TAB

Society Review Committee

Review Report

IEEE Information Theory Society

Date of Review: 08 November 2012

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Confidential, 2013

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Gerhard Kramer, President, IEEE Information Theory Society

Abbas El Gamal, First Vice President, IEEE Information Theory Society

Muriel Medard, Immediate Past President, IEEE Information Theory Society

**Notes about This Report**

There are ten main areas included in this report: Purpose of Society/Council, Society/Council Strategy and Operations, Conferences, Publications, Education, Membership, Finance, Governance, Previous Review, and Successes. When available, IEEE Technical Activities staff has provided Society/Council data in the areas of Membership, Governance, and Finance. To assist in the assessment process, the committee encourages the Societies and Councils to provide specific examples to back up the comments made throughout the report.

The Society Review Committee (SRC) is dedicated to continuous improvement of the review process and welcomes Society and Council representatives’ feedback on the revised report.

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# Society Review Committee Summary Comments

The Information Theory Society (ITS) is a moderately sized Society with a strong inward focus. The Society is very successful and this inward focus has served the Society well. The Society has made many changes in its operation since the last review. Some of the changes were response to recommendations made by the SRC at the last Review.

The Society does take strategic planning seriously, but has neither a formal strategic plan nor an operational plan.Nevertheless the Society does practice the principles of strategic planning by the formation of focused ad-hoc committees to address issues identified by the BoG. The Society has many instances of successful initiatives that were developed and implemented through this process.

The Society is entirely volunteer run. The Society has 1 flagship conference and 1 publication (in addition to a Newsletter). The Society also sponsors a limited number of Workshops per year and participates in a modest number of conferences as a technical co-sponsor.

The Society has a particularly strong focus on students. The Society has a unique and very successful student-focused School on Information Theory program, and also maintains a website with links to job resources. The Society also has a particularly strong focus on under-represented membership groups through its Women in the Information Theory Society program, which is focused on women but actually serves as an outreach activity to other groups.

The Society also has a unique and very successfulmentoring program. The program provides mentoring opportunities for students as well as junior professional members. The program has also been effective at member recruitment and retention.

The Society membership is static with good retention rates but has very good opportunities for growth. However, the Society lacks a formal strategy or plan to take advantage of these opportunities and grow membership.

The society has a reasonably diverse governance structure and is seriously trying to further diversify its Board of Governors (BoG) to better reflect the membership demographics. The governance is almost exclusively from academia, which is consistent with the focus of the Society.

The Society is strong financially and has adequate funds that could be put toward society initiatives. The Society is actively investigating additional activities that could be pursued but it does not fully understand the processes by which it can access its reserves for these purposes.

# Society Comments

We appreciate the SRC feedback and will try to implement the recommendations. For instance, we have already included our Vision, Mission, and Field of Interest statements on our web site. Our Online Editor has started to look into how to expand our use of online environments.

Concerning our “inward focus”, we would like to point out that an ad-hoc committee on education and outreach recently developed recommendations for “outward” activities. The committee's two main recommendations to date are to develop materials that would bring information theory to the attention of a broader audience and to play an active role in encouraging US-based members to serve as program managers and division directors for NSF. The first goal led to a video contest idea. We are also pursuing a proposal to the USPS for a stamp to honor Claude E. Shannon. Regarding the second goal, our 2nd VP Michelle Effros was recently asked by the NSF to serve on the Search Committee for the next NSF CCF Director; the ad hoc committee came up with a list of potential candidates, which is now under consideration by the search committee.

**SRC Committee Response**

The SRC appreciates the rapid Society response to our comments about the Vision, Mission, and Field of Interest statements.

The SRC does not consider the inward focus to be a limitation to the Society, and stated that this approach has served the Society well. The Society is very well run, has many strengths, and has leveraged these strengths to serve is members and its technical community. However, expanding its activities beyond the Society, and beyond the IEEE, would enhance the visibility of the Society and likely create new opportunities for the Society. Greater visibility may result in more partnerships, or more technical interactions, or more technical offerings and may be beneficial to the Society. The SRC is pleased that the Society is developing some outward focused activities on its own volition and looks forward to seeing what impact this may have at the next Review.

