

IEEE Information Theory Society Board of Governors Meeting
Location: Zoom Remote Meeting

Date: June 21st, 2020

Time: The meeting convened at 10:00 am EST; the meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm EST

Meeting Chair: Aylin Yener

Minutes taken by: Lara Dolecek

Meeting Attendees:

Erik Agrell, Erdal Arikan, Matthieu Bloch, Suhas Diggavi, Alex Dimakis, Lara Dolecek, Stark Draper, Elza Erkip, Meir Feder, Christina Fragouli, Andrea Goldsmith, Camilla Hollanti, Sid Jaggi, Tara Javidi, Vijay Kumar, Brian Kurkoski (#), Matt LaFleur (#), Olgica Milenkovic, Prakash Narayan, Henry Pfister, Vince Poor, Joachim Rosenthal, Parastoo Sadeghi, Anand Sarwate (#), Igal Sason, Emina Soljanin, Daniela Tuninetti, Emanuele Viterbo (#), Aaron Wagner, Aylin Yener, Wei Yu

All attendees joined remotely via Zoom; non-voting attendees are denoted by (#).

Business conducted between meetings:

The following votes were conducted by email between the February 2020 Information Theory Society (ITSoc) Board of Governors (BoG) meetings and this meeting:

- (1) In February 2020, the following motions were issued:
 - a. To approve Richard Dale Wesel as an Associate Editor for Coding Techniques in the IT Transactions.
 - b. To approve Achilleas Anastasopoulos as an Associate Editor for Communications in the IT Transactions.
 - c. To approve Arian Maleki as an Associate Editor for Signal Processing in the IT Transactions.

The motions passed.

- (2) In March 2020, the following motion was issued:

To approve Martina Cardone as the Chair of the Student and Outreach Activities Subcommittee.

The motion passed.

(3) In March 2020, the following motion was issued:

To postpone ITW 2020 from September 2020 to Spring 2021 with new dates to be negotiated between the general chairs and the venue.

The motion passed.

(4) In March 2020, the following motion was issued.

To suspend the Distinguished Lecturer Program effective immediately until further notice, to revisit the suspension decision as soon as the COVID-19 situation starts to improve globally, and to potentially extend the current DLs' terms to offset the suspension of the program.

The motion passed.

(5) In March 2020, the following motion was issued.

To re-open the nominations for individual society awards until April 6, 2020. The impacted awards are Massey (deadline March 15), Shannon (deadline March 1) and Wyner (deadline March 1).

The motion passed.

(6) In March 2020, the following motion was issued.

To hold ISIT 2020 as a virtual conference on the same dates (June 21-26), in a manner that resembles the in-person experience as much as possible. The organizers will work towards this goal in consultation with officers and relevant committee chairs (outreach, awards etc.). The organizers will come up with new registration fees to reflect the new financial model.

The motion passed.

(7) In April 2020, the following motions were issued:

- a. To approve the minutes from the February 2020 meeting.
- b. Motion 2: (from the School Subcommittee): “We request the ITSoc BoG allow the holding of the 2020 IEEE North American School for Information Theory, currently scheduled for University of British Columbia in July 2020, to be deferred to the summer of 2021 and for the deferred school to be supported at the same level of \$10,000 USD as was originally allocated by the BoG at the BoG meeting in July 2019.”
- c. Motion 3: (from the School Subcommittee): “We request the ITSoc BoG allow the holding of the 2020 IEEE East Asian School for Information Theory, currently scheduled for Seoul University in August 2020, to be deferred to the summer of 2021 and for the deferred school to be supported at

the same level of \$20,000 USD as was originally allocated by the BoG at the BoG meeting in July 2019.”

The motions passed.

- (8) The following motion was issued in May 2020:

Motion (from the School Subcommittee): “We request the ITSoc BoG allow the holding of the 2020 Joint Technology Group / IEEE School for Information Theory (JTG/ITSoc), currently scheduled to be held at the IIT Kanpur in July 2020, to be **deferred** to the summer of 2021 and for the deferred school to be supported at the same level of \$10,000 USD as was originally allocated by the BoG at the BoG meeting in October 2019.”

The motion passed.

- (9) The following motion was issued in May 2020

To approve Technical Co-sponsorship by the IT Society for the Seventeenth International Workshop on Algebraic and Combinatorial Coding Theory (ACCT 2020) June 9 - 15, 2020, Albena, Bulgaria.

