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Fundamental Changes and Major Actions of the IEEE Antennas and Propagation Society

Welcome to the April issue of the Magazine and the second President's message of the year! At the time of writing this message, I have been serving you and the IEEE Antennas and Propagation Society (AP-S) as President for a little more than a month and a half, and I have truly enjoyed my work.

All Society Officers, Administrative Committee (AdCom) Members, Committee Chairs, Editors in Chief (EICs), and Support Staff have been incredibly responsive, helpful, and productive as we work together, and they have pushed the limits of enthusiasm, effort, effectiveness, and kindness beyond norms and expectations—this has been truly amazing! I would like to thank all of them for their fantastic work, collaboration, and help in advancing our Society and activities to the benefit of the AP-S membership and AP community and profession at large.

This message should include the names of all of these fabulous volunteers, colleagues, and friends, but that would make the already very long article much longer. A first draft of the article did include names of some of them, with thanks, up front or on the various topical occasions throughout the article, but I found that unfair to those who were not mentioned and decided ultimately to exclude all names, as a less unfair solu-

tion, at least in my view. I know this is far from a perfect solution, and I do apologize for that.

A Very Long Message—Please Keep Reading. The first seven weeks of the year and my term were extremely busy indeed. In this message, I would like to summarize for you our most important activities for this period. This will be a very long message, but I feel that you should be fully informed firsthand and right away, as I am writing this just a few days after our winter AdCom meeting, about fundamental changes made or initiated and major actions that the Society leadership and volunteers have undertaken—with hope and confidence that they will benefit our members and our profession. Note that all of these are in line with the “plan of action” I outlined for you in my message in the February issue of the Magazine.

A number of decisions made are aimed at establishing a foundation for advancing the structure and operation of our Society, and I think you will want to know all of this. Some of the changes and actions will have immediate impacts, whereas the outcomes of some will be able to be judged only in the longer term. Also, some changes and actions are just the start of a process.

MAJOR ACTIONS OF THE SOCIETY LEADERSHIP IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY

2024 Appointments of 354 Volunteers. In January, we conducted nomi-

nations and appointments of all Society Officers, Chairs and Members of AP-S Standing Committees, and Society Representatives. By our rules, the names for all of these positions are proposed by the President and then discussed and approved by the AdCom. We had a total of 354 volunteers as candidates in this voting. This year, we established and used a new voting tool and process, which are much more efficient and functional than IEEE vTools. Per our rules, the process is completely secret, individualized, and anonymous.

Vice Chairs of All Standing Committees. As a general change, we have instituted a practice for every committee of having, in addition to Chair, a Vice Chair of the committee. The Vice Chair will be versed in the committee business and operation to practically the same level as the Chair, will be able to step in and represent the Chair when needed, and will assist the Chair in planning, organizing, and running the activities of the committee. For AdCom meetings, if the Chair is unable to attend in person, they will participate virtually, but the Vice Chair will then hopefully be able to join and participate in the meeting and discussions in person. Establishing committee Vice Chairs will also help in planning for the succession of committee leadership, which should be a gradual and not abrupt process. The AdCom approved in January the names of colleagues

proposed as Vice Chairs of all of the committees for 2024.

RAFC Ad Hoc Committee. We have created the Ad Hoc Committee on Recommendations to Advance Flagship Conferences (RAFC). The purpose of this temporary committee is to provide recommendations on everything related to our flagship summer APS/URSI Conferences from a multicommittee, holistic coordination perspective.

The RAFC committee will work on many important, comprehensive, and multifaceted issues, including Clarivate indexing of our conference papers; increasing the quality of contributions while remaining inclusive; conference paper length; the number of parallel sessions; increasing industry engagement (technical and exhibitions/sponsorships) to complement our academic/university strengths; making the conference more of interest for attendance by non-authors as well; Special Sessions and Celebratory/Memorial Sessions; Plenary Sessions; registration fees, heavily discounted registration rates for students, and travel grants; a new business/financial model for conferences; the frequency of going outside of the United States and outside of North America; and enhancement of the continuity between conference yearly editions to facilitate the transition between steering/organizing committees.

