

IEEE Information Theory Society Board of Governors meeting minutes

The Marine Room, La Jolla, CA, 02.01.2015, 1 PM- 5 PM Pacific Time
Edmund Yeh

Present: Michelle Eros, Ruediger Urbanke, Abbas El Gamal, Urbashi Mitra, Vijay Kumar, Vincent Poor, Jeff Andrews, Wei Yu, Aylin Yener, Matthieu Bloch, Edmund Yeh, Emanuele Viterbo, Michael Honig, Alex Vardy, Andrew Barron, Elza Erkip, Emina Soljanin, Tracey Ho, Nick Laneman, Dave Forney, Anand Sarwate, Frank Kschischang (via Skype), Gerhard Kramer (via Skype).

The meeting was called to order at 1 PM Pacific Time by Information Theory Society (ITSoc) President, Michelle Eros.

1. **Motion:** Vote to approve the minutes from the GlobalMeet BoG meeting (9/20/2014). Motion was passed.

2. **Motion**

communication among its members, but doesn't do as well at communicating beyond the Society. To remedy this, outreach and education activities should extend beyond the IT community. The Shannon Centennial (April 2016) is a great opportunity to start these activities. Other possible activities include the following. A sub-committee of the Conference Committee is investigating the possibility of joint workshops with other communities. The Newsletter Editor is considering curating a series of articles by authors outside our community on topics with potential for mutual exploration. An ad hoc committee is being formed which will team up with science shows, blogs, authors, or the local press to highlight the past, present, and future of information theory. The Committee will also prepare materials for Shannon Days around the world, and educational materials for kids, teachers, and the broader public. In these outreach activities, the WITHITS, Student, and Outreach Sub-committees will also play important roles.

A discussion followed. Given the influence of Shannon's master's thesis on computing, it was suggested that Shannon Centennial activities be connected to the Computer Society. It was also suggested that the Boole Bicentennial held in Cork, Ireland, be connected with the Shannon Centennial. It was noted that there have recently been a number of movies focused on scientific and technological figures (e.g. Nash, Turing, Hawking). Perhaps it's time for a well-made movie on Shannon. It was pointed out that the IEEE has a media and publicity arm which can professionally produce movies. The Khan Academy seems to have produced some very accessible videos on information theory. Another possibility is to use crowd-sourcing to produce videos. Finally, science museums may be contacted to advertise Shannon-related activities.

on Pareja and web.com has been officially terminated. A complete backup of the server has been carried out. Part of the former hosting budget for web.com will be reused for itsoc.org. Matthieu reported that SixFeetUp has had a new project manager since fall 2014, with a smooth ongoing transition. The Master Service Agreement is in place for 2015. SixFeetUp rates have increased from \$150/hour to \$165/hour.

Matthieu anticipates a 6-8 months transition period with Anand. During this period, the list of the

slightly over the last two years. The page budget for the Transactions in 2014 was 8500 pages. The actual page count was 8074. This yields a surplus of \$34k in publication costs. Frank presented the acceptance and rejection rates during 2014, in overall terms and by editorial area. The fast rejection rate (decision taking fewer than 30 days) is about 12%. Excluding decisions made within 30 days, the median time to first decision is 195 days (the overall median is 170 days). The first decision is reached within one year in 87% of cases. Outliers among Associate Editors are a concern. Frank and Lisa Jess are monitoring this, and sending reminders when appropriate. Some aggressive action (re-assignment of papers) was taken in July 2014 in one case.

A discussion followed. It was noted that there is still a sense that the decision time for the Transactions is too long. Frank indicated that the Board would quickly flag papers which are delayed. It was suggested that the Board try to identify which factors are most important in causing editorial delays. It was asked what the average load for an AE is (30 papers a year). It was then suggested that the Board should aim for roughly 2 papers per month per AE. By that measure, the current load may be too large.

8. Ruediger Urbanke presented the Membership Committee Report. The main items are the Outreach and Student Subcommittee Reports, presented by Joerg Kliewer. Joerg first presented the Outreach Subcommittee Report. Joerg thanked Elza Erkip and Daniela Tuninetti, who are leaving the committee. Bobak Nazer is continuing, while Tara Javid is joining as a new member. It is proposed that Aaron Wagner and Joerg Kliewer serve as co-chairs of the Outreach Subcommittee.

Motion: To approve the appointments of Aaron Wagner and Joerg Kliewer as co-chairs of the Outreach Subcommittee of the Membership Committee. Motion was passed.

Joerg continued to report the recent activities of the Outreach Subcommittee. At ISIT 2014, the Subcommittee organized the panel discussion "How to Survive Tenure Track" with panelists Salman Avestimehr, Rob Calderbank, Natasha Devroye, and Pulkit Grover. Approximately 50 people attended. The panel was followed by the traditional ISIT mentoring get-together reception. Joerg gave an update on the Mentoring Program. Currently, there are about 31 mentoring pairs. Recent interviews indicate the success of the program. For 2015, a panel discussion on "101 Reasons to Study IT" has been organized for ITA with the Student Subcommittee. Panelists include Emina Soljanin, Andrea Montanari, and Venkatash Saligrama. There will also be an event for ISIT. The \$3k budget for 2015 will be sufficient for the planned activities. For the long term, an advertising video, perhaps based on a revamp of the UCSD Shannon video, is being planned.

