GECCO-99 Student Workshop

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The Genetic and Evolutionary Computation Conference (GECCO-99) in Orlando, Florida, USA this year was the biggest ever conference on evolutionary computation. It was a joint meeting of the long standing biannual International Conference on Genetic Algorithms (ICGA) which has been running since 1985 and the more recent annual Genetic Programming (GP) conference (which started in 1996). Before the start of each GP conference there has been a workshop for PhD students research in GP. This year Dr. O'Reilly (MIT AI lab) organized a joint graduate student workshop for research students principally concerned with any aspect of evolutionary computation, Evolvable Hardware, DNA computation, Artificial Life or Agents.

As in previous years, the main part of the workshop took place on the day before the start of the main conference. In GP conferences it had this day to itself but at GECCO'99 there were many other workshops on the same day. The workshop itself was chaired by Conor Ryan (University of Limerick, Ireland). He ran a tight, if informal, ship. This was a tough task with 48 students from all around the world and a similarly international panel of experts in Genetic Programming, Genetic Algorithms, DNA Computing, Artificial Life, Evolvable Hardware and from Industry.

Approximately half the students gave brief presentations of their work to the panel and their fellow students. This was a golden opportunity for the students to put their work in front of some of the best names in their field. The panel (and fellow students) asked, sometimes probing, questions, made suggestions for their work and feedback on their presentations. Getting through 24 presentations in one day is no mean feet but Conor managed it with grace and kindness but still kept the workshop to time. Conor also organised (and heavily participated in) informal discussions late into the night.

In addition to the workshop day the students were also given the opportunity to present their work in special student sessions running in parallel with the main conference sessions.

The formal aspect of the workshop concluded with the students and the panel voting for three prize winers.

Best Research Maarten Keijzer, Danish Hydraulic Institute, Denmark

Title: "Scientific Discovery using Genetic Programming"

Maarten received a copy of *Advances in Genetic Programming 3* signed by the editors and joined the panel for dinner `http://www.cwi.nl/~bill/gecco99/graduate.html#dinner`.

Maarten recently moved from the Netherlands where he worked for CAP to the Danish Hydraulic Institute, Hørsholm.

Best Presentation Anna Marino, University of Southampton, UK

Title: "Sexual vs. Asexual Recombination for the Graph Colouring Problem with Hybrid Genetic Algorithms"

Anna received a copy of *Genetic Programming and Data Structures* signed by the author, W.B. Langdon.

Best Questioner Mark Voss, Markette University, USA

Mark received a copy of the *Proceedings of Euro-GP, 1999* donated by EvoNET.

Details of the workshop and links to many of the students can be found on the Internet at `http://www.ai.mit.edu/people/unamay/gecco-phd/gecco-student-index.html`. While details of next year's conference can be found at `http://www.genetic-algorithm.org/`

Many of the students were generously supported by the American Association for Artificial Intelligence (AAAI) travel bursarys.