

IEEE Information Theory Society (ITSoc) Board of Governors (BoG) Meeting

Location: Hybrid Meeting, where the in-person meeting was held in Taipei, Taiwan.

Date: June 25, 2023

Time: The meeting convened at 9:47 am and adjourned at 5:22 pm, local time.

Meeting Chair: Matthieu Bloch

Minutes taken by: Parastoo Sadeghi

Meeting Attendees: Matthieu Bloch, Martina Cardone#, Li Chen, Po-Ning Chen#, Marco Dalai*, Natasha Devroye*, Lara Dolecek, Stark Draper, Meir Feder*, Christina Fragouli*, Shao-Lun Huang#, Michael Gastpar*, Gerhard Kramer#, Tara Javidi, Brian Kurkoski, Michael Langberg*, Jungwoo Lee#, Henry Pfister, Stefano Rini#, Joachim Rosenthal#, Parastoo Sadeghi, Lalitha Sankar#, Anand Sarwate, Christian Senger#, Vincent Tan*, Ashley Tufuga##, Daniela Tuninetti, Lalitha Vadlamani#, Venugopal Veeravalli*, Aaron Wagner, Shun Watanabe, Chao Tian#, Edmund Yeh*, Wei Yu (Non-voting are denoted by #. Remote attendees are denoted by *).

Business conducted between meetings: Between BoG meetings of February 2023 and June 2023, the following business item was conducted and voted upon via email.

Motion: To approve the minutes of the BoG meeting held on Feb 12, 2023. The motion passed.

At 9:47 am local time, the meeting Chair, Matthieu Bloch, called the meeting to order and roll call was taken. The following motion was issued.

Motion: To approve the meeting agenda. The motion passed.

1) President's Report: The President, Matthieu Bloch, started his report by expressing special thanks to Muriel Medard and Rob Calderbank, the respective outgoing Editors-in-Chief (EiC) of the IEEE Transactions on Information Theory and the IEEE BITS, Information Theory Magazine, for their leadership. He recalled that Suhas Diggavi will become the EiC of the BITS Magazine from July 1st. He also thanked all committee chairs for their tireless work. Next, Matthieu thanked all ISIT 2023 organizers, highlighted many special events at ISIT 2023, and encouraged everyone to attend them.

Next, Matthieu provided an update on the five-year review of the Society. Matthieu noted an overall positive evaluation of the Society in the review outcome, which was handed in April 2023. Only one essential and one critical recommendation was recorded in the report, where the remaining recommendations reflected non-critical areas of improvement. The essential recommendation is to strengthen connections with industry, whereas reducing the sub-to-pub time of the Transactions is flagged as critical. Matthieu stated that several actions have already been taken to address both issues. However, there is room for more to be done. Next, some of the positive comments from the review report were shared with the BoG. For example, the review panel commended the Society for a healthy financial situation and for vibrant publications and conference portfolios. While the review panel found the Society's governance is generally sound, they noted a need to better document operational best practices.

Next, Matthieu provided an update on the latest TAB meeting, which occurred during the week prior to ISIT 2023. Matthieu highlighted that the Fellows Committee will operate differently from 2024 and this will affect evaluation processes. He elaborated that until 2023, there were one Society-level and one IEEE-level Fellows Committees. From 2024, ITSoc will be placed in a "cohort" with two other small societies and a Cohort Fellows

Committee will act as an intermediate evaluation and ranking step before the final IEEE-level Committee. Matthieu flagged some concerns were expressed at the TAB meeting in terms of how this process is to be rolled out.

Next, Matthieu stated that IEEE recognizes healthy financial situations of many societies, including ITSoc. However, it is expected that all societies better plan and use their surplus. Therefore, there is an opportunity for ITSoc to spend more on new initiatives, try new ideas and scale up or down operations in accordance with outcomes. Matthieu concluded his report by stating his plan to review the best practice document that was recently circulated by the IEEE about election/selection processes of officers. He expected to find no major issues with the way ITSoc Officers are elected or selected.

At the end of his report, the following motion was put forward by the President with the support of a second.

Motion: To approve the following corrections to the June 2022 BoG meeting minutes:

- In Section 4, Area Editors and editors are corrected to read Associate Editors.
- Two typos in names in the meeting attendees are fixed.

The motion passed.

2) Treasurer's report: The Treasurer, Edmund Yeh, started his report by stating that the financial situation of the Society continues to be strong, despite negative investment returns by the IEEE in 2022. He elaborated that because of IEEE investment losses, the Society has incurred an overall negative balance this year. However, advice from the IEEE is that such infrequent losses should not be a source of concern.

Edmund elaborated that before IEEE losses were considered, the Society had an operational surplus of around \$654K in 2022. However, after factoring in IEEE investment loss of around \$1.066M, the net balance in Society's reserves at the end of 2022 was \$8.328M, which shows a reduction of about \$448K. Edmund highlighted that only \$27.63K was spent on new initiatives in 2022, which was well below the \$169K budget.

Next, Edmund recalled that the 2023 operational surplus had been estimated at \$122K. However, the actual surplus as of May was about \$255K, which is subject to further fluctuations. Edmund provided an update on special initiatives expenditure in 2023, which have been approved for \$195K (comprising \$156.7K under the 3% rule and \$38.3K under the 50% rule). However, as of May, no amount has been spent. Edmund encouraged champions of 2023 special projects to increase rate of spending. Next, he reminded members of the timeline for IEEE-level budget approvals and stated that the deadline for proposing special projects under the 3% rule is mid-August each year and the deadline for submission of invoices is before the Thanksgiving Holidays. He encouraged BoG members and all society members to propose special projects and budget items early in the year. In addition, Edmund highlighted the availability of travel funds for approved types of travel by BoG members and that special travel requests may be considered by the President and the Treasurer on a case-by-case basis.

Edmund concluded his report by stating that the flip side of being conservative with expenditures and maintaining a big surplus is that the Society was not severely hit by IEEE losses in 2022.

There were follow-up discussions on how to utilize the Society's surplus, e.g., to subsidize student travel to ITSoc conferences. One member stated that a targeted approach for student travel support would scale better than a uniform approach. Another member supported free registration only for students who do not have a paper at the conference. Another member suggested providing more support for attendance from less developed countries.

