

Editorial



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2024 IEEE DEIS President

In my new role as DEIS president for 2024, it is a pleasure to introduce myself to the entire community. I am a professor of Innovative Electrical Technologies and Insulation System Design and Diagnostics at the University of Bologna. Previously, I served as DEIS Meetings Committee chair from 2016 to 2019, VP technical in 2020 to 2021, and VP admin in 2022 to 2023. I am eager to continue contributing to the growth and success of DEIS in the coming year.

I am profoundly honored and incredibly proud to have been elected as the president of DEIS for 2024. I am conscious of the big responsibilities of this role. The role of president implies carrying significant responsibilities, requiring constant commitment, strategic vision, and the ability to make decisions that may affect the organization and its members. I am confident that I am not alone in this journey and that I can receive wise suggestions and advice from my predecessors, Brian Stewart (past president), Paul Gaberson, and Reimund Gerhard—individuals with great strategic visions who gave an extraordinary contribution to the growth of our society. I have learned a lot from them on how to navigate the problems and challenges facing the DEIS community. I am also fortunate to be surrounded by two VPs: Akiko Kumada as VP admin and Mona Ghassemi as VP technical. They will play a crucial role in assisting me in developing and implementing appropriate actions to achieve the objectives

outlined in the strategic plan, which is currently in the finalization phase. I hope for guidance also from DEIS Treasurer Simon Rowland and Meetings Chair Frank Hegeler, who play pivotal roles in ensuring the financial health and smooth organization of our events, respectively; their vast experience has been crucial for positively overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic years without experiencing financial losses.

Our community is vast and diverse, encompassing individuals engaged in dielectrics, electroactive polymers, and bioelectrics and others addressing issues related to the development, design, and diagnostics of electrical insulation. Dielectrics and electrical insulation are pervasive topics across various research fields, many of which overlap with themes explored by other IEEE societies.

This is both our point of strength and our weakness. On the one hand, being multidisciplinary can infuse new perspectives, foster cross-contamination with other societies, and introduce novel topics for the development of scientific and technical activities within the society. On the other hand, this exposes us to competition from other societies, many of which are larger and more structured than DEIS. Even though IEEE members can select more than one society, this incurs a cost that must be justified by the services that the society can offer to its members.

For 2024 I have **five** specific objectives that I would like to achieve.

Membership Growth. Our membership has remained relatively stable in the last two to three years, hovering around 1,800 members. This figure is notably less than the 2,000 to 2,200 members we had a decade ago and makes us one of the smallest societies within IEEE. A feasible objective could be to increase our membership by approximately 10%, aiming to surpass again 2,000 members within the next one or two years.

Numerous actions can be implemented to achieve this objective, and most of them pertain to the services that we can

offer to our members. To attract student members, we can implement a multifaceted approach, including organizing summer schools in various geographical regions, hosting specific events at conferences and technical meetings (such as student awards and special sessions), and continuing the DEIS student fellowship program, which has proven to be highly successful.

To retain student members as they transition into their professional careers, our young professionals group has organized various events over the past year, including webinars and in-person meetings at our flagship conferences. To enhance this effort, we should increase the number of such events and organize them on a geographical basis to provide more accessibility and engagement opportunities for our members.

To cater to our more experienced members, especially practitioners, it is essential to invest more in creating a continuing-education program. This program should include both in-person events organized locally by chapters and remote events that offer opportunities to earn professional credits. This initiative aims to address the specific educational needs and interests of our older members, supporting their ongoing professional development.

Publication Excellence. Ensuring the quality of content in our *IEEE Transactions on Dielectrics and Electrical Insulation* and *IEEE Electrical Insulation Magazine* is paramount. Improving the Impact Factors, with the goal of reaching the first quartile, is a commendable objective. Exploring new formats or platforms, e.g., open access publication, will keep our publications dynamic and aligned with evolving trends. Actively engaging with authors to encourage a diverse range of contributions will not only enrich our content but also foster inclusivity. Strengthening our publications in these ways will undoubtedly elevate the visibility of DEIS and significantly contribute to knowledge exchange within our community.

Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion. Diversity, equality, and inclusion are pillars of a thriving community. Embracing differences fosters innovation and understanding. Equality ensures fair opportunities, while inclusion creates a sense of belonging. Striving for diversity, equality, and inclusion enriches our organization, promoting a culture that values and respects every member.

Enlarge the Volunteer Community. Boosting volunteer engagement is pivotal for DEIS success. Encouraging members to share their time and expertise fosters a vibrant and collaborative community. To increase the number of volunteers, we could implement targeted outreach campaigns promoted by the new Volunteers

Committee, highlighting the meaningful effect volunteers have on DEIS initiatives. Offering diverse opportunities for involvement, from technical committees to specific project execution, ensures inclusivity. Recognizing and celebrating volunteers' contributions enhances morale and inspires continued engagement. By fostering a culture where members actively participate, we not only strengthen DEIS but also create a supportive environment where everyone's expertise is valued and contributes to our shared success.

Last but not least, **Revamping Our Website** is essential for increasing DEIS visibility. Enhancements will include a modern website home page, frequent up-

dates, and integration with social media. Engaging multimedia content and interactive features will captivate visitors. Emphasizing the website as a central information hub will amplify the online presence of DEIS, raising greater community engagement.

As we embark on this exciting journey, I am energized by the prospect of pursuing these five objectives together. With the unwavering support and active participation of our esteemed community, I am confident that we can elevate DEIS to new heights. Let us unite in our commitment to excellence, innovation, and inclusivity, shaping a vibrant future for our society. Thank you for your dedication and collaboration.

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