# Purpose of Society

**SRC Committee Comments**

The Society’s website prominently asserts *“The IEEE Information Theory Society is an international organization whose purpose is to connect people interested in processing, transmission, storage, and use of information, as well as theoretical and applied aspects of coding, communications, and communications networks.”* This is well stated and an implicit invitation for professionals with related interests to join. The Society reviewed its mission statement in 2012 and did approve a modification. The revised mission statement is not on the Society web site

The Field of Interest (FOI) statement has not been revised since 1987; it satisfies the TAB guidelines and is correctly recorded in the TAB Operations Manual. Discussion indicated that revision may not be necessary and might be problematic at this time; however, there are differences between the purpose statement on the web page, and the field of interest. It is likely that some terms and concepts have significant visibility in 2013 that were not used in 1987. The SRC notes that incorporating these into the Society website and possibly into its field of interest may increase visibility for the Society activities and publications and potentially attract new members.

The Society sees itself as focused on theoretical work, although there is some interest in moving into new application areas, such as biology and energy. The current membership apparently does not see a strong need to move in new directions, although there is support for individuals who choose to do so.

The Society recognizes that its field of interest overlaps that of multiple IEEE societies. The Society maintains informal liaisons with these societies and has no plan to formalize them. The Society also recognizes that it has significant overlap with multiple non-IEEE entities. The Society does not have a formal strategy to interact or collaborate with these entities.

**Recommendations to Society**

The SRC recommends that the Society incorporate the scope and mission statements into its website, perhaps as a pull down item under the ABOUT tag. These statements provide useful information, particularly for visitors who are not current members of the Society technical community.

The SRC recommends that the Society expand its use of online environments, such as LinkedIn groups and similar options. These social media options can maintain visibility for the Society beyond the IEEE and may provide opportunities to identify new areas that might belong in the Field of Interest or opportunities to address emerging technologies.

**Recommendations to TAB**

None

**Recommendations to IEEE**

None

**Society Comments**

We have already included our Vision, Mission, and Field of Interest statements on our web site. Our Online Editor has started to look into how to expand our use of online environments.

**SRC Committee Response**

The SRC appreciates the rapid Society response to our comments about the Vision, Mission, and Field of Interest statements. This fully addresses the original SRC comment.

# Strategy and Operations

**SRC Committee Comments**

The Society does not have a formal strategic plan nor does it have the intent to create one. The Society implements strategic planning at an annual Officer’s retreat. Its members see the Society as an intellectual home focusing on its journal and conferences rather than diverse new initiatives. Overall, the Society is inwardly focused and believes that its current method of operation serves its membership well.

The Society does not have a formal operational plan. Operational initiatives are also addressed via ad-hoc committees appointed by the Society President.

Efforts to address improvements and strategic-type developments important to the Society’s future have happened via appointed ad-hoc committees. These committees are formed to address specific issues or initiatives and are staffed by members of the Board of Governors (BOG) and other members of the Society. The Society identified a number of successful innovations and initiatives that have resulted from its ad-hoc process:

* Formation of the Women in the Information Theory Society (WITHITS) group. This is a dynamic and focused group which addresses the needs and encourages participation of the all the Society's underrepresented demographics.
* Creation of multiple committees and activities focused on students and outreach.
* The Society is currently modifying its awards and recognition procedures
* The Society second Vice-President Elect has periodically briefed the Society on best practices from other communities and IEEE Societies
* Migrating the Society publication review process from a custom-made system to the IEEE Scholar One platform
* The Society is in the process of doing a strategic review of its publications portfolio and is addressing the possibility of producing tutorial or position papers through its Transactions, Newsletter or Website, as well as the possibility of supporting or co-sponsoring a more interdisciplinary journal. The Society has added a committee to support the Transactions EIC.
* The Society indicated that its top 2013 priority is expanding its online presence.

The Society seems to be well run by volunteers, which is appropriate for a society of about 3600 members.

**Recommendations to Society**

The SRC recommends that the Society consider developing a more formal and useful strategic plan including milestones, metrics, responsible champions, and resources. The SRC notes that the Society has been doing strategic thinking and has implemented multiple activities that have benefited the Society and its constituency, but further notes that a focused effort on strategic planning would help in setting goals and priorities and allocating resources which could be beneficial for the future of this successful Society.

**Recommendations to TAB**

None

**Recommendations to IEEE**

None

**Society Comments**

None

# Conferences, Publications and Education

**SRC Committee Comments**

## Conferences

The Society is the sponsor of a single flagship conference and 1 – 2 topical workshops per year. The Society is a technical co-sponsor of approximately 6 conferences per year, and approximately 3 conferences held biennially. The Society has numerous other technical co-sponsorships. The Society views technical co-sponsorship as an opportunity for Society members to more widely participate in the technical community.

