



## DELIBERA

<b>Organo</b>	COMITATO PER IL RECLUTAMENTO E LO SVILUPPO DELLE CARRIERE
<b>Data seduta</b>	22 maggio 2018
<b>Sede</b>	Via Calepina, 14 - Trento
<b>Oggetto</b>	<b>Valutazione di ricercatore di cui all'art. 24, comma 3, lett. b), L. 240/2010 ai fini della chiamata nel ruolo di professore di II fascia: dott. Nicola CONCI, Dipartimento di Ingegneria e scienza dell'informazione.</b>

### Sono presenti alla deliberazione:

VALENTINA NIDER	Presidente	P
ALBERTO BELLIN	Componente	P
YURI BOZZI	Componente con funzioni di segretario	P
LUCA NOGLER	Componente	P
RAUL PAOLO SERAPIONI	Componente	P

P = presente; AG = assente giustificato; A = assente

Visto lo Statuto dell'Università degli Studi di Trento emanato con D.R. 167 del 23.04.2012;  
Vista la legge 30 dicembre 2010 n. 240 "Norme in materia di organizzazione delle Università, di personale accademico e reclutamento, nonché delega al Governo per incentivare la qualità e l'efficienza del sistema universitario" e in particolare l'art. 24, comma 5;  
Visto il Regolamento per il Reclutamento e la progressione di carriera di professori e ricercatori, emanato con D.R. n. 563 del 29 ottobre 2013 e in particolare l'art. 32 "Valutazione dei titolari dei contratti di cui all'art. 20, comma 1, lettera b) del presente Regolamento ai fini della chiamata nel ruolo di professore associato";  
Visti i "Criteri per la valutazione dei ricercatori a tempo indeterminato con contratto di cui al comma 3, lettera b), dell'art. 24 della Legge 240/2010, ai fini della chiamata nel ruolo di professore associato", approvati dal Comitato per il Reclutamento e lo Sviluppo delle Carriere nella seduta del 21 luglio 2015;  
Vista la delibera del Consiglio del Dipartimento di Ingegneria e scienza dell'informazione del 21.2.2018, con la quale si esprime parere favorevole all'inquadramento del dott. **Nicola CONCI** nel ruolo di professore di II fascia per il settore concorsuale 09/F2 (Telecomunicazioni) – settore scientifico disciplinare ING-INF/03 (Telecomunicazioni);  
Vista la propria delibera del 20 marzo 2018, con la quale sono stati individuati i referee esterni chiamati a valutare la maturità scientifica e didattica del dott. **Nicola CONCI** nel ruolo di professore di II fascia per il settore concorsuale 09/F2 (Telecomunicazioni) – settore scientifico disciplinare ING-INF/03 (Telecomunicazioni);  
Viste le valutazioni espresse dai tre referee sul profilo del dott. **Nicola CONCI**, di cui sono riportati di seguito alcuni estratti:

#### Referee n. 1:

*Upon your request I am providing with this letter my assessment of the professional standing of Dr. Nicola Conci for the purpose of your consideration to promote him to the level of Associate Professor. My assessment is based on the criteria for the academic career development that hold at my own institution [...] Also please take into account the fact that, while I know Dr. Conci from various international conference venues we have been visiting in the past, we never worked together. As a consequence, my impression about his professional achievements is based mainly on his CV.*

*When assessing the career development of Dr. Conci, I looked at the following aspects:*

*Scientific leadership and impact:*

- 1. Did he develop his own research line?*
- 2. Is he visible in the international scientific community?*
- 3. Did he contribute to the development/growth of the community?*
- 4. How many PhD students have successfully graduated under his supervision?*

*Technology transfer:*

- 1. Acquisition of research funding from external sources*
- 2. Transferring scientific results to the benefit of his socio-economic context*

*Value for organization:*

- 1. Contribution to educational processes, including supervision of M.Sc. students*
- 2. Member/Chair of internal committees at University of Trento*

