Finished and Unfinished Business
a message from the outgoing president

The Governing Board held a special long-range planning meeting in New Orleans on December 2-3, 1975. Specific discussions were focused on technical committees, chapters, publications, and conferences. Many new ideas and suggestions emerged, but the results are too preliminary at this point to report anything concrete. At the request of the incoming president, Dick Simmons, I have agreed to continue to chair the Long Range Planning Committee until the study is completed.

Several IEEE meetings were also held during the same week in New Orleans, including those of the IEEE Board of Directors and the Technical Activities Board. A recurrent topic during all of these discussions was the 1976 IEEE budget. Based on the proposed budget, it at first appeared that the technical societies and groups would be receiving less support from IEEE in 1976—despite the $5 IEEE general dues increase. For example, the publication administration charges (not the page charges) which are applied to all publications of the societies/groups, are scheduled for a large increase. This and other areas of the IEEE budget will be finalized at the next IEEE Board of Directors meeting, to be held at the end of January. Meanwhile, it appeared to be the general understanding of the IEEE Board that IEEE support to its technical activities in 1976 would remain at least at the same level as in 1975.

These meetings in New Orleans permitted many of our Governing Board members to interact with IEEE officers and staff members. One of the problems recognized at these meetings was the need to improve communication between the IEEE and its societies/groups at both the officer and member levels. Up to now, many societies/groups have been passive with respect to IEEE affairs. In fact, it was surprising how many society/group officers did not know what was going on in the IEEE. I believe that situation will change this year.

AFIPS Membership
One of the most important actions at the AFIPS Board of Directors meeting in San Francisco on December 12 was the overwhelming passage of the second (and final) vote on the AFIPS constitutional amendment regarding membership qualifications and privileges. (The first vote was taken at the previous AFIPS Board meeting on May 24, 1975—see my message in the June 1975 issue of Computer.)

Member Society Qualifications. One of the basic problems encountered by AFIPS in the past was the qualification requirements and privileges of two classes of constituent societies: member and affiliate. The differences between the qualification requirements for each category as stated in the previous constitution were vague, and some constituent societies were the subject of debate at many Board meetings when they applied for change of status. As amended, the constitution and bylaws eliminate the affiliate society class, and require each member society to satisfy the following qualifications:

1. The member society (or its qualified subunit) must have more than 1500 qualified members for initial qualification and maintain at least 900 qualified members thereafter.

2. The member society must publish a refereed journal appearing at least quarterly, containing original and scholarly contributions to the information processing sciences or their applications. Furthermore, such contributions must comprise more than 50% of the total pages of technical material published in that journal and must average at least eight articles per year and a total of at least 30,000 words per year. Unless at least 90% of such technical material is related to the computer field, only half of the total membership of the society shall be included in the qualified membership count.

3. The member society must hold at least one scientific and technical meeting of at least one day’s duration per year. It must be devoted primarily to original and scholarly contributions to
the information processing sciences or their applications, with such contributions to be refereed prior to the meeting. Such a meeting can be a part of other conferences or annual meetings solely sponsored by the society.

4. The member society must have as its primary mission the field of information processing sciences or applications.

Member Society Privileges.
The basic change here is that a member society’s privileges depend on the size of its qualified membership. Member societies with at least 15,000 qualified members are entitled to three directors on the AFIPS Board; those with membership of 5000-14,999 are entitled to two directors; those with membership under 5000 are entitled to one director.

Representation on the AFIPS Executive Committee is as follows: one from a society with at least 15,000 qualified members, 1/3 from a society with 5000-14,999 members; 1/10 from a society with fewer than 1500 members. Those societies with a fractional part of a seat on the Executive Committee will elect the holders of the Executive Committee seats representing them. The society representatives on the AFIPS Nominating Committee and Admission Committee are allocated in the same manner.

Another significant change in privileges is the distribution formula of AFIPS surplus funds to constituent societies. Instead of being divided in proportion to the cumulative amount of AFIPS dues paid by such member societies, the distribution procedure will be to first return to member societies those dues which they have paid since the last distribution, with the remaining amount to be divided in proportion to the amount of dues paid since the last distribution. The amended constitution includes a provision for affiliation with AFIPS for any recognized membership group interested in the information processing field. This new class of society is called associate society. Requirements for such affiliation will entail nothing further than an expression of such an interest and presentation of evidence acceptable to the AFIPS Board of Directors of the viability of the group seeking representation. Privileges of such associations will include the right to be heard at meetings of the AFIPS Board of Directors at the discretion of the AFIPS president, receipt of notices and minutes of all AFIPS Board meetings, and receipt of the material distributed for discussions.

In the interim, current affiliate societies may choose to (a) become member societies or (b) remain affiliate societies for a period of five years. No new societies will be admitted as affiliate societies. All member societies must qualify under the full provisions of membership requirements within five years.

These changes should eliminate one of the most serious difficulties of AFIPS and encourage AFIPS constituent societies to increase their activities in the information processing field. The creation of the associate society class should attract many user-oriented societies, and thus strengthen AFIPS’ representation of the entire information processing community. This membership development, the adoption of DPMA, and the establishment of the AFIPS Washington Office may well be considered as the three most significant accomplishments of AFIPS in recent years. In all these cases the Computer Society has played a leading role and collaborated effectively with our sister societies in the AFIPS family.

Relations with IEEE

The Computer Society’s future—healthy or weak—is inseparable from the state of the IEEE, simply because the IEEE is the Society’s home base. The Computer Society comprises Division V of the IEEE, and is therefore entitled to a director on the IEEE Board. However, we are also administratively parallel to the other 29 technical societies/groups and 226 sections, and we must work in order to make ourselves felt. Our ultimate influence on IEEE activities, in other words, depends on our active participation and contribution.

As Director of Division V during 1976-77, I will work closely with the Computer Society officers, Governing Board, and committees to make our contribution to IEEE’s activities and to improve IEEE operations.

Governing Board Nominations

Finally, our current nomination and election procedure for Governing Board members requires the Nominations Committee to complete the consideration of member candidates for the term 1977-78 during the coming COMPCON on February 24-26. Therefore, on behalf of the Nominations Committee, I would like to invite you to send me your inputs by February 16, 1976. Your suggestions on potential candidates should include the candidate’s biographical information, especially his or her past and current participation in the Society’s activities. The Nominations Committee will give full consideration to your inputs.

It has been a great honor for me to serve as the president of the Computer Society over the past two years. During this period, because of the dedicated effort of many members and our staff we have been able to expand the Society’s activities in almost all directions. As it reaches its 25th anniversary, the Society is stronger and healthier than ever. Our membership has passed the 23,000 mark, including about 4000 student members, and we are developing a variety of stimulating and worthwhile programs for the technical and professional growth of our members.

Incoming president Dick Simmons and vice presidents Merlin Smith and Rolly Arndt all have had broad experience and demonstrated leadership in the Society’s activities. In addition, the incoming board members have a wide variety of talents in the Society’s affairs. I am confident that the Society will continue to prosper under their leadership.

Stephen S. Yau

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