

REPORT

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TO: IEEE Board of Directors – November 2012

FROM: James M. Howard, IEEE Director

SUBJECT: Annual Report on IEEE-USA Activities and Issues

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This Annual Report highlights IEEE-USA's accomplishments and progress against goals for the year to dates in the areas of career & member services, government relations, professional activities and communications/public awareness. It concludes with summary reports on three specific issues of potential concern to the IEEE Board of Directors:

- An assessment of U.S. membership trends and related financial challenges facing the IEEE-USA and its future operations
- Federal support of conferences
- The future of the American Association of Engineering Societies

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

IEEE-USA's 2012 Priorities

IEEE-USA's primary focus for 2012 has been on implementing a strategic redirection designed to increase our emphasis on U.S. membership, membership engagement, and new revenue generation, while balancing our projected budget through 2017.

IEEE-USA continued to offer strong programs, products and services in the traditional areas of Career & Member Services, Communications & Public Awareness, Government Relations, and local Professional Activities.

IEEE-USA also gave priority to supporting IEEE's R1-R6 Membership Revitalization Initiative, including leadership on the CareerManager, Employment Networks, and Intellectual Property Professionals projects and support for the MGA's Metro Area Workshops Program.

Our Government Relations advocacy priorities for 2012 were focused on federal support for research and innovation, skilled immigration reform, energy, implementation of the new patent law, federal support of K-12 STEM education, prevention of on-line piracy, promotion of ubiquitous broadband, cybersecurity and issues related to E-health records. In addition, IEEE-USA engaged in a number of government relations efforts in support of corporate policy interests on the subjects of federal participation in conferences and public access to scholarly publications.

Program/Activity Outcomes and Highlights

Here are selected highlights of IEEE-USA events and activities that have occurred for the year to date (through September 2012) along with notes on projected year end outcomes where appropriate.

Strategic Redirection:

After reviewing and fine-tuning its strategic redirection plan in February, IEEE-USA is on track to meet all organizational change milestones set for 2012 by year end. Progress towards new revenue milestones, however, is mixed, with some progress made in growing publications and Annual Meeting revenues, but

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with revenues lagging expectations in the areas of consultant's products, advertising and fundraising efforts.

IEEE-USA's strategic redirection includes a planned 15% reduction (3.25 FTE positions) in staff headcount by the FY 2014 year. By year end 2012, IEEE-USA's staff headcount will have been reduced by 2.25 FTE positions.

Government Relations Activities

- **Immigration Reform:** Supported by a focused advocacy effort, including the retained services of former Rep. Bruce Morrison, IEEE-USA has made significant progress in its efforts to advance immigration reforms that would provide a streamlined process including immigrant visas to foreign STEM graduate students matriculating from U.S. institutions:
 - After a breakdown in negotiations between Republican and Democrat leaders on key provisions, the IEEE-USA supported [STEM Jobs Act \(H.R. 4631\)](#) was brought to the House floor on 20 Sept. under a suspension of the rules, failing to meet the 2/3s voting requirement despite an affirmative vote of 257 – 158. Democratic leaders have pledged to continue negotiations, with some prospect of a revised bill being considered after the election.
 - IEEE-USA-supported Skilled Immigration Reform legislation has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. John Cornyn ([Securing the Talent America Requires for the 21st Century Act of 2012, S. 3185](#)), which would reallocate approximately 57K “diversity” (lottery) visas for use to provide green cards for skilled STEM graduates (and their dependents) from eligible U.S. institutions.
- **Changes to L-1B Visa Specialized Knowledge Test:** In early April, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) announced that it was planning to release new guidance on the “Specialized Knowledge” requirement of the L-1B Visa for intra-company transfers. The changes, which were being advocated by a corporate coalition organized by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which included several large off-shoring concerns, were to be implemented by internal management directive without opportunity for public comment/review. IEEE-USA stated concerns with the process and urged an opportunity for public comment in an [April 3 letter](#). IEEE-USA and other concerned groups met with the USCIS Director in late April, who agreed to a public notice process. After consideration of our concerns, the proposed directive and associated public comment period were deferred indefinitely.
- **America Invents Act Implementation:** To meet the mandated implementation schedule for the new America Invents Act (Public Law 112-29) (converting the U.S. patent system to a “first-to-file” system), the U.S. Patent Office has released hundreds of proposed rules and regulations for public comment. IEEE-USA, tapping the expertise of its Intellectual Property Committee, which is comprised of leading practitioners in the field, has done monumental work in reviewing and filing several detailed comments highlighting issues and concerns with the proposed regulations. In addition, IEEE-USA was joined by the National Small Business Association in a statement to the House Judiciary Committee for the record of a May hearing to consider technical corrections and other amendments to the America Invents Act. Copies of the several regulatory comments and our hearing statement are available on-line in IEEE-USA's Policy Log at: <http://www.ieeeusa.org/policy/policy/>