In the discussion which followed, it was recommended the the Subcommittee return with a more formal proposal on the advertising video. The proposal is a good candidate for an initiative.

Joerg moved to report the activities of the Student Subcommittee. The faculty coordinators for the Subcommittee are Deniz Gunduz and Osvaldo Simeone. At ITA 2014, a panel discussion (co-organized with the Outreach Committee) on "Landing Your Dream Job" was held at Tony Roma's. Panelists included Giuseppe Caire, Bertrand Hochwald, Muriel Medard, and Joseph Soriaga. Lunch was served and the event had very high attendance. At CISS 2014, a roundtable discussion on current research topics with moderators and pizza also had very high attendance. At ISIT 2014, lunch with the Shannon awardee was hosted by Osvaldo Simeone. The interview is available at: <http://media.itsoc.org/isit2014/JanosKornerInterview.mp4>. Expenses for the ITA 2014, CISS 2014 and ISIT 2014 events are already in the budget. For 2015, one goal is to extend membership to students and postdocs with the aim of enhancing diversity and establishing a presence in Asia and Latin America. The ITA panel, CISS roundtable discussion, and the ISIT Meet the Shannon Awardee event will be continued. The Subcommittee budget for 2015 is \$10k.

9. Elza Erkip presented the Conference Committee Report. New members of the committee are Albert Guillen i Fabregas, Ubli Mitra, and Daniela Tuninetti (ex-officio). Retiring members are Lars Rasmussen and Aylin Yener (ex-officio).

Elza gave updates on upcoming ISITs. First, for ISIT 2015 in Hong Kong (Tse, Yeung), finances are in good shape, with a \$60k loan from IEEE. Sponsorship and the venue have been finalized. Plenary speakers and tutorials have been confirmed. Submissions are now closed. The conference received 953 submitted papers, which will be handled by 153 TPC members. Semi-plenary sessions will be held at the conference. For ISIT 2016 (Guillen i Fabregas, Martinez, Verdu), the venue, banquet venue, and PCO have been finalized. For ISIT 2017 in Aachen (Kramer, Mathar), the dates June 25-30 have been fixed. An initial budget as well as potential sponsors have been determined. For ISIT 2018, there is strong interest from a team in Colorado (Mahesh Varanasi, Rockey Luo, Ali Pezeshki). The team is currently examining venue options and quotes. Other possibilities for 2018-2019 include Helsinki in 2018 (Vitaly Skachek) and Paris in 2019 (Pablo Piantanida).

A discussion followed on ISIT 2018. It was suggested that having ISIT at a non-urban location can lead a memorable experience (e.g. Whistler, Canada for ISIT 1995). Colorado in the summer can be refreshing. On the other hand, some concerns were expressed regarding the high elevation in Colorado, and its effects on the health of attendees. It was suggested that the organizers closely examine the accessibility of venues in terms of travel times from major airports. Ali Pezeshki mentioned that the team will be visiting potential venues over the summer.

Elza next discussed the schedule for ISIT approvals. The Conference Committee recommends that approvals for ISITs be decided only during the annual BoG meeting during ISIT. Reasons for this include (1) larger BoG participation at the ISIT BoG meetings, (2) ease of attendance by the proposers, (3) ease of scheduling competing proposals. For ITWs, it is recommended that proposals be evaluated as they arrive. Since there are multiple ITWs during a year, this allows the BoG to act quickly on topics and venues.

A discussion followed. It was pointed out that approving ISITs only at the ISIT BoG meetings can lead to excessive delay if proposals are not ready to be presented then. It was decided that there should not be an official motion regarding this proposal. Rather, the proposal can serve as a guideline for the BoG.

Elza continued with an update on the upcoming ITWs. For ITW 2015 in Jerusalem, decisions on papers have been sent and the program is in place. There will be a panel chaired by Tony Ephremides. Workshop registration is now open. The contract has been delayed due to a lack of response from the IEEE. For ITW 2015 in Korea, the budget has been approved via email.

Elza continued with the proposal to hold ITW 2017 in Kaohsiung, Taiwan during Nov 5-8, 2017. The venue will be the KEC Kaohsiung Exhibition Center. The proposed General Co-Chairs are Po-Ning Chen, Gerhard Kramer, and Chih-Peng Li. The proposed Technical Program Co-Chairs are Hsiao-feng Lu, Stefan Moser, and Chih-Chun Wang. Workshop themes include information theory for content distribution, information theory and biology, coding for memories, and information theory and quantum communication. Hotel accommodation options, registration fees, a preliminary budget, a preliminary program, and preliminary deadlines were presented. A budget surplus of about 10% is expected. The conference committee recommends BoG approval of the ITW 2017 proposal.

Motion: To approve Kaohsiung, Taiwan, as the location for ITW 2017. Motion was passed.