IEEE Young Professionals ... Who are they?

by J. Patrick Donohoe

As a Student Member of the IEEE, you may have heard the term IEEE Young Professionals (YP) and wondered, “Who are these YPs, and how do they fit into the IEEE organization?” Any IEEE Member who has received his/her first professional degree within the last 15 years is considered a YP and part of the IEEE YP group. Before describing the organizational details of YP in IEEE, let’s consider what they do. IEEE YP is an international community of innovative members and volunteers. YP members are interested in elevating their professional image, expanding their global network, connecting with peers locally, and giving back to the community. The IEEE YP program provides a tool for empowering early-career development for its members.

Currently, there are approximately 120,000 IEEE YP members worldwide, which provides a tremendous opportunity for members to develop and nurture working relationships with other young professionals on a global scale. To connect locally, IEEE YP organizes “meet-up” events to engage members and volunteers living in the same geographic area (typically in the same IEEE Section) or from the same technical area. The primary focus of the meet-up is to provide networking opportunities where members can expand their personal and professional networks. YP members give back to the community in a variety of ways, including the development and promotion of humanitarian technologies, organizing community engagement workshops to build social and technological awareness, providing professional skill workshops for IEEE Student Members, and mentoring high school students.

One YP activity of particular interest to IEEE Student Members is the IEEE Student Transition and Elevation Program (STEP). STEP events are designed to connect members of IEEE Student Branches with local YP members through special events such as lectures, interactive workshops, or networking sessions. The goal of the STEP event is to inform students about the transition from Student Member to YP by introducing the opportunities and benefits of IEEE membership from the perspective of the YP. The connection of Student Branches to YP members in the IEEE brings us to the discussion of how those who are YP fit into the IEEE organization.

IEEE YP is designated as an IEEE affinity group, like IEEE Women in Engineering and IEEE Life Members. An affinity group is a nontechnical subunit of one or more IEEE Sections or Councils. A YP group is formed in a Section through the same petition process that is used to form a Student Branch. Contact your local IEEE Section to see if there is a YP group in your area. If not, encourage your local Section to pursue the formation of a local YP group. For more information on the IEEE YP program, visit http://yp.ieee.org/.

About the author

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