IEEE-USA's 22 March comment to USPTO on patent filing was endorsed by the American Bar Association's Section on Intellectual Property in a later filing. ABA noted “the Section believes

that IEEE-USA presents many useful observations and suggestions that deserve careful consideration and analysis.”

Federal Support for S&T: Working through broad coalitions (e.g. ASTRA, Task Force on American Innovation, Coalition for National Science Funding, Coalition for National Security Research, R&D Tax Credit Coalition) and multi-society events such as the annual Science, Engineering and Technology Congressional Visits Day, IEEE-USA is continuing its advocacy for strong federal support of S&T, both through federal R&D budget appropriations and by urging permanent extension of the R&D tax credit for private-sector research. Because of election year politics, federal agencies are operating under a continuing resolution, which runs through March 2013 and which provides funding essentially flat to the levels approved in the 2011 budget agreement. Our current focus is on seeking a budget resolution that sustains S&T funding and forestalls the planned sequestration — the large, automatic, across-the-board reductions in federal funding established in last years budget agreement set to take effect in January 2013, which would result in additional cuts of approximately 8-9% to current federal R&D budgets. Efforts to renew the R&D tax credit, which expired on 31 Dec. 2011, also continue.

- **Supreme Court Decision in *Hyatt vs. Kappos*:** On April 17, the Supreme Court unanimously affirmed the lower court decision in *Hyatt v. Kappos*, preserving the right of a patent applicant whose claims have been denied by the Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) to present new evidence and obtain new review of patentability of an invention in a court action brought under 35 U.S.C. § 145. Writing for the Court, Associate Justice Thomas’ opinion adopts the position and echoes many of the arguments outlined in IEEE-USA’s amicus curiae brief. Ref: [Supreme Court decision](#) and [IEEE-USA’s Amicus Curiae brief](#).
- **Science, Engineering and Technology Congressional Visits Day:** This large, multi-society event was held on 24-25 April, and brought over 200 scientists and engineers to Capitol Hill for visits with their representatives in Congress to discuss the importance of federal investments in research and innovation. Twenty-eight IEEE U.S. members participated in 55 visits. A series of videotaped participant interviews have been collected in a highlight video to help promote awareness and market future participation in CVD.
- **STEM Measures for Innovation and Competitiveness:** IEEE-USA was the lead organizer of a policy workshop on STEM Measures for Innovation and Competitiveness, which was held in Washington on 6 June. IEEE-USA’s partners included UEF, AAAS, AICHE, AIME, ASCE, ASME, ASTRA, SME, Northrup Grumman and Thompson-Reuters. Featured speakers include economist Richard Freeman and U.S. Rep. Rush Holt. The workshop addressed the need for measures to assess the effectiveness of federal investments in research and to better understand and respond to STEM workforce trends. An IEEE Spectrum on-line article [featured](#) the workshop, a highlight video can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76QKLalMG4U>, and video of key speakers and panels will be available later this summer at <http://www.ieeeusa.org/calendar/conferences/stem/>.
- **Congressional/Executive Branch Briefings:** For the year to date, IEEE-USA has held or scheduled 8 congressional briefings on topics ranging from “Wind Energy” (in conjunction with Discover Magazine, NSF and ASME) to “Harnessing Light (Findings from the NAE Report on Optical Engineering),” which was arranged in partnership with the IEEE Photonics Society and other non-IEEE groups. Among the highlights, IEEE-USA’s Medical Technology Policy Committee joined with AIMBE to conduct a congressional briefing (21 June) highlighting the 10 year anniversary of the creation of the National Institute for Biomedical Imaging and



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Bioengineering (NIH) on Capitol Hill. IEEE-USA also provided a briefing to high level FCC staff on scaling mobile broadband capability on November 6.

