One of the strengths of the IEEE Systems, Man, and Cybernetics Society (SMCS) is its community of enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers. Volunteers are essential to the SMCS and ultimately enable the Society to deliver benefits to members, the engineering community, and humanity. Our members advance technology by focusing on traditional subdisciplines of systems analysis and synthesis, human–systems integration and human factors, and cybernetics-enabling intelligent systems. In addition, members are increasingly engaged in today’s trending technologies and methodologies for solving complex engineering and societal problems. As relevant strengths of traditional and trending technologies continue to combine, ultimately converging within the scope of SMCS fields of interest and including transdisciplinary problems, the need persists for volunteers with varied backgrounds and interests.

People with diverse backgrounds and thought leadership skills are needed for important roles in SMCS governance as well as in developing productive relationships with other IEEE Societies, including those involving the production of joint technical offerings of consistent quality. To stay ahead of the pace of change and development, we need more involvement from members who are students and young professionals, the future of the Society. Students receiving education and training in trending technologies involving machine learning, artificial intelligence, robotics, human–machine symbiosis, and model-based systems engineering are highly sought by leading companies, progressive industries, national laboratories, and academic institutions worldwide. Young professional members are already working in positions calling for cutting-edge practices in these and related areas. The demand for their knowledge and skills will continue for years. These fields of interest all come together in the SMCS. Student and young professional members can maximize the membership benefits they share with leaders in those fields while seeing the SMCS as a relevant professional home during their careers today and in the future. Various benefits can be realized through volunteering.

Opportunities for student members at their universities include leadership roles in forming and governing Student Branch Chapters. Each Chapter needs officers, such as a Chapter chair, cochair, treasurer, and secretary. Student Branch Chapters at the various universities represent and fulfill the needs of student members by providing valuable opportunities to host local activities and meet face to face with others sharing the same interests. The purpose of each Chapter is to help student members learn professional skills, build effective international connections, and participate in a strong Society that represents their areas of technical focus.

Becoming active in Student Branch Chapters also opens doors to a mentorship program that the SMCS offers for facilitating relationships among junior and senior SMCS members and providing career guidance. Outside of IEEE Region 10 (Asia and Pacific), the SMCS has very few Student Branch Chapters; many more are needed to benefit students studying SMCS topics at universities across the United States.

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and in Europe, Canada, and Latin America. Our student members are underserved, and we can do much better with support from new volunteers.

SMCS members who have received their first professional degree within the last 10 years are automatically IEEE SMCS Young Professionals. Volunteers looking for opportunities might consider organizing a Young Professionals Committee or local activities that the SMCS might be able to support through seed funding, if available. Such initiatives expose volunteers to Society leaders and peers while attracting those peers to Society activities that enrich their careers. This may open up possibilities for service alongside SMCS leaders, including as a member or supporter of the Board of Governors, which always benefits from the representation and contributions of young professionals. Opportunities also exist to join the Society’s Young Professionals Subcommittee to influence and enrich Society service to Young Professionals.

Additional opportunities for student and young professional members to volunteer are available through participation in conferences sponsored by the SMCS. In such conferences, young members can meet and interact with researchers and professionals sharing their interests, gain increased recognition of their work among peers, extend their network, and discover collaborative opportunities. Young members will find that such early involvement provides benefits that foster their careers. Conference volunteer opportunities can be pursued with the organizers of our conferences, who often find the assistance of student volunteers to be essential to the success of conference operations and positive experiences for conference attendees. In addition, the SMCS junior program, held as part of our annual flagship conference (the IEEE International Conference on Systems, Man, and Cybernetics), provides valuable benefits to student and young professional members in the form of opportunities to present and publish research papers, learn how to organize and run conferences, and gain insights on how to become an academic. The SMCS is also working on ways to highlight the work of young professionals, including through dedicated features in IEEE Systems, Man, and Cybernetics Magazine.

Opportunities for Professors and Practicing Researchers

Our members who are professors have found a wide range of opportunities to volunteer with the SMCS, especially those related to Society governance. Professors consistently comprise more than 80% of the Board of Governors. This is not surprising, as the SMCS has had a chiefly academic focus. Professors also dominate the membership across more than 20 SMCS standing committees and currently make up 100% of the Society’s roster of Distinguished Lecturers.