*Regarding the scientific leadership and impact, Dr. Conci defines the focus of his research to be in the*



domains of human behaviour analysis and human-computer interfaces by gesture recognition and gaze tracking. This focus is thus defined from the point of view of applications and not from the perspective of a fundamental scientific discipline. In my search for this underlying discipline, or (more likely) a combination of fundamental disciplines, I checked his list of publications. This list raised the impression that publications are rather scattered across venues addressing computer vision, multimedia analysis, interactive technologies and multimedia systems. Furthermore, I was not able to discover a set of foundational papers, with Dr. Conci as the first author, which would define his original contribution to a particular discipline and his own well-defined research line. This, in combination with the fact that in most of the papers Dr. Conci appears as one of the contributing authors (thus neither the first nor the last author), raises the impression that he is rather a successful collaborator in a broad international network, than a scientific leader with a clear scientific vision and recognizable profile. This impression should, however, not be automatically placed in a negative context: not everyone can be a scientific leader and the research community also needs highly engaged and broadly deployable senior scientists with wide interest, like Dr. Conci, to move the research in a complex multidisciplinary domain and in varying collaborative settings forward. To this, I would like to add that the number of PhD students supervised by Dr. Conci (5 completed and 1 currently under supervision) is excellent, and that he has built a good experience with reviewing for conferences and journals and with organizing various international scientific venues. I therefore consider this aspect of Dr. Conci's track record as sufficient.

Regarding the technology transfer, Dr. Conci seems to have developed a successful start-up company in the area of communication and rehabilitation tools deploying visual technologies.

This shows his mature vision on transferring the knowledge from computer science to address societal needs. In addition, he has actively been involved in acquiring and conducting many externally-funded projects. While his CV does not specify which amount of research funding he has acquired in total in the past, the number and diversity of projects show high awareness and skills of Dr. Conci to deploy science in practice. I consider this aspect of his track record to be exceptionally strong.

Regarding his value for organization, I observe that Dr. Conci is active as lecturer of many courses over the past 15 years. He has also supervised 55 M.Sc. and B.Sc. students so far and has further 6 M.Sc. students currently under supervision. These numbers are impressive. If I add to this that Dr. Conci has also been active in contributing to various committees and advisory activities, I would assess his value for organization as excellent.

In summary, I see a slight discrepancy between Dr. Conci's track record regarding technology transfer and his value for organization on the one side and his scientific leadership and impact on the other side. However, not everyone can excel along all dimensions and I could imagine that in Dr. Conci's case, two dimensions can compensate for the third one. I leave the discussion about this, however, to your Committee.

Referee n. 2:

It is pleasure for me to write this review of the application of Dr Nicola Conci for promotion to Associate Professor.

[...] I will restrict my evaluation to the research activities, scholarly contributions and professional activities of Dr. Conci.

After carefully reviewing his CV, I found evidence of high quality publications, a few of which in highly selective journals and conferences, such as IEEE Transactions of Multimedia, ACM Transactions, IEEE Conf. Computer Vision and Pattern Recognition and Int'l Conf. Multimedia Retrieval. Some of these works have been received well by the international community, resulting in a good citation record. Several of the most important works are in the last three years - this is reflected in the citation record, which in my view can be expected to increase further as the most recent publication start attracting citations. Both the volume and the quality of the publication show in my view a clear rising trend.

Dr. Conci's work is well focused and revolves around computer vision systems for human behaviour analysis and human computer interaction. This is an area that has significant scientific challenges, several important applications and could have large societal impact. The particular problems that Dr Conci is addressing are of particular importance to both the academic community and the industry. Dr Conci is approaching these problems in a principled manner and addresses them by designing and developing state of the art methodologies. Beyond the methodological contributions, Dr Conci has made contributions with research survey papers and with participation in the collection and annotation of new datasets. The latter are of paramount importance to the community - to a large degree the recent progress in Computer Vision is due to the availability of large, well annotated datasets.