- **Government Fellowships:** During 2012, IEEE-USA was able to sponsor four Government Fellowships. Ms. Leslie Martinich (Austin, TX) served as a Congressional Fellow in the office of Rep. Stevel Israel (NY). Dr. Patrick Meyer (Newark, DE), served as an Engineering & Diplomacy Fellow with the U.S. State Department, working on global energy issues until he accepted a similar position at State. Dr. Richard Bernardi (Wayne, PA). Dr. Umesh Thakkar completed his 2012-2013 Fellowship on detail from the State Department supporting the Government Accountability Office's new technology assessment function.
- **Washington Internships for Students of Engineering:** IEEE-USA (with support from IEEE Technical Activities and the IEEE Life Members Committee) hosted three IEEE student members in the 2012 WISE program. Ross Beppler (Clemson University) researched "Taking Advantage of America's Wind Resources: Implementing a Predictable Incentive Through a Long Term Energy Policy." Abhishek Dharan (Arizona State Univ) investigated "Telemedicine: A Broadband Application Improving Healthcare Access and Efficiency." Kevin McDonald (Columbia University) explored "Network Neutrality: Public Policy Approaches for Mandating Reasonable Network Management Non-Discrimination to Preserve the Open Internet." Their papers appear in the 2012 WISE [Journal of Engineering and Public Policy](#). Former IEEE-USA Government Fellow William Behn served as Faculty Advisor for the Summer 2012 WISE Program.
- **Communications Whitepapers (Cybersecurity; Harmful Interference):** IEEE-USA took a new tack on communications issues in 2012, shifting from an emphasis on direct policy advocacy towards a more educational and advisory approach through the use of targeted whitepapers. Throughout 2012, IEEE-USA shared a "FAQ on Cybersecurity" with key Executive Branch and Congressional officials, principally to help inform Congress' deliberations on cyber security legislation. In May, IEEE-USA presented a whitepaper entitled "*Clarifying Treatment of Harmful Interference Will Facilitate Wireless Innovation*" to key decision-makers at the FCC, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration and Congress, and was summarized in a communication to the House Science Subcommittee on Technology and Innovation as a follow-up to its 18 April hearing on "Avoiding the Spectrum Crunch: Growing the Wireless Economy Through Innovation." FCC and congressional briefings on the Harmful Interference are also in the process of being organized for later this year.
- **Health IT Week:** IEEE-USA joined with over 200 public and private sector organizations in co-sponsoring the 7th Annual [National Health IT Week](#), in Washington, DC, a collaborative forum to highlight the importance of health information technology (IT) for the U.S. healthcare system. One of the highlights of the week-long event was the Capitol Hill Health IT Showcase held 13 Sept. in the Hart Senate Office Building, including a noon-time press conference with Members of Congress in participation.
- **ScienceDebate.Org:** IEEE-USA is a participant in [ScienceDebate.Org](#), a public initiative cosponsored by AAAS/Science, the National Academies, Scientific American and the Council on Competitiveness to encourage candidates for public office to engage in public dialog on important issues related to science, engineering and technology. Both Presidential candidates have responded to a series of S&T-related questions prepared by the participating societies. Their answers are displayed as informational resources to our members and other interested voters on the ScienceDebate.org website.

