

Being a Member

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Why should you be a member of the IEEE and what can the IEEE do to provide more value to you? Let's look at some of the benefits and possibilities of IEEE membership and what members have said about membership in surveys as well as upcoming PACE supported IEEE town meetings for sections to delve further into the value of current IEEE membership and what would compel non-members to join. We will also discuss future initiatives to work with companies to increase subsidies for employee IEEE membership.

Why do we need members? Well there are a few good reasons. The IEEE is a member-led organization advancing technology for humanity. IEEE depends upon its members to promote that mission. From our members come most of our volunteers who do much of the good work of the IEEE in creating and advancing public imperatives, supporting STEM activities, filling volunteer leadership roles in the IEEE and helping to support other members. In addition, the IEEE has a great many benefits that are accessible to members. In the six regions in the US, many of these other benefits are available through IEEE USA.

You can find out about IEEE USA benefit discounts here:

https://www.ieee.org/membership_services/membership/discounts/index_member_discounts.html. IEEE USA also offers career development services including ebooks: <https://www.ieeeusa.org/communications/ebooks/> More general IEEE offerings tailored to an individual's career stage can be found here: http://www.ieee.org/membership_services/membership/benefits/index.html

In 2016 the IEEE did a comprehensive survey of members (both higher grade and student members) to find out what they thought of various IEEE offerings. They ranked these by their importance to the member and their satisfaction with the IEEE offering. The most important observations for retaining members is how satisfied they are with activities that they think are important.

Our higher grade and student members considered online access to IEEE journals and IEEE conferences are both important and that they are generally satisfied with IEEE's performance in providing these activities. On the other hand, IEEE higher grade and student members said that the following activities are relatively important to them but that they are not very satisfied with current offerings:

- Higher grade (HG) as well as student members want continuing education and networking opportunities

- HG Members want representation on public policy issues that impact the profession
- HG Members want local meetings and chances to interact with other members
- Students want on-line career resources, awards and humanitarian contributions

These are areas where we can provide better services to our members and thus hopefully increase our member retention. Many of these needs relate to continuing education, career services and opportunities to interact with other members. We need to make an increased effort to provide these services both at our local section level and in IEEE USA and IEEE overall.

The 2016 survey addressed the needs of members, but IEEE has never done a great job interviewing technical professional non-members to see what they the IEEE could do that would create a compelling reason to join. The recently announced PACE supported IEEE USA Town Meetings may help us gain some understanding of this as well as more general input on what members would like to see-at a higher level as well as the local level.

These meetings would happen in local sections and PACE money is available from the regions to support these meetings. The town meetings are designed to get a better understanding of what members and potential members value and expect from a professional society like ours and not to rank or evaluate what we currently do, or not do. Those values and expectations change as technology, economic and social conditions change ever more rapidly, and the future of our society depends on our ability to quickly adapt. Participants may include:

- Current members
- Members that have not renewed
- New college graduates that are dropping their membership
- Members that are currently in transition
- Non-members

The number of participants should be between 8 and 12 members to get a variety of viewpoints, and allow everyone to participate fully. The duration should be between 1-1/2 hour and 2 hours to allow sufficient interaction on all questions, but not so long as to discourage attendees. Please contact your Region area PACE chair to get more details on the Town Meetings and to make a funding request for your section.

Finally, let's look at efforts to get corporations to subsidize IEEE memberships for their employees. There is currently a beta test of a program through IEEE MGA membership to get large technology companies in Region 6 to subsidize employee memberships with a discount on these subsidized memberships. We currently have an MOU with Google to do this and we have plans to recruit 1-2 more large tech companies in Region 6 over the next 4-6 months. We are also

working with IEEE Corporate Activities, who manage the digital libraries, corporate training and other IEEE services to corporations on expanding offerings beyond subsidized employee discounts. Stay tuned for more on this in the future.

Members are the life-blood of the IEEE. We are led by members and members are our source of dedicated volunteers who make things happen. IEEE membership can lead to life-long learning opportunities and connections that can enhance your career. Many of my best friends are fellow IEEE members.

Furthermore, a recent IEEE salary survey (compared to data from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics) showed that IEEE members generally earn considerably more than comparable technical professionals. IEEE membership can pay for itself and can provide a lifetime of valuable connections, opportunities and valued colleagues.