like to take time to acknowledge our leadership. We are thankful for the efforts of Eleni Kyza during her term as President, and as current President (Carolyn Rose), I am pleased to have her as Past President this year. Similarly, I welcome my longtime colleague Nikol Rummel and congratulate her as the new President Elect. ISLS is an organization that believes deeply in continuity and collaboration, and leading this organization is an important enough task to more than warrant the joint attention of a Presidential team. Furthermore, I believe we all acknowledge that our efforts would be meaningless without the tireless long hours that both the Secretary/Treasurer Joe Polman, and Executive Officer Sadhana Puntambekar contribute as the backbone of the organization.

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Many thanks go to the outstanding slate of candidates who were nominated for the ISLS Board. Our newly elected board members who are beginning their 6-year terms are Heisawn Jeong (South Korea), Jim Slotta (Canada), Jan van Aalst (Hong Kong), and Victor Lee (USA). For a current roster of the Board of Directors, see the ISLS
We are fortunate that our Board of Directors is active in contributing to the work of the society through 8 committees, each of which focuses on a different aspect of the society's mission. You can find the information about committee mission and committee membership at the ISLS website (https://www.isls.org/members/committees), but we want to alert your attention to two newly formed committees. The new Awards committee, chaired by Marcia Linn, will be responsible for administering some new awards, including an Early Career award and a Fellows program, with plans currently under development. The new Communications committee, chaired by Heisawn Jeong and Victor Lee, produces the society’s newsletter and is responsible for other forms of communication with the society at large. We have had an influx of new committee members very recently, including Amy Ogan, Jessica Hammer, and Sherice Clarke to the Publications Committee; Christa Asterhan, Mariana Levin, and Jason Yip to the Communications Committee; and Marcela Borge, Julia Eberle, Sean Goggins, Yotam Hod, Isa Jahnke, David Shaffer, and Jan van Aalst to the Education Committee.

Your active participation is critical to the success of our community. Participating in committee is also a great way to get to know people. Please contact committee chairs if you are interested in learning more about and participating in the committee businesses.

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**Important vote: ISLS By-Laws Change**

We have reached an important cross-roads in the history of our society. For the first
time since its inception, we are seriously contemplating an adjustment to our By-Laws. As this is an important decision for the Society, we want to keep the membership in the loop and provide ample opportunities for discussion and addressing questions. In this article we outline our rationale and plans. Please take time to read this carefully.

The ISLS is an international research society with the aim of upholding excellence in research and service in the Learning Sciences. In order to best achieve this goal, it actively seeks to celebrate and foster diversity in and collaboration across perspectives and expertise. Maintaining diversity of region, discipline, and gender has been an essential mechanism through which the Society has worked to obtain resources to carry out this agenda.

It has always been the goal of the ISLS to maintain regional and disciplinary representation at all levels including the Presidency, the Executive Committee, the Board, the Committees, and the membership at large. Increasingly, this effort to maintain representation has included also targeted efforts to maintain a balance along other dimensions including discipline. Thinking specifically about regional representation, the reality of the distribution of national residency of the society membership is such that it has always been the case that a disproportionate part of the membership is located in North America, followed by Europe, and then by Asia, and finally other regions. Similar issues come up with respect to discipline, where surveys of the membership indicate that the majority self-identifies with Education and Psychology, and much smaller numbers identify as Computer Science or Design. This non-uniform distribution creates increasing challenges in maintaining representation at the Board and Executive Committee levels.

The Society has made efforts to achieve balance despite the challenges. A first effort has been for the Membership committee to seek to increase membership in underrepresented regions and disciplines. A second effort is for each Committee chair to seek diversity in committee members within the membership at large in good standing in a targeted fashion. These two efforts aid in creating a pipeline from which members in good standing may move into leadership positions within the Board and ultimately the Executive committee and Presidency. However, despite these efforts, it remains an unfulfilled challenge to maintain a desirable balance.
In order to take further steps to address these issues, we are proposing a change to the Society’s By-Laws (also referred to as the Society’s “Charter”) related to the process through which Board members and the President are elected. These adjustments to the By-Laws have been discussed extensively by the Board. Furthermore, a motion to move forward with a By-Laws change was voted on by the Board in June of 2015, and the decision was to move forward to approach the membership with a vote. And that is why we are coming to you now. Here we outline the proposed By-Laws changes, which will require an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the membership voting on the proposed amendment to take effect. The vote will take place during ICLS 2016.

The full, current charter can be found [here](#). Overall, the sections the Board is recommending be changed accomplish the following goals:

- **Article IV, Sections 2 and 3:** Providing a mechanism whereby up to three of the four open seats in any election for the Board of Directors can be designated for a special purpose to increase or maintain the balance of representation on the board according to a relevant category, such as region or discipline.
- **Article IV, Section 3:** Providing a mechanism to resolve a tie in a vote for Board President.

The By-Laws change will require an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the membership voting on the proposed amendment to take effect. The vote will take place during ICLS 2016. In December we will host the first in a series of Webinars to provide the opportunity for community level engagement in order to keep the process transparent. Keep an eye on the [ISLS Website](#) for further information.

**CSCL Cocktail Hour at ICLS 2016: ALL Society Members Welcome!**
This year at ICLS 2016 the CSCL Community is trying something new! For the past few years the CSCL community has been in a state of transition. As our ijCSCL journal has grown up, our community has expanded, and due to the success of our research, the technology has transformed as well. We have seen new and related communities spring up in our midst, such as the Learning Analytics community. And exciting new opportunities, such as the rise of the MOOCs, raise new questions and challenges as well as revitalizing the interest of the masses in our work.