The motion passed.

At 10:00 am EST, ITSoc President Aylin Yener called the meeting to order.

Attendees introduced themselves. President Yener thanked everyone for joining the meeting and especially for joining across different time zones. President Yener explained that the meeting will be run as a webinar.

The following motion was issued.

Motion: A motion was made to approve the agenda.

The motion passed.

President’s Report – Aylin Yener

President Yener started by giving big Thank You’s to all the committees for all their hard work and for being so diligent, given the current crisis. She then recapped the goals for 2020, focusing on openness and engagement. These goals included member engagement, BoG engagement, improved communication among different volunteer committees, open calls, and improved membership numbers. She stated that being in the IT community means being a member of the IT Society, and that IT also stands for Inclusiveness and Transparency. She next went into more details about the progress towards these goals pre-Covid-19. She stated that in regards to the

member engagement, ITA town hall resulted in lots of good ideas, including online presentations, and social media presence. In regards to the BoG engagement, she stated that the ITA meeting included discussions on Fellow nomination and evaluation process, which subsequently resulted in the number of nominations being twice as high this year as last year; discussion on the ISIT submission numbers, which do not appear to be a significant concern at the moments; and the discussion on the need for rebranding. In regards to better communication between society volunteer committees, such as conference committees and conference organization, she stated that this is ongoing and that has in part motivated a new initiative. She also stated that the goal of better informing and equipping volunteer selection is on track.

President Yener then discussed the state of the affairs in the Covid-19-era. She reiterated that the society's goals have remained intact, even yielding to better initiatives. As the world turned virtual, BoG had a record number of motions to address. President Yener thanked BoG for acting fast on several time-sensitive issues. She stated that some motions were passed in the record 24h period.

Next, President Yener discussed changes to the current operations, including virtualization of ISIT, and suspension of the Distinguished Lecturer Program and Information Theory Schools. She stated that ITW 2020 in Italy was the first to move to 2021. The current plan is to hold the workshop in 2021 under the same name, although there is still a possibility that this plan may change. Some IT Schools are postponed to 2021, so that there might not be any schools in 2020 and the schools may all be virtual in 2021.

Next, President Yener shared her thoughts on meetings. She stated that we need to adapt quickly to virtual and hybrid meeting formats, and that we have to be ready to have a stronger virtual presence. She also pointed to the relevant opinion piece written by ComSoc colleagues on the future of technical conferences (Piece is titled "To Be or Not to Be—There in Person: What is the Future of the Technical Conference?").

Next, she went over the activities after the start of the Covid-19 crisis, describing new BoG engagement, membership engagements, and the creation of the new web page dedicated to latest developments in the Society, including event cancelations and postponements.

She then discussed the outcome of the membership campaign aimed at improving membership numbers. Membership fee promotion was used in the campaign. She stated that as of May 2020, there were 734 new members, significantly improving the previous membership scale of about 2800 members. She presented charts showing breakdown by IEEE membership status; most of the new society members are IEEE Members, followed by IEEE Senior Members. She then stated that, as a part of the on-going promotion, the membership fee for 2021 will be lowered to \$25 for non-students and \$1 for students.

Next, President Yener discussed a new initiative called the Future of Information Theory Society (FITS) Digital Innovations Initiative. FITS will aim to achieve, among other goals: one unified presence; one web platform that has everything; uniform views of the meeting year to year; familiar interface and navigation for all; remote activity support; have all content archived/available through the portal to the members of the IEEE ITSoc; Society's branding of

the web presence, and social media presence. FITS Ad hoc committee has been formed and its members are: Erik Agrell, Matthieu Bloch (Chair), Salim El Rouhayeb, Brian Kurkoski, Henry Pfister, Anand Sarwate, Aylin Yener, and Wei Yu.

She stated that there will be a formal presentation later in this meeting followed by a motion to fund activities of the FITS committee.

President Yener concluded her presentation with the outlook. She stated that we are in an excellent position as a society to lead in the post-Covid-19 era. She thanked Matt LaFleur for all the help in organizing the meeting.

BoG members congratulated President Yener on her leadership for increasing society's membership. A BoG member asked, and President clarified, that the number of IEEE Fellows from the Society may also increase with the increase in the membership if we manage to retain the member numbers. A BoG member pointed out that the new IT Magazine can also be an additional member benefit.

