

V/C Student Activities

Efthymia Arvaniti

Team Members:

- Efthymia Arvaniti (Chair)
- 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 year 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 (in progress)
- Support and encourage the Students to organize/attend the Sectional, Cross-Sectional Student and Young Professional Congresses (MESYP, HSYP, CEuSYP, WESYP, GCCSYP, NSYP, ASYP) (in progress)
- 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 (done)
- Prepare the Cross-Sectional SYP Congress guide together with the Young Professional Team (done)
- Design the Student Awards and Contests Campaign and evaluate the award submissions (done)
- Engage with the Region 8 Students through the social media channels (in progress)
- Restructure and enrich the R8 SAC Website (done)
- Support the Regional Student Paper Contest (done)
- 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 (done)
- 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. (in progress)
- Approach and collaborate with the Afl and Young Professionals Subcommittee to increase the industry involvement in the student level (e.g. establish student internships) (in progress)
- Increase the IEEE Footprint by continuing successful programs (e.g. Mind the Gap) and introducing new and exciting projects (in progress)
- 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 (in progress)

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 and Past Contributions

Awards and Contests – Yara Melki

This year, the award nominations from the Region 8 Students were significantly higher than the last years' ones. This comes as a result of the successful award campaign and advertisement, prior to the submission deadline, as well as from the support that the team shows to the students when questions or problems occur. In more detail, the number of nominations submitted by R8 Students is the following:

- Exemplary Student Branch Award: 54 (35 in 2016)
- Larry K. Wilson Award: 12 (10 in 2016)
- Outstanding Branch Counselor and Advisor Award: 7 (7 in 2016)
- Darrel Chong Award: 67 (32 in 2016)

As it can be seen from the numbers, the team should encourage more Students to nominate their Counselors and Advisors, to recognize the efforts that they put for the success of the Student Branch and Student Branch Chapter.

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 7.843 page likes as of 15th July 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. In addition to the regular updates and posts, R8SAC FB page features active Student Branches under the "Sunday Branches" Initiative. More ideas and initiatives are scheduled in order to increase the visibility and engage with the students.

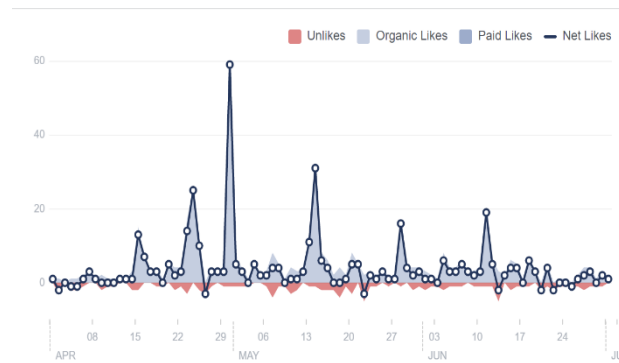


Fig. 1. Likes and unlikes on Facebook.

Projects and Initiatives – George Papadimitriou

R8 SAC received 7 valid submissions for Mind the Gap (MtG) Contest until the 22nd of June 2017, which was the extended deadline. Three Jury members are currently evaluating the submitted ideas and by the 22nd of July 2017, the winners will be decided. The results will be announced in the Region 8 Meeting in Sydney, Australia.

Another new initiative, IEEE Skills Match, born under IEEE Region 8 SAC, is under construction and it will be live in the following couple of months. IEEE Skills Match aims to be a large scale project management tool, a single place where projects and volunteers' skills match.

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.

According to SAMIEEE Records, the current number of registered Student Branches is 592, with the 471 associated with a Student Branch Chair and Counselor, and the 199 of them submitted the annual report for 2016. The number of Student Branch Chapters is 521 and 87 Affinity Groups.

All information regarding the Student Branch Counselors and Chairs per Branch per Section in Region 8 can be now found in the interactive map that was created in order to have a more visual and up-to-date tool that everyone can use and navigate through. The information featured on the map includes Sections, Student Branches, Past and Future Events.

