Elections and Partnerships

The IEEE Systems, Man, and Cybernetics Society (SMCS) began this year with several new volunteer leaders resulting from elections during the latter part of 2017 and new appointments. We welcomed four vice presidents beginning terms of service ending in 2019; they are Andreas Nuerberger, who was re-elected vice president for human–machine systems, Sam Kwong as vice president for cybernetics, Mengchu Zhou as vice president for conferences and meetings, and Vladimir Marik as vice president for organization and planning. We also welcomed Ying (Gina) Tang as newly appointed secretary and Robert Woon as reappointed treasurer. They have joined the collective efforts enabling the Society’s Board of Governors and standing committees to be more effective and efficient at providing new opportunities, initiatives, and projects of benefit to our members.

Our international membership elected five members-at-large to the Society’s Board of Governors and standing committees to be more effective and efficient at providing new opportunities, initiatives, and projects of benefit to our members.

Regarding industry, SMCS is actively engaged in exploring and establishing partnerships with other professional societies that have a focus on industry and its practices as a strong complement to the academic strengths of our Society, including the theory, practice, and integration of systems science, systems engineering, human–machine systems, and cybernetics. We have already embarked on focused interactions with the International Council on Systems Engineering (INCOSE), having participated during January 2018 in an INCOSE-hosted strategy session held at its 2018 International Workshop. At the event, we were represented by our Industrial Liaison Committee chair and Rodney Roberts, our vice president for systems science and engineering. That strategy session examined the future of systems engineering with a focus on challenges and changes needed as the complexity of systems continues to increase. The IEEE Systems Council was also involved in the strategy session.

As a member Society of the IEEE Systems Council, SMCS further strengthens its ties to industry and its value to our members from industry. In the months ahead, you can expect to see products of SMCS and INCOSE collaboration on the Internet, at our respective conferences, and/or reported in our respective publications. For additional perspectives on shared goals and interests, please refer to articles on both the IEEE Systems Council and INCOSE in the July 2017 issue of IEEE Systems, Man, & Cybernetics Magazine.
As a related update, SMCS is now a member of the Council of Societies of the American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering with Dmitry Goldgof of the University of South Florida, Tampa, appointed as the SMCS representative. With this collaboration, we join a forum for weighing in on issues and policy affecting the medical and biological engineering field and coordinating related member-society activities with those of academia, industry, and government, the health-care sector, and biomedical communities. Such relationships are aligned with the SMCS mission to promote interdisciplinary aspects of systems science and engineering, human–machine systems, and cybernetics and the appreciation of the transdisciplinary nature of today’s complex problems and associated systems.

An exemplar of our current activity along this line is our strong participation in technical events and dialog focused on the transdisciplinary topic of brain–machine interface (BMI) systems, where we are represented and led by members of our technical committee on the topic. For this year’s annual flagship conference (IEEE SMC 2018) to be held in Miyazaki, Japan, 7–10 October 2018, our yearly BMI Workshop is being organized to include the participation of leaders affiliated with active brain and BMI-related initiatives around the world. It will once again host a Brain Hackathon involving students from a wide spectrum of academic majors, working with professionals having diverse expertise, on challenge problems of BMI systems. This is fitting for SMCS, as our international membership broadly spans multiple fields and disciplines representing expertise not only on trending technology areas (e.g., model-based systems engineering, systems biology, BMI and shared control systems, awareness computing, artificial intelligence, and machine learning) but also on their integration into the engineered systems that they enable. In many ways, and for many of today’s engineering endeavors, SMCS is where it all comes together!

For our members and nonmember students and professionals who are involved with or have strong interest in the intersections or integration of our three technical pillars, it is important to appreciate the relevance of our Society in this regard. Those who identify with the interdisciplinary aspects of SMC, including sociotechnical issues and related future directions, will find a solid home in SMCS as members. To more clearly promote this aspect of our identity, SMCS has created a new ad hoc committee within its leadership to focus on promotion and branding. This ad hoc committee, chaired by Christopher Nemeth, will undertake a focused effort to articulate and promote the Society’s identity, its emphasis on interdisciplinary aspects of SMC, and its value to current and prospective members and collaborators.

Until next time, I thank all members and friends for your contributions and support to the IEEE SMCS.