Career & Member Services

- **Salary Survey:** Sales of the 2011 Salary Survey has exceeded budget targets by approximately 100% for the year to date. The 2012 Salary Survey was completed on time and on budget, with over 12K respondents. The 2012 Survey Report and the updated Salary Calculator (now with multi-year data to facilitate year-over-year comparisons) was released in September, with related specialty occupation salary reports for energy and computing professionals due out later this Fall.
- **R1-R6 Membership Initiatives:** IEEE-USA is continuing to make good progress on all its programs funded through the IEEE's R1-R6 Membership Revitalization Initiative:
 - *Employment Networks:* nine local employment networks were launched in late 2011 to provide local support and job search networking assistance to unemployed U.S. IEEE members, with eight networks still in operation. A Request for Proposals to establish new networks has been released with a 31 Oct. deadline and funding sufficient to establish up to 20 new networks. An employment assistance webinar ("Getting Your Resume Out of Cyberspace and on to the Manager's Desk") is scheduled for 15 Nov. and targeted at network participants. An ebook is also being developed based on network reports to capture best practices in creating and running an employment network.
 - *Career Manager:* A life-cycle search tool has been restored to the [IEEE Education & Careers](#) website to help connect members to the most relevant career and job resources. IEEE-USA's [CareerNavigator](#) website was given a facelift and a new interactive Career Management Workshop was soft-launched this Spring in partnership with Targeted Learning.Com.
 - *IP Professionals:* A series of workshops and presentations have been held around the country (San Diego, Cincinnati, and Portland) on the America Invents Act through Sept. YTD, with the purpose of raising awareness of IEEE-USA amongst IEEE members and IP professionals, as a precursor to offering an IEEE membership community for IP professionals in 2013. The San Diego session (11 July) was [webcast](#) and is archived on-line. A Fall workshop offering Continuing Legal Education credit is scheduled for mid-October in partnership with George Mason University. Presentations are also planned for Pittsburg in November and Seattle (with the University of Washington Law School) in December. A Patent Survival Manual is in development as a resource to help practitioners (especially inventors and entrepreneurs) to understand changes made to the U.S. Patent System by the America Invents Act.
 - *Metro Workshops:* IEEE-USA is supporting career tracks and providing career-related content for the IEEE Metro Area Workshops (MAWs) scheduled for 8 Sept. (Detroit), 29 Sept. (Santa Clara), 20 Oct. (White Plains) and 3 Nov. (Baltimore).
- **Special White House Invitation to Attend Champions for Change:** IEEE-USA was one of 50 organizations invited by the White House to participate in a special *Champions for Change* Ceremony and Workshop, held 7 March 2012. In addition to being recognized as a "Champion for Change", IEEE-USA was able to share information on its programs and discuss collaborations with other organizations engaged in promoting entrepreneurship.
- **U.S Science and Engineering Festival:** The 2d [USA Science and Engineering Festival](#) was held in Washington, DC on 27-29 April. The largest celebration of STEM in the US, the Festival's mission is to re-invigorate interest in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). The 2012 event featured over 3,000 interactive exhibits,



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+100 stage shows, and 33 author presentations. IEEE-USA STEM Literacy Committee coordinated IEEE's exhibit/booth, which was supported by 20 IEEE volunteers and featured information take-aways and a hand-on demonstration featuring the concept of energy efficiency using a hand-cranked dynamo used to power light bulbs featuring different technologies. An estimated 12,000 precollege students visited the IEEE-USA booth.

- **Model Software Licensure Examination:** Work is completed on development of a national Software Licensure Examination. IEEE-USA, working with the IEEE Computing Society, and in partnership with the National Society of Professional Engineers, and the Texas Board of Professional Engineering, spearheaded the effort to develop the model exam on behalf of the National Commission of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying (NCEES). Registration is expected to open in November 2012, with the first exam administered in April 2013.

Professional Activities

- **Annual Meeting:** IEEE-USA held a financially successful Annual Meeting on 3-6 May in Cincinnati. The program was entitled "Innovation Taking Flight" and featured a keynote address by former astronaut, Dr. Charles J. Carmarda, Senior Advisor for Innovation, at the Johnson Space Center. A technical program, including tracks for student papers, was held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting, with support from the IEEE-AESS Columbus Chapter.
- **Student Professional Awareness:** The 1000th IEEE-USA Student Professional Awareness Conference (S-PAC) was held at Cleveland State University (CSU) on 10 April 2012 and drew over 140 attendees. The event also marked the first "Partnership S-PAC" between the IEEE CSU Student Branch and CSU's Eta Kappa Nu (HKN) Chapter. IEEE-USA has supported a total of 47 Student Professional Awareness Conferences for the year to date.
- **Professional Activities Modules and Incentive Program:** During 2012 PACE Modules were launched to assist local sections and chapters in delivery professional development programs to IEEE's U.S. members. These modules include four topic areas: 1) Finding a Job, 2) Managing Your Career; 3) Establishing an Employment Network, and 4) Professional Development. Within each module the user will find powerpoint presentations with speaker notes, webinars, articles, e-books, and other resources from IEEE-USA to support local meetings or programs designed to help build our members' careers. Sections who utilize these modules and engage 100 members per year will receive a \$200 grant.



