

Meeting Summary
Career and Workforce Policy Committee
August 05-06, 2005

IEEE-USA's Career and Workforce Policy Committee met at the Boston Marriott Cambridge Hotel in Cambridge, MA on Friday, August 5 and Saturday, August 6, 2005.

Participants – Paul Kostek, Chair; Tarek Ladhiri, Rich Larson, George McClure, Ed Perkins, Lee Stogner and Vin O'Neill (IEEE-USA Staff).

Invited Guests – John Conrad, IEEE Boston Section PACE Co-chair; Ted Kochansky, Boston Section Chair; Roger Sullivan, IEEE Region I Director and Irving Weiner, Boston Section PACE Co-Chair.

Trudy Hui, a licensed clinical psychologist from Portland, OR attended the meetings as a guest of the careers issues subcommittee.

Gina Minx, a Lowell MA-based Internet programs administrator and editor of a high-tech workforce web log (www.displacedtechies.com) attended the Friday evening dinner meeting with IEEE Boston Section leaders.

August 06 Business Meeting Summary and Action Items

1. May Meeting Summary – Committee members reviewed and approved a summary of the CWPC meetings held in Washington DC on May 19-21, 2005.

2. Benefits, Careers and Workforce Subcommittee Reports.

2.1 Benefits Subcommittee - Rich Larson distributed a draft article on the impact of contractor turnover at the DoEnergy labs on pension benefits accrual by contract employees.

Action- McClure and staff will edit the article and submit it to IEEE-USA's Communications Department for publication in September.

Roger Sullivan said that articles describing IEEE services for relocating members and IEEE-USA career development and employment assistance programs would help to promote awareness of these services among IEEE members.

2.2 Careers Issues Subcommittee – See Agenda Item 7

2.3 Workforce Subcommittee - Paul Kostek reported on state restrictions on the offshore outsourcing of government services, his plans to jointly author an article on semi-conductor industry skills requirements (with Dave Blakely) and Semi-Conductor Industry Association (SIA) engineering student retention and chip design_competition projects.

Tarek Lahdhiri asked if CWPC or other IEEE-USA committees were assessing the potentially adverse effects of jobs outsourcing on U.S. intellectual property.

Action – Kostek will forward this question to the Intellectual Property Committee.

3. IEEE-USA Public Policy Overview – Staff reviewed current IEEE-USA public policy priorities and reported that the government relations staff is preparing a statement on the role of research funding and workforce quality in maintaining U.S. economic and technological competitiveness for inclusion in the record of House Science Committee hearings held in Washington DC on July 21, 2005.

4. Economic and Technological Competitiveness- Industry is using recent reports on critical links between innovation, competitiveness and economic growth to jump-start the Congressional debate about what the government should be doing to strengthen education, protect intellectual property, improve workforce utilization and strengthen research and development capabilities in the United States. Two warrant special attention:

A Council on Competitiveness report on a December 2004 “National Innovation Summit” (provide link) includes recommendations for actions that should be taken to deepen the nation’s talent pool, revitalize research and development and strengthen technological competitiveness.

A new report from the Business Roundtable (include link) calls for a doubling of undergraduate degrees awards in science, technology, engineering and math disciplines by 2015.

Action – Committee members were asked to review the Council on Competitiveness and Business Roundtable recommendations and forward comments to staff as soon as possible.

5. Pension Benefits – Participants reviewed brief summaries of the Administration’s Single Employer Pension Reform Proposal, Rep Boehner’s Pension Protection Act (H.R. 2830) and Sen Grassley’s National Employee Savings and Trust Equity Guaranteed (NESTEG) Act (S.219).

Action – Staff will prepare a comprehensive position statement on retirement security issues, including draft recommendations on employer-sponsored pensions (defined benefit, cash balance and defined contribution options), individual retirement accounts, social security reform and phased retirement issues for review and approval by mid-September.

6. Social Security Reform – Committee members reviewed brief descriptions of Bush Administration social security reform principles, selected social security reform legislation and a draft IEEE-USA policy statement entitled, “Recommended Social Security Reform Guidelines.”

These documents describe increasingly controversial individual investment account proposals as well as proposed plans to shore up the solvency of the existing social security system.

Action – Staff will include proposed IEEE-USA social security reform recommendations as part of the draft retirement security policy statement to be circulated for review in mid-September.

7. Immigration Reform – The Committee reviewed the following immigration reform plans: the President’s Fair and Secure Temporary Immigration Reform Plan; McCain/Kennedy Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act (S. 1033/H.R. 2330); Cornyn/Kyl Comprehensive Enforcement and Immigration Reform Act (S.1438); and Rep Tom Tancredo (R-CO-06) ’s REAL Guest Act (H.R. 3333).

Staff also briefed participants on recommendations submitted earlier this year to Rep Bill Pascrell (D-NJ-08) for possible inclusion in a narrowly targeted H-1B visa reform bill.

Action – Staff will include educational and employment-based immigration reform recommendations in an updated IEEE-USA position statement entitled, “Ensuring a Strong High-Tech Workforce in the 21st Century.”

8. Career Management Strategies Workshop – Career Issues Subcommittee members Trudy Hui, Tarek Lahdhiri and Ed Perkins briefed committee members on plans to offer a daylong workshop on career management strategies at the Oct CWPC meeting in Austin, TX.

Subcommittee members have developed a proposed course objectives and a content outline and prepared PowerPoint slides for review by CWPC members and other IEEE-USA entities.

