

## NOVEMBER 2019 IEEE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### DISCUSSION

ITEM: IEEE Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Professional Ethics

SUBMITTER: Bruno Meyer, IEEE Director, and A. Goldsmith, IEEE Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Professional Ethics Chair

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### **Executive Summary:**

The IEEE Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, and Professional Ethics (CDIE) is charged by the IEEE Board of Directors to develop and implement mechanisms to improve diversity, inclusion, and professional ethics across all IEEE.

Over the past 9 months, the Committee has made substantial progress on its ambitious charter via the work of its three subcommittees on diversity and inclusion; professional and member ethics; and IEEE ethics processes. Each subcommittee has met multiple times via telecon to establish, finalize, and execute their respective charters, which are highlighted below. Several meetings of the complete committee were held to obtain consensus on recommendations coming from the Committee. The beginning half of the year was dedicated to discussions with IEEE organizational units ("OUs") and subunits about their diversity and inclusion efforts, developing a mechanism to track diversity metrics, and developing recommendations associated with the committee charter. The second half of the year has focused on finalizing, socializing and obtaining IEEE OU, IEEE Governance, and IEEE Legal input and endorsements for its recommendations. The recommendations were also discussed with the Board on its September 2019 teleconference.

At the November Board meeting, Andrea Goldsmith, Chair of IEEE CDIE, will lead a discussion with the Board and recommend three actions proposed by the Committee, and sponsored by IEEE Director Bruno Meyer. These actions include adoption of a diversity statement, initiation of the process to revise the IEEE Code of Ethics, and adoption of a revision to IEEE processes for ethics violation reporting and adjudication. These actions are described in more detail below. In-depth supporting material, including the associated Governance documents on the three Board motions, have been posted to the Board portal.

### **Subcommittee on Diversity and Inclusion (Chair: Bruno Meyer)**

This subcommittee is chartered to develop and implement mechanisms to improve diversity and inclusion across all of the IEEE. As part of this charter, the subcommittee determined that an IEEE diversity statement should be adopted to highlight IEEE's commitment to the core values around diversity and inclusion and to articulate why diversity and inclusion are important to achieve IEEE's mission. At

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the November Board Meeting, the Board of Directors will be asked to adopt the following diversity statement and include it as IEEE Policy.

*"IEEE's mission to foster technological innovation and excellence to benefit humanity requires the talents and perspectives of people with different personal, cultural, and disciplinary backgrounds. IEEE is committed to advancing diversity in the technical profession, and to promoting an inclusive and equitable culture in its activities and programs that welcomes, engages, and rewards all who contribute to the field without regard to race, religion, gender, disability, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression."*

The statement has been shared with IEEE OUs with a request to endorse it prior to the Board vote. So far it has been endorsed by EMCC, EAB, Standards, TAB SPC, and TAB MC, with other OU endorsements to be voted on at the Board series. If approved by the Board, the Committee will implement a comprehensive communications plan to share this new statement with all IEEE OUs and members and define the benefits of adopting it. The statement has been shared with all IEEE Major OUs, as well as with EMCC, and reviewed by IEEE Governance and IEEE Legal.

In addition, the committee presented the following recommendations for feedback at the June Board meeting, with the goal of implementing them in 2019.

*Define and track diversity metrics across gender, geographic region, work sector, and Young Professionals eligibility across all OUs, which will be used to produce an annual diversity report, to also highlight IEEE's efforts and progress around diversity and inclusion*

The subcommittee recommends the above action be taken to ensure transparency around diversity and inclusion across IEEE, and to communicate the organization's extensive efforts and activities regarding diversity and inclusion. Producing a diversity report annually demonstrates IEEE's commitment to maintaining a diverse and inclusive environment for its members and presents an opportunity to build cohesive messaging around these efforts.

To help achieve this goal, the Committee, with support from IEEE Staff, created a "diversity dashboard" that visualizes key metrics (gender and region distribution) using data found in OU Analytics and collected from various IEEE OUs. Membership data is currently collected by the IEEE and can be extracted from OU Analytics, while diversity data associated with Awards and Fellows are not collected centrally and must be obtained from their home OU. Diversity data associated with leadership positions, awards, conferences, and publications of the 46 IEEE Societies and Technical Councils has not previously been collected. To facilitate collecting this information, a set of four online surveys was created and sent to all Societies and Technical Councils with a request and periodic reminders to complete them. The team will manually add the Awards, Fellows, Society, and Technical Council

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diversity data to the database on an annual basis, so it will appear on the dashboard. This marks the first time that comprehensive IEEE diversity data has been collected and centralized in one location.

