

# New iSTEP Program Helps Students Transition to the Profession



## iSTEP Program from IEEE Region 1 Helps Students Transition to the Profession

(By **Soon Wan**, *Member of IEEE Communications Society, Boston Section Chair, Region 1 Membership Development Chair*)

Students join [IEEE](#) and become a member of an IEEE Society for a number of reasons. They join for access to IEEE's wide range of high-quality publications, or to be part of the world's largest technical professional organization, or because they were encouraged by their faculty advisers. Whether it is global networking, professional development, or access to the world's most advanced technical innovations, IEEE offers all of its members a wide spectrum of benefits. However, students faced challenges in finding or learning about all the benefits they were entitled to as members. And not knowing about the great benefits discouraged many students from renewing their IEEE membership.

IEEE Region 1 recognized how important it is to help students while they are still in school. To address this need, Region 1 developed a new initiative called [iSTEP](#) - an Integrated Student Transition to Engineering/Technology Professional program. The program's main goals are to provide students, industry professionals and IEEE leaders the opportunity to share career and membership experiences, while facilitating awareness of what IEEE and IEEE Societies offer student members while they are in school as well as after they graduated. The hope was that iSTEP would encourage student members and graduates to continue their IEEE membership, and motivate them to be more active when they become Graduates of the Last Decade (GOLD) or Graduate Student Members (GSM) after graduation from their undergraduate program.

In October and November of 2011, Region 1 held the first four [iSTEP](#) events in different areas of the region. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, N.Y. (Region 1's Central Area, Schenectady Section), held the first event, followed by events at Syracuse University in Syracuse N.Y. (Region 1's Western Area, Syracuse Section), the New Jersey Institute of Technology in Newark N.J. (Region 1's Southern Area, North Jersey Section), and the Southeastern Regional Educational Service Center in Bedford, N.H. (Region 1's Northeastern Area, New Hampshire Section).

The beginning of each [iSTEP](#) program introduced the IEEE organization and explained the scalability of membership to the students. The program continued by reviewing IEEE's Mentoring Connection program, and also held a live panel session on mentoring. Although most students have mentors or faculty advisers at their school, we wanted them to know that having a mentor from industry or a young professional (GOLD) added value to their career development and was a benefit of being an IEEE student Member. We also hoped that mentors would encourage the mentees to continue their IEEE membership, once they recognized IEEE and IEEE Societies could help shape their professional careers. Most programs concluded with a mentoring game and networking reception.

Survey results have shown that the student attendees were very satisfied with the new iSTEP program. Most importantly, all survey participants commented that they would continue their membership after graduating.

Presentation on the iSTEP program at the Region 1 meeting can be found at: [www.ewh.ieee.org/reg/1/iSTEP/Rubenstein\\_iSTEP\\_12MarMtg.ppt](http://www.ewh.ieee.org/reg/1/iSTEP/Rubenstein_iSTEP_12MarMtg.ppt)

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ISTEP Program - Mentoring Panel Session



Networking during ISTEP event

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