Outreach Subcommittee Report: A Tale of Two Charges

ITSec BoG meeting
Oct. 7, 2017
The Outreach Subcommittee

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Charge #1: The Mentoring Program

• Currently consists of an “assignment” process
  • Possibly much more than this in the past
• Anecdotal experience:
  • the program works very well in a few cases
  • most pairings lead to little mentoring
• The subcommittee conducted a survey of program participants in 2016
Overall, how effective have you found the mentorship program?

32 responses

- 31.3%: Effective; changes not really necessary
- 31.3%: Somewhat effective; minor changes should be considered
- 21.9%: Not effective; significant changes should be considered
- 15.6%: Unable to judge
Mentoring Program: Upshot

• Worthwhile to consider tweaks to the program.
• Subcommittee’s views:
  • Time and energy are limiting reagents to mentoring
  • Young professionals benefit from a network of mentors, not just one.
Charge #2: Event Planning

- The outreach subcommittee is also charged with planning events at Society workshops and conferences.
- Difficult to organize novel events at ITA, ISIT, and Allerton every year while maintaining a high production quality.
- The Subcommittee sought a “template” event that could be repeated each year with different particulars
  - cf. “Meet the Shannon Lecturer” organized by the Student Subcommittee.
Two Birds, One ... ?

- Proposal: organize a mentoring event at a Society conference each year in lieu of the assignment-based mentoring program.

- Done “experimentally” at both ISIT 2016 and ISIT 2017. Informal feedback was positive.

- Advantages:
  - Subcommittee creates time and space for mentoring, so mentors/mentees only need to show up.
  - “Roundtable” mentoring: several different tables/rooms with discussions of different topics. Personnel and topics can change from year to year (template; also network of mentors).
Round Table Mentoring (2016)

Nine simultaneous round table discussions on various career-related topics, accompanied by hors d’oeuvres and led by mentors with expertise to share:

I. INDUSTRY OR ACADEMIA?
   led by Emina Soljanin and Chao Tian

II. EFFECTIVE TEACHING TECHNIQUES
   led by Emre Telatar and Sergio Verdú

III. FUNDING YOUR RESEARCH
   led by Rick Brown and Núria Sebastián Gallés

IV. ACHIEVING WORK-LIFE BALANCE
   led by Negar Kiyavash and Anand Sarwate

V. TIME MANAGEMENT
   led by Helmut Bölcskei and Frank Kschischang

VI. BRANCHING INTO ALLIED FIELDS
   led by Alex Dimakis and Olgica Milenkovic

VII. NAVIGATING THE ACADEMIC JOB MARKET
    led by Giuseppe Durisi and Yury Polyanskiy

VIII. NAVIGATING THE TENURE TRACK
    led by Natasha Devroye and Ashish Khisti

IX. THE POSTDOC EXPERIENCE
    led by Yücel Altuğ and Aly El Gamal

Monday at ISIT, 19:00 - 20:00