These metrics, along with effective practices and diversity and inclusion-focused activities collected from IEEE stakeholders, will be used to create the first-ever IEEE Annual Diversity Report, which will be finalized by the end of 2019, and which will raise visibility of the outstanding efforts made to date by the IEEE to increase diversity and inclusion.

At the June Board Meeting, the subcommittee on diversity and inclusion recommended creating a public-facing website on diversity and inclusion, including metrics, best practices, and educational materials. The website would also be of value to others in the profession by offering a repository of best practices, educational materials, and other pertinent resources that may be used by those looking to build diverse, inclusive and ethical engineering environments in their professional environments.

The Committee still recommends creating a public-facing website and has met numerous times with IEEE Public Visibility and Communications staff to discuss how to best do this effectively. However, instead of beginning with a public-facing website, the Committee plans to create and maintain a pilot page on the Technical Activities Operations site, to gauge interest and effectiveness of included information.

Another recommendation of the subcommittee on diversity and inclusion was to encourage the “face” of the IEEE to be more diverse by ensuring its magazine covers, websites, and social media showcase diverse members. The committee has had discussions with IEEE Public Visibility and Communications staff along these lines and will include progress on this issue in its annual diversity report.

The subcommittee on diversity and inclusion has also reached out to IEEE Awards and IEEE Fellows to discuss mechanisms to improve diversity in these programs. The Awards Chair Rich Cox and Fellows Chair Stefano Galli presented their activities around diversity and inclusion at the TAB CDI meeting in June and will provide an update on these activities in the annual diversity report.

The subcommittee is also considering preliminary recommendations around the following areas, and will continue to examine them throughout the remainder of 2019:

- Examine mechanisms to improve diversity and inclusion in IEEE Distinguished Lecturers
- Raise awareness and create training around diversity, inclusion, and implicit bias for volunteers and members
- Consider IEEE and OU bylaw changes around diversity and inclusion
- Develop strategies to make IEEE of more value to diverse groups

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- Investigate barriers to participation for diverse groups and propose mitigation methods

### **Subcommittee on Member and Professional Ethics (Chair: Andrea Goldsmith)**

Subcommittee activity to-date has been centralized around the following task in its charter.

*Streamline and merge all codes around ethics into one code with a few high-level principles to facilitate education of members and volunteers*

The subcommittee has noted that IEEE members are currently held to the standards of two separate codes: IEEE Policies 7.8 – IEEE Code of Ethics (for members of the IEEE) and the IEEE Code of Conduct, approved by the IEEE Board of Directors in June 2014 (for members and employees).

The IEEE Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct both describe the ethical responsibilities of IEEE members. Many members are not aware of either code or the primary ethical principles associated with them. Moreover, having two separate codes describing member ethical responsibilities has caused confusion, making it difficult to educate members about the IEEE Code of Ethics, how to uphold this code, and the implications for violation. Finally, the current IEEE Code of Ethics does not include language about harassment, which has been identified by the National Academy of Engineering and in an IEEE Spectrum article by three IEEE Presidents as a threat to engineering.

Although the subcommittee's original charter was to merge and streamline all codes around ethics into one code with a few high level principles, after many discussions with OUs and the EMCC, the subcommittee decided to focus on revising the IEEE Code of Ethics to incorporate ethics issues from the Code of Conduct that are not in the Code of Ethics, in particular precluding sexual harassment and bullying. It is not recommending any changes to the IEEE Code of Conduct or its use at this time. At the June 2019 IEEE Board of Directors meeting, a draft of the revised IEEE Code of Ethics was presented articulating three high level principles and incorporating ethical issues from the IEEE Code of Conduct. This draft was also discussed with EMCC in May 2019 and revised based on feedback from EMCC and other OUs. The revised Code of Ethics has been shared with IEEE OUs with a request to endorse it prior to the Board vote. So far it has been endorsed by EMCC, EAB, TAB SPC, and TAB MC, with other OU endorsements to be voted on at the Board series. The ad hoc requests the IEEE Board of Directors vote at the November Board meeting to start the process outlined in IEEE Policies, Section 7.8 – IEEE Code of Ethics of soliciting member and OU feedback around the proposed IEEE Code of Ethics revision.

The second element of this subcommittee's charter is as follows:

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*Develop education, training, and outreach to raise awareness among members and volunteers about the IEEE Code of Ethics and IEEE Code of Conduct, and their responsibility to uphold them, report violations, and prevent retaliation*

The subcommittee has created a comprehensive list of current education and training opportunities across IEEE and is exploring how to build training related to ethics and conduct into existing training vehicles. The subcommittee plans to recommend supplemental onboarding training on these topics, as well as on diversity and inclusion, taking into consideration the amount of role-based training that IEEE volunteers are currently required to complete. Throughout the second half of 2019, the Committee began discussions with Technical Activities learning development staff to identify opportunities to collaborate.

