

# The 2005 AAAI/SIGART Doctoral Consortium

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■ I report on the tenth annual AAAI/SIGART Doctoral Consortium, colocated with the National Conference on Artificial Intelligence (AAAI-05). I discuss highlights of the consortium and include pointers to the consortium web site.

The tenth annual SIGART/AAAI Doctoral Consortium (DC) was held on July 9–10, 2005, in conjunction with the National Conference on Artificial Intelligence (AAAI-05). It was organized and run by Kiri Wagstaff (Jet Propulsion Laboratory) and Rob St. Amant (North Carolina State University).<sup>1</sup> At the consortium, Ph.D. students in AI presented their proposed research and received feedback from a panel of researchers and other students. The main goal of the consortium is to give students feedback on their proposed dissertation research at a critical time, by independent, knowledgeable reviewers external to their institutions. Secondary goals of the consortium are to provide students with information about the value of different career objectives and to give students the opportunity to establish contacts with each other and with more senior re-

searchers. The consortium is consistently praised by students as an exceptionally educational and valuable part of the conference.

Sixteen students (5 women and 11 men) presented their work, selected from an extremely competitive applicant pool of 42 submissions. Their research represents a variety of subfields of AI, including planning, natural language, probabilistic reasoning, and machine learning. The students came from a cross-section of universities across the United States, from the Northeast to the West Coast, as well as one student from the United Kingdom and another from Italy. Nineteen experienced researchers were involved in the review and mentoring process.

In addition to the student presentations, a panel session was held in which Marie desJardins (University of Maryland, Baltimore County) and Terlan Lane (University of New Mexico) talked about how to present research results and how to get the most out of conference attendance.

Student participants were enthusiastic about the event. One student commented, “The DC was an invaluable experience for me—for many reasons, but primarily because it was my

first opportunity to present to a broader AI community.”

To learn about the upcoming DC '06, visit the 2006 web site.<sup>2</sup> All conference participants are welcome to attend as audience members, and students are particularly encouraged to do so. Many student presenters were inspired by their attendance at a previous DC, and several reported that just watching others present their dissertation research and plans gave them a plethora of ideas for their own work.

ACM/SIGART and AAAI gratefully acknowledge financial support from the National Science Foundation (thanks to Edwina Rissland of the Artificial Intelligence and Cognitive Systems Program) and from Microsoft Research. The Organizing and Review Committee would like to thank Keri Harvey, Carol Hamilton, and Colleen Boyce at AAAI for managing submissions, notifications, and awards and for handling the local arrangements. Thanks to them, the event went off smoothly, and the students were very appreciative. Our thanks are also extended to reviewers and panelists for generously donating their time and effort.

## Notes

1. For more information about this event, visit the Doctoral Consortium 2005 web site at [www.litech.org/~wkiri/dc05.html](http://www.litech.org/~wkiri/dc05.html).
2. [www.aaai.org/Conferences/AAAI/2006/aaai06dc.php](http://www.aaai.org/Conferences/AAAI/2006/aaai06dc.php) or [www.litech.org/~wkiri/dc06/](http://www.litech.org/~wkiri/dc06/).



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