In response to a question on what conference surplus percentage is acceptable, it was clarified that the 20% target surplus serves as an IEEE guideline. However, the Society is well placed to manage risks and negotiate the budget for each individual conference. One member noted that the attendance target for ISIT 2024 in the proposed budget seems optimistic, forecasting a 20% surplus. However, a lower attendance would result in a lower surplus. Another member stated that systematic support from the Society in setting reasonable financial expectations will help garner more interest from society members to volunteer for conference organization.

A member asked whether an umbrella new initiative can be created to combine all efforts to provide travel support for conferences. In response, it was recommended that best strategies and tactics be first decided, which can then determine appropriate ways to handle them: either using the Society's operational budget or in the form of new projects. One member highlighted that ISIT 2023 registration fee for students is around \$350. Hence, the main sources of travel cost are airfare and accommodation. This member suggested covering main travel costs for targeted students. Following on, a member suggested to form an ad-hoc committee comprising past and current treasurers, officers and conference organizers who should be tasked with obtaining more comprehensive data and plan accordingly for the best use of our Society's surplus in the future.

A member asked about possible reasons behind low expenditure on new initiatives. In response, the importance of planning early for special projects was reiterated, which would allow enough time to spend the allocated money.

Last, a member suggested a new initiative to reduce the sub-to-pub time of publications by providing free copy-editing services for reviewers who submit their reviews on time. It was suggested to consult the relevant EiCs and implement this idea if it is expected to be impactful.

3) Journal on Selected Areas in Information Theory (JSAIT) EiC report: Tara Javidi, the EiC of JSAIT, presented her report on the status of the Journal. She reported that all four issues for 2022 are now published. She also reported that four issues are scheduled for 2023. A new Call for Papers (CFP) has been announced on information-theoretic methods for trustworthy machine learning (ML) and three more issues are currently under discussion. Next, Tara thanked Senior Editors for their work with Guest Editors. Tara reminded members that since the beginning of 2023, JSAIT has been operating under a volume-only model, where special issues will be listed under different "Topics" in IEEEExplore. Tara highlighted that this model allows accepted papers to be published on IEEEExplore as their camera-ready version becomes available, and this will bypass the problem of one or two late papers delaying the publication of an entire special issue.

Tara expressed a need to change the JSAIT website such that special issues are more visible under the volume-only model. Each special issue should be clearly marked and identified under its topic and notifications about a new issue should be disseminated when the guest editorial is available. Tara flagged this may require a major website upgrade and welcomed suggestions on how to better promote special issues on the website.

Next, Tara provided an overview of the areas that have already been improved or are currently in train. She stated that most special issues have so far been solicited, which raises concerns about low contributed issues in the pipeline. She hoped that the new ISIT-Workshops Initiative can alleviate this problem and asked BoG member for suggestions on how JSAIT Senior Editors can play a proactive role in attracting contributed issues. Another concern is lower than expected traction with other societies. Tara elaborated that special issues organized from within the ITSoc community tend to attract more papers, while cross-society special issues have so far relied on a large percentage of invited papers. This has led to high acceptance rates, as flagged during a recent PAC review. Tara outlined her plans to coordinate with the incoming EiC of the

BITS Magazine on complementary and synergetic roles that JSAIT and BITS can play to support each other. Tara also flagged the possibility of moving some papers from the Transactions across to JSAIT if deemed appropriate. However, she recognized this needs further consultation with the incoming EiC of the Transactions. Finally, she reported that page count was increased via absorbing supplementary material of some papers into the journal.

During discussions, a member asked whether smaller more frequent special issues would work better than bigger less frequent ones. Tara noted this idea for further investigation. One member asked whether other cognate journals have a volume-only model. In response, Tara clarified that one cognate journal operates under a volume-only model and each issue is clearly visible on their website under a corresponding topic. She also highlighted that close timing of some JSAIT Special Issues with respect to similar special issues by other journals has been a detrimental factor in attracting sufficient papers.

One member noted that some journals rely on junior faculty to run special issues. It was clarified that while junior faculty can be part of the guest editorial team, it is important to have senior (tenured) Lead Guest Editors to take charge of making difficult decisions. Tara emphasized the importance of promoting JSAIT as a high-quality journal to outside the IT community and to newly tenured faculty members.

A member thanked Tara and all the editors for their ongoing work and suggested posting CFPs several months in advance. In response, Tara clarified that finding suitable editors for creating an issue has been the bottleneck, whereas preparing/posting CFPs is usually much quicker. A member asked about measuring the impact of JSAIT compared with more established comparable journals. In response, Tara clarified that larger societies have a self-replenishing pipeline of contributed special issues and that due to the age of the journal, the official Impact Factor of JSAIT is not reported yet. She described one of her plans is creating social media blogs to highlight past high-impact papers. One member welcomed this idea and noted a similar blog by a past EiC of ComSoc JSAC. This member asked how supplementary material were included in special issues. In response, Tara clarified that where supplementary material was deemed essential to understanding a paper, page charges were waived, and supplementary material was merged with the paper. A member suggested rolling special issues on hot topics such as 6G, quantum, or ML. In response, another member cautioned against competition with an open journal on quantum, which is a low-overhead and popular journal.

- 4) IEEE Transactions on Information Theory EiC report:** Matthieu Bloch reported on behalf of Muriel Medard, the EiC of the Transactions. He reported that during Muriel's term as the EiC, about half-a-year reduction has been achieved in the sub-to-pub time. Matthieu reported that soon, sub-to-pub times will be calculated differently at the IEEE level, and this may impact our Impact Factor. Matthieu noted that while the review time has been significantly reduced, there is more room for improvement. Matthieu thanked Muriel on behalf of the BoG for restructuring the Editorial Board and for adding more Associate Editors towards more diversity and balanced workloads.

