

## V/C Technical Activities

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### Goals

There are a total of five subcommittees under Technical Activities:

- 1) Chapter Coordination;
- 2) Conference Coordination;
- 3) Professional and Educational Activities;
- 4) Action for Industry;
- 5) Standards Coordination;

These subcommittees maintain a strong portfolio of their own programs and play a crucial role in supporting an array of technical and non-technical activities throughout the Region.

Technical Activities goals for 2019-20 are:

- 1) Revitalize the Chapter Coordination sub-committee;
- 2) Expand Action for Industry programs and align them with the IEEE Industry Engagement Committee;
- 3) Achieve a healthy conferences outlook, explore new flagship conferences and industry-focused events;
- 4) Improve educational activities programs with specific emphasis on University and Continuing Education;
- 5) Coordinate the potential merger of Educational Activities and Professional Activities;
- 6) Expand our standards-related offerings;
- 7) Engage with Africa Council to expand TA activities in Africa;
- 8) Increase TA activities focused on Students and Young Professionals;
- 9) Increase coordination between sub-committees;

### Status

The pandemic introduced a major challenge to our activities this year and almost immediately, all subcommittees had to redirect their focus to ensure that:

- 1) Relevant and robust advice is provided to volunteers (conference organizers, events organizers, etc) throughout the Region;
- 2) Review own program portfolio to identify opportunities and challenges, and to ensure continuity of activities;
- 3) Support Sections and event organizers with their programs, where requested.

All subcommittees have performed exceptionally well in adapting to the challenges posed by the pandemic and have been working hard throughout the year to provide value to our members and the technical community. A few key highlights are listed below. Detailed reports from each subcommittee are available on the meeting page.

- 1) Action for Industry subcommittee initiated a Region-wide virtual mentorship program and lined up a highly accomplished set of mentors to advise students and young professionals. 19 mentors provided mentorship to a total of 44 mentees this year.
- 2) Conference Coordination subcommittee produced detailed guidance for conference organizers highlighting the available resources and IEEE's updated set of rules. They also worked with the R8 flagship conference organizers to adapt the conferences to virtual platforms and finalized flagship conference locations for 2021 and 2022.
- 3) Professional and Educational Activities subcommittee realised the increased importance of technical and non-technical skills in the current economic turmoil and initiated two additional programs - an online webinar series with the speakers from the Speaker program focusing on topics such as leadership during a crisis and a competition for students in partnership with IEEE EAB with the winner receiving free access to an online technical course and others receiving substantial discounts on online courses offered by IEEE.
- 4) Chapters Coordination subcommittee focused on the Potential Chapters initiative to highlight the potential chapters which can be formed in Sections based on existing Society members to support membership retention and growth.
- 5) Standards coordination moved its speaker and workshop offerings online and focused on collaboration with IEEE OUs to conduct activities. Two webinars were organized in collaboration with IEEE R8 Young Professionals and the Egyptian Knowledge Bank. They also continued support IEEE Standards Association in their outreach and partnership efforts in various Sections of R8 such as Hungary and Saudi Arabia.

Although the pandemic posed significant challenges to TA activities, overall, the subcommittees adapted well and focused on initiatives which add further value to the experience of our members and support our Sections in retaining them during these challenges times.

### Outlook

IEEE and the Region face significant challenges in the coming year with respect to our membership and finances. It is vital that increased focus is placed on

- 1) Technical activities:
  - which generate value for our existing members and help our Section's retain them;
  - which improve the value proposition for groups which we have generally struggled to attract such as industry professionals;
- 2) New streams of revenue to continue supporting activities at Region and Section level.

At Region and Section levels, possible experimentation with new virtual conferences/technical events on cutting edge topics and sectors can be organized with minimal financial commitment, and the successful conferences/events can be promoted to face-to-face events in the future.

### **Points of Concern**

Low number of bids for flagship conferences is a point of concern which needs to be improved going forward.

Significant work has been done to develop a revitalization plan for chapter coordination and part of it has been tested this year. However, engagement with societies and chapters remain low and needs to be improved.

Our internship program has suffered massively due to the shift to virtual platforms and current economic volatility introduced by the pandemic. The relationships will need to be rekindled next year under the challenging economic environment to restart the internship program.

### **Other Issues to report**

Membership recruitment and retention will be a key focus in the coming years and it is important that a clear strategy to improve, diversify and increase the portfolio of technical and non-technical activities is developed to tackle these issues and provide a clear value proposition to existing and prospective members.