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MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

ComSoc Membership Services

Interview with Zhensheng Zhang, Director of Membership Services

By Stefano Bregni, Vice-President–Member and Global Activities, and Zhensheng Zhang, Director of Membership Services

This is the second article in the series of eight, started in November 2016 and published monthly in the IEEE ComSoc *Global Communications Newsletter*, which covers all areas of IEEE ComSoc Member and Global Activities. In this series of articles, I introduce the six MGA Directors (Sister and Related Societies; Membership Services; AP, NA, LA, EMEA Regions) and the two Chairs of the Women in Communications Engineering (WICE) and Young Professionals (YP) Standing Committees. In each article, one by one they present their sector's activities and plans.

In this issue, I interview Zhensheng Zhang, Director for Membership Services (MS). Zhensheng received his Ph.D. in electrical engineering from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). He has over 20 years of experience in the design and analysis of network architectures, protocols, and control algorithms. He has worked at Boeing as a principal scientist, and he has served as principal investigator for several Department of Defense projects, at Bell Laboratories, Lucent Technologies, and Columbia University, focusing on research and development in wireless networks. He was an IEEE ComSoc Distinguished Lecturer from 2010 to 2013. He served as GLOBECOM2015 Executive Vice Chair, IEEE GLOBECOM2012 TPC Chair, IEEE ICC2015 TPC Vice Chair, an Editor of the *IEEE Transactions on Wireless Communications* (2000-2004), and Chair of the IEEE ComSoc San Diego Chapter from 2008 to 2014 (Chapter-of-the-Year winner in 2013).

Stefano Bregni

Zhensheng Zhang

It is my pleasure to interview Zhensheng and offer him this opportunity to outline his current activities and plans for ComSoc Membership Services.

Bregni: Zhensheng, what is the goal of the ComSoc Membership Services Board? What have you and the Board done to reach this goal so far?

Zhang: The goal of Membership Services is to serve our members, to listen to what our members need, and to work with our four regional directors and chapter chairs to add value for our members so that we can increase member retention, renewal, recruitment, and recognition. To achieve this goal, since the beginning of 2016, the Membership Services Board has allocated and funded our ComSoc local chapters (who filled in the questionnaire and required funding) with $54475 (out of the budgeted $55000), has reviewed and approved six MDSGs from various regions, and reviewed and approved more than 30 Distinguished Lecturer tours and more than 20 Distinguished Speaker Program tours.

Bregni: How is Chapter funding granted and regulated?

Zhang: Each local Chapter may request funding to support chapter activities/initiatives, including membership development, and organizing Distinguished Lecturer Tours (DLTs), Distinguished Speakers Programs (DSPs), social events, and workshops. The chapter must complete a questionnaire in the early part of the year and request funding. The Region Director approves or modifies each Chapter request, taking into account the balance in the Region. Each Region proposal is submitted to the MS Director for final approval, taking into account possible modifications for overall harmonization and balance if necessary.

Bregni: There are Awards to recognize the most deserving Chapters. What Awards are assigned? What is the selection process?

Zhang: To recognize those chapters that served our members best, every year we assign the Chapter Achievement Awards (CAA) and the Chapter of the Year (COY) Award.

The CAA is given annually to one chapter from each Region. The nomination is made by the Region Director and is approved by the Director of MS. The 2016 CAA winners were: the Malaysia Chapter from the Asian Pacific region; the Romania Chapter from the Europe, Middle-East and Africa region; the Panama Chapter from the Latin America region; and the Ottawa Chapter from the North America region.

The Chapter of the Year (COY) Award is also given annually to one Chapter out of the four CAA winners, chosen by the entire MS Board Committee. The 2016 COY Award went to the Malaysia Chapter.

Bregni: What are the main MS programsthat you would like to discuss in some detail?

Zhang: The following are main MS programs designated to create value for our members.

Membership Development Support Grant (MDSG): The grant is offered to initiate, promote, and support activities of ComSoc members, local Chapters, and Regions aiming at the following targets: IEEE ComSoc membership growth, member professional development, local Chapter growth (currently there are 213 Chapters worldwide, forming four Regions: Asia/Pacific, Europe, Middle-East and Africa, Latin America, and North America). Each local Chapter is encouraged to advertise local programs as a service to members through GCN, local chapters' web sites, etc.