During discussions, one member asked whether a third late review can be shared with the authors after an initial decision has been made with only two consistent reviews. It was flagged that sharing a late review after the first decision is made may not be possible under current ScholarOne site settings. One member stated that it may not be fair on authors if a late review contained important comments that required changing the direction of revisions at a late stage in the process. One member stated, on the other hand, that it is better to receive as much information as possible and maybe the parameters of ScholarOne can be tweaked to allow more flexibility to receive more reviews. One member suggested that reviews that are deemed reasonable could be

shared with the authors as soon as they arrive, even before any formal decision is made. It was noted by one member that Associate Editors have a great deal of discretion and can consult with the Area Editors and the EiC if in doubt about best practices.

- 5) Nomination of Officers:** Stark Draper was nominated as the 2024 President. Aron Wagner was nominated as the 2024 1st VP. One member nominated Meir Feder as the 2024 2nd VP, which received a second support. Brian Kurkoski was nominated as the 2024 2nd VP by a member, which received a second support. The President clarified that an email with voting instructions will be sent out to the BoG in the coming weeks to elect the 2024 2nd VP.

Beginning of Executive Session

Motion: To appoint Venu Veeravalli as the Editor-in-Chief of the IEEE Transactions on Information Theory for a two-year term from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2025. The motion passed.

Motion: To appoint Christian Senger as the Chair of the Digital Presence Committee for a three-year term from January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2026. The motion passed.

Motion: To comply with the new timelines and processes for the Fellows review process for the Fellow Class of 2025, the Nominations and Appointments Committee shall appoint the Society Fellow Evaluation Committee Vice Chair and the Cohort Fellow Evaluation Committee Evaluators from the ITSoc by September 1, 2023, in consultation with the ITSoc Fellow Evaluation Committee Chair. The Cohort Fellow Evaluation Committee Evaluators shall be chosen among the ITSoc Fellow Evaluation Committee members. The motion passed.

Motion: To approve the report of the Paper Awards Committee. The motion passed.

Motion: "To award the Information Theory Society Paper Award to C. T. Li and V. Anantharam, "A unified framework for one-shot achievability via the Poisson matching lemma," in IEEE Tran. Inf. Theory, Feb. 2021." The motion passed.

End of Executive Session

- 6) Thomas M. Cover Dissertation Award Committee report:** Roy Yates, the Chair of the Committee, provided a brief video report about work done by the Committee in 2023. He introduced five new members of the Committee, in addition to two existing members, and the 1st VP as ex-officio. After identifying conflicts of interest, two rounds of reviews were conducted to narrow down the nominations. In round one, two non-conflicted members scored each thesis between 0 (not likely award worthy) and 2 (very possibly award worthy), which resulted in elimination of four theses. In round two, one more non-conflicted member was assigned to review each remaining thesis and two more theses were eliminated. For the final round, all remaining five theses were reviewed by members. A complex set of rules were devised to handle ranked voting and Col. However, in the end, there was clear consensus among votes and five out of seven members chose the PhD thesis by Jin Sima, titled "Correcting Errors in DNA Storage", as their top ranked thesis.

Roy continued his report by stating that expanding the committee was helpful in reducing the review burden on members and introducing diversity of expertise in the Committee. Despite complexity, ranked choice voting worked well. He noted that three theses will be carried over to 2024 and Roy anticipated that a committee comprising six or seven

members should suffice to handle the review task. He concluded his report by reminding the BoG that the term of Lara Dolecek and himself will finish in December 2023 and encouraged Society members to serve on the Committee if invited.

- 7) **James L. Massey Research and Teaching Award for Young Scholars Selection Committee report:** Sid Jaggi, the Chair of the Committee provided a video report on the activities of the Committee. He reported that seven nominations were initially received. However, one was invalid due to the nominee being past ten years post-graduation as of January 2023 and another was deemed invalid due to late submission of material by the nominator. Out of seven initial nominations, two were female and five were male; six were based in the US and one was based in Europe. In the first meeting, the list was narrowed down to two candidates. In a second meeting and based on ranked voting, Dr. Hamed Hassani was selected to receive the James. L. Massey Award for his outstanding contributions to teaching and research.

Sid continued his report with some suggestions for modifying the wording of the Society By-laws to address several identified issues. The first suggestion is to remove explicit deadlines from the By-laws for making decisions about the Award. The rationale for this proposal is that encoding deadlines in the By-laws may be too restricting. The second suggestion is to remove the phrase “exemplifies the special quality of James L. Massey”. The committee felt that this phrase is unnecessary and can be confusing. Instead, the committee suggests focusing on the qualities the Society seeks in an awardee. The third suggestion is to replace “brief biography” with “full CV”, which can shed more light on the breadth and depth of candidate’s qualities and expertise. The fourth suggestion is to include in the application a portfolio (up to three pages) describing a nominee’s contribution, accomplishments, and impact on teaching in the field of information theory. Lastly, the By-laws could be modified to ensure at least one of the recommendation letters focuses on teaching accomplishments.

Sid concluded his report with a list of more minor changes to the process, including 1) minor changes to the wording of evaluation criteria on the submission webpage to cater for atypical or unusual contributions, 2) using the ITSoc submission portal system for handling the submission of nomination package, and 3) submission of teaching evaluations (and possibly teaching portfolios) by the nominees themselves. The rationale is that such material may contain sensitive information and may be available only to the nominee.

- 8) **Conference Committee report:** Li Chen, the Chair of the Conference Committee, provided his report on the state of conferences. He first summarized the state of ISITs between 2023 and 2028. He noted ISIT 2023 in Taipei is running in hybrid mode, where 397 out of 619 submissions were accepted for the in-person track and 66 out of 98 submissions were accepted for the virtual track, resulting in an overall acceptance rate of around 65%. He then provided some statistics about participation by country, as well as distribution of papers by topic. By early June, about 600 delegates had registered for the main event and around 150 scholars had registered for tutorials. A new feature of ISIT 2023 is hosting a special inter-society session, which is co-organized with ISCAS 2023 (the flagship conference of the IEEE Circuits and Systems Society). Five ISIT papers with a systems theory flavor are to be presented in a special session on Tuesday June 27. This session is open to both ISCAS and ISIT attendees.