The Society introduced a Society-built software tool at its last flagship conference. The tool, which was well received, allowed attendees to search for presentation authors or topics, show interconnections between presentations, highlight presentations of particular interest, download presentations, etc.

The Society has a process to determine whether to technically co-sponsor conferences. The Society has a conference approval process and also a conference oversight process. The Society conference operations provide a large positive net financial contribution.

**Recommendations to Society:**

None

**Recommendations to TAB:**

None

**Recommendations to IEEE:**

None

**Society Comments**

None

## Publications

The Society maintains one publication – a transactions. The Society uses Scholar One for managing submissions to the Transactions. The Society thoroughly understands the IEEE and non-IEEE publications that overlap the scope of its Transactions. The Society does not view these competing journals as threats to its Transactions. The Society also has a Newsletter.

The Periodicals Review and Advisory Committee (PRAC) review of periodicals should raise any issues with respect to impact factors and submission to publication time. The SRC will not duplicate the work of the PRAC.

The Society has an excellent process for selecting Associate Editors (AEs). The Society holds a 2 hour training session for incoming AE’s at its flagship conference.

Historical and continuing delays in submission-to-publication time, noted in prior PRAC reviews, are primarily associated with the review/acceptance process for particularly long and mathematically oriented papers. Policies have been suggested to provide incentives to reviewers who may be particularly slow in providing feedback. These will need to be reviewed over time to determine what is appropriate and what is effective. In 2011 the Society adopted a process to expedite delivery of content to its membership. Papers that have been accepted through the Society peer review process, but are in preprint form, are posted to Xplore. The SRC notes that as an alternative, it may be possible to segment papers into portions that receive detailed review and move into the paper publication cycle, these are key for non-tenured faculty, with online content (arXiv) that has underlying formulas and other basic aspects. Maintaining the high quality of content will need to be addressed in any revised process.

The Society formally responded to a lengthy paper review process by approving a policy in 2012 that would authorize the Transaction Editor in Chief (EIC) to delay publication of papers by authors who, as reviewers, contribute to the lengthy review cycle. The Society had no metrics or feedback on this policy at the time of the Review.

**Recommendations to Society:**

The SRC recommends that the Society continue to track the submission/acceptance cycle, and specifically recommends closely tracking its policy on delaying publication of papers by authors who contribute to the lengthy review cycle and maintain metrics to determine the number of authors affected and to determine if the process is effective in reducing delays in reviews. As a part of this the Society needs to collect and review feedback from the EIC and the authors. Results and insights on this policy should be shared with PRAC and SRC.

**Recommendations to TAB:**

None

**Recommendations to IEEE:**

The SRC notes that the Society prefers the use of the Eigen factor are a better metric of value/impact of a publication, since this takes into consideration the quality of citations. It may well be that IEEE should be tracking more than one measurement model, and even soliciting feedback from IEL users, to assess the value of this metric. The SRC recommends that PSPB consider the Eigen factor as an alternate to citation impact factor.

**Society Comments**

None

## Education

The Society appears to have a strong educational program that largely meets the needs and desires of current Society members. The educational items highlighted by the Society are:

* Tutorials and panel sessions are held at Society conferences and workshops,
* A Distinguished Lecturer Program (DLP). The Society has an established, formal process, which is used to support its Distinguished Lecturer program. Five new DLs are selected each year, each with a two year term. The Society funds at least a portion of DL expenses; details were not discussed during the Review.
* The Society offers two Schools on Information Theory and primarily views these are activities that support its student membership. The Schools, held annually in both North America and Europe, provide a unique resource to the members of the professional community, bringing together both relatively-new members and leading researchers in an environment that allows for extensive, personal interactions.
* The Society also hosts student events at its conferences and workshops. These are more informal than the Schools but have the same objective as the Schools.
* The Society also a website for students, providing resources in terms of lectures on topics in the field of interest of the Society, volunteering opportunities, as well as job resources.

The Society does not appear to be actively engaged in educational activities outside its primary community, such as through collaborations with other societies/councils or IEEE Educational Activities. Given the role that information theory plays as part of theoretical underpinning of many specialties, there may be opportunities to create tutorials or continuing education programs that would expand the Society’s reach and that could lead to membership and/or revenue growth. Educational programs and activities appear to be prime opportunities for expanding the reach of the Society.

