V/C Student Activities   Efthymia Arvaniti

The Team

- Ines Inacio (Student Representative),
- Sarra ben Rabii (Student Branch Coordinator),
- Jose Miguel Sepulcre (Electronic Communications Coordinator),
- Yara Melki (Awards and Contests Coordinator),
- Paul Micallef (Student Paper Contest Coordinator),
- George Papadimitriou (Projects and Initiatives Coordinator),
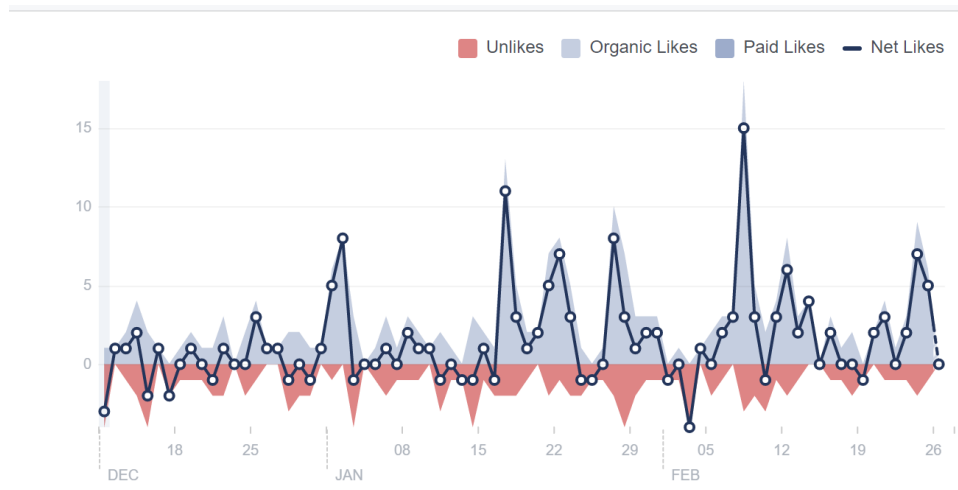- Mona Ghassemian (Past Chair).

Goals

The Student Activities Committee has set some common goals for the years 2017, during the first online committee meeting in January. These goals will serve as a motive for all SAC members, and through our pre-set KPIs, the progress and the deliverables of the team will be easily measured and monitored. The main goals are listed below:

- Continue the Student Branch Revitalization Project and follow the activities of the newly formed and revamped Student Branches.
- Support and encourage the Students to organize/attend the Sectional, Cross-Sectional Student and Young Professional Congresses (MESYP, HSYP, CEuSYP, WESYP, GCCSYP, NSYP).
- Organize and release the Call for Proposals for the IEEE R8 SYP Congress 2018, as well as to provide feedback to the applicants and evaluate the final proposals.
- Prepare the Cross-Sectional SYP Congress guide together with the Young Professional Team.
- Design the Student Awards and Contests Campaign and evaluate the award submissions.
- Engage with the Region 8 Students through the social media channels.
- Restructure and enrich the R8 SAC Website.
- Support the Regional Student Paper Contest.
- Create a database and a network with all the contacts of Section SACs and Section Representatives, as well as an up-to-date file with all the Student Branches' emails.
- Work closely with the Section SACs of the Sections that have lower member retention percentages to find strategies and best practices that will lead to higher membership numbers, in addition to the efforts towards assisting more volunteers from the Africa area.
- Approach and collaborate with the AfI and Young Professionals Subcommittee to increase the industry involvement in the student level (e.g. establish student internships).
- Increase the IEEE Footprint by continuing successful programs (e.g. Mind the Gap) and introducing new and exciting projects.
- Create a volunteer pool where students will be able to see open projects that they can apply and help, or introduce their own idea or project and seek for motivated volunteers.

The Committee has decided on a quarterly-divided timeline, which by the end of each trimester, the current status and progress of the aforementioned goals are calculated according to the KPIs.

Status

- **Awards and Contests – Yara Melki**
  This year, the aim is to promote the awards through the designed campaign, as well as the release of the E-notice to encourage the R8 students and student branches to apply for the IEEE Student Awards. Moreover, it is highly important to proceed with an effective way of judging the award submissions on time. For the global contests (e.g. IEEE Xtreme), the committee will advertise and support when needed. As mentioned previously, each task is measured by KPIs. For the awards, the KPIs are the following:
  1) Increase the number of applicants by 30%. In 2016, 35 award applications were received. This year's goal is 45, a number that should be achieved through the promotion that took place from January until the deadline (extended).
  2) Ensure that each member of the SAC shares the posters through their social media profiles during the awards campaign to increase the audience and encourage the students to submit their applications within the deadline.

