IEEE Information Theory Society Board of Governors Meeting

Location: Marine Room, La Jolla California

Date: 31 Jan 2016; meeting convened at 1:10pm PST; meeting adjourned 5:30pm PST

Meeting Chair: Alon Orlitsky

Minutes taken by: Stark Draper

Meeting Attendees: Krishna Narayan, Pierre Moulin, Alex Vardy, Emanuele Viterbo, Rüdiger

In terms of Society priorities, Alon raised two. The first is to keep the society vital and important by continually considering how to "branch out" to identify areas in which information theoretic ideas and perspectives can provide insight and impact. Possible initiatives include: (i) organizing a "Bit of information channel" on youTube or Vimeo, (ii) putting together short videos about information concepts, (iii) a journal of information with a scope broader than that of the Transactions. The second set of priorities surround the Shannon Centennial. Initiatives here include: (i) Shannon Days, and (ii) the Shannon movie. More discussion of the Centennial was to follow later in the meeting.

2) **Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Daniela Tuninetti next presented her report on the state of the Society's finances. She first provided the BoG an update on the 2015 budget for which the actual numbers would be finalized by April 2016. She then discussed the 2016 budget.

Regarding the 2015 budget, Daniela first reviewed the three main budget items in terms of percentage revenue/expenses: Publications (60% of revenue / 59% of expenses), conference (38%/35%), and membership (2%/5%). As of the October 2015 BoG meeting a surplus for 2015 was anticipated, which the BoG approved to donate to the IEEE Foundation Shannon Fund. However, the transfer did not take place as it was too late in the year to get the IEEE Board of Directors' approval to make the transfer. The IEEE Technical Activities Board (TAB) proposed that ITSoc spend the money that would have been donated on the initiatives on which they would have been spent, even through this would mean ITSoc would be in the red for 2016. The projected budget surplus has decreased since the October meeting and the actuals should firm up by early April 2016 by which time all 2015 conference should have closed.

Regarding the 2016 budget. Daniela first discussed the cost of preparation of the Transactions. The switch in 2014 of the Transactions from full-edit to moderate-edit reduced production costs by about 50%. Furthermore, the Transactions page count in 2015 ran about 1000 pages below the estimated page count. Daniela then detailed the income vs. expenses to produce and distribute the Transactions. She presented exact numbers for 2014, but the 2015 numbers are not yet final, pending details on income generated by IEEEXplore. A discussion ensued about the subsidization the society provides to subscribers of the print edition. This category is decreasing by about 15% per year. It was agreed that the BoG should get a clearer sense of what type of subscribers are receiving the print edition before implementing any changes in pricing. Daniela will work with Matt Lafleur to get such numbers. Finally, Daniela will reach out to the Transactions EiC to get the page count estimated needed to put together the 2017 budget.

Daniela then reviewed the membership situation and fees. There has been a slow decline in overall membership over the past few years, with the exception of 2014 at which time differential pricing was introduced at conferences (for ITSoc vs. non-ITSoc IEEE members). Daniela the reviewed the various product offerings of Society publications to which IEEE members and non-IEEE members can subscribe. Daniela sought guidance from the BoG whether she should formulate a proposal on how to change product pricing and/or product bundling.

Motion: To request the Treasurer to propose a bundling of the Transaction-electronic and

Daniela reported that in 2015 $25k was allocated to produce and distribute the Newsletter while actuals were close to $30k. If a plan is put into motion to grow the Newsletter into a magazine, the additional budget required would need to be planned for.

Regarding conferences, Daniela noted that many schools have occurred sufficiently frequently that they are no longer in the "new initiatives" category (funded through the IEEE "50% rule"), but must be factored into recurrent annual expenses. The 2015 budget aimed for $268k in net income from conference, through Dec 2015 $228k had been accrued with some conferences yet to close their books. The 2016 budget is designed to net $241k in income. The BoG then discussed the possibility of designing budgets to be balanced, to net $0 in income. Daniela noted that if the BoG decides to aim for a budget, it will be critical for all conference to meet their target surpluses.

Daniela then discussed with the BoG administrative fees charged by IEEE, the budgets allocated to the various committee, the salary for the new ITSoc administrator, and the support for the Distinguished Lecturer (DL) series, as well as the budget for new initiatives.

In conclusion Daniela noted two things. First, the draft budget for 2017 is due to the IEEE in July, so if any committee will request an increase in their budget they need to do so before the BoG meeting at ISIT. Second, Daniela provided some guidance regarding reimbursements: (a) submit expenses within one month, (b) email all receipts with the latest expenses form (which Daniela can provide) to her and Matt LaFleur, (c) include a full list of attendees at meals, (d) Distinguished Lecturers should follow same procedure.