**Recommendations to Society:**

The SRC recommends that the Society to explore expansion of the Distinguished Lecturer program, given the apparent demand, subject to financial constraints.

The SRC recommends that the Society begin evaluating options for expanding the Schools in order to accommodate future growth, while maintaining the unique characteristics that make the Schools so valuable.

The SRC recommends that he Society actively consider opportunities for collaborations within TAB and EAB, as well as new options for disseminating its educational products. Specifically, the Schools might be excellent Continuing Education modules; see Steve Welch (EAB) for information about the EAB CE program.

**Recommendations to TAB:**

The SRC recommends that TAB formally summarize the basic details about the Schools on Information Theory to all S/C’s and examine it for wider society and council application.

**Recommendations to IEEE:**

None

**Society Comments**

None

# Membership

**SRC Committee Comments**

The Society membership is relatively static and there was an expressed lack of interest in active membership recruitment and growth. This appears to be at odds with the Society strategic goal to “Be the home for all technical professionals in all disciplines of interest.” There is tremendous opportunity for membership expansion given the broad Field of Interest (FOI).

The Society has implemented a number of additional organizational structures that would help support membership growth (e.g., the web committee and executive editorial board) and a mentoring program that includes dedicated mentor/mentee pairings.

The SRC recognizes the Society mentoring program as a best practice that needs to be highlighted to other S/Cs. The Society formally pairs a faculty member or industry professional with a graduate or postdoctoral student, and also formally pairs a senior faculty or industry professional with a junior faculty or industry professional. This is a formal two year mentorship with a commitment by the mentor to communicate multiple times per year to provide professional advice and feedback. The Society has a yearly mentor/mentee social event at its flagship conference. The mentoring program is used both to recruit and retain Society members. The Society currently has 16 mentor-mentee pairings and is expanding the program.

The Society also provides sufficient focus on Chapter vitality which is measured annually through the Society membership committee. In 2012 the Society created an External Nominations Committee which is responsible for the solicitation, processing and submission on behalf of the Society of nominations for appropriate IEEE awards as well as for awards outside of the IEEE. The SRC recognizes this as a best practice that needs to be highlighted to other S/Cs. This committee is a great improvement and will increase society visibility.

The Society does well at nurturing current membership and is commended for its excellent member retention statistics. There are no perceived problems with membership, however there is potential for targeted growth if the Society aligns its stated strategy with specific objectives and activities.

**Recommendations to Society**

The SRC recommends that the Society explore opportunities for targeted membership growth.

The SRC recommends that the Society implement more formal metrics to evaluate its mentoring programs.

**Recommendations to TAB**

The SRC recommends that TAB formally summarize the basic details about the Society mentoring program to all S/C’s and examine it for wider society and council application.

**Recommendations to IEEE**

None

**Society Comments**

None

# Finance

**SRC Committee Comments**

The Society budget development process relies primarily upon the Society Treasurer, who coordinates inputs from the Society committees and presents an integrated budget to the Board of Governors for approval. The Society conference committee reviews conference budgets before they are presented to the BoG for approval; the Society Treasurer is a member of this committee. The Society Treasurer also leads the in-year forecast activity and communicates with the TA financial analyst for the Society. The Society Treasurer is also responsible for financial closure of Society conferences.

The expense to reserve ratio is 1.52. The Society is showing nominally flat revenue over the last five years; expenses have also been nominally flat but do show an increase in the last two years; driven by a combination of increased publications expenses and IEEE Infrastructure expenses. The net conference budget line item is positive and shows a clear increase in revenue and expenses when Society flagship conferences are held in Regions 1 – 6. The net publications budget line item is positive, but is showing an increase in expenses recently while revenue has been flat. The Society maintains a large surplus and does not appear to have any significant financial risks.

The Society has not been particularly active in the past five years developing projects for the betterment of the Society or the technical community which it serves, but has added funding to its Information Theory Summer School program as well as its website. The Society is actively investigating additional activities that could be pursued. In discussion the Society President commented that the Society does not fully understand the processes by which it can access its reserves.

**Recommendations to Society**

The Society has a strong financial position, but should be somewhat concerned that its expenses have increased faster than revenue in recent years. The SRC recommends that the Society BoG place special focus on reviewing and understanding this situation so that it might react nimbly if the situation warrants.