Dr Conci's CV indicate a strong record in attracting funding from several sources, including EU councils, local councils, and industry. While the CV does not always quantify the level of funding, it is clear that Dr Conci is active and the successful in attracting external financial support. There are several projects with industrial involvement and that shows clearly the impact and relevance of his work.

Dr. Conci is the co-founder of a the startup Xtensa, with which a number of awards have been obtained, which has participated in projects and collaborations and which commercializes some of its products. This



*is a very strong contribution to knowledge transfer in my view, that clearly shows the relevance and importance of the work.*

*Overall, I believe that Dr Conci has a very strong research track record, a rising profile, and is already working at the level of associate professor. I support strongly his application and recommend to the committee to award the promotion.*

*Referee n. 3:*

*You have asked me to provide a review for the promotion of Dr. Nicola Conci to the rank of tenured associate professor, which I gladly provide here. Before I commence my review, let me first state that I do not know the candidate personally and that I also do not have any research interactions (joint research, grants, etc.) with the candidate, neither currently nor in the past. Hence, I believe that I am free of a conflict of interest with the candidate.*

*During his career, Dr. Conci has worked across a range of different areas in image and signal processing, in parts crossing into computer vision and human computer interaction. From his publication record, it is clear that his research interests have diversified significantly from his early work, which focused mostly on video coding.*

*Over the past three years, which you have asked me to consider in particular, he has been working on a broad range of topics from event recognition over crowd analysis to eye tracking, demonstrating that he has successfully broadened his research agenda. Looking at the publications from the last three years in some more detail, they are split between more technical work on the one hand, and more applied work on the other. The more technical work includes papers on camera placement in camera networks (involving simulation and optimization), crowd behavior identification (modeled using diffusion processes), or on photo gallery synchronization (involving probabilistic graphical models). More applied work includes, for example, papers on event detection, video surveillance, or on moving object detection and segmentation. I should add for clarification that I did not know his papers before and have not been able to review them in great detail due to time constraints.*

*In terms of publication venues, looking across his entire career, his main mode of publication has been the International Conference on Image Processing (ICIP, 11 publications), the MediaEval workshop series (4 publications), and the ACM International Conference on Distributed Smart Cameras (ICDSC, 4 publications). These are reputable international venues with a peer review process; ICIP is moreover one of the two top international conferences in the area of image processing. As is common to the publication traditions in engineering, these conferences are not as competitive as more computer science-oriented conferences, such as in computer vision (e.g., CVPR, ICCV, ECCV) or human-computer interaction (e.g., CHI or UIST), which have acceptance rates of 20–30% compared to 40–50% of ICIP, for example. Consequently, his conference publishing is complemented with a significant number of journal papers. Most of his journal publications have appeared in reputable international journals such as IEEE Transactions on Multimedia (impact factor 3.51), Computer Vision and Image Understanding (impact factor 2.50), or Signal Processing: Image Communication (impact factor 2.24). It is clear from his record that he has recently increased the publication frequency in international journals to a steady stream of 1–2 journal papers per year (on average).*

*Looking at the impact of his work through his citation record according to Google Scholar reveals that his work has received close to 700 citations (h-index 14) so far, which is certainly at a level that qualifies for a tenured position. Comparing to other colleagues at the Università di Trento who work in comparable areas and are at a similar career stage (for example, Dr. Elisa Ricci), Dr. Conci is somewhat less visible. While citation impact is clearly important, it is highly dependent on the specific research area, so it has to be added that one should not read too much into the citation numbers alone. What I take as a clear positive sign is that his citation frequency appears to be rising, showing that his work is being increasingly noticed. In any case, I would encourage him to aim to publish in higher impact conferences as these often get more international visibility. His CV lists three invited talks, none of which fall into the span of the last three years. Here as well, I would encourage him to take a more proactive role in getting his work noticed via talks. I also want to point out the conference tutorial at the International Conference on Image Processing that he gave jointly with his colleague Prof. Nicu Sebe. Such tutorials are highly competitive and only given by established members of the research community. Moreover, his research has also received several prizes, including two paper prizes at international conferences including the IEEE/ACM International Conference on Distributed Smart Cameras, as well as various smaller awards.*

