IEEE ComSoc
Member and Global Activities
North-America Region Chapter Chair Congress 2016
Washington, DC, USA

Stefano Bregni
Vice-President for Member and Global Activities
Politecnico di Milano, Italy
bregni@elet.polimi.it
Summary

- Overview on Member and Global Activities
- Global Communications Newsletter
- Student Competition 2016
- Regional activities
  - Chapter Awards
  - recertification of Chapters?
  - promotional kits
- Membership issues
- Value proposition for students
- Women in Communications Engineering
Composition of the MGA Council 2016-2017

- **Chair (Vice-President for Member and Global Activities)**
  - Stefano Bregni

- **Members ex-officio**
  - President: Harvey Freeman (non voting)
  - Past President: Sergio Benedetto (non voting)
  - Director MS: Zhensheng Zhang (voting)
  - Director LA: Carlos A. Lozano G. (voting)
  - Director AP: Takaya Yamazato (voting)
  - Director EMEA: Andrzej Jajszczyk (voting)
  - Director NA: Scott Atkinson (voting)
  - Director SRS: Curtis Siller (voting)
  - WICE Chair: Octavia Dobre (voting)
From the P&Ps

Overview on MGA

- **Scope**
  - all Society activities and programs related to members, chapters, membership development, sister and related societies, and regions

- **Member activities and programs**
  - Chapter Achievement Awards
  - Chapter Funding
  - Distinguished Lecturer and Distinguished Speaker Programs (DLP/DSP)
  - Membership Development Support Grant
  - Global Communications Newsletter
  - Student Competition
  - Regional & Global Chapter Chair Congresses
Global Communications Newsletter

- In 2014, it was recognized the need to revamp GCN
  - improve awareness among Chapters
  - make it more
    - interesting (better content)
    - appealing (new graphical design)
    - widespread (wider distribution)

- Three lines of actions were carried out in 2014-2015 to revamp GCN and make it the
  Voice of the Chapters
Global Communications Newsletter

Actions to Revamp GCN: New Design

- Accolades to Joe Milizzo and Jennifer Porcello!
- Max Loskutnikov designed the logo and provided several suggestions
- Process started in August and completed in Sept. 2014
- Design compliant with the IEEE Visual Identity Guidelines
Global Communications Newsletter

Actions to Revamp GCN: Now Also Online

- Since the origins, the GCN
  - has been printed in the IEEE Communications Magazine (insert)
  - has been posted on www.comsoc.org as PDF with public access

- Since July 2014, the GCN
  - is also emailed (PDF) to all Chapter Chairs (push, not pull)
  - has been assigned two ISSN numbers
    - Print: ISSN 2374-1082
    - Online: ISSN 2374-1090

- Online GCN released in November 2015!
Global Communications Newsletter

Features of the Online GCN

- **Contemporary graphic layout**
- **Contents**
  - **official monthly issue of GCN**
    - same content as the monthly printed issue, but HTML layout
  - **GCN Blog** with public fresh content supplied by Chapters Chairs
    - e.g., announcements, calls, etc.
  - **GCN Forum** accessible only by Chapter Officers
    - to provide an online venue where Chapter Officers can freely discuss experiences and opinions
    - unmoderated because private
    - provided over the IEEE Collabratec platform
Global Communications Newsletter

Problems and Action Plan

Problems

- the Online GCN Blog and Forum are dead
- the IEEE Collabratec platform is not well suited to a forum (no threads)
- not enough contributions from NA Chapters

Action

- new Associate Editor appointed (Periklis Chatzimisios) dedicated to the Online GCN to fully develop its potential

What to do next

- adopt a well-established forum platform (e.g., vBulletin)
- work on the Online GCN problems with the Associate Editor
- series of interviews to MGA Directors in 2016-17
- bring to life the GCN Forum and Blog
- find volunteers to solicit contributions from NA Chapters (kudos to Mrs. Ewell Tan, Singapore!)
New Series of Interviews to MGA Directors

Time plan of interviews

- Curtis Siller, SRS Nov 2016
- Zhensheng Zhang, MS Dec 2016
- Andrzej Jajszczyk, EMEA Jan 2017
- Takaya Yamazato, AP Feb 2017
- Carlos Lozano, LA Mar 2017
- Scott Atkinson, NA Apr 2017
- Octavia Dobre, WICE May 2017
- Lola Awoniyi-Oteri, YP Jun 2017
4th Student Competition 2016
"Communications Technology Changing the World"