Communications/Public Awareness

- **New Flagship Publication:** In 2012, IEEE-USA laid plans to merge its two primary publications – the monthly *IEEE-USA Today's Engineer* and the quarterly *IEEE-USA In Action* – into a new "flagship" IEEE-USA publication published on-line, supported by an interactive digest edition. The new periodical will debut in 2013. This change will enable IEEE-USA to communicate career and professional information and news of products and services more effectively to U.S. members, while freeing resources to support other critical communications functions. In the interim, IEEE-USA will complete its full schedule of 2012 issues for both periodicals.
- **Publication Awards:** Both of IEEE-USA's primary publications received 2012 APEX Awards for Publication Excellence. *IEEE-USA In Action*, an inter-active publication, received the APEX Award for Excellence in Multimedia Publications, one of only 8 publications so honored out of 332

entries. IEEE-USA's *Today's Engineer* on-line publication was also recognized by the publishing community with a 2012 APEX Award for Publication Excellence in the electronic/web newsletter category.

- **E-Books:** Through August 2012, IEEE-USA has published nine original titles and nine open source GovDocs, for a total of 18 new e-books, bringing our catalog to 117 current titles. Nearly 86,000 e-books have been downloaded in the same period, mostly through our free monthly e-book offer to U.S. members. The three most popular e-book titles have been “Engineering the Art of Negotiation – How to Handle Your Boss (15,090 downloads); “Personal Positioning for Engineers (13,250 downloads) and Innovation Conversations (Book I: The Innovation Process) (12,421 downloads). The next iteration of IEEE TechNavigator tentatively scheduled for release at year end 2012 will feature IEEE-USA ebook titles. A new 12 volume E-book series targeted at young professionals on “Shaping Engineering Careers” is under development for 2013.
- **IEEE-USA Promotional Video:** One of the highlights of the IEEE-USA’s Annual Meeting was the unveiling of a new promotional video for IEEE-USA, which was developed in three weeks with a budget of \$5K (click image to play):



- **Student Video Competition:** This Spring, IEEE-USA awarded prizes in its annual Student Video Competition to student teams from Tufts University, the University of California-Berkely and Ohio University in Athens. Contest entries are developed by undergraduate engineering or computer science students for creating inspirational, 90-second, YouTube videos for youngsters 11-to-13-years-old on “How Engineers Make a World of Difference.” [\[View Video Winners\]](#)
- **Turing Centenary:** Working in collaboration with the producers of “[Codebreaker](#),” the National Press Club and the IEEE Computer Society, IEEE-USA helped organize a special screening and panel session featuring the new documentary on computer-giant Alan Turing. The event, in honor of Turing’s centenary, was held on 4 Oct. at the National Press Club. IEEE-USA President-Elect Marc Apter provided introductory remarks and panelists included Computer Society President-Elect David Allen Grier.
- **IEEE-USA Conferences Brief:** In early October, IEEE-USA launched its new Conferences Brief, a bimonthly electronic newsletter featuring news and important deadlines for IEEE-USA-supported technical conferences and related meetings. The Brief will be distributed by email to all IEEE U.S. members. As part of its [technical conferences program](#), IEEE-USA is on track to sponsor or technically co-sponsor nine IEEE conferences in 2012, and has three currently scheduled for 2013.

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Issue Focus: U.S. Membership Decline and Implications for IEEE-USA

Through the end of the 2012 membership year in August, IEEE U.S. higher grade membership was down 1.5% (2.7K members), driven by a failure to improve the retention rate (85.2%) and a 6.8% decline in new HG member recruitment (Source: IEEE Membership Development Report, August 2012). Before this year, R1-R6 HG membership has declined an average of 1.3% a year since 2003.

IEEE-USA faces three fundamental challenges with financial implications related to this membership trend and is concerned the trend is escalating:

