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It All Started with Student Chapters

I have been chair of the IEEE Industry Applications Society (IAS) Chapters and Membership Department (CMD) since 2009. You may have read a lot of statistics and activity reports in the nearly 60 “Chapter News” columns over the last ten years. With this column, instead of listing activity details, I would like to recall two memories that significantly influenced my CMD-related work.

My first memory is from 2009. Before 2009, I served as Chapter chair, Section and Region Chapter coordinator, and IAS Chapter area chair. So my IEEE background was connected to Chapters. When I became the IAS CMD chair and updated the IAS Chapter roster, I found three Student Branch Chapters (SBCs) listed there, two in Texas and one in Ecuador. I had no idea what a Student Branch Chapter was. I did some research and realized the importance of this new (to me) form of Chapter.

Several months later, I had my first contact with the existing SBCs and others in formation at the first IAS Chapter Annual Workshop, which I conducted as the new CMD chair in Houston in 2009. One year

later, we had ten SBCs in Latin America, which continued with a Region 9 SBC boom. This is the background for the slogan about the SBC cradle (Figure 1). The Latin American SBCs were followed one year later by a European and an Indian SBC boom.

Currently, we have 236 SBCs, along with 159 Section Chapters, which have become a significant part of IAS activity. As of July 2018, there

are more than 50 SBCs in the U.S. Regions 1–6: 11 in Region 2, 14 in Region 4, 17 in Region 5, and 16 in Region 6. In other countries, there are ten in Brazil, 11 in Colombia, 12 in Pakistan, 16 in China, 17 in Tunisia, 18 in Peru, and 57 in India. The Kerala Section in India has by far the most SBCs, with 22. So the speech bubble in Figure 1 could be updated for 2018 by adding, “... and became an adult in India.”

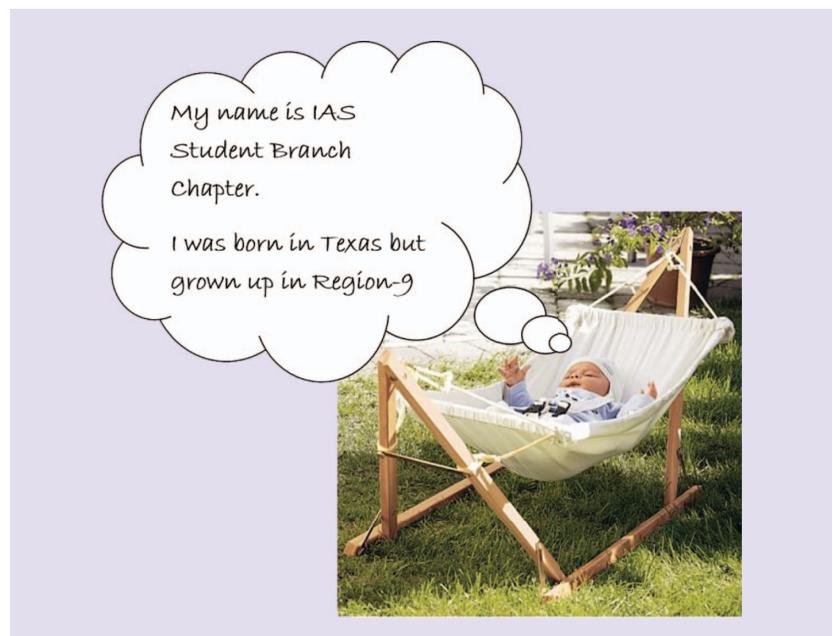


FIGURE 1. From the 2011 CMD Report, Annual Chapter Meeting, Orlando, Florida, on reporting the activities of the Student Branch for the first years.

For commemorative purposes, here a list of the first SBs by Region, with the Section name and date of formation:

- *Regions 1–6:* Texas A&M University Engineering Tech SB IAS Chapter (1 July 1994, Houston Section), renewed with the new name Texas A&M University SB IEEE Power & Energy Society (PES)/IAS/Power Electronics Society (PELS) Chapter (14 October 1998)
- *Region 7:* University of Calgary SB PES/IAS Chapter (Southern Alberta Section, Canada, 21 September 2014)
- *Region 8:* Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BUTE)

SB PES/IAS Chapter (Hungary Section, 20 2009 May)

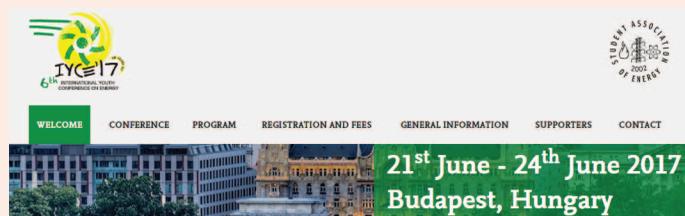
- *Region 9:* Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral SB IAS Chapter (Ecuador Section, 18 August 2004)
- *Region 10:* 1) Dhirubhai Ambani Institute of Information and Communication Technology SB IAS Chapter (Gujarat Section, India, 15 June 2012), 2) Marwadi Education Foundations Rajkot SB IAS Chapter (Gujarat Section, India, 15 June 2012), and 3) Saintgits College of Engineering SB IAS Chapter (Kerala Section, India, 15 June 2012).