- A well-established and smooth-running MGA Program
  - large committee (45 members) chaired by Bregni & Fonseca
  - significant workload for staff, committee and chairs!
  - precisely defined smooth two-rounds review process

- ComSoc Marketing Dept. runs the advertising campaign

- Submission deadline extended to Sep. 16
  - 36 valid submissions
  - October: two-rounds review and selection
  - November: winner announcement (presented at GC 2016)

- Declining number of submissions?
  - 0.8% of SMs in 2014, 1.8% in 2015, 4.4% in 2016
  - strong increase vs. the number of Student Members (now <1000)
  - time to revamp the Competition by introducing some new ideas
Student Competition

Standard Operation Procedure

- 45 committee members evaluated 36 submissions

**Phase I:** members evaluate the projects (3 subsets) by scoring
  - social impact
  - technical content
  - originality
  - practical applicability and results
  - quality of presentation

Projects are ranked

**Phase II:** committee members vote for the best 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} among the top 9 projects ranked out of Phase I

The Chairs Stefano and Nelson examine the top 9 projects out of Phase II and confirm the winners
### First Prize (ex aequo)

- **Cooperative Networks for Ubiquitous Localization and Navigation**
  Wenhan Dai, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA

- **RIM: Resilient Information Management System in Network-Isolated Environment after Disasters**
  Kazuya Anazawa, the University of Aizu, Japan

### 7 Honorary Certificates

- **Massive MIMO for Future 5G Wireless Systems**, Paul Harris, Steffen Malkowsky, Univ. of Bristol, UK

- **LoRa Congo: low-power, long-range monitoring technology for development projects in Congo**, Gowri Sankar Ramachandran iMinds-DistriNet, KU Leuven, Belgium

- **Pervasive Brace Monitoring System for Patients with Scoliosis**, Mehdi Mohammadi, Univ. of Michigan, USA

- **ASUCIC: an Air-Surface-Underwater Collaborative Information Collection System**, Yunfei Li, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, P.R. China

- **Engaging the User in Preserving Her Privacy On the Web**, Hassan Metwalley, Politenico di Torino, Italy

- **Vehicle Enabled Big Data Platform**, Yik Him Ho, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

- **GreenMeter: Energy Efficient Core Networks**, Leonard Nonde, University of Leeds, UK
Regional Activities

2016 IEEE ComSoc Chapter Awards

Winners of the 2016 Chapter Achievement Awards

- Asia/Pacific: **Malaysia**
- EMEA: **Romania**
- Latin America: **Panama**
- North America: **Ottawa**

Winner of the 2016 Chapter-of-The-Year Award

**Malaysia**
Regional Activities

Recertification of Chapters?

- Ongoing discussion on a process of recertification of Chapter vitality
  - IEEE recommends a *vitality checklist for successful Sections/Chapters*
  - ComSoc might request all Chapters to complete a mandatory checklist
    - Questionnaires would be still filled by Chapters who wish to receive funds and be considered for Awards

- ComSoc has already various *incentives* for active Chapters
  - funds upon completion of Questionnaires
  - Chapter Awards
  - chapters rewarded based on the number of members registered to ComSoc conferences (trial in NA Region)

- IEEE process in force for dissolving Chapters/Sections (vtools)

- Anything better we can do?
  - in some cases, there is only the chair with few volunteers around
  - dissolve or thank them for their effort in the desert?
Regional Activities

ComSoc Promotional Kit for Chapters

- First proposed by Carlos Lozano, LA Director

- We should have a **standard ComSoc Promotional Kit**
  - intended for free distribution at Chapter events for members and potential members
  - IEEE PES has a standard Promotional Kit

- ComSoc Staff was requested to
  - compare the composition of ComSoc current promotional kits (if any) with the Promotional Kit of PES
  - design a ComSoc Promotional Kit for Chapters and Student Branches
  - staff is at work
Membership Strategies

Industry vs. Academia Membership

- Some shift of membership segments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Academic</th>
<th>Unspecified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>50,958</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>49,163</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>32,203</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- ComSoc membership is largely unbalanced towards non-academic
  - argument: "Who are "professionals"? "Professionals" are not "Industry"
  - what is "industry"? however, 75%-80% of members is not academic

- Need to serve better Industry members and offer value to them
  - large industry stopped research or changed focus on communications
  - we need to re-focus on new industry interests

- Yet, do not disregard to meet the needs of Academia and Students
  - why only 20%-25% of our members comes from Academia?
Membership Issues

Students are Leaving (...ooops they left already!)