Distinguished Lecturer Program (DLP): The DLP is provided as a service to local Chapters. It is organized to benefit existing members and chapters. It can also be used to generate new membership and new Chapter formation. It is invited and organized by local Chapters including student Chapters. Each Distinguished Lecturer Tour (DLT) is organized by providing at least three lectures in different locations. We currently have 43 Distinguished Lecturers, listed on the ComSoc web site (http://www.comsoc.org/about/memberprograms/distinguished-lecturers). Candidates for DL can be nominated by a Technical Committee or be self-nominated, and are selected by the DL Selection Committee annually.

Distinguished Speaker Program (DSP): The objectives of the DSP are similar to those of the DLT, but it can support only one lecture and covers only local expenses. Distinguished Speakers may be any current and former DLs, IEEE Fellows, and prominent leaders.

Student Travel Grants: ComSoc Student Travel Grants (STG) are provided to help Student Members attend major ComSoc

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CHAPTER REPORT

The First IEEE ComSoc Summer School Program in Pakistan

By Kashif Bashir, IEEE ComSoc Lahore Chapter Chair, and Waqar Mahmood, Principal CEET Punjab University, Pakistan

The IEEE ComSoc Lahore Section, in collaboration with IEEE UET Lahore, the Al-Khawarizmi Institute of Computer Science (KICS), UET & IEEE Punjab University, organized the four-day "IEEE ComSoc Summer School Program 2016 Pakistan". This ComSoc Summer School is the second such global event following the 2015 event in Trento, Italy.

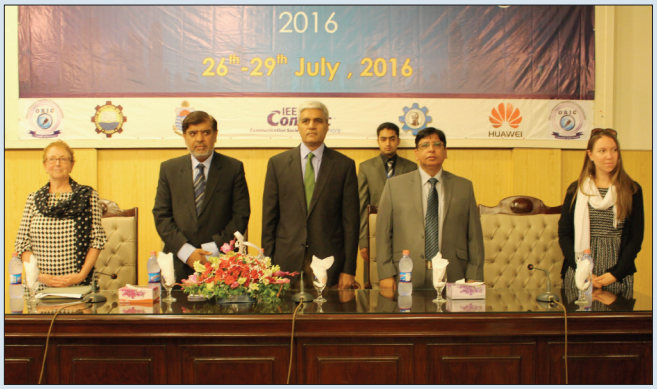
KICS UET Lahore and Punjab University jointly launched a four-day IEEE ComSoc Summer School 2016 that was held 26–29 July, 2016. It was a very interesting and informative event targeted specifically to engineers and M.S./Ph.D. students. A total of 169 applications were received, and 30 students were chosen. The participants attending this event were from 21 notable universities in Pakistan.

The event featured invited talks delivered by the luminary speakers from universities spread across Pakistan. On the first day, the opening speeches were delivered by the Director of KICS, Prof. Dr. Waqar Mahmood; Principal CEET PU Prof. Dr. Rafique Ahmad; Director of FAST University, Prof. Dr. Amjad Hussain; and Mr. Kashif Bashir, Chair of the IEEE ComSoc Lahore Section.

Each talk at the event was well structured and delivered with gusto. The best feature of these talks was that they delivered novel ideas to inspire and ignite innovation. The talks were delivered on topics such as data center evolution, visible light communication, the Internet of things, living in the LTE Era: post-deployment emerging and practical research and development directions in LTE (4G and beyond).

A six-member delegation from the U.S. State Department also visited the IEEE ComSoc Summer School on the second day. Three members, Miss Karol Hines, Liby Parker, and Mindy Mclaughlin, delivered talks on the subjects of Leadership, Project management, and Entrepreneurship

An interesting 'poster competition' was held on the second day of the event, with the theme 'humanitarian'. The projects were presented to the judges' panel, which included the U.S. delegation, VC UET Lahore Prof. Dr. Fazal Ahmad Khalid, and Director KICS UET Dr. Waqar Mahmood. The projects were well received and acknowledged by the judges. The Best Poster Winner was Syed Muhammad Rizwan, whose project was titled, 'Fire Fighting Robot for Industrial Application'. Usman Munawar from KICS UET was the advisor for this project.