NLIC Ad Hoc Committee. We have created the Ad Hoc (temporary) Committee on New Logo Implementation and Communication (NLIC) for the purpose of transitioning to the full use of

Perhaps the most fundamental change approved by the AdCom in Orlando is the establishment of Society Vice Presidents.

the new AP-S logo, in everything we do as a Society, as systematically, consistently, and comprehensively as possible and following the IEEE branding guidelines as well as marketing and communication best practices. The NLIC Committee has already done a fantastic job, and there is still more work to do.

First AdCom Meeting. We conducted our first AdCom meeting of the year on 17–18 February 2024 in Orlando, FL, USA. The meeting was held at the back of the IEEE Technical Activities Board (TAB) Meeting as well as many other IEEE meetings as part of the IEEE Meeting Series in Orlando. This provided opportunities for our AdCom Members and Committee Chairs to meet with IEEE leaders, IEEE Committee Chairs, Committee Members, the IEEE Foundation, etc. (Literally everyone IEEE was there.) We had an unprecedented number of 37 AP-S AdCom at-Large Members (Voting AdCom Members, Officers, Standing Committee Chairs, EICs, and Support Staff) attend in person in Orlando (see Figure 1), and several additional members participated virtually.

FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES APPROVED BY THE AP-S ADCOM ON 17–18 FEBRUARY

The agenda for the meeting was organized around topics, issues, motions, proposals, and discussions and not by reports. It contained many important discussion items.

Evidently, the February 2024 AdCom Meeting in Orlando brought about big changes for AP-S. The AdCom discussed and approved a number of fundamental forward-looking developments for the Society, aimed at advancing its structure and operation. In this part of my message, I will provide an outline of these decisions and changes. Please note that some of these changes will not be effective until they undergo further approvals and confirmations at the IEEE level and until an elaborate “paperwork” has been completed. Also, some details may be straightened, tweaked, or added by the AP-S leadership and AdCom during further steps of the implementation and realization of such complex restructuring.

Society Vice Presidents. Perhaps the most fundamental change approved by the AdCom in Orlando is the establishment of Society Vice Presidents (VPs). Namely, AP-S will have five VPs to enhance the coordination and operation of the Society and help the President as follows: VP of Professional Activities, VP of Technical Activities, VP of Operations and Finance, VP of Publications, and VP of Conferences. VPs



FIGURE 1. IEEE AP-S AdCom at-Large Members during the AdCom dinner, after a very long day of presentations and discussions, on 17 February at the SeaWorld Sharks Underwater Grill, as part of our winter AdCom meeting on 17–18 February 2024 in Orlando, FL, USA. Also shown in the photo are some family members as well as some IEEE and IEEE Microwave Theory and Technology Society dignitaries/guests. Nearly the entire AdCom at-Large participated in person in Orlando.

will be appointed/approved following the same procedure as for Committee Chairs, and the appointment is for one year, renewable.

Our activities and the number of standing AP-S committees have grown dramatically over the years, and VPs will be key to improving coordination as well as joint planning and strategizing, in real time, to enhance collaborations and synergies, reduce unnecessary duplication, and take advantage of similar goals and overlaps (of groups of committees).

With the President, each Vice President will provide direction for the respective activities and standing committees of the Society and will coordinate and supervise the joint planning and conducting of these activities. Working together with the committees and the President, each VP will provide regular reports to the AdCom on the projected and accomplished goals and outcomes of the activities based on requests, reports, and inputs from the committees, and the presentations will be joint with Committee Chairs. The VP will coordinate and/or help consolidate the proposals for initiatives and activities from the committees to advance their combined effectiveness and feasibility; results and payoffs for the Society, our members, and profession; and assessment, that is, how we measure success or impact.

VP of Professional Activities and VP of Technical Activities. The VP of Professional Activities will assist the President in supervising and coordinating the following activities and the respective standing committees of the Society: Membership; Chapter Activities; Member and Geographic

Activities; Education; Outreach; Special Interest Group on Humanitarian Technology; Promoting Equality; Young Professionals; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging; Workshops; Travel Grants; and Student Grants/Fellowships. For the VP of Technical Activities, the list of activities and standing committees is the following: Technical Directions; Industrial Initiatives and Listings; Standards; Distinguished Lecturers; History; Field Awards; Paper Awards; and Fellows.