Next, Li provided an update about ISIT 2024, which will take place in Athens, Greece in July 2024. The CFP was distributed at ICASSP 2023 in Rhodes, Greece and is also being distributed at ISIT 2023. The organizers are planning to host a chess event, which may incur around \$4K to run. The organizers hope that if they cannot succeed in finding sponsorship for this event, the Society can support it. Li flagged the organizers are

considering named sponsorships for individual ISIT 2024 events, such as Meet the Shannon Lecturer or WITHITS. He invited BoG members to provide comments on the pros and cons of this approach.

Next, Li reported that organization of ISIT 2025 in Michigan is going well and the General Co-chairs have finalized the organizing committee and are in the process of signing contracts for hotels. An application to NSF for student travel grants is being prepared. The organizers of ISIT 2026 in Guangzhou, China have prepared their event logo and a flyer, which will be promoted at upcoming conferences. The flyers are also distributed in this year's ISIT. While there is currently no candidate for ISIT 2027, Li noted that a team from South Korea will present a preliminary proposal to host ISIT 2028 in Seoul.

Li continued with a report on ITW 2023, which took place in Saint-Malo in France in April 2023 and received positive feedback from attendees. About 130 delegates attended the conference, which featured 96 accepted papers out of 135 submissions.

Next, Li highlighted a proposal to organize ITW 2024 in Shenzhen, China. For ITW 2025 and 2026, proposals from Sydney, Australia and Phoenix, USA are respectively expected to be received later in the year.

Next, Li discussed future of ISITs and ITWs. He noted ISITs and ITWs had traditionally been rotating between locations in the US and outside of the US in alternate years. However, in recent past ISITs and ITWs have occurred less frequently in the US. Effectively, the rotation model has evolved towards a model in which US-based ISITs occur roughly every three years and in the other two years, ISITs are held in the Asia-Pacific or Europe/Middle East regions. Li invited comments on whether such rotation model can be supported in the long term and suggested the Committee should proactively solicit proposals from the respective regions based on the new rotation model, while ensuring geographic diversity between the ISIT and ITW(s) in any given year. Li provided examples of diversified locations among ISIT and ITW between 2023 and 2026.

Li concluded his report with proposals to approve technical co-sponsorship of ISITA 2024 and CISS 2024. Li also highlighted that the process of obtaining technical co-sponsorship has been revised on ITSoc website to further clarify and streamline the process.

Upon conclusion of Li's presentation, Po-Ning Chen, one of General Co-chairs of ISIT 2023 provided an update on the state of the conference. He first highlighted the hybrid format of the conference and the intention of the organizers to 1) promote and encourage participation in the in-person track and 2) to separate virtual tracks from in-person tracks. However, the organizers faced many requests to swap in-person presentation with virtual presentation (due to various issues including visa problems). Requests had to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. This resulted in a total of 28 hybrid sessions involving both in-person and virtual presentations, which added significant complexity to the organization and costs (e.g., non-trivial technical support). Next, Po-Ning provided a summary of student travel grant applications where funds were distributed among applicants, ranging between \$750 and \$600. Finally, Po-Ning reported that despite inflation and added costs, the conference is expected to return around \$13,000 surplus.

During discussions, it was clarified that ISIT 2023 received around 100 less submissions than previous years and that the number of attendees is about 300 less than ISIT 2019 in Paris (last ISIT before COVID). Then a question was raised by a member whether ISIT 2024 in Greece may be too optimistic with respect to forecast number of attendees (around 1100). In response, Christina Fragouli, a TPC Co-chair of ISIT 2024 clarified that the location of ISIT 2024 may attract more attendance from European countries. In addition, the organizers are rolling out a widespread publicity campaign, including advertising at ICASSP 2023 in Rhodes, Greece, and other upcoming cognate events. She also hoped introduction of ISIT-Workshops in 2024 would attract a complementary cohort of scholars to ISIT 2024. A member asked whether the conference would break even with only 850 attendees instead of forecast 1100. In response, Christina clarified

that she was not part of forming the budget. However, she reiterated plans to attract many sponsors and attendees with a manageable risk of smaller surplus in case of lower attendance. Christina also noted a large signal processing community in Greece which may attend ISIT 2024. Two members reported that ICASSP 2023 in Rhodes was a huge success with many attendees and many sponsors, which can be taken as a good sign.

Next, Shao-Lun Huang, accompanied by Chao Tian, presented the proposal to host ITW 2024 in Shenzhen, China. He introduced Shenzhen as a key and technologically advanced city in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area in China, which hosts many large-scale IT companies, such as Huawei, ZTE, and Meituan. The event will be organized by volunteers from Tsinghua-Shenzhen International Graduate School, which was launched in 2014 and is home to more than 200 faculty and 5000 graduate students. Professor Xiao-Ping Zhang, the EiC of the Journal of Selected Topics in Signal Processing, will work alongside Shao-Lun and Chao as a General Co-chair. This is expected to foster more attendance to ITW 2024 from the signal processing community. Next, the proposed organizing team and an outline of the technical program was presented. Shao-Lun also presented a summary of registration fees for an estimated 160 attendees. The proposed venue for the event is Sheraton Hotel, which is a five-star hotel and boasts state-of-the-art conference rooms. During discussions, one member asked about minimum number of hotel rooms that need to be filled to avoid underutilization penalty. In response, Shao-Lun clarified that to avoid penalty, 100 rooms must be filled by attendees (room rate will be around \$200).

Next, Jungwoo Lee presented a preliminary proposal to host ISIT 2028 in Seoul, South Korea. He recalled that the last ISIT in South Korea was held in 2009 in Coex, Seoul. In addition, ITW 2015 was held in the remote island of Jeju and an IT School was organized in 2021 in KAIST. He anticipated that a strong IT industry can lead to substantial sponsorship of the conference. Jungwoo noted that Seoul boasts around 40 universities and like ISIT 2009, strong participation from local universities is anticipated. Jungwoo stated that Seoul also boasts many high-quality hotels and a modern public transport system. Furthermore, access to Seoul is facilitated by direct international flights from major cities around the world. Finally, Jungwoo presented a tentative table of registration fees, which factored in inflation by 2028.