Paper Awards Committee – Wei Yu

Next discussed were paper awards, presented by Wei Yu. This part of the meeting was only for the board members who are not conflicted with the paper selection procedures. 2020 Paper Awards Committee is chaired by Wei Yu. The committee prepared a detailed report on their selection criteria and the rationale behind their decisions. Wei acknowledged all the help from the committee members, stating that it was a lot of work to go over the award-worthy papers, especially in the current circumstances. Wei state that there are 6 paper finalists for the Jack K. Wolf Student Paper Award at ISIT 2020. Information about the finalists is available on the conference website.

Next, Wei presented the paper that was selected to receive the Communications Society & Information Theory Society Joint Paper Award. That paper is K. Lee, M. Lam, R. Pedarsani, D. Papailiopoulos, and K. Ramchandran, "Speeding Up Distributed Machine Learning Using Codes," IEEE Transactions on Information Theory, March 2018.

Afterwards, Wei discussed the IT Society Best Paper Award. He stated that the purpose of the award is to recognize exceptional contributions. He also stated that during the selection process, conflict of interest was carefully managed, and that further details are in the committee's report. In particular, he stated that the two papers put forth by the committee concurrently discovered the same technical result.

The following motion was issued:

Motion: that the committee report be accepted.

The motion passed.

President Yener opened the floor for the discussion. A BoG member asked, and Wei clarified that bylaws state that the best paper award be given to a single paper. It was suggested that bylaws be changed to allow for more than 1 paper. A question was raised about honorable mention, and it was decided that this topic can be discussed at a later time.

The following motions were issued.

Motion: That a 2020 Information Theory Society Paper Award be given to the paper: E. Abbe, A. S. Bandeira, and G. Hall, “Exact Recovery in the Stochastic Block Model”, in IEEE Transactions on Information Theory, vol. 62, no. 1, pp. 471-487, Jan. 2016.

Motion: That the 2020 Information Theory Society Paper Award to be given to the paper: E. Mossel, J. Neeman, and A. Sly, “Consistency Thresholds for the Planted Bisection Model”, in Electronic Journal of Probability, no. 21, pp. 1-24, 2016.

Both motions passed.

Nominations and Appointments Committee – Elza Erkip

The presentation was given by Elza Erkip as the Chair of the Nominations and Appointments Committee.

Elza went over the committee structure and its duties, which include being responsible for nominating and appointing many ITSoc committee chairs/members and the IT Transactions Executive Editor. She went over the positions on committees that have been filled since the last BoG meeting in February 2020. She also pointed out that there are constraints on who can be a member of a given committee. She reiterated the goals of the committee, which are to diversify the committee memberships and to involve new people in society affairs and enlarge the pool of volunteers. Elza next went over the Fellows Evaluation Committee, which is responsible for evaluating nominations for the IEEE Fellows from the Society. The chair of the committee Antonia Tulino requested more members be added to the committee due to the increased number of Fellow nominations this year. The committee has 9 members, who are Antonia Tulino (chair), Christina Fragouli, Massimo Franceschetti, Senur Ulukus, Kannan Ramchandran, Pramod Viswananth, and Hirosuke Yamamoto, and the two new members are Olgica Milenkovic and Jinhong Yuan.

Next, Elza went over the Paper Awards Committee, including the constraints on who can qualify to be a member of the committee. Current members of the committee are: Wei Yu (chair), Christina Fragouli (ex-officio), and Kannan Ramchandran, and the new members are Matthieu Bloch, Holger Bloche, Jean-Francois Chamberland, Bikash Kumar Dey, Maxim Raginsky, and Daniela Tuninetti. She next presented the slate of 12 candidates as new members of the board. Elza pointed out that there are no continuing members from Region 10, as one member’s term is ending and another member of the committee is moving out of that region.

They are: Natasha Devroye, Pingzhi Fan, Massimo Franceschetti, Brian M. Kurkoski, Parastoo Sadeghi, Anand D. Sarwate, Vincent Y. F. Tan, Andrew Thangaraj, Daniela Tuninetti, Bane Vasic, Aaron B. Wagner, and Edmund Yeh.

Based on a question from a BoG member, Elza clarified that this list does not require a vote.

2021 Officer Nominations – Aylin Yener

Next presentation was given by President Yener about 2021 officer nominations. The two candidates for the 2nd VP are Matthieu Bloch and Stark Draper. The candidate for VP is Christina Fragouli, and the candidate for President is Wei Yu. President Yener explained that the request for votes will be sent to BoG after this meeting.

Treasurer’s Report – Aaron Wagner

Next presentation was given by Aaron Wagner in his role as the Society’s Treasurer. Aaron first went over the IEEE accounting, explaining how surplus from the general funds get split evenly to new initiatives and to reserves. He stated that of the surplus funds, only 50% of it goes to the funds for the following year and the rest goes to hard to touch reserves.

Next, Aaron went over the 2019 general funds. He stated that at the time of ITA 2019, the expected budgeted surplus was \$46K, which over the course of the following year gradually got revised to be \$573K in April 2020. He explained that the sources of the changes in expectations are due to the following: Transactions revenue increased by \$300K, while the costs decreased by \$70K; conference publications revenue increased by \$92K; ISIT 2019 in Paris had a surplus increase of \$63K; IEEE Tax decreased by \$35.5K; newsletter costs decreased by \$12K; dues increased by \$2.8K; and committees overspent by \$5.5K. Aaron next went into more detail regarding the Transactions trends, and explained how at the time of ISIT 2018 in Vail the outlook looked dire, but that the numbers have improved since. He also clarified that this is not an accounting fluke as there is more money across the board in Transactions.

He then went over the Special Projects for 2019, totaling \$264.5K in the budget, specifying for each project, the leader of the project and the associated cost. Of the budgeted \$264.5K, \$175K have been spent, as some ISIT 2019 related projects are still being processed.

Next, Aaron went over the 2020 General Funds. At the time of ITA 2020, the expected budgeted surplus was \$243K. As of this meeting, it is \$232K. The changes are due to cancelations of certain in-person events that increased the expected surplus, and new operational costs of JSAIT and reduced membership fees that decreased the expected surplus. Regarding the 2020 Special Projects, Aaron stated that some previously approved projects have become inoperative due to the pandemic. As a result, the sum total for the remaining projects is \$65K. Aaron encouraged the members to provide additional ideas for 2020 Special Projects and to start thinking about possible projects for 2021.

Next, Aaron discussed the status of the Padovani Fund. He stated that Roberto Padovani generously donated \$110K over 5 years, and that the Society is permitted to spend \$10K/year on

Schools. He asked the Board whether we should think of this as a short-term gift to effect a immediate impact or a self-sustaining endowment. He stated that the IEEE Foundation treats it as a gift to be used until spent, whereas we treat it operationally as an endowment, and that this conflict creates issues. A BoG member suggested that Roberto Padovani be brought into the loop regarding this matter. Another BoG member suggested to make it an endowment for raising visibility. President Yener stated that the detailed discussion is be deferred to the October meeting.

Future of the Information Theory Society (FITS) Initiative – Aylin Yener and Matthieu Bloch

Next presentation was the FITS report provided by President Yener and Matthieu Bloch. President Yener went over the executive summary that included the need for a unified and long-term online presence of ITSoc, unified portal for all our online activities, and calls for renewed investment in web technologies. President Yener thanked the Ad Hoc Committee members: Erik Agrell, Matthieu Bloch, Salim El Rouhayeb, Brian Kurkoski, Henry Pfister, Anand Sarwate, Aylin Yener, and Wei Yu, for their hard work in preparing the report. She went over the current situation and vision, stating that while we won't go back to the business as usual, the current crisis has created an opportunity to think forward and to create a unified FITS vision for the Society.

In terms of realizing the vision, Matthieu then identified four short term goals: 1) IEEE authentication, 2) Hosting multimedia resources, 3) Video conferencing integration, and 4) Support for events. Regarding IEEE authentication, a new Single Sign On was proposed to improve membership value. Regarding hosting of multimedia resources, the proposal was to explore alternative media solutions beyond the currently used YouTube in other to better serve the constituency at large and to provide a unified portal for various materials. It was pointed out that there are already many providers for content delivery networks such as Amazon. Regarding video conferencing integration, it was proposed to replace the current ad-hoc solutions with the integration into our website. It was pointed out the existing grass efforts in this direction, such as Salim's Shannon Seminar Series and online presentations by Distinguished Lecturers, have already been very successful. It was also pointed out that top providers (Zoom, BlueJeans, Webex) now offer APIs. Regarding support for events, it was proposed that the current distributed operation be replaced by easy and user-friendly hosting within unified portal.

Matthieu next presented the arguments for the change which included: easy archiving, reduced burden for organizers, consistent look over time, and the opportunity to invest now, when the funds are available. He also pointed out that larger cost is expected upfront but that the maintenance will be much smaller, compared to starting from scratch each time. Matthieu then went over the estimated cost for each of the proposed items.

The following motion was issued:

Motion: To support the activities of the FITS initiative with a budget of \$51K.

President Yener asked for remote meeting support of \$10k, and the friendly amendment was issued to increase the requested budget to up to \$60K.

There was a brief discussion where a BoG member suggested to go bold in the new initiative, and another BoG member suggested video and tutorial combination for the new magazine. It was asked how does the new initiative relate to the on-going efforts led by Brian Kurkoski and the On-line Committee. Matthieu answered that there will be overlap and how much if it will depend on the cost and Brian's work. It was also suggested that to add hardware such as microphone for hybrid events. The motion was then revised to approve the budget of up to \$65k.

The following motion was issued:

Motion: To support the activities of the FITS initiative with a budget of \$65K.

Motion passed.

On-line Committee -- Brian Kurkoski

The next presentation was given by Brian Kurkoski as the Chair of the On-line Committee. Brian went over the status of the website itsoc.org upgrade, highlighting the high cost up to date; the vendor has been paid \$70K for incomplete upgrade thus far and is asking for additional \$30K. In light of this situation, the online committee asked for the upgrade of the website and to transfer of the web platform from Plone to Drupal. Brian described planned features for the upgrade and showed what the new page would look like, with various items of interest to current and prospective members. He then went over the quotes provided by different vendors for the upgrade. The following motion was issued.

Motion: The Online Committee requests 1) \$73K to develop a new site for itsoc.org and 2) \$5K to migrate data from the old site to the new site for a total of \$78K.

The motion passed.

Upon a question from a BoG member regarding how long the upgrade will take, Brian stated that 3-4 months is likely feasible.

After a short break, the meeting resumed.

EiC IEEE Transactions on Information Theory – Igal Sason

Next presentation was given by Igal Sason in his capacity as the Editor-in-Chief of the IEEE Transactions on Information Theory. Igal stated that there are currently 60 associate editors, and that there is a need to add more. He then presented the 7 candidates in the needed areas. A BoG member asked about the gender and geographic diversity of the candidates. Igal clarified that among the candidates, 1 is female, 2 are from Asia, 2 are from Europe, 1 is from Israel, and the rest are from the US.

Motion was issued for each of the following candidates.

Motion: To elect Claude Carlet as an Associate Editor for Sequences.

Motion: To elect Guang Gong as an Associate Editor for Sequences.

Motion: To elect Marco Lops as an Associate Editor for Detection and Estimation.

Motion: To elect David Mitchell as an Associate Editor for Coding Theory (emphasis on LDPC codes).

Motion: To elect Changho Suh as an Associate Editor for Statistical Learning.

Motion: To elect Himanshu Tyagi as an Associate Editor for Shannon Theory.

Motion: To elect Eitan Yaakobi as an Associate Editor for Coding Theory (emphasis on coding for storage).

All motions passed.

EiC IEEE Journal on Selected Areas in Information Theory – Andrea Goldsmith

Next presentation was given by Andrea Goldsmith in her capacity as the Editor-in-Chief of the IEEE Journal on Selected Areas in Information Theory (JSAIT). Andrea first went over the executive summary, stating that the first special issue is already published, the second and third issues are on track, and that the CFPs for fourth and fifth are published. She stated that the guest editorial teams are performing well, that startup glitches on Manuscript Central are mostly fixed, that JASIT has received great support from the IEEE staff, and that the launch appears successful so far.

In regards to the first issue, she said that the sub-to-pub time was 6 months. She thanked the guest editorial board, especially the Lead Guest Editor Alex Dimakis for successfully handling the inaugural issue. She stated that this issue had 3 tutorials, and that there will be at least 1 tutorial per issue moving forward.