The proposed course includes 8 instructional modules: Workshop Overview; the Engineering Workforce; Requirements for Success; Adaptation Requirements; Rebuilding Your Tool Box; Career Planning Strategies; Creative Job Search; and Closing the Deal.

The Boston MA, Portland OR and Pasco WA IEEE Sections were identified as possible test beds for pilot presentation in the late Fall or early Winter in the event that current plans to preview the presentation in Austin, TX on Sat, Oct 28 fall through.

Next Steps – Subcommittee members will: 1) Review and improve the course content; 2) identify, recruit, and train workshop presenters; 3) reformat and package the instructional modules; 4) establish locations and dates for pilot presentations; and 5) prepare a formal development, presentation and promotion schedule (including cost estimates).

Action – Paul Kostek will brief ECS Chair Jean Eason on the status of work in progress and negotiate appropriate buy-in and support from ECS committee members.

Action – Tarek Lahdhiri will reformat existing instructional materials using a PowerPoint template he has developed to facilitate packaging of course modules in CD-Rom format.

Action – Meeting participants will review the proposed course outline and content and send suggested editorial comments and recommendations directly to Ed Perkins.

9. Other Committee Business

9.1 Base Closings and Realignment Issues - Participants discussed proposed military base closings and realignments in CT, MA, ME, NH, and RI, including the transfer of MA-based research functions to facilities in CA and NM.

Action- Ted Kochansky and Ed Altshuler will keep IEEE staff posted on developments.

9.2 IEEE Political Action Committee – Paul Kostek briefed the Committee on the status of a recent proposal to establish a PAC to strengthen IEEE-USA’s Federal government relations capabilities.

Action – Meeting participants endorsed a recommendation that IEEE-USA’s Operating Committee be asked to give serious consideration to the proposal at its next meeting.

9.3 BLS Employment Statistics – Staff briefed participants on difficulties encountered in tracking and charting engineering and computer science employment and unemployment trends.

Quarterly changes for some occupations can be subject to considerable variation, due to the small samples that BLS uses to develop its estimates. Staff is concerned that major variations may undermine the credibility of the quarterly press releases that IEEE-USA uses to publicize engineering employment and unemployment trends.

Action – George McClure recommended that a rolling average based on the most recent and three preceding quarterly reports be used to help reduce variability currently encountered in quarterly changes in small samples.

9.4 Health Benefits Issues – Staff will summarize information on the status of health benefits legislation of special interest to IEEE’s U.S. members. Key issues include: Association Health Plans; Medical Savings Accounts and Retiree Health Benefits.

9.5 Education and Training Issues – Staff will summarize information on pending Federal legislation on education issues including: K-12 Math and Science Education; Higher Education Act Reauthorization; Federal Agency Scholarships for Service Initiatives; Workforce Investment Act Reauthorization; and Continuing Education and Training (Lifelong Learning).

9.6 Trade Issues – Staff will also prepare a brief summary of employment and immigration-related international trade issues including: GATS negotiations; recent and pending multilateral and bilateral agreements (eg., Chile/Singapore and CAFTA/DR) and the impact of these pacts on US temporary admissions programs, including the H-1B, L and TN work visa programs.

10. Additional Committee Business

10.1 Educational Presentations – George McClure is preparing presentations on retirement planning issues for an upcoming webinar (August 22) and the 2005 IEEE Sections Congress in Tampa, Florida (October 14-17).

10.2 Congressional Visits – Rich Larson recommended that Congressional visits be made in conjunction with CWPC meetings to be held in Washington D.C.

10.3 Careers E-Book Opportunity- Lee Stogner recommended that IEEE-USA negotiate an E-book publication/bulk access agreement with Cay Humphreys of Tualatin, OR. Humphreys is the author of “Find Your Dream Job in Seven Easy Steps.”

Address – Cay Humphreys, P.O. Box 1615, Tualatin, OR 97062; Tel. (503) 701-2191.

10.4 CWPC Web Log (Blog), Pod Casts and Virtual Community- Paul Kostek reminded committee members that new platforms have been developed to make for ease of electronic communications among IEEE members on careers and workforce issues of special concern.

10.5 IEEE-USA Position on Wage Busting – George McClure recommended that consideration be given to resurrecting an expired IEEE-USA position entitled, “Service Contracts and Engineering Compensation.”

11. Related Meeting Summaries

11.1 Offsite Meetings – Due to scheduling difficulties, committee members were unable to meet with representatives from the Massachusetts Software and Internet Council, the Massachusetts Departments of Labor and Workforce Development and the Technology Advantage Training Consortium in Boston on August 5.

Action – Staff will contact principals from these organizations and distribute pertinent information to committee members.

Action – Ted Kochansky will provide staff with a list other significant academic, government and industry organizations in the Boston area.

11.2 Boston Section Concerns – Boston Section members report that although the high-tech economy in the Boston area is growing again, some members are having difficulty selling their capabilities to employers. As in other parts of the country, older workers are likely to remain unemployed for longer periods of time than younger workers.

Action – Ted Kochansky urged IEEE-USA to redouble efforts to publicize the accomplishments of electrical, electronic and computer engineers and increase federal funding for basic research.

12. Future Meeting Dates and Locations

12.1 2005: Fall- October 28, 29, 30 in Austin, TX

12.2 2006: Winter – Portland, OR; or Seattle, WA

Spring – Washington, DC

Summer – Chicago, IL; or Detroit, MI

Fall – Raleigh/Durham, NC

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