- **U.S. Assessment Revenue:** IEEE-USA currently derives 95% of its revenue from an assessment of U.S. members residing in Regions 1-6. Projecting the declining membership trend forward, IEEE-USA has been forced to make significant cuts in program/staffing and faces substantial new operating deficits within 5 years unless membership trends are reversed, alternative revenue sources developed, and/or IEEE-USA program and service offerings are reduced.
- **The Baby-Boomer Demographic and Life Member Transition:** The age distribution of the U.S. membership mirrors that of the Baby-Boomer demographic in the U.S. As a consequence, increasing numbers of IEEE U.S. members will be eligible for Life Member status over the next 12-15 years. Life Members do not pay dues or assessments. Based on a projection developed by MGA, Life Member transition and associated member attrition could result in lost IEEE-USA annual revenue of \$3.25 million or 45% of our projected operating budget by 2024.
- **Product/Service Penetration and Member Awareness:** Various surveys suggest that IEEE members want more in the way of career and policy-related support and services than they are currently receiving. The surveys also confirm that while members are generally satisfied with the products and services of which they are aware, overall member awareness of IEEE-USA products and services is low. IEEE-USA continues to work to address these challenges on several fronts, including our new monthly free E-book benefit, our work on the IEEE on-line Career Manager, our participation with MGA on strategic road-mapping for career-related member benefits, and our continuous efforts to strengthen and diversify existing products and services. With fewer resources available due to declining membership, IEEE-USA's ability to address these challenges in a proactive way is becoming increasingly constrained.

As a consequence of the downward U.S. HG membership trend, IEEE-USA's revenues are not keeping pace with the cost of operations, even with annual CPI increases. This has forced IEEE-USA to adopt a five-year budget plan with cuts to program and staff, which puts increased emphasis on volunteer-run programs, fund-raising activities, a new model IEEE-USA Annual Meeting, and a new technical conferences program.

This trend were also the key impetus for IEEE-USA's extension of a financial incentive to U.S. sections who are successful in achieving net growth in new members, for IEEE-USA's participation in the R1-R6 Membership Development Initiative, and for adoption of our strategic redirection plan and budget. However, IEEE-USA believe the U.S. membership trend presents a strategic issue for IEEE and requires proactive responses at a higher level of organizational focus and that cut across organizational lines.

Issue Focus: Federal Participation in Conferences

In response to news of the GSA's Las Vegas Conference "scandal", both the House and Senate have passed amendments to legislation approved by each body that, if enacted, would severely limit federal employees' ability to attend educational conferences or meetings held by a nonprofit, association, or business.

The conferences amendment was offered by Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) to the [21st Century Postal Service Act of 2012 \(S1789\)](#) passed by the Senate on April 25, and is contained in the [Digital Accountability and Transparency \(DATA\) Act \(H.R. 2146\)](#), introduced by Rep. Daryl Issa (R-CA), which also passed the House on April 25. A key provision in both bills provides:

"LIMITATION ON THE ANNUAL NUMBER OF CONFERENCES AN AGENCY MAY SUPPORT.--No agency may expend funds on more than a single conference sponsored or organized by an organization during any fiscal year, unless the agency is the primary sponsor and organizer of the conference. "

Other provisions address the number of federal employees who can participate, sets limits on their participation, mandates public access of their IP, and puts limits on the total amount of expenditures allowed for support of conferences. Conferences are defined broadly to include both federally-organized meetings and conferences by "other organizations" in which federal employees may participate. If implemented, what this legislative provision would do is limit annual federal attendance to no more than 50 people at only one IEEE technical conference per year.

Both bills were stalled in Congress at the time of its pre-election recess, due to partisan differences over other subject matter addressed in the bills. However, pressure for a postal bill is building due to the financial status of the U.S. Postal Service, which creates some potential for the Postal Service Act bill (with Coburn amendment) to see action in the post-election "lame duck" session.

On June 27, the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee passed The GSA Act of 2012 (H.R. 4631), legislation introduced by Rep. Joe Walsh (Ill.) that eliminates the one conference restriction, but contains other restrictions that would impact to some extent federal participation in IEEE conferences:

- The bill defines "conference" to include "a meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium or event to which a employee travels 25 miles or more" which is held for "consultation, education, discussion or training" and is not held entirely at a government facility.
- The bill limits agency participation in a particular international conference (i.e. one requiring travel outside the U.S.) to no more than 50 agency personnel unless an exception is approved by the Secretary of State.
- The bill limits federal agencies to no more than \$500K expenditure on a specific conference, however the limitation does not "preclude an agency from receiving financial support or other assistance from a private entity to pay or defray the costs of a conference the total cost of which exceeds \$500,000."
- The bill sets a limit on agency budgeting for travel expenses for the period 2013-2017, which is basically 70% of their 2010 expenditures.
- The bill requires that prepared text, presentations and any recordings (audio, digital, etc.) by a federal participant in a conference must be posted on the agency's public website (unless exempted for national security reasons).

