



If You Cannot Come to Us, We Will Go to You...

I have made a concerted effort in my previous editorials to cover topics that embrace our humanity and diversity and touch on issues of social value, the environment, the universe, our history, and science. In it all, I hope that you were able to see the reach and impact of our discipline into the depths of our existence. Our technologies enable discoveries and interactions with our surroundings. They also place a heavy weight on our shoulders to make sure we promote solutions that enrich and preserve our existence rather than limit it.

In my parting message as your Society president, I will step back and share with you a summary of the initiatives we have pursued and policies we have put in place to serve our members. I would not have been able to act on these ideas without the support of exceptional colleagues serving as volunteer leaders on the Society's Executive Committee and as members of the Society's Board of Governors (BoG). To all of them, including to those who may have had opposing views on certain issues, I express my deepest gratitude. Your perspectives helped enrich our discourse and sharpen our focus.

Our aim has always been the same: to build and sustain a stronger IEEE Signal Processing Society that is up to the times and serves its members in innovative ways, including those from disadvan-

taged regions. By working together, we have been able to make a difference for the betterment of our discipline. There is, of course, more to be accomplished, and I move on with a sense of optimism. Our Society is forward-looking and will continue to flourish under the able leadership of Ahmed Tewfik, our new president, (2020–2021), and Athina Petropulu, his successor as president-elect (2022–2023). I have interacted with both of them over many years, as well as with our predecessors including Past-President Rabab Ward, now leading our Awards Board. All of these colleagues care deeply about our Society and its members. We are in good hands.

One of my main focus areas during my years as your president-elect (2016–2017) and president (2018–2019) has been to make our Society more inclusive and to structure its activities in ways that make it more agile and more appealing to the younger generation. We launched direct elections to president, established a standing US\$1 annual membership for all students, approved reduced membership fees for individuals from disadvantaged Regions, established a new flat rate for students attending our conferences, launched regional meetings worldwide to reach local members, launched an open access journal with reduced fees, and established the position of vice-president of education to strengthen our outreach and educational activities, in addition to several other initiatives.

Many new accomplishments happened in 2018 and 2019.

At the IEEE International Conference on Acoustics, Speech, and Signal Processing (ICASSP) 2019 in Brighton, United Kingdom, we launched the Society's new logo. It has a modern look and reflects the broad reach of our discipline across the globe. Its flying and intersecting lines show how we promote a convergence of methods and ideas to solve challenging problems on a grand scale. We are a global organization representing a sophisticated discipline that reaches all corners of the world. We care about our planet and work incessantly to contribute to a better life cycle through our devices and methods.

In the same year 2019, we elected our first president by direct vote from the Society's membership. We had two exceptional candidates, Athina Petropulu and John Mathews. For years, both of these colleagues have been dedicated volunteer leaders of the highest caliber. I have served with them on many committees and have witnessed their dedication firsthand. In my opinion, the direct election is a significant step forward because it strongly involves you in Society affairs. Your opinion is an asset and direct voting is both a right and privilege that I hope you will cherish for years to come.

In 2018, we instituted a new standing policy for student membership. Students can join our Society for only US\$1 annually; tell your students and your friends!

It is remarkable how a step that may appear trivial to some can have such a sizable impact. In the short span of 12 months, our student membership has more than doubled, increasing by 104%. This was largely driven by increases in Regions 9 and 10, while our overall Society membership has increased by 9.6% (one of the highest increase rates within the IEEE). We have also capped all student tutorial fees at IEEE Signal Processing Society conferences at the

nominal value of US\$25. As a result, I was informed that the number of students attending our 2019 ICASSP meeting in Brighton increased sixfold over the previous ICASSP held in Calgary, Canada, from 128 to 750. This influx of interested students has helped ICASSP exceed 3,000 attendees for the first time in its history! I am grateful to my colleagues, Vice-Presidents Nikos Sidiropoulos and Fernando Pereira, who have helped make these efforts a reality.

We continued our outreach to members in 2019. In particular, we have decided to reduce the Society membership fees by 50% to members from low-income economies and developing nations. We have also reduced the registration fees at conferences for our IEEE Life Members to the same level as student rates. Moreover, we have established a flat rate for student registration of US\$200 at our flagship conferences. We have been working to reduce entry barriers to our Society. Like I mentioned in one of my previous editorials on how “Science Is Blind” [1], there should be no walls to our Society. Your science pushes you forward. We have also established awards to honor our younger members and the exceptional teachers of signal processing in different parts of the world. We launched a Best Ph.D. Dissertation Award to honor our exceptional graduating students, as well as an Early Career Technical Achievement Award to honor our younger researchers during the early years of their career.

In 2018, we launched a brand-new concept of regional meetings to enable

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members across the globe to organize their own technical meetings under the sponsorship of the IEEE Signal Processing Society. Just like Summer Schools, financial support is available to assist you in promoting signal processing in your geographical areas. We have close to 18,000 members. Unfortunately, a large number of them cannot attend our flagship conferences for various reasons, namely financial ones. Our motto is simple: “If you cannot come to

us, we will go to you.” You can now apply to organize technical meetings, summer or winter schools, and industry forums with Society sponsorship and financial support at your local university, local Chapter, local industry, or city. Be proactive and take advantage of these opportunities.