The Society is fortunate to benefit across the board from the contributions of professors, and there are additional critical volunteer roles that professors can fill. Professors are essential for helping to add more Student Branch Chapters, which require advisors, who are typically professors. Professors whose teaching and/or research focuses are grounded in SMCS fields of interest are well positioned to encourage and guide student activities and career direction by helping to establish Student Branch Chapters and recruiting scholars in those fields to join and participate. This is critically needed, as mentioned, at universities across the United States and in Europe, Canada, and Latin America.

The prospect is similar for SMCS Chapters, the local branches of the SMCS. Professors are often involved in forming such Chapters and frequently serve as instrumental or leading figures. Currently, there are more than 60 SMCS Chapters worldwide, and more are welcome, while there is only one third as many Student Branch Chapters. If there are no Chapters in your local area, you are invited to work with other professors and colleagues to establish one. Note that, if critical mass is an issue, it is possible to form joint SMCS Chapters that include members from other IEEE Societies sharing technical interests with the SMCS.

Volunteer roles in Society governance, as Distinguished Lecturers, and in SMCS Chapter formation can also be filled by members who are practicing researchers and not professors. This is most welcome. Among the additional opportunities for professors and practicing researchers are roles in which volunteers serve as representatives of the SMCS, facilitating productive relationships with other Societies as well as in the production of joint technical offerings cosponsored by the SMCS and other organizations. Examples include representing the SMCS in its membership on one of multiple IEEE Councils (e.g., IEEE Systems Council, IEEE Biometrics Council, and IEEE Council on RFID), on steering committees for cosponsored journals (e.g., IEEE/CAA Journal of Automatica Sinica and IEEE Transactions on Affective Computing), and on committees for SMCS-supported IEEE initiatives (e.g., IEEE Brain, IEEE Blockchain, and IEEE Internet of Things Emerging Technologies Initiatives).

Opportunities for Members From Industry

Members in industry have a critical role to play in grounding SMCS technical activities in practical applications and guiding those activities toward new practical solutions to industrial problems. Increasingly, the flagship annual conference is focusing attention and content on matters of interest to industry through dedicated industry tracks, with workshops, or via an overarching conference theme, as is the case this year with the theme of Industry 4.0. Such focus can only be sharpened through the direct involvement of members from industry in their organization, execution, and success in attracting industry participation. Members from industry can also be proactive in organizing special sessions or workshops that serve to educate researchers from...
academia and national laboratories (e.g., via presentations of technical notes on latest products for research and applications) and practitioners from industry (e.g., on the latest research results and techniques mature enough for industry transition or adoption).

Large and small companies as well as start-ups are very active in tracking the previously mentioned trending technologies. With the SMCS positioned where these trends converge, volunteers supporting and creating SMCS activities get an inside track to international networks and a knowledge base that benefits members from industry and their companies. This can be facilitated by volunteering or working with the SMCS Industrial Liaison Committee or directly with our conference organizing teams. Members from industry could also leverage the SMCS community by proposing projects, studies, or initiatives in particular areas that can be considered by the many technical committees of the SMCS or as workshop and tutorial/webinar topics.

**Call for Female Volunteers**

Finally, while it should go without saying, all of the aforementioned ways and means for volunteering apply to the women of the SMCS. This is worth an explicit mention, not only to be clear but to emphasize that the Society wants more women to get involved. With the welcome (albeit still gradual) increase in the number of women studying and practicing in SMCS fields of interest, I expect to see more women on SMCS committees and among the Society’s leadership.

The Society welcomes the diversity of thought that all backgrounds can bring, whether related to gender or not. Without the additional varieties of diversity and leadership that a greater collection of female members can offer, we are not operating at our fullest potential. More help is needed from our membership to attract and encourage volunteering from our female members at all levels—and not limited to the important work that the IEEE Women in Engineering (WIE) and SMCS WIE Committee does to facilitate the recruitment and retention of women in technical disciplines globally (an activity, by the way, for which we need more contributions from men).

How will you get involved? I invite you to consider one or several ways to take advantage of the opportunities the SMCS has to offer. Your contribution is needed to maximize the Society’s benefits to members, the engineering community, and humanity. I extend a hearty welcome to nonmembers to join the SMCS and to do the same. For more information, please visit http://ieeesmc.org/, and feel free to reach out to points of contact indicated there to inquire about available opportunities. We can do much better by our members, but only through additional contributions from enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers.