LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

IGiving back.

How many times have you heard that expression? ‘Giving back’ is an oft-used expression depicting philanthropic pursuits in hopes of alleviating a lesser human condition. A noble soul is one who is able to set aside their concerns for a person, making a personal sacrifice. This usually requires a considerable investment of time – something IEEE members vainly attempt to recover by foregoing sleep.

How many realize that one definition of giving is ‘to produce’ or ‘to contribute’? Volunteering for an organization does indeed require time and effort – but the payback usually comes in spades. Case in point: A fellow engineer volunteers for a group project and ended up making friends with the VP and co-founder of major power quality company. Now, he is sitting pretty for that summer internship and perhaps a career. The argument can be made that humans are inherently selfish acting to satisfy their own ends. Who can truly argue this premise when a fellow engineer has secured a job in this tough market?

However, some intend to give back and do nothing more than make a big splash. Grandiose promises of performance and product can mean these folks are nothing more than pesky parasitic capacitances. They try, and they usually mean well, -but as an engineer our word is our bond and we must stay the course.

Giving back extends beyond volunteer groups as well. Take for example the half dozen or so professors that are retiring this month. These are individuals that have given back tremendous amounts of knowledge to their students, their peers, and their profession. Their contributions are greatly appreciated and will be sorely missed.

As engineers, we can give back in our designs and in our work ethic. Simply going that extra mile, spending a half hour tutoring, or making an effort to work with the most disagreeable among us -are all examples of giving back.

The IEEE is an educational clearinghouse where engineers give and take in exhaustive amounts. As a professional organization, new ideas, concepts, and theories can be readily and securely disseminated among our peers. The IEEE Xplore serves up nearly 8,000 articles a month to Virginia Tech folks alone. From discount health insurance, to unbelievable networking, to a lifetime email address, ‘Giving Back’ with the IEEE doesn’t seem so bad...

Mike Schenck
IEEE Chair
FORWARD TO A NEW YEAR

Another round of elections has passed. Gone are some old faces that have been around for three semesters. Rising are new and young faces ready to spend time bettering the organization and the lives of ECE students. But enough of the poetry—what should you expect from the new officers? There are more officers than ever, and that means more can be completed, such as more information sessions, general meetings, and recruiting events. You don’t need to wait until the fall semester to see these changes take effect—within the next month Navsea and the United States Patent Office will deliver technical presentations to student audiences. The spring picnic, our big annual social event, is also scheduled to take place near the end of April, and of course, Fun Friday will still kick off every month.

For the people that will be around next year, we would like to send several students to the regional IEEE conference in Greensboro. There, we would like to hold a Student Professional Awareness Conference, and watch our hardware and software teams win their respective competitions. Our new and veteran officers are capable and willing to organize these events, but as always, we need your input and attendance. With large audiences it will become easier to entice corporations and professional organizations to visit Blacksburg. So keep your eyes open, our events are for your benefit as well. We’d love to see you there.

Brian Knauss
Chair Elect

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

This past Monday, the College of Engineering held its annual Engineering Open House. The EOH is an event for which potential engineering students can tour campus and attend as many info sessions as they can fit into a 6-hour period. The event is intended to give high school students an idea of what different types of engineering there are and what the differences are between them, although obviously students aren’t expected to make their choice quite yet. This is simply one of the first bricks laid in a road that paves the students’ journeys, which could lead anywhere (not exclusive to an industry career in engineering).

Events like the Engineering Open House can be invaluable resources to a prospective student. Had I attended the Engineering Open House five years ago, there is a chance I would have seen that Computer Engineering wasn’t what I wanted to do, and the time I spent in unnecessary CpE classes might have been put to other uses. As it turns out, lots of students are clueless as to what goes on inside the doors of our engineering buildings, and that’s where student volunteers can step in. While at a booth in the Squires Colonial Ballroom I got the chance to spend time answering a barrage of questions ranging from “what is Electrical Engineering?” to “how can I join the Autonomous Underwater Vehicle Team?” Tours of various facilities and labs in the department were also held for interested students and parents.

The Engineering open house isn’t the only outreach work that we can participate in. There are plenty of activities that are aimed towards rising college students interested in the engineering field. The First Lego League is one among various competitions aimed towards pre-collegiate competitors. There are lots of opportunities for us to get involved in the education of our community, and the officers in our student branch are striving to include the department in as many of these types of activities as we can. All in all, it’s a great experience to be able to help students on their way to success.

Brian Knauss
Chair Elect
IEEE OFFICER ELECTIONS

IEEE officer elections were held last week for all positions. With the overwhelming success of the interim elections, we expected a moderate response. Instead the response was even bigger this time around. 12 new officers were elected, seeing out the 7 retiring officers. There are now a total of 19 officers in the IEEE chapter at Virginia Tech. The four newly elected Executive Council members are listed below:

Brian Knauss, the Chair elect, has been with the IEEE for the last 2 years. This year Brian retires from the position of Social Chair—a position that afforded him plenty of chances for leadership, since he was able to fill in as temporary Vice Chair during the fall semester.

Alok Bathija is the new Vice Chair. Alok joined the IEEE branch at Virginia Tech this spring as the Fundraising Chair, although he has also had experience with leadership in the largest IEEE branch in the world in his home country of India.

Sara Rangos was elected to the position of treasurer. She is an Economics triple major, and is a member of several student organizations. She describes herself as an “organizer” and looks forward to working with everyone.

Elizabeth Ellis took the position of secretary. Elizabeth joined the Virginia Tech branch this spring as the Outreach Chair, and has already established herself within the group as an eager member seeking a challenge. She is also an officer of the Society for Women Engineers here at Tech.

Thanks also to all the rest of our new officers, and to our 7 retiring officers—especially Mike Schenck, the former Chair, whose efforts toward a renewed student branch are beginning to pay off. If you would like to get involved, but missed the election, IEEE members are welcome to come to the weekly officer meetings to participate. If you would like to know more, e-mail ieee@vt.edu for information

UPCOMING EVENTS

Patent Office

On April 21st, the Patent Office will visit campus and give presentations. There are some options available and since the students will be attending, we’ll let you decide what you want to see. Also, April 22nd will be an interview day with the Patent Office. You could be hired to one of THREE HUNDRED possible full time positions available strictly for ECE students.

Navsea

The Naval Surface Warfare Center will be coming to campus on April 24 to give a talk entitled Electromagnetic Signature Reduction of US Navy Ships for Susceptibility Reduction. Navsea is the US Navy’s national maritime technology center. They would like to encourage all BS, MS, and PhD students in Science and Engineering to bring their resumes. The event will be held in Squires room 150 at 6:00

Spring Picnic

The IEEE annual spring picnic will be held on Saturday April 26. All ECE students and faculty are welcome to come and bring friends and family. Expect more info via e-mail
IEEE POLOS

The IEEE got together this semester and put together an IEEE polo shirt that you can wear around with pride and say, “I am a member of the Bradley Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering”. Or you bought one so that you can go one more day without having to do laundry. In either case, we would like to thank those who bought a shirt and remind them that they should be in next week. Watch your email for notification on pickup times.

If you missed this opportunity to buy a shirt, well shame on you. I mean really, what better things could you do with $20? Nothing really. So, if you want to buy a shirt, if you feel guilty for not getting one, if you’re the only kid in your class that doesn’t have one, don’t despair. If there is enough interest, the sale will be repeated in the Fall semester. If you were just waiting to see how they were going to look, well then take a good look in the coming weeks. Let us know what you think of the shirts and if you want the sale repeated next semester, drop a line to ieee@vt.edu with the subject line “I WANT AN ECE POLO SHIRT!”