VP of Operations and Finance. The Vice President of Operations and Finance will assist with the supervision and coordination of Finance; Large Initiative Assessment; AP-S Endowment Fund; Regulations; Constitution and Bylaws; Strategic Planning; Nominations; Treasurer; and Society Administrators. In addition, this VP will direct the preparation of long-range financial projections of the Society and will coordinate Society Reviews and all matters related to planning, regulations, and documentations.

VP of Publications and VP of Conferences. The VP of Publications will assume the Chair of the Publications Committee and the corresponding duties related to our journals and publications as well as all forms of digital communications and will work closely with EICs and the IEEE Press Liaison Committee. The VP of Conferences will assume the Chair of the Meetings Committee and will help with the planning, assessing, organization, advancing, and monitoring of the conferences, meetings, workshops, and events financially (co)sponsored and owned by the Society

as well as the evaluation and approval of conferences and events that we cosponsor technically.

Director of Intersociety Collaboration. We have created, in Orlando, a new position of AP-S Director of Intersociety Collaboration (DISC). Our Intersociety Collaboration activities have grown tremendously in recent years. The DISC will coordinate, assist with, and/or participate in managing all Society Representatives (we have as many as 25 Society Representatives); Memoranda of Understanding between AP-S and various societies, organizations, and institutions; joint Distinguished Lecturers; joint conferences; joint journals; joint membership drives; joint chapters; joint outreach activities and events; etc. This position will complement, and not substitute, the respective activities of related standing committees.

Technical Directions Committee. The Technical Committee on Antenna Measurements (TCAM) has ceased to exist as a standing committee of the Society, as it should not be the only technical committee of the Society. We have restructured the New Technology Directions Committee into a new committee, the Technical Directions Committee (TDC). The new TDC will organize a number of Technical Committees (TCs) for all main areas that the Society covers. The list of TCs will reflect and acknowledge the current status of the technical activities of the Society and will define our desires and goals as a society for the near future.

Technical Committees. Whereas the former TCAM will become one of the TCs, and the list will include the TC on Future Directions and TC on



FIGURE 2. The AP-S 75 Years Celebration during the IEEE Technical Activities Board Meeting on 16 February 2024 in Orlando, FL, USA, with 12 AP-S leaders onstage and more than 200 IEEE leaders and Society/Council Presidents attending.

Special-Session Selection for our flagship conferences, a Task Force within the TDC has been working on the composition of all other TCs, which is a work in progress, an ongoing broad discussion, and an incredibly important task. Once created, TCs will provide technical expertise and assistance to AP-related publications, conferences, events, standards, local chapters, and membership in a particular technical area.

Maximum Total Length of Terms.

The AdCom has decided that no person, including Society Officers, Committee Chairs, Committee Members, and Society Representatives, should hold any one position in the Society for more than six years total, including reappointments. It sounds reasonable that total terms for all positions in the Society should not be theoretically “indefinite” and should be limited by our rules and documents. This limitation will not be enforced abruptly but gradually and in a staggered fashion to ensure continuous and effective operation of the Society. Committee Chairs, with the help of the Society, will develop succession plans and prepare for a smooth transition.

Fellows/Awards Search Committees. We have created the Fellows Search Committee of AP-S, with goals to enhance the diversity of IEEE Fellow nominations from AP-S in terms of gender, geographic region, and sector (e.g., industry), to increase the number of nominations and quality of nominations, as well as the number of high-quality nominations that the AP-S Fellow Evaluations Committee (FEC) pushes up to the IEEE FEC. A task is also to provide education and training of the potential nominators and nominees on how to prepare a successful nomination. We have also created the AP-S Awards Search Committee, with similar goals.

Latin American Conference on AP. The AdCom has decided to create a new AP-S annual conference in Latin America—the Latin American Conference on Antennas and Propagation (LACAP). The principal goal is to increase AP-S membership and impact in IEEE Region 9. We will identify champions for this new and exciting ini-

tiative and work on the establishment and organization of the conference. Ideally, the first edition may happen as early as later this year, namely, LACAP 2024, although LACAP 2025 seems more realistic and feasible.

Revitalized Finance Committee.

