

## Letter from the President (2015-2016)

July, 4 2015, Hong Kong

Dear AFNLP Members,

To begin, I would like to send you my warmest regards. I am your President for the next two years, 2015-2016. I am writing to inform you what I have achieved in the first 6 months of my term and my plan for Asian Federation of Natural Language Processing (hereafter abbreviated as AFNLP) in the coming months.

Some of you may feel surprise to receive this letter and wonder why you are an AFNLP member. The answer is simple --- AFNLP individual membership network is comprised of institutional members and individual members. The former member class are representatives drawn from (a) International organization or its chapter/branch; (b) International conference; (c) Regional organization; or (d) Regional representative, endorsed by the Federation; as well as Members-at-Large in the AFNLP Executive Committee. Individual members are mainly drawn from participants in the last meeting of the conferences supported by AFNLP, which in particular include the Federation own bi-annual conference, namely the International Joint Conference of Natural Language Processing (IJCNLP) in Nagoya, Japan (2013). At present, we have some 630 members worldwide.

AFNLP was founded in 2003 by a group of active NLP scientists and technologists in different Asian and Australian economies. *The mission of the AFNLP is to promote and enhance research and development relating to the computational analysis and the automatic processing of all languages of importance to the Asian region without regard to differences in race, gender, language, religious belief or political stand, by assisting and supporting like-minded organizations and institutions through information sharing, conference organization, research and publication coordination, and other forms of support in consonance with the mission of AFNLP.* In this front, I have in the first 6 months of my term completed (or am continuing working on) the following tasks:

1. Joint conference with ACL, ie ACL-IJCNLP2015, July 26-31 2015, Beijing, China and our immediate past President (2013-2014), Professor Yuji Matsumoto, Nara Institute of Science and Technology (NIST), Japan, is the General Chair of the conference. AFNLP has been providing Professor Matsumoto all possible support. In fact, joint conference organization with ACL takes place every 6 years since the first one in Singapore (2009).
2. Keep abreast of the global development of NLP research through our close connection with ACL. We have nominated Dr. Haifeng Wang, Vice President, Baidu Inc., to serve as AFNLP Liaison officer in the ACL EXECutive committee. This liaison arrangement is bi-directional. Through it we would like ACL (and the international NLP community at-large) to appreciate the work of AFNLP; and in the other direction, for us to keep up to date the work of ACL and other related international NLP related events. Also, Professor Pushpak Bhattacharyya, IIT Bombay, India, is the ACL counterpart sitting in the AFNLP executive committee.
3. Asia Active NLP Researcher Database. We have compiled the latest Database in March with over 130 expert entries drawn from nominations made by members of the executive committee. The Database has been shared with the organizers of conferences such as ACL-IJCNLP2015 (Beijing), NLPC2015 (Nancheng) and BigComp2016 (Hong Kong) for them to select Asian NLP

researchers as candidates of functional chairs, PC members, reviewers, etc. This is an open database for NLP research communities worldwide. If any members are interested in it, please do not hesitate to contact me.

4. Call for bid to host IJCNLP2017. The Call has been distributed to all members inviting them to submit proposals. The submission deadline is August 14 2015 and notification October 16 2015.
5. AFNLP President Summit. The Summit with the presence of all the past presidents, including professors Benjamin Tsou (Hong Kong), Jun'ichi Tsujii (Japan), Key-Sun Choi (Korea), Keh-Yih Su (Taiwan), Yuji Matsumoto (Japan) and myself (Kam-Fai Wong, Hong Kong, the host), was successfully held in The Chinese University of Hong Kong, June 13, 2015. The objective of the Summit is to plan forward for AFNLP.

I am glad to meet with the past presidents in the AFNLP President Summit. We had a very fruitful meeting. We have revisited AFNLP mission and confirm its importance to the Asian NLP communities. Following our objectives of “*assisting and supporting like-minded organizations and institutions through information sharing, conference organization, research and publication coordination, and other forms of support in consonance with the mission of AFNLP*” and based on our assessment of our volunteer capacity, we have plans to (a) enhance communications of the Federation through our website and quarterly newsletters, (b) put more emphasis on our work in Asian Linguistic Resources; (c) organize annual AFNLP schools in different economies and invite prominent international NLP experts to teach; and (d) establish a AFNLP award fund to support meaningful international NLP activities, e.g. there will be a AFNLP Best Paper Award for COLING2016, Japan. There are plenty work behind these tasks and like any not-for-profit associations, AFNLP is always looking for volunteers. Currently AFNLP has the Conference Coordination Committee (CCC, chaired by the Vice President), Asian Language Resources Committee (ALRC), Communication and Liaison Committee (CLC), and Nominations and Constitutional Affairs Committee (NCAC). We do need help in all of them, please send me an email if you would like to participate.

Last but not least, may I remind you once again that our next bi-annual meeting is just round the corner. This year we are jointly organizing it with ACL. ACL-IJCNLP2015 will be held in Beijing, July 26-31 2015. I hope you will participate. When you are there, please do not hesitate to stop me for a chat and share with me your ideas for the betterment of Asian NLP communities.

I am looking forward to meeting you soon. In the mean time, should you have any good suggestions for AFNLP, please drop me a line.

Yours,

Kam-Fai Wong,

President (2015-2016)