IEEE Information Theory Society Board of Governors Meeting

Location: Remote
Date: November 13th, 2021
Time: The meeting convened at 9:00 am EDT; the meeting adjourned at 4.50 pm EDT Meeting
Chair: Wei Yu
Minutes taken by: Lara Dolecek

Meeting Attendees:

Erik Agrell, Matthieu Bloch, Joseph Boutros (#), Robert Calderbank (#), Themistoklis Charalambous (#), Li Chen (#), Kristen Cignavitch (#), Natasha Devroye, Suhas Diggavi, Lara Dolecek, Stark Draper, Meir Feder, Christina Fragouli, Massimo Franceschetti, Andrea Goldsmith, Camilla Holanti, Shao-Lun Huang (#), Sid Jaggi, Tara Javidi, Navin Kashyap (#), Vijay Kumar, Brian Kurkoski, Matt LaFleur (#), Muriel Medard, Olgica Milenkovic, Prakash Narayan, Henry Pfister, Joachim Rosenthal, Stefano Rini (#), Parastoo Sadeghi, Anand Sarwate, Emina Soljanin, Vincent Tan, Satyajit Thakor (#), Daniela Tuninetti, Emanuele Viterbo (#), Aaron Wagner, I-Hsiang Wang (#), Rabab Ward (#), Rick Wesel (#), Aylin Yener, Wei Yu,

Non-voting members are denoted by (#).

Business conducted between meetings.

1. In June 2021, the board elected the officers for 2022:

    Christina Fragouli was elected as the President of the IEEE Information Theory Society for 2022.

    Matthieu Bloch was elected as the First Vice President of the IEEE Information Theory Society for 2022.

    Stark Draper was elected as the Second Vice President of the IEEE Information Theory Society for 2022.

2. In July 2021, the board voted on the Area Editors for Transactions on Information Theory.

    - Shannon Theory and Information Measures - Ioannis Kontoyiannis
    - Coding and Decoding - Moshe Schwartz
    - Communications - Ubli Mitra
    - Machine Learning and Statistics - Bob Williamson
    - Sequences and Cryptography - Anne Canteaut
    - Security and Privacy - Aylin Yener
    - Quantum - Andreas Winter

- Signal Processing and Source Coding - Deniz Gunduz
- Networking and Computation - Edmund Yeh

All candidates were approved by the board.

3. In August 2021, the board voted to approve meeting minutes from the June 2021 meeting.

4. In October 2021, BoG voted on the following slate of associate editor (AE) candidates for Transactions on Information Theory:

a. Coding and Decoding AE Candidates

   Eimear Byrne
   Cunsheng Ding
   Ryan Gabrys
   Gennian Ge
   Anna-Lena Horlemann-Trautmann
   Brian M. Kurkoski
   Vitaly Skachek
   Itzhak Tamo
   Xiande Zhang

b. Signal Processing and Source Coding AE Candidates

   Lifeng Lai
   Or Ordentlich
   Jan Østergaard
   Namrata Vaswani
   Zhiqiang Xu

c. Networking and Computation AE Candidates

   Atilla Eryilmaz
   Iraj Saniee
   Vijay Subramanian

d. Security and Privacy AE Candidates

   Matthieu Bloch
   Mael LeTreust
   Ravi Tandon
   Vinod Prabharakan
   Anand Sarwate
   Mikael Skoglund

e. Sequences and Cryptography AE Candidates
    Thomas Johansson
    Daniel Katz
    Gohar Kyureghyan

f. Communication AE Candidates

    Ashutosh Sabharwal
    Elif Uysal
    Meixia Tao

g. Shannon Theory and Information Measures AE Candidates

    Varun Jog
    Anelia Somekh-Baruch
    Aslan Tchamkerten
    Michèle Wigger

All AE candidates were approved by the board.

At 9:00 am EST, ITSoc President Wei Yu called the meeting to order.
Attendees introduced themselves. President Yu thanked everyone for joining the meeting.