Next, there were further discussions and questions about the proposed budget for ISIT 2024 and the anticipated number of attendees. Li clarified the Conference Committee had carefully reviewed budget spreadsheets and provided feedback to the Organizing Committee. Christina reiterated plans to attract a large number of attendees, as well as more sponsorship compared to previous years, which can be achieved by leveraging on the location, attractive technical and social programs, and widespread publicity campaigns. Subsequently, the budget spreadsheet was shared on screen and the Board verified that even with 850 attendees (where 350 attendees was taken off from the ITSoc member registration category), the conference will still return 9% surplus. Matthieu confirmed that ITSoc is in a position to make informed decisions about possible ranges of surplus and manage any associated risk.

There was a suggestion by some board members to share future conference budgets in more detail with the entire board. It was clarified that at time of approving ISIT 2024 in June 2022, only a tentative budget with a smaller number of participants was presented to the BoG. However, since then, the conference venue and the overall budget parameters have changed. Li assured the Board that finer details will be shared ahead of budget votes. A motion was put forward by a member with a second support to table the ISIT 2024 budget motion and conduct an email vote later. The motion did not pass and hence, the original motion to approve ISIT 2024 budget was presented.

Finally, there was discussion about the timing of ITW 2024 in Shenzhen and ISIT 2026 in Guangzhou. Li clarified that the synergy between ITW 2024 and ISIT 2026 is a positive aspect and can hopefully galvanize more interest in IT research in China.

Motion: To approve the new budget of ISIT 2024. The motion passed.

Motion: To approve the proposal for ITW 2024 in Shenzhen, China. The motion passed.

Motion: To approve the Technical Co-Sponsorship of ISITA 2024. The motion passed.

Motion: To approve the Technical Co-Sponsorship of CISS 2024. The motion passed.

- 9) **Schools Subcommittee report:** Christian Senger, the Chair of the Schools Subcommittee, provided an update on the state of ITSoc Schools. He started his report by presenting an overview of IT schools in 2023. He noted the India School in IISc, Bangalore and the North American School in Philadelphia, USA occurred in the week before ISIT 2023. The European School in Bristol, UK will occur in July 2023. Christian recalled that since there is a Croucher summer school in Hong Kong in odd years, there will be no East Asian school run by ITSoc in 2023. He flagged upcoming motions from 2023 Schools requesting extra support.

Christian continued his report by presenting a summary of four upcoming proposals for schools in 2024 as follows: India School in Hyderabad, European School in Eindhoven, Netherlands, North American School in Ottawa, Canada, and East Asian School in Shonan, Japan. All schools have confirmed some speakers and have flexibility in attracting additional speakers, including Padovani and/or Goldsmith Lecturers. Christian stated that due to inflation and several other factors, the requested support from schools has increased compared to previous years.

Next, Christian reported that the outlook for European schools is very good, with one confirmed interest from Italy for 2025 and two interested groups targeting ESIT 2026. Next, Christian reported that the outlook for European schools is very good, with one confirmed interest from Italy for 2025 and two interested groups targeting ESIT 2026. There are also preliminary discussions with colleagues to host a North American school in 2025. Christian expressed hope that the new volunteer's webpage will generate additional interest in organizing IT schools and invited interested colleagues to get in touch with the Schools Subcommittee. Finally, Christian suggested streamlining Schools budget in the future where the BoG agrees on a total lump sum to be spent across all schools (\$75K in even years and \$55K in odd years), which could then be distributed for each proposal as deemed appropriate.

During discussion time, Christian clarified that the BoG will still individually approve each school proposal. However, an annual lump sum can be pre-arranged to be distributed across all schools. There were generally support among board members for allowing more flexibility in distributing school funds depending on school needs, locality, and plans for named lecturers. The President described a plan to request from the IEEE and Padovani Funds to allow more flexibility in spending the Fund across all schools (in contrast to only spending it at the school where Padovani Lecture is given).

Regarding the motion to support \$3,000 for the 2023 North American School of Information Theory, it was clarified that this will come from Padovani Funds. A question was raised by a member whether more money can be claimed from Padovani Funds to cover associated student activities for NASIT 2023. The Treasure of the School clarified that due to inflation, costs had been higher than initially planned. However, \$3,000 is the extra amount that is needed and the NASIT 2023 is expected to finish breakeven.

Motion: To approve extra funding in the amount of up to \$2,000 for the 2023 JTG/IEEE Information Theory Society Summer School in Information Theory, Signal Processing, Telecommunication, and Networking, Bangalore, India. The motion passed.

Motion: To approve additional funding in the amount of up to \$3,000 for the 2023 North American School of Information Theory in Philadelphia, USA. The motion passed.

Motion: To approve additional funding in the amount of up to \$3,000 for the 2023 European School of Information Theory in Bristol, UK. The motion passed.

Motion: To approve \$12,500 financial support for the 2024 JTG/IEEE Information Theory Society Summer School in Information Theory, Signal Processing, Telecommunication, and Networking, Hyderabad, India. The motion passed.

Motion: To approve \$20,000 financial support for the 2024 European School of Information Theory, Eindhoven, Netherlands. The motion passed.

Motion: To approve \$22,000 financial support for the 2024 North American School of Information Theory, Ottawa, Canada. The motion passed.

Motion: To approve \$20,000 financial support for the 2024 East Asia School of Information Theory, Shonan, Japan. The motion passed.

10) Fellows Committee report: Daniela Tuninetti, the Chair of the Fellows Committee started her report by introducing seven members of the Committee. She highlighted a strong suit of nominations for the class of 2024 Fellows. Next, Daniela outlined the timeline of various meetings. She explained that upon completion of evaluations and rankings in May, the Committee submitted final narratives on the IEEE portal before June 15. She reported that anonymized nomination reference letters were made available to the Committee for the first time, and that this was useful in forming evaluation narratives. She reiterated that from 2024, an intermediate cohort-level evaluation step will be added to the process. She highlighted that as a result, the deadline for nominating a Fellow will be pushed to 7 February from 2024, which is about a month earlier compared to previous years. Members suggested to clearly communicate this new deadline to potential nominators and nominees using ITSoc digital platforms. Daniela noted this for action.