We decided in Orlando to restructure the AP-S Finance Committee in terms of both its composition and its scope. The revitalized Finance Committee, working with the Treasurer, will provide high-level monitoring and oversight of the Society finances. The most important function of the committee will be the planning of Society finances, both short-term and long-term. It will keep track of the history of financial investments, spendings, and proposals and will provide the big picture and “institutional memory” for the Society in terms of finances. The Finance Committee will not engage in day-to-day financial operation of the Society, which is the responsibility of the Society Treasurer.

New Awards, Grants, and Programs. Finally, the AdCom approved the establishment of the “IEEE Antennas and Propagation Society Standards Development Award”; “Leopold Felsen Research Grant for Electromagnetics,” funded by the Felsen Foundation; and “Industry Award for Best Paper/Presentation” at AP-S-owned conferences; as

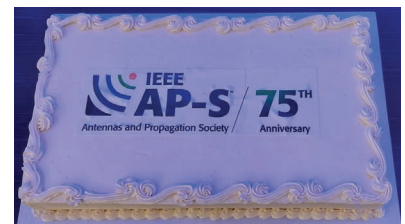


FIGURE 3. The IEEE TAB AP-S 75 Years Celebration cake, with our new celebratory logo on top.

well as a substantial reduction of student registration fees and the formation of affinity groups at the APS/URSI 2024 Conference in Florence, Italy; financial cosponsorship of *IEEE Transactions on Terahertz Science and Technology*; and Intersociety Joint Distinguished Lecturer Program of AP-S with the IEEE Microwave Theory and Technology Society and IEEE Geoscience and Remote Sensing Society.

IEEE TECHNICAL ACTIVITIES BOARD CELEBRATION OF THE AP-S 75TH ANNIVERSARY

In addition to the AP-S AdCom meeting, we organized and ran an official IEEE TAB Celebration of the 75-year jubilee of AP-S as the third oldest IEEE society in Orlando. The celebration took place on 16 February as part of the official, announced agenda of the IEEE TAB Meeting, as shown in [Figure 2](#). This was a rather important



FIGURE 4. Members of this prominent IEEE audience were truly impressed by AP-S accomplishments, and the celebration culminated with a standing ovation congratulating us on the fantastic 75 years and the “Happy Birthday to You” song.

opportunity for our Society, as the celebration involved about 215 IEEE leaders in attendance, including the IEEE President, IEEE VPs, Presidents and Presidents-Elect of all IEEE Societies and Councils, Directors of all IEEE Divisions and IEEE Regions, IEEE Committee Chairs, IEEE Staff, etc. I was joined by 11 AdCom Members and Committee Chairs onstage, whom I introduced individually as part of the program.

We celebrated with champagne and an anniversary cake, with our new celebratory 75-years AP-S logo in full color covering the top of the cake, as depicted in Figure 3. My presentation on the history and state of the Society, for which I obtained invaluable help from many AP-S officers, committee chairs, EICs, and support staff, was very well received, and everyone was truly impressed by AP-S accomplishments (Figure 4). But, make no mis-

take, these were not successes of us dozen AP-S leaders standing in front of that prominent IEEE audience. These were successes of all AP-S volunteers and members—these were your accomplishments! There was a standing ovation by the entire audience, congratulating us on the past 75 years and wishing us the best for the next 75 years. A highlight of the event happened spontaneously when the President of another IEEE society started singing the “Happy Birthday to You” song, and the entire ballroom joined.

This was clearly an AP-S Day within all of IEEE in Orlando! I would like to emphasize that this celebration was not for the sake of festivity per se. It was about the promotion of our Society in a very important environment. Namely, it is essential that other IEEE Societies and Councils and IEEE Officers and Committees get to know us better.

This can lead to enhanced intersocietal interactions and collaborations and can facilitate our many activities and actions requiring good understanding and support at the IEEE level—to the benefit of AP-S volunteers, members, and friends (future members).

In closing, I hope you like and support the fundamental changes and major actions of the Society leadership described in this message. Changes are exciting! We will be working together on their implementation and realization in the coming weeks and months. In addition, in the next period of time, we will be addressing some other important topics outlined in the February issue of the Magazine, and I am planning to talk about that in my upcoming messages to you.

Until next time, with very best wishes,
Branislav



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