



(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.

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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

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 p0.2 ( p0.90.24 0 0 0.2 (pe(F) 5

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.

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



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

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 1<sup>st</sup>, 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 1<sup>st</sup>, 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.



## **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.

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. EiC1 1 Tf [(2(e) 0.21 0.2 ( II doc)(

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, 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

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.