11) External Nominations Committee report: Gerhard Kramer, the Chair of the External Nominations Committee, started his report by welcoming members to ISIT 2023. Next, he thanked past members and introduced new members of the Committee. Gerhard reported that the Committee tracks about 27 prizes, including all relevant IEEE-level medal and field awards and some prestigious non-IEEE awards. He encouraged members to nominate worthy colleagues for various awards. He highlighted June 15 and January 15 as respective deadlines for nominations for an IEEE Medal and IEEE Field Award.

During discussion time, a member asked whether unsuccessful nominations are carried forward. In response, Gerhard clarified that in his experience, all unsuccessful nominations remained in the pool for the following year. Nevertheless, he advised that only strong nominations be submitted that demonstrate a reasonable chance to being awarded in one or two years. A member suggested also nominating worthy colleagues for IEEE Teaching Awards. Gerhard encouraged members to identify other prestigious non-IEEE national awards to be tracked by the Committee. One BoG member suggested that the list of awards be publicized on ITSoc digital platforms. Gerhard noted this idea for action.

12) ISIT-Workshops Initiative: Stark Draper introduced the ISIT-Workshops Working Group, consisting of Henry Pfister, Osvaldo Simeone and Stark himself. The proposal

from the Group is to pilot workshops at ISIT 2024, in a somewhat similar format to workshops in cognate conferences such as Globecom and ICASSP. Stark elaborated the aim of such workshops is three-fold: first to broaden participation in ISIT by scholars from cognate societies; second to provide opportunities for “in-community” workshops; and third to help with the pipeline of proposals for JSAIT special issues and tutorial articles for the BITS Magazine.

Stark reported that the initiative has been discussed with ISIT 2024 organizers, Conference Committee members and ITSoc Officers and all have been supportive. Therefore, this has been advertised on ISIT 2024 website. Stark noted the timeline for proposals is 15 September 2023 and decisions will be sent out in October 2023. The Group’s plan is to post more details about the call by July 15 and select four or five workshops. Stark stated that the option to publish an accepted workshop paper in ISIT proceedings (labelled as ISIT-W) is being pursued with the IEEE. However, authors will be able to opt out if this affects publishing their work in other venues. Stark explained reviewing workshop papers will be handled by corresponding workshop organizers, and not by ISIT TPC.

The Working Group requests travel support for senior scholars who typically do not come to ISIT to attend these workshops and attend ISIT, in part or in full. He sought feedback from BoG members on how to balance cross-community versus in-community distribution of workshops and how to balance invited versus contributed papers. The suggestion by the Working Group is to target equal proportion of invited and contributed papers and to limit the number of papers from organizers of a workshop to one (which could be in the form of a jointly authored survey or tutorial). Stark clarified workshop proposals should identify plans for turning workshop contributions into a JSAIT/BITS special issue or a BITS Magazine tutorial. Stark emphasized that when assessing workshop proposals, technical merits, as well as diversity aspects will be considered.

Stark elaborated that the requested support per person is estimated at \$1750, assuming \$1000 to cover the registration fee and \$750 for three nights stay at a hotel. Furthermore, supporting four invited attendees per workshop would require \$7K and supporting five workshops would require \$35K. This will be a new initiative for 3 years.

During discussions, it was suggested to make the funding available to invited (non-organizing) attendees only.

A member expressed a concern that \$35K may not be enough to support and attract speakers to five workshops. This member suggested increasing the budget to ensure funding does not become a limiting factor in organizing good workshops. It was also flagged by another member that venue and catering costs should be carefully budgeted in workshop registration fees. One member suggested to consult with ITW 2022 organizers on how invited sessions were hosted and to obtain information on associated venue and catering costs. One meeting attendee highlighted that in ML conferences, senior PhD students and postdocs run workshops. This attendee noted that registration for an ML conference automatically includes any associated workshop.

A member asked for more details about how the requested support is to be spent since most workshop attendees will have a paper and must register for the workshop. It was clarified that main purpose is to fund invited speakers to attend the workshop and that the funds will not be used to pay honoraria.

In conclusion, the following motion was put forward by a member with the support of a second.

Motion to amend: To increase the amount of funding for ISIT-Workshops to \$50K. The motion passed.

Subsequently, the following amended motion was presented.

Amended motion: To provide support for travel funds for workshops, in the amount of \$50,000 for workshops to be held at ISIT in 2024 as a new initiative. The motion passed.

13) Funding for Math Collaborators Initiative: Joachim Rosenthal, Ioannis Kontoyiannis and Christina Fragouli proposed a new initiative to provide travel support, mainly in the form of reduced registration fees, to mathematicians and physicists to attend ISIT 2024. Joachim elaborated the aim is to attract members of this cohort back to ISIT, following a gradual but steady drop in attendance in the past decade. Joachim noted that there is an active community of mathematicians who work on information and coding theory. However, they attend other conferences and cite high registration fees for not attending ISIT. Joachim provided several examples of recent math workshops which host sessions on coding and have been well attended by mathematicians. Joachim also clarified that many math conferences are very lean in operation and are not expected to return profits. They are often hosted on university campus and offer dorm accommodation, which results in low attendance costs. In addition, Joachim clarified that students could pursue many travel support opportunities, whereas faculty support is very limited. Joachim and Christina recognized that while the initiative may not be sustainable in the proposed format, it would be worthwhile to try it for a few years and take appropriate next steps if successful. It was clarified that requested funds can support around 30 researchers at reduced registration costs, comparable to IEEE Life Members or IEEE Student Members.

During discussions, there was a question on whether this support would be open to those who have a paper at ISIT. Joachim clarified this in the affirmative and stated that the process would be similar to student travel support. One member asked whether support will be means tested. Joachim clarified that a motivation letter for attending ISIT can be submitted together with the application and similar to student travel grants, a selection committee will consider merits of each application. One member asked about eligibility criteria since boundaries between departments of math, science and engineering may be not well defined. In response, Joachim clarified that this scheme is meant to be open to anybody who works in math/science.