The SRC recommends that the Society Treasurer needs to have a specific communication with the TA financial analyst to help the Society better understand how it can access its reserves. Attending the yearly Treasurer’s Workshop might also help the Society, and would allow direct interaction with the TA financial analyst.

**Recommendations to TAB**

The SRC recommends that the Society TA financial analyst needs to perform an outreach to the Society Treasurer regarding the topic of access to Society reserves.

**Recommendations to IEEE**

None

**Society Comments**

# Governance

**SRC Committee Comments**

The SRC notes that the Society governance appears to be functional and meeting the Society’s needs. Society leadership comes almost exclusively from the academic community, which is not surprising given the theoretical research focus of the Society.

The Society Administrative Committee (AdCom) in general has good regional diversity but is diversity is weighted toward Regions 1 – 6. The demographics of the Society leadership reasonably match the Society membership; there are some differences but nothing significant. The leadership is slightly over-represented by Region 1 – 6 (62% of the leadership comes from Regions 1 - 6 compared to 42% of the Society membership). The leadership and membership demographics match well for Regions 7 – 10, although the leadership from region 8 is slightly under-represented compared to membership (23% leadership compared to 29% membership).. However the leadership is significantly under-represented with Region 10 members (8% of the leadership comes from Region 10 compared to 24% of the Society membership.

The Society governance contains no GOLD members but noted that GOLD members who have been on the election slate have not been elected due to their junior status in their profession. 19% of the leadership are female, which the Society notes is good for a technical community that is 92% male.

The Constitution and Bylaws appear to be appropriate to the Society and to include all of the TAB mandated requirements, except for only partial compliance on Must-Have #6.

**Recommendations to Society**

The SRC recommends that the Society explore ways to expand non-academic membership and participation in leadership positions. Given the Society academic focus, researchers in corporate and government laboratories may be more likely targets of opportunity than practitioners.

The SRC recommends that the Society Bylaws be updated to conform to TAB Must-Have #6; specifically, the ability of the president to vote on written ballots.

**Recommendations to TAB**

None

**Recommendations to IEEE**

None

## Technical Committees

**SRC Committee Comments**

The SRC noted that the Society has no technical committees. This was not discussed during the Review but was covered in the Society Report. The Society has considered the possibility of creating technical committees two times since its last Review. The Society believes that the current operational structure served the Society membership well.

**Recommendations to Society**

None

**Recommendations to TAB**

None

**Recommendations to IEEE**

None

# Previous Review

**SRC Committee Comments**

The society is to be commended for its diligence in addressing recommendations from the last review:

* In the prior review it was recommended that Society consider revisiting its field of interest, The Society considered this recommendation and has chosen not to modify its field of interest. However, as part of its consideration the Society chose to modify it mission statement in 2012.
* In the prior review the SRC recommended that the Society establish a Student Committee and expand its student activities. The Society has established a Student Committee and has created a broad and deep portfolio of student activities. The SRC commends the Society for the extent of the activities initiated since the prior review.
* In the prior review the SRC recommended that Society monitor its process of offering conference proceedings to members. This recommendation has been rendered moot by the expansion of the IEL platform.
* In the prior review the SRC recommended that Society increase BoG representation from Region 7 – 10. In 2012, 38% of Society leadership was from Regions 7 – 10. The Society noted that its Nominations and Appointment Committee actively seeks to diversity the leadership; this has been partially responsible for the broadened diversity of Society leadership. Hosting Society conferences and workshops outside of Regions 1 – 6 has increased the level of involvement of volunteers in this area, also helping to broaden the diversity of Society leadership.
* In the prior review the SRC recommended that Society consider establishing an Executive Committee. The Society considered this recommendation and has chosen not to add an Executive Committee. However, the Society has added standing committees (Conference Committee, External Nomination Committee) to offload some of the agenda from the BoG meetings.
* In the prior review the SRC recommended that Society consider creating Technical Committees. The Society considered this recommendation twice since the last Society Review and has chosen not to form Technical Committees. The SRC notes that due diligence was given to this recommendation by the Society.
* In the prior review the SRC recommended that Society consider creating a Conference Committee. The Society has established a Conference Committee.
* In the prior review the SRC recommended that Society consider whether or not the acceptance rate at the Society flagship conferences was too high. The Society considered this recommendation and believes that the current selection process serves the Society and its technical community well and has chosen not to reduce the acceptance rate The SRC notes that due diligence was given to this recommendation by the Society.
* In the prior review the SRC recommended that Society try to avoid overlap between ITS and ComSoc events, due to the overlap between members of these Societies. The creation of the Conference Committee has successfully eliminated the overlaps between events of these Societies.
* In the prior review the SRC recommended that Society needed to increase industrial or practitioner content in its publications, and otherwise highlight the relevance of the Society to the practitioner. The Society has had meaningful discussions on this topic, and these discussions are continuing. It is clear that the Society understands the value of more practitioner participation in the Society and is working to accomplish that. This is an ongoing activity that is receiving Society attention.
* In the prior review the SRC recommended that Society strengthen its Chapter activities. Since the prior review, the Society has broadened the Distinguished Lecturer Program and uses that better engage its Chapters. The issue of the role of Chapters in Society activities is still actively being discussed by the Society BoG. The Society has a specific focus topic on the future of Chapter activities. In 2012 the Society created an ad-hoc committee to review and issue recommendations to the BoG about revising the role of the Membership and Chapters Committee.
* In the prior review the SRC recommended that Society strengthen its Distinguished Lecturer program. The Society has reinvigorated its Distinguished Lecturer program and the program is an active part of the Society operations.
* In the prior review the SRC recommended that Society consider translation books written in a non-English language be translated to English. The Society considered this recommendation and has chosen not to pursue any action at this time. This is still an open topic for consideration by the Society BoG.