- Free-of-Charge membership inflated artificially our numbers
- Sharp decrease of ComSoc membership Sep. 2014 to Sep. 2015
  - Members: -32.3%
  - Graduate Student Members: -58.4%; Student Members: -83.7%
  - Stopping ComSoc FOC membership explains the -32.3% for members, but it is not the only reason for Students
    - students pay highly reduced IEEE and ComSoc dues: $33 + $17
    - professionals pay: $162 + $33 (from www.comsoc.org)

- October 2016
  - only 821 ComSoc Student Members (excl. GSMs) (stable vs. 2015?)
  - 28,658 members in total (-5% vs. 2015)

- Student Members do not consider the value provided by ComSoc worth the $17 fee (increased by BoG 2016…)!
Strategic Planning Committee

Value Proposition for Students

The Problem
- *we lack to provide value for students*, or (mere evidence of facts)
- *they do not understand the value we provide*

The Challenge
- to convince people (students) that *there is some exclusive content or service (i.e., value), which is obtainable only by ComSoc members*

The Opinion of Leaders
- BoG Opinion Poll: what are the 3 most important values you see in being ComSoc member? what is the reason why you pay the annual fee?

ComSoc Values for Students?
- some values identified also reflecting on the replies to the opinion poll
- issue discussed in the Strategic Planning Committee
Opinion Poll for Membership Marketing

Most Important Values in Being Member?

- Belong to a Community and networking (9)
- Reduced fees for conferences and publications (7)
- Communications Magazine (print and online) and other included publications (5)
- Volunteer service to the Community (incl. TCs) (4)
- Status recognition and association with a brand of excellence (4)
- ComSoc Publications and Conferences (excellence) (4)
- Stay up to date and get exposed to new research areas (4)
- Contribute actively to technical activities and advance (2)
- Awards (2)
- Online content (CTN, BR, DL) (2)
- Professional training (1)
- Support to nurture juniors (1)
Value Proposition for Students

- The **reputation** of being ComSoc member and participate to such a well-reputed community. How to make this **tangible**?
  - *ComSoc membership facilitates the interactions with VIPs* (e.g., by making VIPs to meet people at ComSoc main conferences)
  - encourage more Chapters *to organize DLTs and invite DLs to speak*
  - a student would *pay the modest fee just to access the best forums* where real experts post and discuss technical advances

- **Significant discount** granted to ComSoc members to access ComSoc conferences and publications (the best of the best)

- **Exclusive content accessible only by ComSoc members**
  - e.g., Best Readings, old-fashion Tutorials Now by ComSoc's best speakers, CTN, webinars, impromptu events, …
  - the key here is that such exclusive content is *updated every month*

- **Special initiatives open only to ComSoc Student Members**
Standing Committee
Women in Communications Engineering

Chair
- Octavia Dobre

Members
- Publicity Chair: Sinem Coleri Ergen
- Secretary: Ana Garcia Armada
- Industry Relation Coordinator: Nada Philip
- Student Activity Coordinator: Meryem Simsek
- IEEE WIE Committee Society Coordinator: Mari Carmen Aguayo-Torres
- Maite Brandt-Pearce
- Meixia Tao
- Shalinee Kishore
- Sarah Kate Wilson
- Urbashi Mitra
Women in Communications Engineering
Major Accomplishments in 2016

- Active online presence and networking
  - web site, LinkedIn and Facebook
  - e-mail list including >4,200 members

- Organization of events
  - N2Women-WICE Event at ICC 2016
  - WICE Workshop at GLOBECOM 2016

- Relations with similar groups
  - N2Women (Computer Society)
  - Women in instrumentation and Measurement (I&M Society)
  - WITHITS (Information Theory Society)

- Other activities
  - panels at conferences (ICC, PIMRC)
  - representative in the 2016 Student Competition Committee
  - first trial of the Childcare Program at IEEE GLOBECOM 2016
Women in Communications Engineering
Childcare Program at Conferences

**Highlights**
- grants to support childcare at conference location or at home
- parents are responsible for making own arrangements
- applications are selected by a committee
- grant is provided upon submission of expense receipts
- kids admitted at Exhibit if a Minor Release Form is signed

**In the MGA budget: $300/grant, max total $4000/year**
- Magnetics Society: 10 grants × $300 for conferences ~1500 attendees
- Nuclear & Plasma Sciences Society: up to $400 per family

**First trial at GLOBECOM 2016 led by Maite Brandt-Pearce**
- announced to all Globecom attendees early November
- received 5 independent and complete applications (eligibility checked)
- the actual cost will be ≤$1500 (receipts not received yet)
- plan to repeat at ICC2017, but with earlier announcement