Two members suggested to broaden the target of this initiative to beyond math and science. In response, Christina clarified that this initiative has been designed to address a specific issue and a broader target may make it hard to measure the success of this initiative. However, both Christina and Joachim expressed their strong support for devising broader initiatives in the future to attract other scholars to ISIT. Another member supported this initiative and expressed difficulties in the past to offer a similar support without significantly increasing the cost of the conference.

Motion to amend: A motion was proposed to amend the original motion which received a second support: to change “students and faculty in mathematics and physics departments” to “researchers in mathematics and natural sciences”. The motion to amend passed.

Subsequently, the following motion was presented.

Amended motion: To partially fund participation to ISIT of researchers in mathematics and natural sciences for ISIT 2024, in the amount of \$20K, as a new initiative. The amended motion passed.

14) Alumni in Industry Ad-hoc Committee report: Christina Fragouli, the Chair of the Committee, started her report by recalling the mission of the Committee, which is to form strong connections between ITSoc and industry and to provide career development opportunities for graduate students and inspire and explore new directions. She reported that an Alumni event was held at ITA which was well attended, and another event is

organized at ISIT 2023 on Tuesday at the conclusion of technical sessions. She encouraged attendance and introduced prominent panel members from both academia and industry. She reported that topics of interest identified through a student survey is to be discussed at the ISIT Alumni Event.

15) Sharing Teaching Resources Ad-hoc Committee report: The Chair of the Committee, Martina Cardone, updated the Board on the activities of the Committee in the past few months. Martina reported that THOMAS website will go live on June 26. Prior to this, the Committee had been working with the IEEE to create Terms of Use for accessing and uploading teaching material. The Terms cover IP matters, conditions of redistribution, as well as disclaimers on correctness of material. Martina invited suggestions on the website and explained that next steps involve fine tuning the website, identifying inaugural classes to be made available, and advertising THOMAS at suitable IEEE forums.

Members thanked Martina and the Committee for their great work.

16) Chapter of the Year (CoY) Award report: I-Hsiang Wang provided a video report on the Chapter of the Year Award. He outlined the selection process. At the beginning of May all chapters were contacted and were asked whether they wish to be considered for the CoY award. Four chapters expressed their interest to be considered and reports on their activities were received in mid-May. Subsequently, Committee members participated in ranked-choice voting and selected Sweden VT/COMM/IT joint Chapter as the winner of the Award.

Next, I-Hsiang commented on some issues encountered when selecting the awardee. The first issue is that chapter activity reports are sent directly sent to IEEE and are difficult for the Membership Committee to obtain. The second is that the Committee found the wording of the By-laws unclear in places. I-Hsiang reported that the Membership Committee is currently investigating these issues more closely and will provide updates and a proposal to revise the By-laws to address these issues.

17) Student and Outreach (S&O) Subcommittee report: Farhad Shirani, the Chair of the Subcommittee, provided a video report to introduce S&O events at ISIT 2023. The first event is Meet the Shannon Lecturer on Thursday, June 29. The event will be recorded for online and offline audience. The ISIT 2023 Mentoring Event for ECRs is planned for Friday, June 30. Six topics are chosen for this event and participants can go around different tables and ask questions from various mentors. The third event is DeepVerse 6G Machine Learning Challenge for graduate students. Farhad acknowledged Stefano Rini, for suggesting the topic and format of this challenge, and colleagues from the Wireless Intelligence Lab at Arizona State University for providing the dataset. Farhad reported 77 students had registered for this challenge, out of which 33 teams were formed to compete against each other. Three winners will be announced during ISIT 2023.

The last event at ISIT 2023 is AI, ChatGPT, Research and Teaching, which is a faculty-oriented initiative and was suggested by some ITSoc members. The event will have three parallel sessions focusing on 1) use cases, 2) effects on research and 3) effects on teaching. Farhad concluded his presentation by inviting colleagues to attend all S&O events.

During time for discussions, a member flagged some concern at IEEE level about running student competitions and presenting awards before going through IEEE approval processes. It was clarified that creation of a formal award is still under consideration. However, the Committee's goal is to work with cognate societies to ensure broad outreach in the competition and selection processes if/when a new award is created.

Next, Stefano Rini, a member of the Committee proposed the following structure for the winners of ITSoc student competition: \$1500 for the first prize, \$1000 for the second prize, \$750 for the third prize, and \$400 free registration for online courses for the fourth to tenth places. Complimentary registration will be offered to four student volunteers. The total requested money is \$8K.

One member asked whether this amount is requested for the 2023 competition. In response, Stefano clarified this will be recurring prize money if an ITSoc Student Competition Award is formally established.

One member raised some concern about availability of new ML datasets to run such competition every year. Because of this concern, this member suggested that ITSoc should not establish a formal student competition award. In response, Stefano clarified that a similar format is repeated every year at CVPR, ICASSP, and NeurIPS. The asking member then pointed to some challenges in finding organizing teams and good datasets for the Signal Processing Cup. Another member noted that the competition format can be flexible and there is no requirement to restrict the competition to ML topics or to involve datasets every year. In response to a question about awarding students from sanctioned countries, Stefano clarified that in-kind awards (e.g., in the form of free registration for online courses) can be offered to such winners.

18) WITHITS report: Lalitha Vadlamani, a Co-chair of WITHITS reported that a joint WITHITS and D&I event will be held on Monday June 26, in the evening. She invited all members to attend this event.

19) Digital Presence Committee report: Brian Kurkoski, the Chair of the Committee started his report by introducing Committee members and the scope of current projects. Next, Brian reported that good progress has been made on the Alumni in Industry microsite, which is currently undergoing web development. The site is expected to be ready for launch at ITW 2024 and will feature upcoming events, as well as photos and videos from past events. Brian thanked Samir Perlaza for leading this effort. Next, Brian reported that ISIT 2024 is planning to use the ITSoc Event Platform for their entire event. He elaborated that the platform supports video presentations and integration with the Zoom App. Currently, features such as the banner and news sections are being improved. He hoped that future ISITs and ITWs will continue to use this platform, which will give ITSoc events a familiar look across years. He thanked Christian Senger for leading this project.