In 2019, we have argued for and promoted the need to move our major conferences to new corners to reach regions where there is significant interest in signal processing but are underserved by our professional activities. For the first time, our flagship conferences will be held in India and Southeast Asia. Specifically, the IEEE International Conference on Image Processing (ICIP) will be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 2023 while ICASSP will be coming to Hyderabad, India, in 2025. I am also happy to report that we have elected our first vice-president for the Society who is physically located in India, our colleague K.V.S. Hari from the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore.

Also in 2019, we created a new vice-president of education position to help develop and strengthen our educational outreach efforts and educational material. We also elected our colleague Shri Narayannan to serve as the first vice-president of education for the Society. Under the supervision of our colleague Maria Sabrina Greco, we continued to enrich our Resource Center in an effort to evolve it toward an e-learning center. In addition to recorded plenaries, seminars, and tutorials, the objective is to generate recorded courses, webinars,

interviews with luminaries of our discipline, historical content, and more.

We continued to support and promote our female members. The number of Society members in the IEEE Women in Engineering organization has increased by more than 150%. In 2019, the BoG put forward two candidates for the position of president-elect, one of them female. She was successful and won the election and will be serving as our president in 2022–2023. In the same year, the number of elected female BoG members reached five out of a total of nine: Abeer Alwan, Beatrice Pesquet-Popescu, Athina Petropulu, Ana Perez-Neira, and Zhi Tian. Our Awards Board is led by Rabab Ward and our vice-president for technical activities is Tulay Adali. Three of our journal editors-in-chief (EICs) are female: Lina Karam for *IEEE Journal of Selected Topics in Signal Processing*, Dilek-Hakkani Tur for *IEEE Transactions on Audio, Speech, and Language*, and Mari Ostendorf for *IEEE Open Journal of Signal Processing*.

We promoted open science and an open model for our publications. I published an article on this topic titled “Galileo, Fourier, and Openness in Science” [2], where I expressed the view that the IEEE can and should do more in this domain. We created an entry for “Signal Processing” under the arXiv platform and launched an open access journal with reduced fees. Future plans will consider adding notable features, such as promoting reproducible research features and allowing the upload of videos, software, and data. I am grateful to Vice-President, Publications Sergios Theodoridis for making this plan a reality, and for the support from then President-Elect Ahmed Tewfik and EIC-designate Mari Ostendorf during the planning and launch phases. It is a strong effort in the right direction. In my opinion, the future of the publication enterprise will be very different from what we practice today. Our Society needs to push forward with conviction and lead the way in open science and open publications.

We also created uniform branding for our awards. Our major awards are now named after distinguished scholars

and individuals who have had a mark on our discipline, such as the Carl Gauss Education Award, the Norbert Wiener Society Award, The Shannon-Nyquist Technical Achievement Award, and so forth. This is an important step to help promote the accomplishments of our discipline. Society Award winners are now required to deliver a plenary lecture at our major conferences.

We also launched a major effort to streamline the areas of expertise of the Society and to create a unified EDICS across all our journals, conferences, and workshops. The purpose is to attain a uniform taxonomy for our Society's areas of interest. I am grateful to Vice-President Tulay Adali for all the good work she has been pursuing in this regard.

I cannot end this editorial without expressing my deepest gratitude toward the staff of the IEEE Signal Processing Society. We are blessed with a wonderful group of individuals who are knowledgeable and care deeply about our organization, from Executive Director Rich Baseil, to Senior Manager of Operations Theresa Argiropoulos, Senior Manager, Conference Strategy and Services Caroline Johnson, and Senior Manager, Publications and Education Strategy and Services Bill Colacchio, along with their outstanding supporting staff. There is not enough space to list everyone here, but I want to extend special thanks to Jessica Perry for her work on the logo initiative, Samantha Walter and Nicole Allen for their dedication to

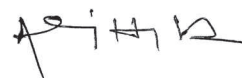
ensuring our conferences run smoothly, and Deborah Blazek for her outstanding support to our boards. These are the unsung heroes of our Society.

And above all, I thank you—our members and volunteers—who help make this Society a vibrant place with your daily contributions to science and service.

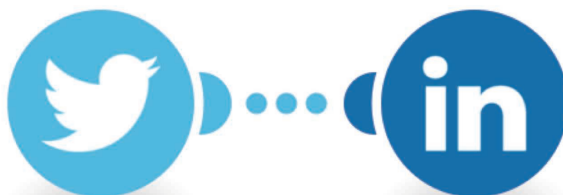
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[1] A. H. Sayed, "Science is blind," *IEEE Signal Processing Mag.*, vol. 35, no. 5, pp. 4–6, Sept. 2018. doi: 10.1109/MSP.2018.2849043.

[2] A. H. Sayed, "Galileo, Fourier, and openness in science," *IEEE Signal Processing Mag.*, vol. 35, no. 3, pp. 6–8, May 2018. doi: 10.1109/MSP.2018.2809224.



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