Motion: A motion was made to approve the agenda.

The motion passed.

President's Report – Wei Yu

President Yu started his presentation by thanking the members for their service. He next presented ITSoc membership numbers and stated that now the membership has been at the highest level since 2003, and that there has been a significant growth in Asia and Pacific region. President Yu also stated that starting in 2023, membership fee discount program for developing nations will be implemented. Next, President Yu announced the results of BoG election. The following members were elected (or re-elected) to the BoG for 2022 - 2024: Marco Dalai, Lara Dolecek, Michael Langberg, Henry Pfister, Sennur Ulukus, and Shun Watanabe. He thanked Emina Soljanin for over a decade of service on the BoG, as well as the other outgoing BoG members P. Vijay Kumar, Andrea Goldsmith, Suhas Diggavi, Prakash Narayan and Olgica Milenkovic. He welcomed Stark Draper as Second Vice President for 2022. Next, he stated that Edmund Yeh is renominated as Treasurer for 2022, and that Parastoo Sadeghi is nominated as Secretary for 2022. He next went over the awards received by society members. President Yu next discussed IEEE Systems Council, in which ITSoc is one of 18 sponsoring members. He stated that the main membership benefit is outreach, and that the membership fee is permanently set to $0.

The following motions were presented.

Motion: To reappoint Edmund Yeh as Treasurer for 2022

Motion: To appoint Parastoo Sadeghi as Secretary for 2022.

The motions passed.

The following motion was issued.

Motion: To renew the MOU with IEEE systems council.

The motion passed.

Next, President Yu provided updates on the movie "Bit Player." He stated that Amazon removed all documentaries not produced by itself, including this one. The movie is now available on Curiosity Stream. The movie has made $42K over two years. The society takes a fraction of this revenue; this amount would go to reserves if not spent.

In conclusion, President Yu outlined challenges on the horizon, including that the locations of ISIT 2024 and 2025 are both still open, whether ISITs will be remote, in-person, or hybrid, and how the impact and timeliness of flagship journals could improve. It was noted that the next BoG meeting will be on February 5, 2022, with the format still to be determined.

IT Schools Subcommittee – Parastoo Sadeghi

Next presentation was opened up by Parastoo Sadeghi on behalf of the IT Schools Subcommittee. She provided an update on the IT schools. NASIT 2021 was held virtually in Vancouver, Canada. All lectures were live and there were around 200 attendees. Statistics regarding attendee demographics were presented. IT school held in India in 2021 had pre-recorded lectures. Statistics and the list of speakers were also shared with BoG.

Next, Shao-Lun Huang presented a proposal for EASIT 2022 to be held in Shenzen City, China. He went over the organizing committee, location, venue, list of speakers, timeline, and three plans for holding the event in person, in a hybrid mode, and fully virtual. The preference from the organizers is to hold the event in person.

The following motion was issued:

Motion: To support the 2022 EASIT School at $20K.

The motion passed.

Next, Satyajit Thakor presented the status of the 2022 India School of Information Theory to be held at IIT Mandi, India in June 2022. He presented IIT Mandi, and stated that the school harbors cross-disciplinary culture and that this is the only IIT in the Himalayas. He also presented the list of speakers, went over the registration fees, organizing and advisory committee, and stated that they are currently seeking sponsorship.

The following motion was issued.

Motion: To support the 2022 India School at $10K.

The motion passed.

Next, Rick Wesel presented the status of the 2022 North American School of Information Theory (NASIT), to be held at UCLA, Los Angeles in August 2022. He went over the program outline, list of speakers, organizing committee, and the social program.

The following motion was issued.

Motion: To support the 2022 NASIT at $10K.

The motion passed.

It was stated by Parastoo that a potential place for ESIT 2023 is Bristol, UK, and Sid Jaggi is leading this effort. It was also discussed to not hold EASIT in 2023 due to another related event taking place in Hong Kong around the same time. BoG agreed to postponement.

