

IEEE Information Theory Society Board of Governors Meeting
Prospect House, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ USA, March 17, 2004

Mehul Motani

Attendees: Anthony Ephremides, Dave Forney, Hideki Imai, Ralf Koetter, Muriel Médard, Urbashi Mitra, Mehul Motani, David L. Neuhöfer, Vincent Poor, Radha Poovendran, Bixio Rimoldi, Paul Siegel, Sergio Verdu, Jack Wolf.

The meeting was called to order at 13:20 by Society President Hideki Imai. The members of the Board were welcomed and introduced themselves.

1. The President welcomed the board members present, including six new members.
2. The agenda was approved and distributed.
3. The action items from the previous Board meeting in Allerton on October 1, 2003 were reviewed. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved with minor amendments.
4. The President presented his report by presenting, including items from the IEEE TAG Meeting.

The President reviewed the message from the IEEE President, Arthur Winston.

The President reported that the finances of the Society are in good order but the IEEE is still keeping the Society in the 2004 Watchlist.

The President reported on the decline in 2003 membership, 13.5% for the IT Society and 5.6% for IEEE overall.

The President then discussed the issue of open access to IEEE publications. Currently, IEEE does not support open access, but there are numerous benefits to open access. In addition, the Sabo bill (in Congress) would mandate open access to publications that result from US government supported research.

→ Action Item The matter of open access to publications will be further discussed at the next meeting in Chicago.

The president reported that the Society is aiming to get more

The President encouraged all members to participate in the Call for Nominations for the IT Society Distinguished Service Award, meant to honor outstanding leadership and exceptional service to the Society.

The President reported on the potential of proposing new IEEE initiatives. New initiatives can have funding levels of \$50K and greater, be single or multi-year efforts, and require a formal proposal.

5. Muriel McDard presented the Treasurer's report. The Society's net worth was reviewed. It was noted that the final number for year 2003 were not yet available.
It was noted with sadness that the Treasurer for the 2003 Paris IT W^{Aw}

8. Ms. Cecilia Jankowski, representing the IEEE, gave an update on the IEEE and OFAC. In summary, the U.S. Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) had placed restrictions on the IEEE publishing process with respect to manuscripts from authors from embargoed countries. The update focused on what IEEE was doing to resolve this situation.

After the presentation, the Board discussed the matter. There was some concern that it was too late to do anything. Ideas for action included: (a) The Society should offer a symbolic gesture and (b) The Society should write a personal letter to the Iranian members and other affected members of the IEEE.

After deliberation, the President requested Dave Forney to draft a statement clarifying the IT Society position on this situation. The resolution is reproduced below:

The Board of Governors of the IEEE Information Theory Society, recognizing the difficult position into which the IEEE has been put by its interpretation of U.S. Treasury Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) regulations embargoing services to residents of Iran and other countries, as well as by subsequent rulings requested from OFAC, nonetheless:

1. Expresses its extreme dismay at the operation of the IEEE embargo and its effects on the IEEE's reputation as an international scientific society;
2. Condemns the application of embargo regulations to scientific exchange and publishing as contrary to the fundamental values of our society;
3. Encourages the IEEE to stand up for universal principles of open scientific interchange and cooperation;
4. Expresses its profound hope that the current negotiations between IEEE and OFAC will soon result in the full restoration of the status quo ante; and
5. Urges that all possible measures be taken in the interim to minimize damage to members, to the IEEE, and to its societies.

Shortly after the meeting, the U.S. lifted the restrictions on the IEEE. Specifically, OFAC ruled on 2 April that the IEEE's publishing process is exempt from OFAC regulations and licensing requirements for scholarly papers submitted by authors from Cuba, Iran, Libya, and Sudan.

It was agreed that the IT Society resolution should still be included in its present form in the minutes of our March meeting as reflecting the sense of the meeting at that time. However, further efforts to publicize this resolution, e.g., by putting it on our Web site, were deemed no longer to be necessary.

9. David Neuho® gave an update of membership development and discussed the 13% decline in membership. It was questioned how much of the decrease was due to the IEEE mistake in stating Society membership fees last year.

Ways of attracting members were then discussed. Suggestions to attract fresh PhDs include (a) Best thesis prize, (b) Mixers at conferences, (c) Best Student 4.449 -19.422

It was also suggested to use the Society Transactions as a centerpiece. The Transactions could include more tutorial articles. The Transactions/Newsletter could also contain a news section.

Anthony Ephremides suggested to offer tutorials to sister society conferences. For key topics, it was suggested to get outside researchers involved.

It was suggested to take a survey to poll former members why they did not renew. This could be in the form of a letter or electronic survey.

David Forney suggested the need for a tutorials editor.

10. Jack Wolf related his experience at an international conference of the Operations Research Society. The OR Society gives an award each year for the Best PhD Dissertation. The thesis is nominated by a thesis advisor and a committee selects and invites a subset of the authors to the annual conference. At a special session, the candidates give an oral presentation and the committee selects a winner.

The Board discussed adopting a similar method to award a best thesis for our Society.

The President appointed a task force to look into setting up a Outstanding PhD Dissertation award. The members include Jack Wolf, David Neuho®, Steven McLaughlin (as Awards Chair), and the Program Chairs of the relevant ISIT.

11. The Awards Committee report was presented. The committee has received 13 nominations for the IT Society Paper award and 8 -14.448(y)Tj 10.4978 0 iT

- (f) ITW 2004 in San Antonio: Sessions have been identified, and the registration fee is expected to be less than \$350.
 - (g) ITW 2005 in New Zealand: Aug/Sept timeframe.
 - (h) There are no IT Workshops in 2006. The need for more workshops was noted. Bixio Rimoldi will send an email to solicit new ITWs.
15. The Board unanimously approved technical co-sponsorship of the WiOpt Workshop.
 16. It was noted that Urbashi Mitra (Society Information Officer) has compiled a document outlining all officers' responsibilities.
 17. It was announced that the second BOG 2004 meeting will be held in conjunction with ISIT on 27 June 2004 in Chicago