- **Electronic Communications – Jose Miguel Sepulcre**
  Following the trend that wants the students to mostly follow the news through the social media channels, the R8 SAC team strongly supports the communication through them. The R8 SAC Facebook page has a total of 7.358 page likes as of 26th Feb 2017, with an increase of approx. 500 likes within three months.

To continue the efforts of the previous years, the R8 SAC Website, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter accounts are also being regularly updated with content. The website will be slightly changed and restructured into a more user friendly interface.

- **Projects and Initiatives – George Papadimitriou**

  After two successful pilot years or launching the Mind the Gap Contest, the R8SAC will continue the Initiative for the third consecutive year. The following timeline shows the important dates of the contest promotion and implementation:

  1) 17th of March 2017: Promotional Campaign Month-Starting Date
  2) 17th of May 2017: Submissions Deadline
  3) 17th of June 2017: Winners' Announcement
  4) 31st of July 2017: Deadline for the MtG ideas evaluation
  5) 17th of August 2017: Implementation Period Begins (6 months duration)

  In addition to the preparation of the MtG Contest, new Ideas and Projects will be designed for this year.

- **Students and Student Branches – Ines Inacio and Sarra Ben Rabii**

  This year's highlight is the creation of a database that gathers all SB emails, as well as a database for all Section SACs and Section Student Representatives. This will help to achieve a better communication between R8 SAC and the Student Branches.

  According to SAMIEEE Records, the current number of Student Branches is 463 and Student Branch Chapters is 250. The next main goal is to prepare and release the call for Proposals for the 2018 edition of the famous R8 SYP Congress, in collaboration with the R8 Young Professionals, and a social media campaign will also be designed, in order to ensure better reach. In the meantime, the evaluation criteria of both the decision of the host and the funded participants will be reviewed and adapted to the current needs.

  Together with the previous points, the continuation and monitoring of the R8 Student Branch Revitalization Project comes as a priority item, whose results will be presented at the upcoming R8 Meeting in Sydney, Australia, as well as through the website and social media channels.

- **Student Paper Contest – Paul Micallef**

  Ten papers were submitted for this year's contest. The deadline for submission was December 22, 2016. The papers are now being reviewed and marked by the five jury members which consists of Prof. Paul Micallef from Malta, Prof Samir Shaheen from Egypt, Dr. Mohamad Awad from Lebanon, Dr. Christos Schizas from Cyprus and Prof Anastas Mishev from Macedonia. By the end of February, the marks should be received and the overall results will be announced. The authors of the five best papers will be invited to EUROCON2017 in July at Ohrid, Macedonia. The results will also be presented during the Stockholm Meeting.

Outlook

In the upcoming months, the R8 SAC should work on the actions described throughout the report document and keep track of all the activities in the Region. In addition, the team has managed to keep the max. of two days' rule of replying to the requests and emails, which is an effort that it is worth maintaining.

For the future, it is advisable to design posters for awards and contests minimum for 20 days prior to the deadline day, and start the advertising campaign through emails, website and social media channels as early as possible. Moreover, there is a lack of a guidance document that describes the roles of the Region and Section SAC Members, which will hopefully be completed within 2017.

Points of Concern

Currently, no major struggles have been faced within the Committee's organization, but in respect to the students' needs, R8 SAC would like to highlight the need to support the Africa Focus Group in facilitating students in Sections with low income. Additionally, some points of concern are mentioned below:

1) The highly increasing number of participants in the R8 SYP Congress should be controlled in order to deliver a worthy and successful event, that will add value to the Regional Activities. Some thoughts on how to deal with this are already been made, and the R8 SAC together with the YP Subcommittee and OpCom will work on finding the best solution.

2) In every R8 SYP Congress, R8 SAC is allocating budget to support funded students to attend. In the last Congress in Germany, the amount of students that the Region could afford was doubled. The eligibility criteria that one student per Student Branch should fulfil in order to receive funding should and will be re-evaluated.

3) Student Membership Renewals/Retention. How can IEEE be more attractive for the students of the Region, and what possibilities it can offer prior and post studies? A need to become more competitive as an Organization starts to arise.