In regards to the second issue on quantum information theory, Andrea stated that is moving towards completion, and that the final acceptances are undergoing. She thanked the Lead Guest Editors Andreas Winter and Emina Soljanin for leading this effort.

The third special issue is on statistical inference and estimation, and the Lead Guest Editor is Devavrat Shah. The submission deadline was in May 2020. The fourth special issue is on Privacy and Security of Information Systems, and the Lead Guest Editor is H. Vincent Poor. The submission deadline is August 1st, 2020. The fifth special issue is on sequential, active, and reinforcement learning, and the Lead Guest Editors are Vincent Tan and Yao Xie. The submission deadline is October 1st, 2020. Andrea also stated that there will be 4 special issues starting next year.

Andrea next went over the JSAIT Editorial Board and stated that since all Senior Editors were appointed in 2019, some may be staggered for continuity purposes. She then went over the list of members of the Industrial Advisory Board, and stated that they have provided excellent inputs so far. She then went over the list of members of the Steering Committee and thanked them for their service.

Next, Andrea discussed the issues regarding page charges. She stated that submitted papers cannot exceed 35 pages in length, and that some authors seemed unaware of page charges for JSAIT. In regards to the initial issue, she stated that several authors requested to remove content from their accepted paper to reduce the paper to 10 pages rather than pay the page charges, which was in turn handled by Andrea on a case by case basis. Appendices were moved to supplemental material. In the cases where page reduction entailed removing valuable content in the main body of the paper, which degrades the paper and might deter authors from future JSAIT submission, as Andrea explained, she waived the page charges to retain the content and she waived page charges for all tutorials (as EiC prerogative).

Next, Andrea presented page charge recommendations to increase the number of free pages in JSAIT regular papers from 10 to 12, and to have no page charges for tutorial papers.

A short discussion ensued. A BoG member suggested to increase the limit to 14 pages. A BoG member asked and Andrea clarified that there were over 50 submissions for the first issue, and about 20-30 for the next two. She also clarified that the charge per excess page is \$200, and that the average length of non-tutorial papers in the first issue was 14.2 pages.

The following motion was issued.

Motion: to increase the number of free pages in JSAIT regular papers from 10 to 12, and to have no page charges for tutorial papers.

The motion passed.

ITSoc Schools Committee – Stark Draper

Next presentation was given by Stark Draper as the Chair of the ITSoc Schools Committee. Stark thanked Parastoo Sadeghi, Christina Fragouli, for their dedicated service on the committee as well as Aylin Yener for her help.

He then went over the status of the schools. 2019 schools had nothing to report. Four schools were planned for 2020, and are all deferred. ESIT 2020 was deferred to fall, and the organizers are looking into the possibility of making it virtual. The remaining schools, which are NASIT 2020, EASIT 2020, and India 2020, are all deferred to 2021. He then went over the implementation of the virtual ESIT 2020. He stated that the organizers will look to ISIT 2020 plenaries as a model and that they believe it should and can be “more than downloading a few good videos”; he also stated some pros and cons of holding the school virtually. Stark stated that the Schools Committee is in favor of the ESIT’20 organizers exploring the possibility of a virtual ESIT’20, and that the organizers and the School Committee request input from the BoG. In regards of the named lectureships, Stark stated that the Padovani and Goldsmith Lectures are delivered at schools. Padovani was to be delivered at NASIT’20 and Goldsmith at ESIT’20, and that the plan for the named lectureships in 2021 will be discussed as part of the Membership Committee report.

Diversity and Inclusion Committee – Stark Draper

The following presentation was also given by Stark Draper, in his role as the Chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

Stark started off by thanking all the members of the precursor D&I committee for their service, and going over the procedures from the Bylaws for constituting the committee and adding new members.

The following motion was issued:

Motion: To approve the proposed four members of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, who are: Todd Coleman, Vinod Prabhakaran, Nihar Shah, and Michele Wigger.

The motion passed.

Next, Stark went over the Committee's mandate and schedule for this year. He stated that the committee is responsible for creating and executing an ongoing diversity and inclusion strategy, presenting progress, plans, data, and metrics annually to the Board. He also stated that the committee is charged with ensuring that Information Theory Society events and processes are inclusive, welcoming and safe for everyone in the field of information theory and with developing and overseeing codes of conduct and best practices for all Society activities, including conferences, schools, and committees. It is anticipated that the committee will provide a report update at the next BoG meeting in October.