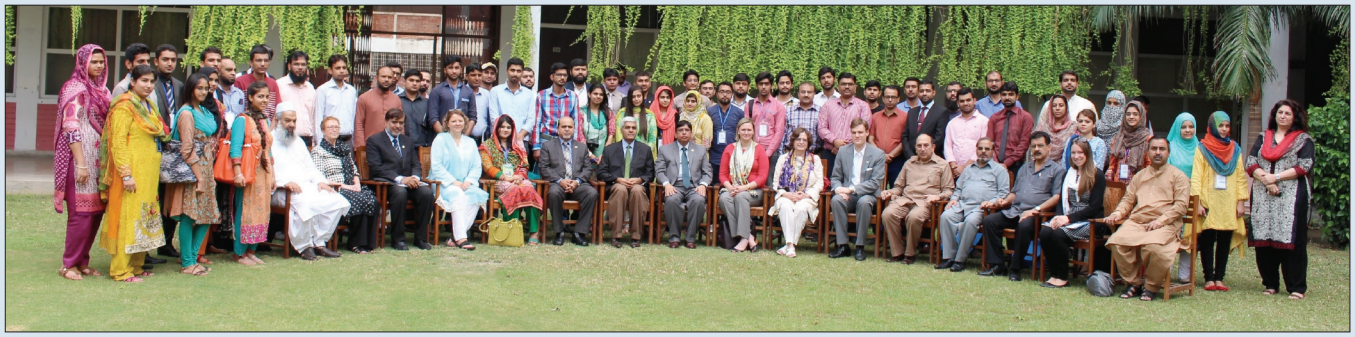
Ms. Karol Hines, Dr Waqar Mahmood,Dr Fazal Ahmad Khalid, Dr Rafique Ahmad and Amanda Bischoping.

On the third day of the event the participants were taken to visit the Huawai UET Telecom & IT Center. The talks of the day were focused on Cloud Computing & Networking, including Development of Technology Trends in IP Networks by Huwaei officials Mr. Charles Wang and Mr. Usman Khan.

A social dinner and closing ceremony were held at the Staff Club in UET Lahore, where Dr. Naveed A. Malik, VC Virtual University, was the chief guest. A long list of other distinguished guests also attended the occasion. Vice Chancellor UET Prof. Dr. Fazal Ahmad Khalid, in his speech, thanked the guests and expressed appreciation for the efforts of the IEEE ComSoc Lahore Section, Punjab University, and KICS UET for conducting such a great event. After Dr. Khalid's speech, Dr. Waqar Mahmood, Director KICS, presented an overview of IEEE ComSoc Summer School 2016. The chief guest and the distinguished guests said in their speeches that these types of events should continue, as they help establish collaborations among different universities in order to promote research and development.

The distinguished guests included VC LCWU Dr. Uzma Qureshi, MD Pakistan Railways; the CEO of Siemens Enterprises; the Dean of CS & IT at Superior University; the Dean of EE at HITEC Taxila; the Director of FAST; and the Chair of the IEEE ComSoc Lahore Section. The day and the closing ceremony ended with certificates and shields distributed to the participants, speakers, and organizers of the event.

First Row Mr Charles, Dr Waqar Mahmood,Kashif Bashir,Usman Ghani and Usman Khan.



Summer School group photo with VC UET, U.S. delegates and dignitaries.

CHAPTER REPORT

Ignacio Castillo Tours El Salvador

By Carlos Eugenio Martínez-Cruz, El Salvador Chapter Chair

The always tireless Prof. Ignacio Castillo, Secretary of the IEEE ComSoc Latin America Board, was invited by the IEEE El Salvador Section for what was supposed to be a one hour talk. But this turned into a visit to two of our major universities, a talk to dozens of IEEE Salvadoran past section chairs, and a two-day seminar on data centers.

We discovered that Ignacio never says no when asked to volunteer for work. First, he was contacted to give a talk about smart grid at one of our major industry national conferences. Then he was asked if he could give a talk at our IEEE Section 30th anniversary and two-day seminar. He said yes to everything. Those who heard his first talk were impressed, and faculty members demanded to take him to their own campuses. Again, he could not say no and agreed to visit the universities. Two trips were scheduled: one to the University of Sonsonate, and another to Don Bosco University.

IEEE Section 30th Anniversary: On July 20, after finishing his two-day seminar on data centers, at IEEE Section 30th anniversary ceremony, Ignacio gave a special talk on smart cities. The IEEE El Salvador Section was founded in 1986 but its origin goes back to 1972, as a subsection of IEEE Central America. More than 20 past Section Chairs were recognized with special IEEE pins. It was a very emotional ceremony. Ignacio gave the ceremony a high tech, high academic touch. As the ceremony assembled people from so many different ages and so many different backgrounds, so does the concept of smart cities assemble so many different technologies and so many different engineering developments. That was what Ignacio was able to show: a whole body of different technologies forming a complex system that makes life easier and safer. At the end of the ceremony, during cocktails, a meeting for the next day to Don Bosco University was scheduled.

Ignacio Castillo and Vice Chair Carlos Martínez.

Ignacio Castillo delivers a talk at IEEE El Salvador Section 30th anniversary.

IEEE-USO Student Branch and professor Ignacio Castillo.

Meeting with Engineering Professors at Don Bosco University: The Universidad Don Bosco (UDB) is located in the suburbs of Soyapango City, approximately 15 kms east of San Salvador. Its College of Engineering has more than 2,000 students. The IEEE-UDB Student Branch has five student chapters, and among them they have a ComSoc Chapter. Ignacio met faculty at the College of Engineering Dean's Office. Several collaboration issues were discussed. Ignacio is a very energetic speaker, and the meeting lasted until very close to noon. From Don Bosco University Ignacio travelled to give what was supposed to be his only talk in El Salvador.

Talk on Smart Grid at the 3th Energy Congress: On July 21, at around two o'clock in the afternoon, Ignacio delivered his talk. The Salvadoran Industry Association (ASI) organized the third Regional Energy Congress. Companies in the sector discussed the state of the regional electricity market, and power and energy management. Ignacio's main thesis was that smart cities will

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REGIONAL REPORT

Toward Disaster-Resilient Communications: Highlights from the First Meeting of the COST RECODIS Action

By David Hutchison, UK, and Jacek Rak, Poland

March 1, 2016 was the date of the kick-off meeting of COST CA15127 Action, entitled Resilient Communication Services Protecting End-user Applications from Disaster-based Failures (RECODIS). This one-day meeting took place at the COST premises in Brussels, Belgium, and was chaired by the Action Chair, Prof. Jacek Rak from Gdansk University of Technology, Poland, jointly with COST officers Dr. Giuseppe Lugano and Ms. Carmencita Malimban. This Action, co-chaired by Prof. David Hutchison from Lancaster University, UK, now comprises around 150 Members from over 50 academic, industrial, and governmental institutions from 28 European countries.

RECODIS was recently approved by COST (the oldest and widest European intergovernmental framework for trans-national Co-Operation in Science and Technology). In its forthcoming four-year period (March 1, 2016 to February 29, 2020), RECODIS aims to develop appropriate solutions to improve communications resilience in the presence of disaster-based disruptions concerning both existing and emerging communication network architectures. This is of the utmost importance, since disaster-based failures can seriously disrupt any communication

Members of RECODIS at the Action kick-off meeting.

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conferences (ICC, GLOBECOM, SECON, NOMS, INFOCOM, WCNC, CCNC, BlackSeaCom, Cloudnet, CNS, Dyspan, Healthcom, IM, SmartGridCom). Conferences may also seek sources other than ComSoc STGs for travel grants, e.g. the NSF (National Science Foundation) program supports travel for students studying at a U.S. college or university.

Bregni: Student Travel Grants are very appreciated by our members. How are they assigned? What are the main rules?

Zhang: The applicant must be an author of an accepted conference paper, who is presenting the paper at the conference, a Student Member of the IEEE Communications Society when submitting the application, and a full-time student registered toward a Bachelors, Masters, or Ph.D. degree in engineering or related fields in a college or university when submitting the application. Moreover, the applicant must have not received an STG Award in the last 12-month period.

The STG awardees are selected by the STG Committee for each conference. The individual conference website will provide the instructions for the STG application as well as information regarding the approval/notification process. The STG consists of a monetary award to be used for registration fees, conference hotel expenses, and travel costs, which is the most appreciated aspect of the STG Award.

Bregni: Chapter officers can meet periodically at Regional Chapter Chair Congresses. Can you tell us something more?

Zhang: The Regional Chapter Chair Congress is held to encourage sharing, feedback, and networking among chapter chairs of a particular Region, inviting ComSoc Officers and ComSoc Staff to meet the chairs and participate in the Congress. The RCCC is hosted by the Region Director in consultation with the MS Director.

The LA-RCCC will be held at IEEE LATINCOM 2016 in Medellin, Colombia, and the NA-RCCC will be held at IEEE GLOBECOM 2016 in Washington, DC, USA. The AP-RCCC is planned to be held during IEEE GLOBECOM 2017 in Singapore.

Bregni: What are you plans for next year?

Zhang: Our plan for next year remains to provide value to our members by continuing those programs that have proven to be successful and improving those programs that have not been implemented as expected.

One of the problems associated with DLT/DSP is that some chapter chairs and Distinguished Lecturers/Speakers are not fully aware of the application procedure, and the ComSoc P&P need to be modified so the procedures or steps are clear to the Chapters and the Distinguished Lecturers and Distinguished Speakers.

We also plan to provide opportunities for chapter chairs to share their success stories, voice their concerns, and exchange ideas to serve our members either at RCCCs or conferences. We are confident that the Board of MS will work together with ComSoc staff and local chapter chairs/volunteers to promote ComSoc and provide our members with the best benefit.

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STEFANO BREGNI
Editor
Politecnico di Milano – Dept. of Electronics and Information
Piazza Leonardo da Vinci 32, 20133 MILANO MI, Italy
Tel: +39-02-2399.3503 – Fax: +39-02-2399.3413
Email: bregni@elet.polimi.it, s.bregni@ieee.org

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STEFANO BREGNI, VICE-PRESIDENT FOR MEMBER AND GLOBAL ACTIVITIES
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REGIONAL CORRESPONDENTS WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THIS ISSUE

EWELL TAN, SINGAPORE (EWELL.TAN@IEEE.ORG)

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require smart grid. He emphasized that a variety of operational and energy measures, including smart meters, smart appliances, renewable energy, and energy efficiency resources, need to be incorporated into the electric grid.

Cyber Security Talk at the University of SonSonate: On July 22, Ignacio ended his tour in Sonsonate, where he discussed the Origins and Current Trends in Cyber Security. The University of Sonsonate (USO), located in the city of Sonsonate, the capital of the same department, is approximately 60 kms west of San Salvador. Its campus is home to more than 1,000 students. USO's College of Engineers offer four majors, with computer science the biggest. The IEEE-USO student branch is mainly formed by a young and dynamic group of computer science students. From San Salvador, a small bus brought IEEE student members from three other universities. A total of 60 students and five professors attended the meeting. After the talk, Ignacio was invited to lunch by faculty members. In the afternoon he returned to San Salvador.

COST RECODIS/*Continued from page 3*

network and render its services unavailable or severely degraded. Such disruptions may be caused by natural disasters (e.g., earthquakes, hurricanes, fires, heavy rainfall), technology-related failures (e.g., a power blackout), or various malicious attacks, and they are observably increasing in number, intensity and scale.

The need to introduce a set of disaster-resilience techniques is evident also because of a current lack of built-in mechanisms to assure the ongoing availability of network services in the presence of disaster-based failures. The impact of such failures on the performance of communication networks is often severe. Meanwhile, the common expectation is that communication networks (forming an important, but often under-appreciated, part of the critical infrastructure of everyday life) should be "always available", which is actually immensely hard to achieve, especially in post-disaster periods when there is increased network traffic generated by people desperately seeking information, or trying to communicate with each other.

In particular, the RECODIS researchers aim to develop appropriate solutions to improve communications resilience for existing communication networks (in particular, IPv4/IPv6-based, current Internet), and emerging architectures of the global communications infrastructure (viz., the Future Internet). RECODIS research will include the introduction of algorithms for resilient routing together with metrics for establishing disaster-resistant communication paths, as well as mechanisms to make use of predictions about disaster-based threats. Another important objective is to prepare recommendations for network and service operators on how to design communication networks with improved resistance to disaster-based failures.

RECODIS is structured into five Working Groups (WGs): WG1–large-scale natural disasters; WG2–weather-based disruptions; WG3–technology-related disasters; WG4–malicious human activities; WG5–oversight across WGs + general principles, challenges, definitions, as well as architecture and mechanisms of disaster-resistant communication systems.

Instruments to achieve the Action aims include regular meetings of Action members (twice a year), short term scientific missions, and training schools for network operators and other interested parties. Action results will be published in white papers, conference/journal papers, presented in special sessions of conferences/workshops, and in the Action final book.

Up-to-date information on RECODIS and its outcomes can be found at http://www.cost-recodis.eu