*In terms of service to the research community, Dr. Conci has co-organized several symposia that are co-located with large international conferences, including during the last three years. He is also serving as reviewer for a number of journals of international rank, but the curriculum I have at hand does not go into detail as to the frequency and recency of his journal reviewing service. The same goes for conference reviewing – the CV does not contain names of the conferences he reviews for, hence I am not able to assess this aspect. The curriculum also does not list any reviewing for funding agencies nor service as senior program committee member or area chair for international conferences.*

*Dr. Conci seems to have been and continues to be quite successful in terms of third-party funding. His*



research is currently being funded by two industry projects as well as two projects funded by the university or by the province of Trentino. The amount of funding for these grants is not listed, hence it is difficult for me to judge their significance. From his CV, it seems that currently one PhD student is being funded by these grants. His portfolio of past grants lists a number of highly competitive projects, including a Horizon 2020 grant as well as a grant from the Italian government. Moreover, he has served as local coordinator for several of these projects, showing his active role in shaping the local research environment. This impression is reinforced by the number of administrative roles he fulfills, including serving as international student advisor, local coordinator for international Masters programs, and others. This is a very important quality to consider for a well functioning department and Dr. Conci seems to fill out this role very well. Finally, let me come to his teaching record. While the CV does not go into a lot of detail here (for example, there are no teaching evaluations available), it seems that he consistently teaches two courses per year at various levels, including both Masters and Bachelor level courses. He, moreover, takes a very active role in the supervision of Masters and Bachelor students, as evidenced by his ongoing supervision of six Masters students and 55 students already having finished their MSc / BSc theses under his supervision. This is a large and impressive number.

Let me now try to summarize my thoughts. From his record, Dr. Nicola Conci clearly seems to be a highly valuable asset for his department as shown by the active roles he takes in funding acquisition and administration, various administrative roles, as well as by the very significant involvement in MSc/BSc student supervision. On the research side, there is no doubt that Dr. Conci manages to place his work in highly reputable international journals, but as I said, I would motivate him to focus his conference publishing on higher impact venues. The impact of his work as judged by citations and invited talks is at a good level, yet I would encourage him to be more proactive in promoting his work. Overall, I believe that his research record qualifies him for promotion to tenure and I recommend continuing the tenure process.

Visto il curriculum vitae del dott. **Nicola CONCI**;  
Con voto unanime;

Delibera

1. di formulare la seguente valutazione del dott. **Nicola CONCI**, ai fini della chiamata ai sensi dell'art. 24 comma 5, L. 240/2010 nel ruolo di professore di II fascia per il settore concorsuale **09/F2** (Telecomunicazioni) – settore scientifico disciplinare **ING-INF/03** (Telecomunicazioni) presso il Dipartimento di Ingegneria e scienza dell'informazione:

*I giudizi espressi dai referee esterni sul contributo scientifico, la qualità dell'attività di ricerca e l'esperienza professionale del dott. **Nicola CONCI**, nonché sulla coerenza del suo profilo con i requisiti attesi per il ruolo di professore di seconda fascia, sono positivi.*

*A seguito di attenta valutazione del curriculum e delle pubblicazioni, e sulla base dei giudizi formulati dai referee, il Comitato ritiene il profilo scientifico del candidato adeguato al ruolo ed esprime parere favorevole alla chiamata del dott. **Nicola CONCI** nel ruolo di professore associato per il settore concorsuale **09/F2** (Telecomunicazioni) – settore scientifico disciplinare **ING-INF/03** (Telecomunicazioni).*

F.to Il Presidente  
Prof.ssa Valentina Nider

F.to Il Segretario  
Prof. Yuri Bozzi