A Student-Led Technical Conference

My second memory is also in connection with the SBCs. In the spring of 2009, I received an invitation to be a paper reviewer for a conference I had never before heard of—the second International Youth Conference on Energy (IYCE 2009). Because of other work I had, I was not too happy to receive it, but I read the conference leaflet. The key information was that it was a student-led technical conference with paper reviews, organized by the Hungarian Student Association of Energy (SAE) of BUTE, my alma mater.

Table 1. The Club of the Six members with their conference logos

IYCE, hosted by the BUTE SB PES/IAS Chapter, Budapest, Hungary



Workshop on Power Electronics and Power Quality Applications, hosted by the Universidad de los Andes SB IAS Chapter, Bogotá, Colombia



PECI, hosted by the University of Illinois Urbana–Champaign SB PES/IAS/PELS Chapter, Urbana–Champaign



YSF, hosted by IRE NASU SB IAS Chapter, Kharkiv, Ukraine



Student Conference on Electrical Machines and Systems, hosted by Zhejiang University of Science and Technology SB IAS Chapter, Hangzhou, China



Power and Energy Conference at Texas, hosted by the Texas A&M University SB PES/IAS/PELS Chapter, College Station

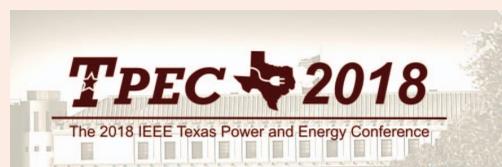




FIGURE 2. The CMD core team in 2016 at the IAS Council Meeting, Portland, Oregon (from left): Srikanth Vasudevan P., Lesley Arakkal, Christina-Panagiota Malliou, Peter Magyar, Megha Tak, Beata Polgári, and Aristotelis Farmakis.

As this coincided with my discovery of the SBCs, I wondered why SAE was organizing this conference and not a BUTE IAS SBC. My second thought was how could the IAS become a part of this student-led technical conference? The solution was clear: we had to form an IAS SBC there, and the IAS must support IYCE.

The next steps were quite easy. I had an upcoming Chapter visit to Hungary, and the three SAE board members accepted my invitation to have a meeting from 7:30 to 8:00 a.m., where they sleepily followed my explanation about the benefits of the IEEE and the IAS. I was quite satisfied, however, with the very noncommittal “we will think about it” response and had to go about my other business of the day. One week later, I received an e-mail with the following: “OK, but we are energy sector people. Would it be possible to make something in common with PES?” I explained to them how to form a joint PES/IAS SBC, which soon was followed by their submitting the appropriate petition.

At that time, I was also the Region 8 Chapter Coordination Committee chair. So we were able to inaugurate the first student-led technical conference with IAS and Region 8 support and also receive approval from the IEEE Member and Geographic Activities Board for the formation of the SBC one day before

the IYCE opening ceremony. The BUTE SBC later became one of IAS’s flagship SBCs.

IYCE was followed by an additional five student-led conferences, which formed the exclusive group Club of the Six. The Power and Energy Conference at Illinois (PECI) and International Young Scientists Forum (YSF) existed earlier, so we had to create only the host IAS SB chapters. The others were established by already existing IAS Chapters as a result of local and CMD initiatives. There are also some new candidates, but for the time being, only six conferences have met the four Club of the Six criteria: 1) being student led, 2) being hosted by an IAS SBC, 3) following the IEEE standard paper review process, and 4) providing IAS technical cosponsorship. The current club members are listed in Table 1.

It is no wonder, then, that I considered this kind of student technical activity to be one of the most important achievements of the last ten years.

A Decade of Acknowledgments

During the last ten years, the CMD-led Chapters and membership activities became a significant part of IAS life. Interested readers may find more details at <https://ias.ieee.org/chapters-membership.html>. As CMD chair, I planned, developed, and executed these activities with my team. One

may ask, why has the chairmanship been ten years long? A usual department chair term is two years, and a prolongation requires a special nomination process.

I was glad to be named for four additional terms. I enjoyed this task, since I haven’t been either an IEEE project developer or aspired to a higher IEEE career. I was always a field volunteer as a Chapter secretary, vice chair, or chair in the Germany Section of the IAS/PELS/Industrial Electronics Society Chapter; a Chapter coordinator of the Germany Section and the Region 8 Committee; and an area chair and IAS CMD chair. I found my Society “home” in the IAS. In addition, I retired in 2009, so I had enough time, which was also an important condition. In summary, I was able to realize my motto, at least in part, which I developed in my early Chapter officer terms, “IEEE should be beneficial not only to the officers but to the members.”

I had the privilege to be supported by the IAS Executive Board, the IAS Executive Office, and the five IAS presidents during my time of service and by an excellent volunteer team. It is not possible to specify all of the volunteers who joined the CMD and have been sharing not only the recognition but also the hard work for ten years. I express my deep gratitude to all IAS members, CMD committee chairs, cochairs, task managers, area chairs, Chapter chairs, and advisors as well as the meeting organizers who have imparted distinction to the CMD story. To recognize all of these volunteers with a single exemplary picture, I have selected a favorite from among the approximately 20,000 photos that were taken over the past ten years. This is the CMD core team in 2016 (Figure 2).

The CMD activity will continue with new teams and probably with another new main focus. And I wish success to the next and future CMD chairs!

