

Input on Action Item AI-0658 Conflict of Interest

AESS Spring BoG Meeting

May 12, 2017

Westin Hotel, Seattle, WA

Dale Blair

Member of BoG, AESS



From Fall 2016 IEEE BOG Minutes

- Joe Fabrizio will lead an adhoc committee to review all awards and policies.
- ACTION ITEM: Joe Fabrizio – Organize and lead the adhoc committee to review all awards and associated policies. Committee: Joe Fabrizio, Chair; Bob Rassa, Marina Ruggieri, Dale Blair, Peter Willett, Alfonso Farina, Mike Wicks.
- AI-0658
- There was discussion about conflicts of interest with regards to the AESS Awards. It is believed that AESS should take it a step further and not have any conflicts of interests in relation to our Fellows and Awards. We can adopt a stricter policy than IEEE does.
- MOTION: Dale Blair moves that any member of an award committee is excluded from evaluation of a nomination of an individual with whom he/she has a direct relationship. Bob Rassa 2nd. MO-0208
- MOTION: Michael Rice moves that we postpone this motion until the spring meeting on the floor. Roy 2nd. Motion passed. MO-0209
- ACTION ITEM: Dale Blair/Joe Fabrizio – Work on the wording of the postponed motion regarding Award Committee COI. AI-0660
- ACTION ITEM: Hugh Griffiths – Find an appropriate place to document the COI statement. AI-0661

Comments on IEEE Conflict of Interest in Awards Committee

- ❑ IEEE COI Policy is given on the next three charts.
- ❑ Concerning Awards and IEEE Fellow Nominations, IEEE interpretation of COI is
 1. Nominators nor endorsers of candidates can serve on the evaluation committee.
 2. Members of the evaluation committee can have direct relationships to the candidates as long as those relationships are disclosed to their direct report and the committee.
- ❑ Since our technical communities are rather small and often involve broad collaboration for award candidates, avoiding all relationships between evaluators and candidates can be difficult, but the current policy leaves room for abuse.

IEEE Policy – Conflict of Interest

- A. **Definition.** Conflict of interest is defined as any situation in which a member's or volunteer's decisions or votes could substantially and directly affect the member's or volunteer's professional, personal, financial or business interests.

- B. **Responsibility.** It is the responsibility of all IEEE members and volunteers in any elected, appointed, or other decision-making position of an IEEE activity to consider each item of business where they have a vote or decision-making authority to determine if a real or perceived conflict of interest may exist. Any such recognized conflict shall be disclosed in writing immediately to the person in charge of the activity (or the next higher authority if the member is in charge) who, after consultation with other individuals in the activity, shall advise the member of the proper course of action and cause a notation of the action to be entered in the activity's record. A copy of the disclosure statement shall be reviewed by the Audit Committee.

IEEE Policy – Conflict of Interest

- c. Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement. IEEE members, non-members or volunteers in an elected or appointed position and volunteers, editors and others involved in making procurement decisions or other activities that could represent a potential conflict of interest as determined by the IEEE Audit Committee shall submit annually a completed Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement to the Director, IEEE Internal Audit, at the Operations Center. Forms shall be on file within 30 days of assuming his/her position or, in the case of elected positions, within 30 days of acceptance of the nomination, or as otherwise determined by the IEEE Audit Committee. The IEEE staff shall notify every individual requested to file a Conflict of Interest of the applicable deadline. Failure to submit a form shall result in automatic removal from service on the committee, board or election slate, as the case may be. It shall be the responsibility of the Board or Committee Chair or, in the case of nominations, the Chair of the appropriate nominations committee to inform such individuals that they have been removed from service or an election slate, as the case may be, for failure to complete the form and to notify the IEEE Audit Committee of such action. The IEEE Audit Committee shall notify the IEEE Board of Directors of all individuals removed from service or an election slate, as the case may be, at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

COI Abuse

Example

1. Member prepares nomination of this employee and recruits endorsements.
2. Member has second employee to submit nomination in his name.
3. Member is Chair of Awards for technical panel and appoints himself to the award committee.
4. Award committee members are aware that the Member and nominee work for the same organization.
5. Award committee selects Member's employee for the award.

Problem

Current COI policy allows a candidate for an award to have a member of the evaluation committee with a direct relationship to be their advocate in the evaluation process.

Proposed IEEE AESS COI Policy for Bylaws.

Definition. Conflict of interest is defined as any situation in which a member's or volunteer's decisions or votes could substantially and directly affect the member's or volunteer's professional, personal, financial or business interests. The advancement of one's employees and former graduate students is considered as a COI.

Award Evaluation Committee: No one with a COI involving an award nominee can serve on the evaluation committee for that award.

IEEE Fellows Evaluation Committee: All members of the IEEE Fellows Evaluation Committee must declare all COIs to the Chair before the evaluation process begins. No member of the evaluation committee shall provide an evaluation for any candidate for which they have a COI. No member of the evaluation committee shall provide written or oral commentary on any candidate for which they have a COI.