

HOPE!

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Broadening the IEEE

Join me in discussing how we can broaden the IEEE at our last town meeting at 8 AM PT on September 23, 2021. Register for this event here: <https://tomcoughlin.com/ieee>

We have talked before about increasing diversity in the IEEE. In addition to making the IEEE welcoming to people of different cultural and racial backgrounds as well as gender, there is a great opportunity to broaden the IEEE in terms of professional disciplines represented and embracing, encouraging and providing resources for multi-disciplinary careers. I believe that this is an extension of the historical broadening of the IEEE. Today there are about as many members with experience outside of electronics and electrical engineering as there are from those disciplines. The technologies that our members have created offer new business value and new opportunities and requirements for participating in a world where humans and machines work in tandem.

In the past, many careers focused on a single technical field and often even in-depth knowledge and experience in a sub-set of a field. There are still jobs that require such knowledge. However, there are an increasing number of jobs and especially entrepreneurial opportunities that require broader knowledge and experience that spans a number of technical disciplines and often requires understanding of soft skills for working with other people as well as understanding the physical laws that make the universe work. Imagine an IEEE that provides value to professionals with broad knowledge and experience as well as those with deep knowledge and experience.

In addition, the transitory nature of many jobs means mastering broad systems level and soft skills is important. During their careers many of our members will find themselves looking for new jobs and even new types of work in new fields (some that never existed before). Some members will start their own businesses, where multi-disciplinary skills are crucial to success. Understanding and mastery of broader concepts and people skills are critical to working in today's economy. IEEE must embrace this reality and help our members gain the skills that will enable them to be successful. Doing so will enhance the value of IEEE membership and will help us attract and retain younger members and members in industry.

IEEE must provide and promote educational experiences as well as creating partnerships and even acquisitions that make the organization a leader in helping our members become successful multi-disciplinary professionals. In doing so, we will not only create greater value for our members, but also for the companies and industries for whom these members will work or even create.

Making these changes will require efforts in the IEEE at the local level, at the institutional level, and in educational institutions. Imagine an IEEE that helps create the sort of multi-disciplinary professionals that are needed to solve the world's problems and create new opportunities that will increase health, wealth and opportunities for all humans. We would truly provide value to

the world and our members. As a result, IEEE could grow in size and influence and provide hope and inspiration for a world that sorely needs both.

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