Next, Brian reported that the the Volunteer webpage has been completed, which was developed in collaboration with the D&I Committee and will be launched at ISIT 2023. The aim is to attract volunteers for various committee and reviewing roles. He expressed his thanks to Lalitha Sankar, Christina Fragouli and all chairs for their input. Next, Brian reported that a page dedicated to news from IT Chapters is planned to be added to the Newsletter site. The last project is launching the THOMAS teaching site at ISIT 2023, in collaboration with the Sharing Teaching Resources Ad-hoc Committee. Next Brian provided a summary of budget items, which includes \$14K annual expenditure on maintenance and upgrades and \$40K for special projects in 2023. Brian invited members to post videos of talks and events on ITSoc website, post news to the ITSoc mailing list, and provide feedback on how to improve the website.

During discussions, Brian proposed to advertise external awards and awardees on the website. He invited members and volunteers to provide input on celebrating the life and work of Claude Shannon on ITSoc digital platforms.

20) Awards Infographics: Matthieu started his report by recalling that during the last BoG meeting, a need was expressed to provide more clarity to the ITSoc membership on

nominations and award selection processes. Matthieu was pleased to announce that the BoG leadership took the feedback onboard and created preliminary infographics to better explain these processes.

Matthieu highlighted the distinction between binding rules, as codified in ITSoc By-laws, versus implemented processes by various awards committees. Next, Matthieu emphasized that infographics must make it clear that the By-laws are the ultimate source of truth. The infographics should therefore serve to illustrate complex processes. Next, Matthieu presented Paper Award infographics, which show a combination of binding rules from the By-laws and current best practices.

Matthieu clarified that the motion to endorse infographics is to recognize the current version as a steppingstone towards creating clearer and more polished infographics with the help of professional designers. Next, Matthieu highlighted that ITSoc is leading this initiative compared to other societies.

In response to a question from a member, Matthieu explained the rationale for the motion is to publicly endorse the creation of award infographics. In response to a question about the cost of creating infographics, Matthieu clarified that there will be a small cost associated with hiring a graphics designer and that this cost will be separately presented to the BoG to approve.

One member noted that the Joint ITSoc/ComSoc Best Paper Award Committee is chaired by ITSoc every other year and therefore, the infographics might not be representative of the process in years that ITSoc is not chairing the Committee. Matthieu clarified that the infographics serve only as “examples” of processes. In response to further concerns about the Joint Award, it was suggested to create the corresponding infographics and clearly mark it as illustration of processes when the Committee is chaired by ITSoc. In due course, it was hoped this initiative can, in turn, lead to similar infographics being created and published by ComSoc.

One member suggested to add hyperlinks to the infographics that links to the corresponding nomination pages, submission pages, and the By-laws. It was suggested that after the final infographics are created, a motion be presented to the BoG to endorse their public distribution. Matthieu noted these ideas for action in due course.

Motion: To approve the creation of infographics, consistent with the Bylaws, illustrating the awards nomination and selection process. The motion passed.

21) Diversity and Inclusion Committee report: Lalitha Sankar, the Chair of the D&I Committee, presented her report by introducing the Committee members and outlining activities of the Committee in the past few months. She presented the newly developed Volunteer webpage, which was recently launched in response to the 2021 D&I Survey. She briefly explained key features of the webpage for attracting volunteers to various committee and reviewing roles. She then highlighted the Volunteering Event on Monday June 26 during lunch. She thanked ISIT conference organizers for helping launch the event and various committee chairs who will be presenting the nature of work done by their committee and volunteer roles and responsibilities. Lalitha highlighted that the role of TPC member has become increasingly important and serving on ISIT TPC can be used for tenure or promotion processes. She asked the BoG to encourage higher engagement of conference TPC chairs with the D&I Committee and invited future TPC chairs to develop a clear set of requirements for TPC membership. Next, Lalitha highlighted another event at ISIT 2023, jointly organized with WITHITS, on D&I issues in Asia-Pacific. This event will be held on Monday evening, June 26. Lalitha noted that this event is built upon a similar event about D&I issues in Europe/Finland at ISIT 2022. One issue to be discussed is barriers experienced by scholars who do not speak the native language of their host country.

Next, Lalitha thanked ISIT 2023 organizers for their tireless work on distributing student travel grants to a larger than expected pool of applicants, through pulling together money from three different sources. However, she flagged that this process raised interesting questions on how “minority groups” should be universally defined. Lalitha indicated that due to availability of additional resources more students may receive travel grants and thanked BoG for their continued support.

Lalitha continued her report by proposing that the BoG allocates a regular budget to the Committee, which can be used to broaden the reach and application of D&I efforts, provide more reliable and regular funds for student travel grants, and analyze TPC patterns of past ISITs and ITWs.

Finally, Lalitha provided an outlook on the activities and goals of the Committee. She stated that Onur Gunlu, a D&I Committee member, is responsible for passing a concise summary of volunteers to respective committee chairs at regular intervals. Also, the Committee is investigating ways to measure the performance of Volunteer page. Another area of work is developing clear criteria for distributing student travel grants.

During discussions, Matthieu thanked Lalitha, Stark and all D&I Committee members for their great work. He pointed out to the D&I Council under the TAB and noted that ITSoc should nominate itself to be recognized by the Council for leading D&I efforts. Matthieu and Stark clarified that at the conclusion of the New Initiative Period for the D&I Committee, a D&I budget line is expected to be added to the Society’s operational budget.

22) Joy Thomas Award. Stark Draper, the Chair of the Paper Awards Committee, provided an update on the Joy Thomas Award. He recalled that the criteria for the Award was approved by the BoG in November 2021. Subsequently, Suhas Diggavi interacted with TABARC to get the Award approved by the IEEE and the BoG was notified of this approval in June 2022.

Stark requested the BoG to approve the call for nominations to be launched in 2023 and the deadline to be shifted to Sep/Oct 2023. Stark elaborated the rationale for moving the deadline (from spring) to fall is to spread the workload of the Committee more evenly. Stark clarified that once approved, the processes will be codified in the By-laws in 2024.

Motion: To Approve the Paper Awards Committee to initiate the call-for-nominations and decision process for the IEEE Joy Thomas Tutorial Paper Award with paper nominations due in autumn 2023. The motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 5:22 pm, local time