Conference Committee – Vijay Kumar

Next presentation was given by Vijay Kumar on the behalf of the Conference Committee. He started off by thanking the committee members for their service. Next, he went over the key status update of ITWs and ISITs. ITW 2020 in Riva del Garda, Italy is postponed to 2021. Format of the ITW 2021 in Kanazawa, Japan will be decided in Sep. 2020. For ITW 2022 to be held in Goa, India, the formal proposal has been submitted and is under review. For ISIT 2024 to be held in New York a proposed formal proposal has been deferred to a future BoG meeting. For ISIT 2021 to be held in Melbourne, Australia, an update will be provided by Parastoo Sadeghi in this meeting.

For ITW 2020, more specifically, Vijay stated that the new dates are Apr. 11-15, 2021, and that all involved people have confirmed their participation. It is not yet decided whether the conference will be in-person, remote, or in a hybrid mode. The current submission window is September 30 to October 30, 2020. Vijay also went over the list of confirmed plenary speakers, organizers of the special sessions, and tutorial organizers. He stated that the permission was granted from the IEEE to keep the "2020" in the name of the conference.

For ITW 2021, Vijay stated that the decision will be made to either postpone the conference or to convert it to online/hybrid format. The current submission window is March to April, 2021. He re-iterated that the committee hopes that ITW Kanazawa will happen as planned in Oct 2021.

The committee is monitoring the situation for international travel, worldwide COVID-19 infection, as well as local regulations on social distancing and related events. They are currently discussing three scenarios: onsite, online/hybrid, and postponement, each with its own timeline. The organizing committee plans to re-assess the situation in September, particularly with regard to the venue contract.

Next, Vijay stated that the report on ISIT 2020 Experience will be presented at a future BoG meeting, possibly the Fall 2020 BoG.

Afterwards, Vijay went over the proposal for ITW to be held in Goa, India in 2022. He went over the list of members of the organizing committee, details of the location, and the list of potential topics of interest. He stated that given the current and potentially future world-wide circumstances, this conference, and others, would be held in hybrid or all-virtual mode.

Next, Vijay presented the update for ISIT 2021 in Australia. He went over the timeline of various options, discussing in particular various fees associated with venue cancellations at given points in time. He stated that three major contracts have already been signed with the IEEE. The current focus is to hold ISIT in person (viewed as Plan A). Here, things are on track: monthly organizer meetings are conducted, website is up with fair amount of content: <https://2021.ieee-isit.org>, and there is a plan to advertise as much as possible at ISIT 2020 and in the next 6-7 months. Organizing committee is also discussing fallback Plan B. In this case ISIT would be held virtually, similar to ISIT 2020, and possibly more interactive. The committee has contacted IEEE Conference Contracts and IEEE Legal to get advice on liabilities, timelines and insurance options. Vijay went over various scenarios and outlined the dollar amount of values and schedules of liabilities and sponsorship. He also presented dollar amounts for base registration estimates to break even (assuming virtualization platform or other costs will be added later to break even) for Virtual ISIT 2021.

There was a brief discussion about the estimated costs in terms of cancellation fees and what aspects of the cost could be re-negotiated, or potentially have the venues changed to the university setting. Vijay stated that he will communicate back with the committee and will update the board in the near future.

IEEE BITS The Information Theory Magazine – Christina Fragouli

Next presentation was given by Christina Fragouli in her capacity as the Chair of the Steering Committee for the new IT magazine. She started off by thanking committee members for their service. She went over the timeline of the magazine launch, highlighting that in February 2020 Phase II documents were reviewed and a positive TAB decision was made. EiC selection is scheduled for Summer 2020, and the first publication is scheduled for 2021. She stated that the magazine is ready to start and that the goal is to increase the visibility of our field and community.

The following motions were issued:

Motion: To elect Robert Calderbank as the inaugural Editor in Chief of the IT Magazine.

The motion passed.

Motion: To approve \$15K for the IT Magazine to start operations such as creating a logo and starts promotions.

The motion passed.

Membership Committee – Christina Fragouli

Next presentation was also given by Christina Fragouli, this time on the behalf of the Membership Committee. Christina stated that upon careful consideration of the membership committee, the Chapter of the Year was awarded to the North Macedonia chapter.