3) **Nominations and Appointments (N&A) Committee:** N&A Committee Chair Abbas El Gamal next presented his report. He reviewed the composition of the various committees and noted that all are fully staffed except for the External Nominations Committee, which is still missing a committee chair.

Abbas then reviewed two changes in the bylaws that require BoG discussion and votes. The first change was a revision of the current bylaws. It concerned the selection of the James L. Massey Research and Teaching Award. Abbas read the proposed revised bylaw to the board: "A subcommittee of the Awards Committee shall be responsible for selecting the recipient of the IEEE Information Theory Society Thomas M. Cover Dissertation Award, according to Article VII, Section 8. Another subcommittee of the Awards Committee shall be responsible for selecting the recipient of the IEEE Information Theory Society James L. Massey Research & Teaching Award for Young Scholars, according to Article VII, Section 9....The Cover Dissertation Award and Massey Research & Teaching Award Subcommittees shall be appointed by the Nominations and Appointments Committee by December 31 of the previous year."

Motion: To pass the revision to the bylaws. The motion was passed unanimously.

The second change was an addition to the bylaws requested by the IEEE. The addition deals with possible conflict-of-interest situations wherein a member of the N&A Committee would like to be nominated to a committee for which the N&A Committee handles nominations. In brief, said member would both need to resign prior to the start of the year and cannot be nominated by a (former) fellow member of the N&A Committee. Abbas read the proposed addition: "A member of the N&A Committee may be nominated and run for a position for which the N&A Committee makes nominations only if: (i) the member resigns from the N&A Committee prior to its first meeting of the year in which the nomination shall be

made and (ii) the nomination is made by a member of the N&A Committee whose term did not overlap with that of the nominee."

Motion: To pass the addition to the bylaws. The motion was passed unanimously.

4) **Online Committee:** Online Committee Chair Anand Sarwate presented his report. Anand reviewed the current Committee membership and thanked Stefan Moser for his efforts on behalf to the Committee.

Anand reported that ITSoc Administrator Matt Lafleur is taking on the job of updating website content. He gave a tour of the mockup of the revised site. He would like to get a volunteer to manage an ITSoc Twitter feed, as well as other social media links (LinkedIn/ Facebook/other). The BoG asked about a YouTube channel. The decision was made to go with Vimeo because there are no ads and because there may be ownership questions once you post content to YouTube. Anand will look into legal issues about ownership on YouTube with the idea that we can perhaps post both to YouTube and to Vimeo, and will report back to the board.

5) **Conference Committee:**0.2 (re) -0.2(p) -0(a) -0.2 472 cm BT11 0 0 11 (i)-0.2 (n) -0.2 11 0 0

School was held already at Monash University in Melbourne in January 2016. The other 2016 schools will be the North American School to be held at Duke University, the European School to be held at Chalmers University of Technology in Sweden, and the Indian School.

As for future schools, Aylin reported that it is likely that the next Croucher Foundation funded East Asian School will be held in Hong Kong again in 2017. At the moment a biannual event appears more feasible in Asia than an annual event. In 2017 there will be schools in North American and in Europe, these are annual events.

A proposal to hold the 2017 European School in Madrid was presented by Albert Guillén i Fàbregas on behalf of the organizers.

Motion: To support the 2017 European School for Information Theory in the amount of $20k.

educational videos on information theory, and with Google about getting a Shannon-oriented design for Google's front page on the date of the centennial. There is a website for the centennial that will be updated shortly and a number of Centennial events have already been fixed. The Committee has spent $10k of its budget for logo design, the short movie, and infographics design.

The BoG discussed various ideas that might prove helpful to publicize the Centennial. One idea was to have the graphics designer make a website banner that departments can use on their websites. Another was to have an array of content that could be shared with news organization that could push that content to local outlets, e.g., text for a newspaper, a one-minute video for TV organizations (we would need to get all rights), something for social media.

Motion: To allocate the Shannon Centennial Committee an additional $10k budget to complete the infographics, to offer small commemorative gifts, and to create a children's book. The motion passed unanimously

Rüdi requested $100k in ITSoc support to support Shannon Centennial events. A discussion ensued regarding the logistics of where the money would come from, the impact on the 2016 budget, the process that would be followed in awarding the money to recipients, and on how to communicate to awardees what sorts of expenses would be reimbursable.

mentioned by members of the Board. The Khan Academy was raised as a possible collaborator on such initiatives.

Minutes of the last meeting. The minutes from the previous meeting were briefly discussed.

Motion: To approve minutes from the October 2015 BoG Meeting. The motion was passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30pm PST.