A New Era of Engagement for the IEEE Industrial Electronics Society

Recently, I sent an e-mail regarding major changes made to the IEEE Industrial Electronics Society (IES) bylaws, which took effect 7 March 2018. (The document can be downloaded from http://www.ieee-ies.org/about/governance-documents.) Now is a perfect time to address the motivation behind these changes and their justification.

The world around us has been changing rapidly, and we need to keep up with the times. Our organization has been continuously growing, and we, like many other nonprofits, are facing many challenges to live up to the expectations of our members, stakeholders, industry, and society around us. In my last “Message from the President,” I listed some of the key elements for the success of a group such as ours: an effective management team, a clear and concise mission statement, good public relations and marketing, and a strong and supportive volunteer base. Our Society has demonstrated most of these characteristics throughout the years, but there is room for evolution and improvement, such as the need for greater member participation in our activities and decision making and maintaining the consistency and improving the quality of the services to our members.

The major changes in the bylaws are a necessary step for moving our organization forward in this way. To summarize, they include:

- Four Administrative Committee (AdCom) members at large to be elected from the IES membership each year
- Eight technical committee cluster delegates with voting rights to be appointed to the AdCom from technical committee chairs
- Tightened rules for senior and life AdCom members concerning regaining voting rights after certain periods of absence
- A number of other minor changes, such as limited consecutive terms of IES officers.

The IES was started with just a few volunteers in 1951 and continues to this day to be run by volunteers. While our unpaid helpers are our core and foundation, we have reached a tipping point that requires dedicated professional support to improve our service quality and better preserve institutional knowledge.

I am excited about these developments, though fully aware of the efforts required for smooth changes in the management process. We have commenced the transition already, working with the IES AdCom and IEEE headquarters to ensure that all of our operations and activities comply with the new bylaws. We are also improving management by introducing dedicated professional support to our operations. The positive impact of the new bylaws and management processes will be seen in the years to come across all of our core business areas in technical activities, industry activities, conferences, publications, and membership. More details about progress in these areas will be reported in this column in future issues of IEEE Industrial Electronics Magazine.

Over the last few months, I have traveled to various parts of the world to attend IEEE and IES business meetings, present at IES conferences, and visit local IES Chapters. I am very impressed with the enthusiasm, active participation, and selfless contributions of our members, which gives me great confidence that we will have a bright future.

We had a very successful IES officers meeting in Orlando, Florida, on 18–19 February 2018, with an opportunity for officers to attend an IEEE Technical Activities Board meeting series to learn how the IEEE works and its latest developments. For the first time, we used an experienced facilitator, Shelly Alcorn, of Alcorn Associates in California, to help the IES executive staff shape our strategic thinking, develop plans for implementing the new bylaws and management processes, and brainstorm new ideas for major initiatives that will drive our future growth. We recognized the need to separate planning and execution and saw the importance of transitioning from a working AdCom to a strategic AdCom, which...

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will require a change in our thinking in conducting our businesses.

We identified several key areas of focus for future growth, including women in engineering, students and young professionals, membership growth centers, a future IES web and submission system, and industry activities. Planning for activities and budgeting is well under way. If you have any ideas and suggestions to help in these domains, please do let me know (xyu@ieee.org). We expect to see substantial improvement in technical activities, conferences and workshops, publications, and membership in the next few years.

I had the opportunity to visit the New Zealand North Section Joint Chapter [IES 13/IEEE Industry Applications Society (IAS) 34] on 30 January in Auckland, and the New South Wales Joint Chapter (IES 13/IAS 34/IEEE Power Electronics Society 35) in Sydney, Australia, on 15 March and presented an IEEE IES Distinguished Lecture on smart grid in each city. I also had the opportunity to talk to a number of IEEE Members during these meetings and lectures, and I was very impressed with their enthusiasm. There was overwhelming participation from students and young professionals eager to learn, a clear indication of hope for our future development.

I also had the pleasure to open the inaugural IEEE International Conference on Industrial Electronics for Sustainable Energy Systems (IESES), held 30 January to 2 February 2018 in Waikato, New Zealand. This is one of the many new initiatives that the IES has established over the years. The event was four years in the making and shows how the IES is responding to the future energy needs of industry and society to ensure prosperity and environmental sustainability together. IES 2018 attracted 135 submissions from 22 countries, an excellent result indeed for a first-time conference. The conference program was wonderful, and I had the honor of presenting the IES Student Travel Assistance grants to several student participants. I would like to congratulate the conference organizers and participants, especially the general cochairs, Prof. Nihal Kularatna, Prof. Chandan Chakraborty, and Prof. Mo-Yuen Chow, and their enthusiastic team for their initiative in and dedication to organizing this excellent event.

In addition to ISES, we have a number of major conference series taking place in various parts of the world. They include the Annual Conference of the IEEE Industrial Electronics Society, the International Symposium on Industrial Electronics, the IEEE International Conference on Industrial Technology, the International Conference on Industrial Informatics, and the International Conference on Emerging Technologies and Factory Automation. For the full listing of conferences, see http://www.ieee-ies.org/conferences. These conferences offer an opportunity to meet old and new friends and colleagues, exchange ideas and experiences, listen to industry and research leaders about future perspectives on key areas of industrial electronics, and, of course, enjoy each other’s company and the fantastic local cultures and customs. I am looking forward to seeing many of you at these and other IES events.

Editors’ Column

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Electronics Society on defining the best practices and an operational guide for the application of industrial wireless systems.

Last but not least, “The Flow and Reuse of Data” by Nicole Schmidt and Arndt Lüder, deals with the life cycle as one of the three dimensions of a manufacturing system. Traditionally, the view of the system changes along the phases of the life cycle and so do the data that are supported by software tools. However, in a digitalized factory, such data should be unified and consistent, and the article reviews the importance of a standardized data-exchange format.

Matching the information technology topics, the “Historical” column “Matthew Fontaine Maury: The 19th-Century Forerunner of Big Data” shows, once again, that history sometimes repeats itself, and some modern inventions or developments are not as modern as they may initially seem. Surprisingly, this even applies to the area of big data, which we usually consider to be a product of the Internet and virtually unlimited computing power. However, as is often the case, a look into history puts things into perspective.