Preface: Program Committee Co-Chairs

On behalf of the program committee for ACL-2003, consisting of 12 area chairs and two program committee co-chairs, we are pleased to present you with this volume. It contains the papers accepted for presentation in the main conference program of the 41st Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics held in Sapporo, Japan on July 7-12, 2003.

The 41st Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics consists of the main program, a student workshop, interactive poster/demo sessions, ten pre- and post-conference workshops, and four tutorials. Associated conferences for ACL-2003 include The Eighth Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing (EMNLP2003) and the Sixth International Workshop on Information Retrieval with Asian Languages (IRAL2003). These workshops and associated conferences have published separate proceedings that are available at the conference or from the ACL office (http://www.aclweb.org/).

This year, 360 papers were submitted for the main program of the meeting, from which 71 were accepted for presentation and inclusion in the conference proceedings. An acceptance rate of 19.72% makes ACL-2003 one of the most selective international conferences of the year. Among the accepted papers, 32 come from North America and Canada, 22 from Asia and the Pacific Rim area, and 17 from Europe. As a whole, the accepted papers provide a unique overview of cutting-edge research in the field of Computational Linguistics conducted at present.

We would like to thank all the authors of submitted papers for choosing ACL-2003 for the presentation of their research results. Due to the high quality of the submitted papers, selecting the 71 papers for the main conference was a very difficult task. We are deeply indebted to the 12 area chairs and to the associated reviewers for their conscientious and impartial judgment and for the time and effort they contributed in preparation of this year's meeting. All area chairs and reviewers are listed on the following pages.

Our special thanks go to the 12 area chairs who spent, together with their associated reviewers, numerous hours reaching a consensus on every submitted paper, and who provided us with their expert advice during the program committee meeting held in Munich on April 20-21. Michael Strube (European Media Lab Heidelberg, Germany) kindly agreed to represent the program area of "Discourse and Dialogue" at the meeting. We very much appreciate his participation and advice. We are also very grateful to Profs. Franz Guenthner and Klaus Schulz for their support and their willingness to host the program committee meeting at the Centrum für Informations- und Sprachverarbeitung (CIS) at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Germany.

The main program of ACL-2003 lasts three days (July 8-10). Due to the number of accepted papers, the program is structured into plenary sessions, three parallel paper sessions, demo/poster sessions, and the student workshop.

In addition to the submitted papers, the main program includes three invited presentations by distinguished and internationally acclaimed researchers in Computational Linguistics and neighboring fields that are of key importance for long-term research on natural language processing. We are honored and very grateful that Cynthia Fisher (Department of Psychology and Beckman Institute of Science and Technology, University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign, U.S.A.), Ariel Rubinstein (School of Economics, Tel Aviv University and Department of Economics, Princeton University, U.S.A.), and Donia Scott (Information Technology Research Institute (ITRI) at the University of Brighton, U.K.) have accepted our invitation.

2003 marks the second year that the Association for Computational Linguistics presents The

ACL Lifetime Achievement Award to a most distinguished researcher for his or her pioneering work in Computational Linguistics. The ACL Executive Committee selects at most one award recipient annually at its winter meeting, considering the originality, depth, breadth and impact of the entire body of the nominees' work in Computational Linguistics. In 2002, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the ACL, Aravind Joshi, Professor of Computer and Cognitive Science at the University of Pennsylvania, was presented with the first ACL Lifetime Achievement Award. It is a pleasure and, indeed, an honor to be able to once again congratulate Aravind Joshi. This year's winner of The ACL Lifetime Achievement Award will be announced in a special plenary session on July 9th. The announcement will be followed by a special lecture delivered by the awardee.

This year's conference also continues the tradition of recognizing one of the submitted papers with the award of Best Paper of ACL-2003. The paper will be selected by the program committee, and the winner will be announced in a special plenary session at the conclusion of the meeting. We would also like to take this opportunity to honor the recipients of the Best Paper of ACL-2002 award: Franz Josef Och and Hermann Ney for the paper entitled "Discriminative Training and Maximum Entropy Models for Statistical Machine Translation".

We would like to thank everyone who helped us with this year's main program. We greatly appreciate the advice and support by the General Conference Chair, Jun-ichi Tsujii (The University of Tokyo), and the Local Organizing Chair, Kenji Araki (Hokkaido University). We would also like to express our gratitude to the Local Arrangements Committee, the Financial Committee, and the Publicity Committee.

For the preparation of this volume and for the production of the CD-ROM version of the proceedings we would like to thank the Publications Co-Chairs, David Yarowsky (Johns Hopkins University) and Sadao Kurohashi (The University of Tokyo).

We gratefully acknowledge the advice of the ACL Executive Committee, the experience and guidance of Kathleen McCoy, ACL Treasurer, of Sandra Carberry, ACL Secretary, and the help from both the past and present presidents of the ACL, John Nerbonne and Mark Johnson. We could not have done the job without them.

We would also like to express our gratitude to Dekang Lin (University of Alberta), the Program Co-Chair of ACL-2002, for sharing tools and resources from last year's meeting with us, and to the Seminar für Sprachwissenschaft at the University of Tübingen and the Department of Computer Science of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign for financial support for administrative and technical tasks.

Special mention for their sustained and dedicated help over many months are due to our students, Scott Wen-tau Yih (Computer Science, University of Illinois) and Julia S. Trushkina (Seminar für Sprachwissenschaft at the University of Tübingen). Scott installed and maintained the conference management system which handled electronic submission of papers, the entire reviewing process and communication with authors and with reviewers. Julia assisted us with the reviewing process, with the organization of the program committee meeting, and with the structuring of the conference program.

Welcome to ACL-2003 in Sapporo.

Erhard W. Hinrichs and Dan Roth,
Program Committee Co-Chairs
May 2003