Nomination of Prof. Prashant Doshi to the IFAAMAS Board

Background. Prof. Prashant Doshi is a tenured professor in the department of computer science at the University of Georgia (UGA), Athens, USA. He received his M.S. from Drexel University, Philadelphia, in 2001, and his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Chicago in 2005, both in computer science. His doctoral dissertation was supervised by Prof. Piotr Gmytrasiewicz. From 2005-2010, Prashant was an assistant professor of computer science at UGA and was promoted to associate professor with tenure in 2010. He was promoted to full professor in 2016 and in between he spent a year at Waterloo as a visiting professor. Prashant is a faculty member of the Institute for AI at UGA, an interdepartmental teaching and research unit, and in 2010, he founded and directs the THINC Lab (http://thinc.cs.uga.edu). Prashant brought together like-minded faculty from various units in 2013 to form the Faculty of Robotics at UGA.

Prashant's research focuses on decision making in multiagent settings – a core facet of autonomous agents – and on its interdisciplinary applications such as toward computational modeling of human strategic behavior. He has been involved in pioneering research on multiagent decision making leading to frameworks such as the interactive POMDP, which is now finding several diverse use cases including in the study of money laundering, UAV reconnaissance, and theory-of-mind modeling. In the context of this research, he has consistently published in AAMAS conferences between 2004 and 2019 and articles in the Journal of AAMAS. Outside of IFAAMAS forums, Prashant has published his research related to multiagent systems extensively in several AI venues. In 2009, he received the NSF CAREER award, a prestigious award for new faculty, and a Creative Research Medal from UGA in 2011 for his contributions to automated decision making. Recently, his efforts are focused on algorithms that allow a robot to observe a human perform a task to acquire enough understanding to allow the robot to collaborate with the human.

Service. Prashant has faithfully attended all AAMAS conferences except one since 2004. He has been very active in his service to the AAMAS community. In 2008, he initiated and co-conducted a full-day AAMAS tutorial on Decision Making in Multiagent Settings. From 2008 up to 2014, this tutorial was a regular feature of the AAMAS technical program, consistently attracting high enrollments and receiving good feedback. Furthermore, Prashant was part of the organizing committee of the AAMAS workshop on Multiagent Sequential Decision Making (MSDM) from 2010 to 2016, which was another regular feature of the AAMAS workshop program for many years. Between these two forums, an entire generation of new researchers has been trained in methods for autonomous decision making. Finally, Prashant has served as an active member of the program committee of the AAMAS conferences in various capacities (PC member, SPC member, area chair, and exhibits chair) each year since 2007.

Issues. Prashant is passionate about incorporating autonomous agents holistically and synergistically in our human-centered world. But, to realize this goal, the agents research agenda with its useful amalgam of topics such as game theory, planning, reinforcement learning, and robotics, must place greater emphasis on incorporating human beliefs and values such as fairness and justifiability in these subareas (while noting that some areas such as agent norms already consider these aspects). Toward this, he believes that the AAMAS community must converse with new stakeholders: cognitive psychologists and neuroscientists, AI and robotics ethicists, and sociologists, many of whom are lately drawn to AI. Prashant is interested in exploring how the AAMAS publication venues could appeal to them. However, this should be done in a way that benefits the AAMAS research community without diluting its participation. Prashant thinks that encouraging these new stakeholders to submit to the Blue Sky track would be a good start.

Prashant is also interested in helping IFAAMAS attract new students and faculty from emerging research hubs to AAMAS, such as those in the developing countries of Brazil, India, and in the many nations of Africa. Bringing IFAAMAS's agent summer schools to these new regions could prepare new researchers for subsequent participation in AAMAS.