In response to these growth spurts, we have made efforts to stop and reflect. During and surrounding our last few conferences, we have attempted to engage the community in exercises related to redefining our field. Efforts also to map out the current state of the field in terms of its representation in a variety of publication venues and its structure through co-citation links and other analytic lenses is also underway. Some of these efforts have been published at our conferences and in our journal. Now we would like to engage the broader ISLS community in both our celebration of accomplishments and our reflection of who we are as a community and where we are heading.

In place of a CSCL Open Meeting, the CSCL community is trying something more engaging and welcoming this year. We are hosting a CSCL Cocktail Hour on Wednesday evening (June 22) of ICLS 2016, just after the last session of the day. The purpose of the session is to expose the broader ISLS community to the work and accomplishments of the CSCL community. We will do this through posters, games, and of course, cocktails! Don’t miss out!

**Bridge Building Events Past, Present, and Future**

Some of the recent work of the Society has been to engage in bridge building efforts in partnership with related Learning Sciences relevant societies. The Presidential Troika has convened a semi-regular leadership meeting including ISLS and the leaders of several brother and sister organizations in the Learning Sciences including the European Association for Technology Enhanced Learning, the Society for User Modelina. Adaptation. and Personalization. the AI in Education society. the Society
Modeling, Adaptation, and Personalization, the AI in Education society, the Society for Learning Analytics Research, the International Educational Data Mining Society, the Society for Text and Discourse, Learning at Scale, and the NSF Cyberlearning program. Through these discussions, the group planned three cross-community panels that were hosted at CSCL, AIED, and EDM in Summer of 2015 (see below for an insider look at the AIED and EDM Panels). One focus of the panels was brainstorming about grand challenges that could be accomplished through strategic partnerships between researchers in different societies, which bring complementary strengths. The group is continuing to develop these ideas with the idea of hosting Leadership Retreats in order to flesh out proposals that would be submitted internationally to a variety of funding agencies. A white paper is currently in progress, and a leadership retreat is planned just after the Learning Analytics and Knowledge conference in Spring of 2016.

Inside Look: AIED and EDM Panels

Contributed by Alyssa Wise, Simon Fraser University, Canada

The panel at AIED focused on identifying interdisciplinary "grand challenges" in the learning sciences that we should collectively aim to address over the next five years, and discussing how members of the different communities could work together to do so. Many of the challenges brought up related to making an impact with our work, specific examples related to exploring the synergies possible between intelligent tutors and teachers, finding ways to balance increasing personalization with needs for interpersonal interactions in learning and finding ways to make formal education (and educational technologies) relevant in an information and technology-saturated world. Panelists were also asked to answer the provocative question of if the AI-ED, ISLS, LAK and EDM communities should merge into a single society which led to a vigorous debate about what structure would allow us to make the most progress in research and have the greatest impact in policy.

The panel at EDM also focused on what big challenges needed to be tackled, though the topics addressed were more data-focused. Specific issues raised revolved around what data needs to be collected beyond basic activity traces (for example instructional conditions of the situation, affective states of learners) in order to make meaningful and useful inferences about particular educational contexts, how activity trace data itself can be made more useful...
educational contexts, how activity trace data itself can be made more useful (from tracking a click to tracking a click with a purpose), how to improve and apply (rather than reinvent) algorithms to make a difference in learning, how to scale up qualitative analyses, and how to move beyond working in "echo chambers" (small communities of like-minded scholars) and incentivize researchers to build bridges with educational stakeholders to help get out work out into the world. For those who are interested, the slides from one talk are available on slideshare: http://www.slideshare.net/alywise/grand-challenges-for-the-educational-data-mining-and-learning-sciences-communities.

Solicitations for ICLS 2018 Bids

The official solicitation for bids to host ICLS 2018 has gone out via email already. For a list of past ICLS hosting cities and locations, see the ISLS Conferences web page. Hosting ICLS is a tremendous way to help the LS and CSCL community as well as increase recognition and awareness of the programs at your institution! Letters of interest must be submitted by January 15, 2016. For any questions, contact the ISLS Conference Chair, William Sandoval.

Digital Access for ISLS Journals

As part of your ISLS membership, you now have digital access to ISLS journals! Make sure to log in to the ISLS website and verify that your membership information is up to date. This is an exciting new perk of society membership. Please be aware that if you have not visited the ISLS website in some time, you may need to register a new account as the web and membership management platform changed this year.

Call for New Journal of the Learning Sciences Editor(s)-in-Chief
One of ISLS’s flagship journals, *Journal of the Learning Sciences*, is seeking a new editor or new editor team to begin a five-year term. Be on the lookout for an email solicitation for applicants and nominees. Questions can be directed to Eleni Kyza, JLS Editor Search Chair.

**Remembering Naomi Miyake (June 8, 1949 - May 29, 2015)**

It is with much sadness that we mourn the loss of Naomi Miyake following a 6-year battle with cancer. Naomi was a founder of both Learning Sciences and CSCL, past president of ISLS, and a leading scholar of collaborative learning. Marcia Linn, Hajime Shirouzu, & Masaki Miyake wrote a touching memorial statement in *ijCSCL*. Another heartfelt memorial piece prepared by Tim Koschmann appears in *JLS*. At CSCL 2015, the Best Student Paper Award was officially renamed the Naomi Miyake Best Student Paper Award. Please take time to remember Naomi’s many contributions, both professionally and personally, to those of us who had the privilege of knowing her.

**Newsletter Credits**

The ISLS newsletter is prepared by the ISLS Communications Committee. Current members include Victor Lee and Heisawn Jeong (Co-Chairs), Christa Asterhan, Eleni Kyza, Mariana Levin, and Jason Yip. Thanks to Alyssa Wise for her contribution. For future contributions, send a message to isls.comm.committee@gmail.com. To join the committee, contact one of the co-chairs.