**Recommendations to Society**

**Recommendations to TAB**

None

**Recommendations to IEEE**

None

**Society Comments**

None

# Society Successes

**Successes**

The Society highlighted several successes since the last review:

* Our Society is particularly proud about maintaining the high quality of its Transactions, high participation in its conferences, the level of collegiality and volunteerism that pervades its culture and the substantial involvement of our members in the technical activities of many societies.
* The Society is very pleased with many of its new initiatives since the last review, which have significantly improved the value of membership. The Society notes:
	+ The activities of the Student Committee
	+ The Information Theory Schools
	+ The Online Committee, which has provided our Society with a visible and highly useful Web presence
	+ The Mentoring committee, which is meeting a huge demand for involved, caring mentoring
	+ The ISIT Student Paper Award, which has provided needed recognition for our student authors and led to highly anticipated presentations at ISIT
	+ The WithITS program, which has provided support, information, networking and fellowship for our members
	+ The Distinguished Lecturer program, which has provided not just lectures, but substantial, sometimes protracted, interactions between leading researchers and local chapters.

**SRC Committee Comments**

The SRC does note the following Best Practices identified during the Review:

- The Society has multiple activities focused on student members:

- The Society have two separate Schools on Information Theory, one serving Regions 1 – 7 and one serving Region 8. Leading researchers from different universities are brought in to interact with and teach students both well-established principles as well as new directions within the field of interest of the Society. The Schools play a pivotal role in helping strengthen the relationship between the students as well as guide them in their research careers. The Schools offer a unique approach to providing educational opportunities for members of a specialized technical community. This model also may be appropriate for other S/C’s.

- The Society conducts multiple events at the major Society conferences focused on student attendees to promote engagement with professionals practicing in the field of interest of the Society. This includes panel sessions focusing on career guidance.

- The Society also a website for students, providing resources in terms of lectures on topics in the field of interest of the Society, volunteering opportunities, as well as job resources.

- The Society has a strong mentoring program:

- Pairing a faculty member or industry professional with a graduate or postdoctoral student or postdoc, and also pairing a senior faculty or industry professional with a junior faculty or industry professional. This is a formal two year mentorship with a commitment by the mentor to communicate a few times per year to provide professional advice and feedback. The Society has a yearly mentor/mentee social event at its flagship conference. The mentoring program is used both to recruit and retain Society members. The Society currently has 16 mentor-mentee pairings and is expanding the program.

* The Society has a formal Women in Information Theory Society (WITHITS) program. The program sponsors panel sessions featuring influential women in the field of interest of the Society, and also maintains a mailing list to provide information on such matters as postdoctoral and graduate fellowships for women. The program also sponsors networking luncheons.
* In 2012 the Society created an External Nominations Committee which is responsible for the solicitation, processing and submission on behalf of the Society of nominations for appropriate IEEE awards as well as for awards outside of the IEEE.

**Recommendations to Society**

None

**Recommendations to TAB**

None

**Recommendations to IEEE**

None

**Society Comments**

None