Conference Committee – Vijay Kumar

Vijay provided update on the status of ISIT 2022 to 2024. He stated that ISIT 2021 was highly successful. It was noted that new budget for ISIT 2022 needs to be approved. Vijay also stated that previously considered ISIT 2024 in New York City will not be further pursued due to steep cost associated with various options. He thanked Anand Sarwate and Joerg Kliewer for their service in regards to planning of this event.

ISIT 2021 Organizing Committee Update – Parastoo Sadeghi

Parastoo presented a report on ISIT 2021. There were 968 attendees and 571 papers were presented. There were 8 tutorials over 2 days. Parastoo provided detailed statistics about the event. The event was completely virtual and was run with great success.

ITW 2021 Organizing Committee – Brain Kurkoski

Next, Brian presented a report on ITW 2021. He thanked the organizing committee. Brian stated that ITW was run fully virtually on a platform developed for the society. He also said that there was daily lottery to encourage participation. BoG members expressed their impression that the workshop was extremely well run. It was clarified that the society invested $35K to develop this on-line platform which the society now owns.

ISIT 2022 Organizing Committee -- Themis Charalambous

Next update was given by Themis on behalf of the ISIT 2022 Organizing Committee to be held in Espoo, Finland. There was a discussion on the format of the event (in person vs. fully virtual, and if in-person the criteria for accepting on-line presentations), and at what time does that format need to be made binding so as not to lose the venue deposit but also not to miss out on prospective authors who may not be able to attend in person. A survey to prospective authors is to be made available at submission time to gauge the in-person attendance was discussed. BoG members made suggestions on how to make this survey valuable for the organizers while keeping the event inclusive for the whole society, and to make ISIT 2022 offer the best experience given the circumstances.

Next, a poll was issued to gauge BoG opinion on the minimum number of in person attendees an ISIT needs to attract in order to be worthwhile to hold an ISIT in person. Out of 23 respondents, 7 chose 200; 8 chose 300; 5 chose 400; 2 chose 600; 1 chose 700.

ITW 2022 Organizing Committee – Navin Kashyap

Next presentation was given by Navin on behalf of the ITW 2022 Organizing Committee. He stated that the event is primarily planned in a hybrid mode, and that that the venue is flexible in terms of booking. He also went over the budget and timeline. He stated that call for papers is out and that a sponsorship brochure has been prepared. He next went over the next steps in organization, including setting up virtual platform and submission, and having an open call for themed sessions.

ITW 2023 Proposal – Joseph Boutros

Joseph went over the proposed dates, motivation for the proposed venue, including a historical context. He stated that the web domain is already booked. There was some discussion on the paper acceptance rate, which is currently projected at 40-45%. It was noted that some previous ITWs had been very popular in terms of submissions, leading to program expansion.

The following motion was issued.

Motion: To approve ITW 2023 and its attendant budget.

The motion passed.

ISIT 2023 Organizing Committee – I-Hsiang Wang

I-Hsiang provided an update on the status of ISIT 2023. He presented a new hybrid conference format that will consist of both live and in-person sessions. Each day of the conference will have 2 live and 6 in-person parallel sessions. All the conference events will be held in the same week. There was some discussion regarding how many papers will be allowed for the virtual component. It was noted that virtual sessions are harder to implement and thus the number of

virtual papers should be limited while also maintaining a high quality of papers. A motion regarding conference budget was presented. After a discussion on if and how to limit the virtual attendance, a revised motion was issued.

Motion: To approve a hybrid format of ISIT 2023 and its attendant budget.

The motion was approved.

IEEE Division IX Update – Rabab Ward

Next presentation was given by Rabab Ward who presented an IEEE Division IX update. She went over the membership numbers, and said there has been a recent drop in membership in higher grade. She also stated that the constitution is being revisited, as it has not changed since 1963. Currently, 1000 signatures on a petition are required to initiate a change, and the new rule will change it to 1% of the total membership plus at least 1/3 of 1 % from all regions.
A BoG member commented that surpluses are revealed late, and Rabab said other societies also have a similar issue. It was state that Aylin Yener is a candidate for Division IX director-elect.

