

## Our Society's Best Practices

**E**ach IEEE technical Society must undergo a review every five years. The IEEE Control Systems Society (CSS) had its five-year review last year, in 2016. One of the outcomes of this exercise was the requirement that the CSS produce a review report for the IEEE Technical Activities Board (TAB) Society Review Committee (SRC). Although producing this report took quite a bit of work, it helped us to reflect carefully on our Society and its practices. I thank the members of the CSS Executive Committee for their diligence in crafting a well-written document highlighting the many activities of our Society.

On November 17, 2016, Frank Doyle and I attended a face-to-face meeting with the TAB SRC to answer questions and finalize the five-year review, an activity that had taken most of the year. About a month later, the SRC sent us its report on the outcome of our review, and we were happy to learn that it went very well. What struck me most about the SRC report was the number of times the SRC commended our Society for the effective and innovative ways in which we do things. They have compiled a list of these items to be included in an overall list of best practices for other IEEE Societies.

To give you a sense of these best-practice items credited to the CSS, in the following I will include an excerpt from the SRC report [1], with my own annotations in italics. I hope you will find this excerpt to be informative, especially if there are items here regard-

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ing our Society of which you were previously unaware.

The SRC congratulates the Society on the following items of best practice it has identified from the review:

- » The Society maintains strong relationships with five non-IEEE

associations (*the European Control Association, the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences, the Institution of Engineering and Technology, the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics, and the Society of Instrument and Control Engineers*) where



The Chong family (from left): Isaac, Yat-Yee, Maddy, and Ed.

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engagement is primarily through conferences. Representatives of these associations are invited to attend the Society Board of Governors meetings. The SRC considers this to be a best practice because it better engages the leadership of the non-IEEE professional associations.

- » A repository of CSS conference data since 2005 (final report and budget information and summary information on submissions and attendance, but also hotel contracts) was created by the Conference Operations (CO) chair. The CO chair is now in charge of maintaining this database, supporting the Conference Activities Board chair to review conference budgets and contracts and assisting general chairs in the negotiation of contracts, if needed. The database availability and the CO chair support contributed to ease the organization of our CSS conferences. The SRC considers this a best practice because it is a conscious attempt to improve continuity in the Society conference activities and improve quality by reviewing past data to better plan future events.
- » The Society electronically distributes the CSS's publication content to its members on a monthly basis. This lists the current tables of contents of the periodicals sponsored by the Society and offers readers a rapid means to survey and access the latest published articles. It contains hyperlinks to ab-

stracts of the full articles in IEEE *Xplore* and includes links to Society-sponsored conferences, giving readers a preview of upcoming meetings. This is considered a best practice due to its novel approach to keeping members up to date with the most current research results, and the SRC considers this a practice that should be communicated to other S/Cs (*IEEE Societies/Councils*).

- » The Society has a significant online lecture library containing videos of plenaries given at sponsored conferences (*www.ieeecss-oll.org*). The Society indicated that there is good engagement with this content by members. This is a carefully planned resource and is a clear example of best practice.
- » The Society has several activities to engage the wider community within its FOI (*field of interest*), and the SRC considers these best practices because they are specifically targeting the improvement of future leadership or underrepresented groups and achieving positive results:
  - Workshops for high school students increase knowledge and interest in control systems.
  - The Society expressed the importance of a pipeline of future leaders mentioning specifically the search for "young, energetic, and good citizens to join them." The CSS provides student members free access to workshops at two of their flagship conferences [CDC (*IEEE Conference*

*on Decision and Control*) and MSC (*IEEE Multi-Conference on Systems and Control*; now, *IEEE Conference on Control Technology and Applications*)], and students also have access to a program of travel grants and a newcomer's reception at CDC.

- The Society has an active Women in Control group, which attracted over 150 attendees at its last event.
- » The SRC was particularly interested in the Society's Fellows Nominating Committee and a Fellows Evaluation Committee, separated to prevent conflicts of interest. The SRC noted this as a best practice for other Societies to follow as this improves the pipeline for the Society to elevate its members to the highest IEEE grade (*www.ieeecss.org/member-activities/css-ieee-fellows*).
- » SRC considers the creation of an Ethics in Publishing committee, which is responsible for investigating allegations of possible misconduct by authors of papers submitted to or published in Society journals or technically sponsored conferences, a best practice (*ieeecss.org/publications/css-ethics-publishing-committee*).
- » The Society uses an Outreach Task Force and considerable annual funding to increase opportunities for researchers, high school students, and other diverse groups across the regions, which is considered a best practice by the SRC (*www.ieeecss.org/general/control-systems-society-outreach-fund*).

I am proud to be your president and even prouder to be a member of our great CSS.

**REFERENCE**

[1] "Society successes," Society Review Rep., Section 11, IEEE TAB Society Review Committee, Nov. 2016.

**Edwin K.P. Chong**