The third element of this subcommittee's charter is as follows:

*Develop professional ethics advice and support policies*

The subcommittee is working to more clearly define IEEE's role in offering professional advice and looking to practices from other professional societies for guidance. Discussion to-date has been centered around whether to develop internal support mechanisms, or to refer those seeking support to an external resource.

### **Subcommittee on IEEE Ethics Processes (Chair: Jerry Hudgins)**

IEEE's current processes for handling ethics violations are widely considered to be ineffective due to the cumbersome and confusing reporting process, very long timelines, inability for complainants to track progress, and failure to follow best practices with respect to confidentiality and adjudication. As a result, IEEE ethics cases are rarely reported or adjudicated. Without effective processes to deal with ethics violations, IEEE cannot protect its volunteers and members, which is a threat to the organization.

The subcommittee on IEEE ethics processes was charged with re-evaluation of, and modification to, existing procedures for member conduct complaints. Important background material for this charge took place in 2018, when a team comprised of IEEE Volunteers and staff from IEEE Corporate Activities and IEEE Legal & Compliance determined that existing processes do not provide members and volunteers with a process or outcome that is safe, timely, effective, or based on best practices. Using knowledge of IEEE functions and best practices gathered from other associations, this team drafted detailed process recommendations for the reporting and adjudication of ethics and conduct issues.

In 2019, the IEEE Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity, Inclusion, & Professional Ethics was formed with one of its key charters to develop a complete overhaul of IEEE ethics processes around reporting, mediation, adjudication, appeal, and sanctions

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incorporating best practices for confidential reporting, timeliness, tracking, and transparency. Using the initial process recommendations created in 2018 as a starting point, the ad hoc continued to evaluate and collect feedback from various OUs regarding the proposed new process, which has been incorporated into the committee's recommendations. The ad hoc requests the IEEE Board of Directors vote at the November Board meeting to adopt the proposed revision of ethics processes and the associated changes to IEEE Bylaws and Policies.

The proposed revisions have been reviewed by the IEEE Governance Committee and Finance Committee as well as by IEEE Legal and Compliance. Review by the IEEE Audit Committee is scheduled for November 2019. IEEE staff, including representatives from IEEE Corporate, were also consulted. Given the broad scope of the proposed revisions, the need for consistency and alignment across IEEE and Major OU Board governing documents, and the imperative to address the challenges of the existing process with care and consideration, the process was presented to the IEEE Board of Directors in June 2019 and on its September 2019 Teleconference. The Board was supportive of the proposed changes; no major concerns were raised in these discussions. The revised processes have been shared with IEEE OUs with a request to endorse them prior to the Board vote. So far it has been endorsed by EMCC, EAB, TAB SPC, and TAB MC, with other OU endorsements to be voted on at the Board series. In addition, Technical Activities hosted a webinar to discuss and obtain input from its Board members and has created a Wiki page for volunteers to comment on the three proposed actions going to the Board in November.

### **Looking to the Future**

The IEEE Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity and Inclusion has already made substantial progress in addressing its broad charter. Approval by the Board of Directors of the committee's three recommendations will address the most urgent issues in this charter. However, the processes to disseminate the IEEE Diversity Statement if it is adopted, to revise the IEEE Code of Ethics, and to implement the proposed new processes around ethics violations require continuity of the committee's work into 2020 and continued support by IEEE. More generally, diversity, inclusion, and professional ethics are not topics that can be finalized within the timespan of a one or two years; rather, they require an ongoing commitment by IEEE to be embedded into the culture of the organization. In addition, a number of activities will require continuity year-over-year as they are to be updated, produced, and distributed annually, or must be evaluated for effectiveness in an ongoing manner.

The committee is currently examining how to best ensure continuity of these efforts. It believes the best approach is to renew this ad hoc committee in 2020. The renewed ad hoc will ensure the main initiatives launched in 2019 are brought to completion, and make recommendations for how IEEE can continue efforts on diversity, inclusion, and ethics after 2020 either with existing committees and staff. It will also consider recommending the creation of a permanent IEEE Committee on

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Diversity and Inclusion. The Committee welcomes feedback from the IEEE Board of Directors on all its activities and recommendations at the November meeting.

**2019 IEEE CDIE Members**

- Andrea Goldsmith (Chair)
- Jennifer Bernhard
- Jerry Hudgins
- Susan Kathy Land
- Bruno Meyer
- Akinori Nishiara
- Karen Pedersen
- José Pinto
- Teofilo Ramos
- Magdalena Salazar-Palma
- Lisa Lazareck-Asunta

**Professional Staff Support**

- Marc Beebe
- Sophia Muirhead
- Kristen Russell
- Jonathan Wiggins