After a short break, the meeting continued.

Constitution and Bylaws Committee – Emina Soljanin

Emina presented proposed changes to bylaws. President Yu went over the rules to make changes to bylaws; revisions that were communicated to the board three weeks ago require 2/3 majority of those present (assuming quorum is met); amendments that change the intent of the revisions require unanimous approval.

There was a discussion regarding the inclusion of 3 journal and magazine EiCs as ex-officio board members. It was noted that other sister societies do not share the practice of including EiCs on the board. It was also noted that changes to the Bylaws are potentially cascading and need to be done carefully.

A motion to make changes to the pertinent part of Bylaws was introduced. A BoG member issued an amendment to remove all EiCs from the board.

The amendment failed. It did not receive unanimous approval.

The following motion was issued:

Motion: To approve the Bylaws revision Article IV, Section 3 (Ex-officio member of the Board).

The motion failed, as it did not reach 2/3 majority.

The following motion was issued.

Motion: To approve the Bylaws revision Article V, Section 4 (Publications Committee).

The motion passed.

It was explained that the new Area Editor model for the Transactions requires an update to the Bylaws. The set of motions on the Transactions, Journal, and Magazine editorial structure were introduced.

The following amendments to the language of the motions were issued.

Motion. To amend the Bylaws revision Article V, Section 4, Subsection A (Transactions Editor-in-Chief, Area Editors, and Associate Editors) as follows:

Current: In the event of a within-term vacancy in the position of EiC, an interim EiC shall be designated by the President from the present editorial board or past EiCs.

Amended: In the event of a within-term vacancy in the position of EiC, an interim EiC shall be designated by the President, from the present Transactions Area Editors, Associate Editors, or past Transactions EiCs.

The motion passed.

Next motion was issued.

Motion: To amend the Bylaws revision Article V, Section 4, Subsection B (Journal Steering Committee, and Editor-in-Chief) as follows:

Current: "In the event of a within-term vacancy in the position of EiC, an interim EiC shall be designated by the President from the present editorial board or past EiCs."

Amended: In the event of a within-term vacancy in the position of EiC, an interim EiC shall be designated by the President, from the present Journal Senior Editors, or past Journal EiCs.

The motion passed.

Next motion was issued.

Motion: To extend the meeting by 1 hour.

The motion passed.

Next motion was as follows.

Motion: To amend the Bylaws revision Article V, Section 4, Subsection C (Magazine Steering Committee, and Editor-in-Chief) as follows:

Current: In the event of a within-term vacancy in the position of EiC, an interim EiC shall be designated by the President from the present editorial board or past EiCs.

Amended: In the event of a within-term vacancy in the position of EiC, an interim EiC shall be designated by the President, from the present Magazine Editors, or past Magazine EiCs.

The motion passed.

The following amended motions on the publications were issued:

Motion: To approve the Bylaws revision Article V, Section 4, Subsection A (Transactions Editor-in-Chief, Area Editors, and Associate Editors).

The motion passed.

Motion: To approve the Bylaws revision Article V, Section 4, Subsection B (Journal Steering Committee, and Editor-in-Chief).

The motion passed.

The motion on the Magazine editorial structure was introduced. An amendment to the motion was proposed and seconded:

Motion: To remove "The Magazine Editor-in-Chief shall be a voting member of the Board".

The motion failed. It did not receive unanimous approval.

The original motion was issued:

Motion: To approve the Bylaws revision Article V, Section 4, Subsection C (Magazine Steering Committee, and Editor-in-Chief).

The motion failed. It did not receive 2/3 majority approval.

It was noted that there could be some resulting inconsistencies. A BoG member indicated that they the bylaws document will be carefully checked after the meeting.