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. It is worth mentioning that under the MGA SAC's request, the zero-member and inactive student branches will be put in probation. This will give a better idea of how many active student branches exist in the Region. Currently, the RSR is working on cross-checking the provided data with the research that is already done from the R8 SAC side, regarding the dormant Student Branches.

Cross-Sectional SYP Congresses 2017 and Region 8 Student and Young Professional Congress 2018

As in every odd year, in 2017, there are seven (7) Cross-Sectional SYP Congresses planned, with two of them already taken place. The list below shows the Congresses and the dates:

- GCC SYP Congress in Manama, Bahrain, 7th-8th of May 2017
- CEuSYP Congress in Lviv, Ukraine, 30th of June-2nd of July 2017
- MESYP Congress in Gammarth, Tunisia, 1st-4th of August 2017
- ASYP Congress in Abuja, Nigeria, 8th-10th of September 2017
- WESYP Congress in Valencia, Spain, 20th-23rd of September 2017
- NSYP Congress in Vilnius, Lithuania, 20th-22nd of October 2017
- HSYP Congress in Athens, Greece, 3rd-5th of November 2017

In addition to the above, there are numerous Sectional Events that are being organized, which help Students, Young Professionals and other IEEE and non-IEEE Members to come together and exchange information, ideas and experiences.

The R8 SYP Congress Call for Proposals had been released, and after a two-stages process, the final submissions were received by the 30th of June. The final stage proposals received were from Student Branches in Egypt, Portugal and Tunisia. All of the submissions were evaluated by all members of R8 SAC and YP Teams, and the results will be discussed with R8 OpCom for final approval. The hosts of the R8 SYP Congress 2018 will be announced on the 31st of July 2017. The SAC and YP teams will provide full support to the organizers throughout the year, to ensure a Congress of value and quality for the attendees.

Student Paper Contest – Paul Micallef

Ten papers were submitted for this year's contest. The deadline for submission was December 22, 2016. The papers were 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. The five students chosen by the jury members after the first stage in this year's SPC competition attended MELECON 2017 at Ohrid, Republic of Macedonia, where they presented their papers in front of the jury members and other interested attendees of the conference. The organizers of Melecon 2017 hosted the five students at the conference, in a beautiful location on Lake Ohrid, giving them free registration and participation at the conference functions. The final winners are:

- Lucija Brezočnik from the University of Maribor (First Prize)
Paper Title: Feature selection for classification using particle swarm optimization
- Tim Thielemans from KU Leuven (Second Prize)
Paper Title: A Capacitive Gearbox DC/DC Converter enabling Skyscraper CMOS with Dynamic Voltage Scaling
- Ely De Pelecijn from KU Leuven (Third Prize)
Paper Title: High Speed Time-multiplexed Continuous Time Sigma-Delta Converters

The certificates to the finalists were presented by Region 8 Director Margaretha Eriksson during the gala dinner on July 7.

The advertising campaign for the SPC 2018 has already started in order to encourage more students to participate to the contest. Moreover, the winners of previous years will participate in a mini interview, to share some tips and advice of success, an act that it is believed to help future participants of the Student Paper Contest.

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. Additionally, support the Cross-Sectional and R8 SYP Congress Organizers when needed, encourage students to participate, and develop a plan for the 2018 SAC.

Moreover, R8 SAC will advertise and support initiatives such as IEEE Day, IEEE Xtreme, and of course, reminding the students to submit their annual report in November. The main goals, as it can be seen above, are either fulfilled already, or in progress. The team will work on achieving all goals and create new ones for the upcoming months.

Points of Concern

Overall, the team has managed to overcome any challenges that appeared throughout the year, by working closely with each other and being supportive, motivating and encouraging to the team members and all students in the Region. A few points of concern that are identified since the beginning of the year and the team is putting efforts in changing them, 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) Significant difference between the registered Student Branches, the SBs associated with a Chair and the ones that are actively reporting their activities. Staying engaged with the students and keeping in touch with the Chairs and Counselors has shown signs of improvement. This is a task that R8 SAC will continue working on.
- 4) 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.