IEEE Information Theory Society
President’s Report

Elza Erkip

October 2018, Chicago BoG Meeting
2018 Elections

Congratulations!

• 2018 Junior Past President
  – Frank Kschischang

• 2018 Second Vice President
  – Aylin Yener
Recap of Election Process

• Step 1: 2018 2VP and 2018 JPP elections
• Step 2: 2019 2VP and 2019 VP nominations
• Step 3: 2019 2VP, 2019 VP and 2019 President elections
2019 2VP Nominations

• Emanuele Viterbo agreed to be moved to 2018.

• We now need at least two nominations for 2019 2VP.
  – Officers will select candidates.
  – BoG members can nominate additional candidates.
2019 VP Nominations

• 2018 2VP Aylin Yener will be a nominee for 2019 VP.
• BoG members can nominate additional candidates.
Nominations from the BoG

• Once officer nominees for 2019 2VP are announced, we will have one week for nominations from the BoG.

• Rules:
  1. Nominee should be a board member.
  2. Nominee should agree to serve if elected.
  3. At least two Board members support the nomination.
Recap of Election Process

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Step 3

• 2019 2VP, 2019 VP and President elections.
• Will follow our usual procedure of email ballot (Society Bylaws Article IV, Section 4).
What’s Next?

• Election of one Board member (replacement of Tsachy Weissman)

• Constitution Article VI, Section 2:
  – Within-term vacancies of the Board of Governors shall be filled by appointments for the unexpired terms that are made by the remainder of the Board.

• We will announce details by e-mail.
Discussion Session at ISIT

• Follow-up on the BoG discussion.
  – Sexual harassment, bullying, and discrimination.
• Many junior researchers.
• Suggestions
  – Double-blind reviews to reduce bias.
  – Conference code of conduct.
  – Society ombudsperson.
  – Society climate survey.
  – Plenary sessions at ISIT.
  – Continue discussion sessions like this.
Ad-hoc Committee on Society Finances

- Approved June 2018
- Members
  - Aaron Wagner (Chair)
  - President (Ex-officio)
  - Gerhard Kramer
  - Vince Poor
  - Daniela Tuninetti
  - Alex Vardy
  - Emanuele Viterbo
  - Aylin Yener
Reflections from 2018

- Culture of an organization:
  - Collective values, beliefs and principles of organizational members (Wikipedia).

- Climate of an organization:
  - Recurring patterns of behavior, attitudes and feelings that characterize life in the organization (Wikipedia).

- Culture deep and stable, climate easier to assess and change.
Role of Culture/Climate in Sexual Harassment

• National Academy report is based on decades of research.
  – System-wide changes to the culture and climate in higher education are needed to prevent and effectively respond to sexual harassment.
  – Professional societies have the potential to be powerful drivers of change through their capacity to help educate, train, codify, and reinforce cultural expectations for their respective scientific, engineering, and medical communities.
  – The cumulative effect of sexual harassment is significant damage to research integrity and a costly loss of talent in academic sciences, engineering, and medicine.
Hostile sexism: Reflecting negative views of women who challenge traditional gender roles.
Forms of Sexual Harassment

• Gender harassment
  – Sexist hostility and crude behavior.
  – Verbal and nonverbal behaviors that convey insulting, hostile and degrading attitudes to women.

• Unwanted sexual attention
  – Unwelcome verbal or physical sexual advances.

• Sexual coercion
  – When favorable professional or educational treatment is conditioned on sexual activity.
What is the Culture of ITSoc?

• Emphasis on deep, mathematical understanding.
• Value quality over quantity.
• Small, tight-knit society.
  – Helps create a strong sense of community.
  – But makes it harder to deal with conflicts.
What Happened?

• Our society was tested.
• Highly publicized sexual harassment case involving an ITSoc faculty and an ITSoc student.
• Emotional response from many.
• Severe disagreements on how to react.
• Negative impact on the climate.
How Did We React?

• February 2018:
  – Reaffirm IEEE Code of Conduct and Ethics.
  – Form an ad-hoc committee on diversity and inclusion.
  – Initial draft of Conference Code of Conduct; diversity and inclusion committee to prepare the final version for the BoG to vote.

• June 2018:
  – Statement on sexual harassment.
  – Discussion at the BoG meeting.
  – Discussion session at ISIT.

• But the road to these involved severe objections and led to high emotional toll, tension and deep divisions in the community.
How Do Others React: ML

I'll probably end up remembering this moment as the time I decided to blow my career up for no reason, but this is something I've been wanting to say for a long time.

Statistics, we have a problem. – Kristian Lum – Medium
Recently, while browsing Twitter, I saw a few machine learning researchers post about an incident at one of their big conferences (NIPS)…
medium.com

Statement from the ISBA Executive Committee Regarding the Establishment of a Task Team for a Safe ISBA

Dec 15, 2017

Activity Number: 211 - Late-Breaking Session: Addressing Sexual Misconduct in the Statistics Community
Type: Invited
Date/Time: Monday, July 30, 2018: 2:00 PM to 3:50 PM
Sponsor: Committee on Women in Statistics
How Do Others React: Philosophy

AN N.Y.U. SEXUAL-HARASSMENT CASE HAS SPURRED A NECESSARY CONVERSATION ABOUT #METOO

How a Letter Defending Avital Ronell Sparked Confusion and Condemnation
Judith Butler Explains Letter in Support of Avital Ronell

When Academics Defend Colleagues Accused of Harassment
The recent case of Avital Ronell, an NYU professor suspended for sexual harassment, and the scholars who rallied to support her highlights the intense politics of academia.
How Do Organizations React

NSF announces new measures to protect research community from harassment

New policy requires awardee institutions to report sexual harassment findings

AAAS Approves Policy to Revoke Elected Fellows for Misconduct or Ethics Breach
What is Next for ITSoC?

• Board and leadership
  – Consensus is a good ideal, but we should not be afraid to disagree.
  – Disagreements should be with civility.
  – We should be prepared to tackle difficult issues.

• Better processes
  – Conference Code of Conduct.
  – Work with the IEEE.
    • Better reporting mechanisms.
    • IEEE Conference Code.
    • Sexual harassment on par with research misconduct.
What is Next for ITSoc?

• Improve society climate
  – Concentrate on gender harassment.
  – Realize this is as much a men’s issue as a women’s (if not more).
  – Diverse, inclusive, respectful environment.
  – Continue discussions, involve and educate members.
  – Open discussion sessions, plenaries.
    • ISIT 2019 (General Chair Al Hero indicated interest)
What is Next for ITSoC?

• IEEE Ombudsman: Roberto deMarca
  – Process initiated by a senior ITSoC member.