It was then explained that committee membership requirements require updating. Next motions were then issued.

Motion: To approve the Bylaws revision Article V, Section 4, Subsection D (Newsletter Editor).

Motion: To approve the Bylaws revision Article V, Section 6 (Digital Presence Committee).

Both motions passed

Next motion was issued.

Motion: To approve the Bylaws revision Article V, Section 10 (Aaron D. Wyner Distinguished Service Award Committee).

The motion passed.

Next motion was issued.

Motion: To approve the Bylaws revision Article V, Section 13 (Paper Awards Committee).

The motion passed.

Next motion was proposed and seconded.

Motion: To replace all occurrences of the pronouns "he/his/she/her" by "they/their" in the Bylaws.

The motion passed.

JSAIT EiC – Andrea Goldsmith

Andrea stated that there have been 7 issues so far, that the quality of papers has been high, and that JSAIT now generates a revenue of almost $100K in 2021. Jeff Andrews thanked Andrea for her excellent leadership, and presented to following motion, coming from the JSAIT steering committee.

Motion: To appoint Tara Javidi as the next EiC for JSAIT.

The motion passed.

Transactions on Information Theory (T-IT) EiC - Muriel Medard and Kristen Cignavitch

Next presentation was given by Muriel in her role as EiC of T-IT. She stated the paper submission and time to publication statistics. She also stated that there were outlier papers that went over one year without a single review. She also stated that the allotted time to review has been reduced and that she honored extension requests. New editorial structure with area editors has been put in place.

Next, Kristen Cignavitch, who is with IEEE Publishing Operations assisting with the T-IT issues, talked how distributing the work among area editors will make the reviewing workload easier to manage.

It was also stated that the journal is subject to review by the Periodicals Review and Advisory Committee (PRAC) from the IEEE on a 5-year cycle basis.

Next part of the meeting was an executive session.

The following motions were issued.

Motion: To appoint Graeme Smith as Associate Editor in Quantum for the IEEE Transactions on Information Theory.

Motion: To appoint Mario Berta as Associate Editor in Quantum for the IEEE Transactions on Information Theory.

Motion: To appoint Stefano Mancini as Associate Editor in Quantum for the IEEE Transactions on Information Theory.

Motion: To appoint Richard Nock as Associate Editor in Machine Learning for the IEEE Transactions on Information Theory.

Motion: To appoint Frank Nielsen as Associate Editor in Machine Learning for the IEEE Transactions on Information Theory.

All motions passed.

After the executive session ended, due to that the meeting is running overtime, the following motion was issued.

Motion: To remove the item on the meeting agenda regarding Treasurer's report.

The motion passed.

BITS Magazine – Christina Fragouli and Rob Calderbank

Rob provided an update on the status of BITS in his role as EiC of BITS. He mentioned that the first issue is in production, with the expectation from the IEEE of having 2 issues in the first year. He also mentioned two upcoming special issues in 2022, one on art and information theory and the other on quantum and information theory. He encouraged new submissions.
Christina, in her role as chair of the BITS steering committee, provided an update on how the BITS funding has been used for illustrations, design and publicity.

Proposal of Joy Thomas Tutorial Paper Award – Suhas Diggavi

Presentation was given by Suhas, who led an ad hoc committee to prepare the criteria for the IEEE Joy Thomas tutorial paper award. This award itself had been already approved by the board of Governors in the June 2021 meeting, where Suhas had presented the rationale of having

such an award.   He reminded everyone about the rationale of having such an award and its importance to the IT society. He also explained the criteria that the committee had proposed for the award including the eligibility, process and timelines.

Next, a motion was issued.

Motion: To approve the criteria and the process for the IEEE Joy Thomas Information Theory Tutorial Paper Award.

The motion passed.

Matthieu Bloch stated that the results for the Padovani Lecturer, Goldsmith Lecturer and Distinguished Lecturers will be available in 3 weeks.

Remaining agenda items were postponed for the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 4.45 pm EST.