



Public Imperatives

Keith Moore
President, IEEE-USA



IEEE TAX STATUS

- ▶ IEEE is a global organization, legally reported in the US
- ▶ Under US Tax Law, IEEE doesn't pay taxes because it is a nonprofit, but that status has conditions
 - Individuals can't personally benefit from our efforts.
 - We need to be operated for the good of the "public"
- ▶ "Public" can be defined any number of ways, including:
 - Global humanity
 - Individuals in the technology space
 - Any broad subset of technology professionals
 - But not ... "Members of the IEEE"

PUBLIC IMPERATIVES

- Activities designed to help the public, but not IEEE or its leaders, could be “public imperatives.”
 - The definition is, unfortunately, vague
 - The US government knows public imperatives when they see them
- Currently, about 1.5% of IEEE’s operating budget is spent on public imperatives, which is very low

Public Imperatives Definition

YES, these are Public Imperatives

- Primary goal is directly for social good
- Must be available to public at large
- Major beneficiary is the public
- Part of the responsibility of IEEE being a steward of the profession
- Promote the public's understanding and appreciation of engineering & our related fields
- *Generating a surplus is not a key metric*

Examples of Public Imperatives

- Pre-University activities
- Feet-on-the-ground humanitarian activities
- Public policy: Providing unbiased information or events on technology

NO, these are not Public Imperatives

- Primary beneficiary is the individual professional
- *Could be a member benefit of provide a member discount*
- *Financial metrics are primarily for the health of IEEE*

Examples of non-Public Imperatives

- Publications
- Membership (including WIE, YPs, discounts)
- Conferences (primary goal is the exchange of technical information)

Examples of Public Imperatives

- **Pre-college activities designed to expose students to engineering**
- **Publicly available webinars on engineering and the engineering profession**
- **Public service projects providing electricity, internet connectivity, or other technology to disadvantaged communities**
- **Mid-career professional support for the public to help people transition into engineering careers**

IEEE-USA PUBLIC IMPERATIVES

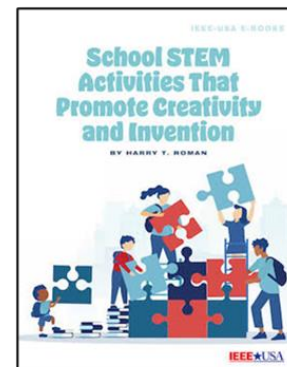
- IEEE-USA historically produces many of IEEE's US based public imperatives
 - Most products that can be accessed by the public for free or at a subsidized price
 - Webinars, eBooks, audio books, some consultant & PE content
 - Some advocacy work counts
 - Legislative work to create policies that benefit the general public count
 - Legislative work to benefit IEEE or IEEE members does not
 - FYI – 501(c)3 organizations can “lobby”

PUBLIC POLICY

- IEEE-supported efforts to help policy makers enact technically sound laws and regulations COULD be public imperatives if...
 - Educating policy makers about technology and its impact of society
 - Advocating for policies that would improve society
 - Advocating for policies that would help all technology professionals
- Efforts that help just IEEE or IEEE members are not public imperatives ...
 - Advocating for policies to strengthen IEEE's publication or conferences businesses.
 - Advocating for benefits that only IEEE members can access

IEEE-USA PUBLIC IMPERATIVES

- Publicly available webinars on patent law, retirement planning, building a career in technology and other topics of value to technologists
- Help preparing professional licensure exams
- K-12 STEM education programs
- MOVE Truck
- Employment reports & data
- eBooks and audio books on technology and technologists



IEEE-USA PUBLIC POLICY

- IEEE-USA staff and volunteers work directly with the US government to craft sound public policies to educate legislators about technology and help policy makers understand what tech can and cannot do for society and advise Congress on emerging technology
- Advocacy is done in a technology-neutral way
- Current Projects:
 - Regulating private space flight
 - AI systems and technology
 - Digital privacy rights
 - STEM education policies



PUBLIC IMPERATIVES

- The rules pertaining to public imperatives are vague, making them hard to apply in the abstract
- IEEE is a public charity. We should invest in programs that benefit society. The US government says we also must invest in these programs
- IEEE's new Humanitarian Technology Board should help globally. IEEE-USA has been and will be champions of Public Imperatives within the US

QUESTIONS