Next, Christina discussed the status of the Distinguished Lecturers (DLs), Padovani and Goldsmith lecturers She first recalled that a motion was passed on March 23, 2020 to suspend the DL program until further notice.

The following motions were presented.

Motion 1: To extend the current term of the DLs for one year (this would apply to both the 2019-2020 and the 2020-2021 DLs).

Motion 2: To require a recorded lecture from each DL (to be uploaded on the society website/youtube channel).

Motion 3: To select no new DLs for 2021.

Motion 4: To extend the current term of the Padovani lecturer for a year.

Upon further discussion the four motions were withdrawn.

The following motion was then issued by President Yener.

Motion: To extend the meeting by 1 hour.

The motion passed.

Student and Outreach Subcommittee – Martina Cardone

Next presentation was given by Martina Cardone on behalf of the Student and Outreach Subcommittee. First, she went over the Meet the Shannon Lecturer video details and presented a trailer. This video is an exclusive recorded interview -- organized into three parts and conducted by Dr. Min-Hsiu Hsieh and Dr. David Sutter – where Dr. Charles H. Bennett shares his past academic experiences, and his insights regarding the past, present, and future of quantum information theory research.

Next, Martina presented a description and a video trailer for online teaching and learning. This was also an exclusive recorded interview -- organized into four parts -- where the committee reached out to 14 members of the Information Theory community (students, postdocs, faculty) and asked them to share their perspective on online teaching and learning.

Afterwards, Martina went over the student video exposition. In this special online challenge, students registered to ISIT were able to team up with students from other universities to create videos explaining an easy concept related to information theory to high school students. Three winning videos were selected and the students who made them received a \$300 award each. It was suggested by BoG that these videos could also be made available publicly for high school student outreach.

Pilot Videos Committee – Matthieu Bloch

Next presentation was given by Matthieu Bloch on the behalf of the Pilot Videos Committee. He went over the current statistics of the available videos that have been made thus far, highlighting that there have already been more than 100,000 views. He then went over the work in progress which included: several meetings with Brit Cruise; discussion around several topics of new videos to be made (synchronization, magnetic recording, and information propagation in graphs). He stated that the objective is to release these new videos by the end of year.

Massey Award – Tara Javidi

Next presentation was given by Tara Javidi in her capacity as the Chair of the Massey Award Committee. Massey Award is given annually to an outstanding young scholar within 10 years of the completion of their highest degree. Tara thanked other committee members: Christina Fragouli, Sid Jaggi, and Ram Zamir for their service. Tara stated that there were 8 highly qualified candidates. Upon very careful deliberations, the committee selected Yuri Polyansky as the recipient of the Massey Award for his outstanding achievements in research and teaching.

Cover Thesis Award – Christina Fragouli

The following presentation was given by Christina Fragouli in her capacity as the Chair of the Cover Thesis Award Committee. Christina thanked the other committee members: Haim Permuter, Michele Wigger, Meir Feder, and Wei Wu for their service on this committee. She then went over the selection process, stating that 6 eligible theses were considered. Based on the detailed discussions amongst the committee members, the committee unanimously agreed to give the Cover Dissertation award to: Pengkun Yang, for his thesis titled: "Polynomial Methods in Statistical Inference: Theory and Practice."

Constitution and Bylaws Committee – Elza Erkip

Next presentation was given by Elza Erkip on behalf of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee whose members are Elza (chair) and Emina Soljanin, as Senior Past President and Junior Past

President, respectively. Elza next discussed the status of the bylaws, highlighting that extensive revision of the Bylaws occurred in 2019, and that this year revisions will be relatively minor. She stated that possible changes would be a) regarding the paper awards committee as the condition of AEs serving in the last three years may be too limiting, and the term limit could be lowered to two years, b) introduction to post-humous awards, and c) resolution of conflict of interest in committees. She next stated that the Publications Committee needs to be updated with the introduction of the new IT magazine. There was a brief discussion regarding the membership on the board of governors for the Editors-in-Chief of the main IT publications.

Going Forward as a Community – Aylin Yener

Next topic on the agenda was how do we go forward as a community and was introduced by President Yener. There was a discussion amongst the BoG members regarding what could be some productive ways of strengthening our community. The following motion was issued.

Motion: to support the production of an educational video in the amount of \$15K.

The motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 4 pm EST.