

## **Statement by Massimo Piattelli-Palmarini**

In my opinion, cognitive science is entering a new phase of development. The so-called “cognitive revolution” has won already. No one today seriously disputes the scientific legitimacy, nay the inevitability, of explaining behaviors in terms of mental states, of representations and transformations of internal symbols and rules. The challenge that lies ahead is to integrate these processes with, on the one hand, an increasingly sophisticated neuroscience (which ought to include genetics, evo-devo and pathologies) and, on the other, with deeper computational and physical optimization principles.

A new generation of young researchers needs to be educated, therefore, in a variety of fields. The Cognitive Science Program of this University is unique for the complementarity of backgrounds of its members and for the openness in the confrontation of ideas, methods and presuppositions. The general situation of this University is such that, alas, very few new appointments can be anticipated in the near future, therefore we will have to coordinate and potentiate the many human intellectual resources which we have already. It is desirable that, in the recruitment of new graduate students in Psychology, Linguistics, Neuroscience, Speech Language and Hearing, Computer Science and Philosophy (this list being only indicative and open) a coordinated concentration in Cognitive Science be explicitly offered, with a suitable and flexible choice of relevant courses. The Friday Noon Cognitive Science Colloquium is for many of us the most important occasion of regular gathering. We need, I think, to invest more in it, regularly inviting important scholars from all over the US and Europe. Contact with graduate students, colleagues and relevant units during their visit needs to be facilitated and organized with care. Maybe, slightly longer visits (up to one week, if possible) can be organized with additional, more specialized talks to small groups active here in neighboring areas. When joint projects and long-lasting collaborations arise from these visits, it is desirable that a small number of travel fellowships be available for graduate students and post-docs to follow up this collaborations in the laboratory of the visitor, or reciprocally, to host here young collaborators coming from the laboratory of the visiting scientist. Travel grants for the participation of our graduate students and post-docs in important conferences should also be made available, on an internally competitive basis, under special recommendation of at least two senior members of the Cognitive Science community. The Cognitive Science Program should also especially encourage and partially fund new kinds of graduate/senior undergraduate courses taught by two or three members of this community having each a complementary expertise (say, as an example: a human geneticist, a brain scientist and a psychologist or linguist). These courses, which may then be repeated, or remain unique and be followed by some other new courses, should attract students from different domains, facilitating exchanges that would not have happened otherwise. Last but not least, the CSP should organize each year a special kind of interdisciplinary and international small workshop, preceded by one full day of tutorials, on a chosen topic, general enough to attract the interest of students and faculty of different backgrounds, but also specific enough to promise a genuine advancement of knowledge as a result of the workshop.