The GSA Act was approved by the House by voice vote under a suspension of the rules on 11 Sept. It is unlikely, but possible that this bill will move forward in the Senate during the post-election "lame duck" session, either directly or as an amendment to other "must-pass" legislation.

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In an effort to defuse the pressure for a legislative response, the White House Office of Management and Budget released a [directive on efficient spending](#) (11 May 2012) to federal agencies directing them to cut their FY13 travel budgets by 30% and cap spending on government-sponsored conferences at \$500,000. The directive also increases reporting, oversight, and financial disclosure of the cost of attending these meetings. The OMB restrictions are likely to impact decisions on which conferences federal employees attend, and result in a decrease in federal attendees attending private meetings, but the language does not limit agencies from sending people to only one association meeting a year.

IEEE-USA is working with two broad coalitions of organizations concerned with these new and proposed federal constraints on conference participation. Initially, the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) mobilized a coalition comprised of thousands of associations (and their members) to encourage Congress to amend the measures so as to minimize the impact on non-governmental organizations and their conferences. IEEE endorsed an ASAE letter to Congress circulated on 7 May. Working directly and through coalitions, IEEE-USA has issued a half dozen policy communications to Congress year to date and is working with our members in key congressional districts to generate constituent communications expressing concerns, most notably from IEEE conference organizers in Oklahoma to Senator Coburn. An IEEE-USA position statement supporting "Participation in Professional Conferences By Government Scientists and Engineers" was also approved at the Oct. 17 IEEE-USA Board of Directors meeting, and is accessible on-line at: <http://www.ieeeusa.org/policy/positions/profconferences1012.pdf>. IEEE's Management Council and technical activities/conferences functions have been briefed and are receiving status reports.

It is expected that the OMB Directive (and any legislative additions) will have an impact on IEEE conferences, primarily by reducing levels of federal participation. Anecdotal examples have already been noted of significant impacts on specific conferences (e.g. MilCon, AutoTestCon, Supercomputing) including resignation of volunteer chairs and cancellation of government exhibits.

Issue Focus: The Future of the American Association of Engineering Societies

The American Association of Engineering Societies was created in 1980 as a Washington-based organization to provide a strong, unified voice for the engineering profession, through collaboration and leveraging the shared interests and resources of its engineering society members. It served as a successor to the New York-based Engineers Joint Council. From that beginning, AAES membership has gradually declined from approximately 20 dues-paying member societies to the current 12. A change in the AAES dues model, from a per-member rate to a fixed amount (\$10K) per society, resulted in a significant downsizing of the organization, its staff and operations. At present, AAES operates on an annual budget of less than \$450K, and is housed and supported by staff detailed by the American Society of Civil Engineers. AAES programs include the Engineers Workforce Commission (publisher of surveys on engineering degree/enrollments and salaries), an awards program, the International Activities Committee (which manages AAES membership in the WFEO and UPADI as representatives of the U.S. engineering community), and member-society supported working groups/committees (e.g. software licensure, nuclear) that function as focal points for society collaborations.

The general consensus is that AAES lacks the membership and resources to achieve its vision of serving as "the voice" of the U.S. engineering profession. Its inability to develop a membership value proposition sufficient to attract smaller engineering societies at the current \$10K dues level has resulted in an organization with a broad mission and vision that is starved for resources. Also at issue is the reality that its "one voice" vision would be better served by a federation or direct membership model, rather than a confederation model of engineering society membership.

With support of the United Engineering Foundation, AAES held a Strategic Direction Summit in August to collect input from stake-holders on a vision for a new, more effective AAES. The AAES Strategic Direction

Steering Committee "received" the input from the summit and is developing proposals for the AAES Executive Committee (and Board) to consider at their next meeting in November.

Among the ideas discussed at the Summit for rejuvenating AAES were a change in the governance structure (evolving the current Executive Committee into the new Board of Directors, with the current Board becoming an Assembly) and/or adoption of a new membership model in which societies, companies, universities and other engineering "stakeholders" were all eligible for membership and/or where individual engineers were eligible for membership. In terms of priority focuses for the new organization, the two areas of strongest consensus among Summit participants were public awareness of engineering and K-12 STEM education/diversity ("putting the E back in STEM education").

As of the date of this report, it is not yet clear what recommendations the AAES strategic working group will bring forward to the AAES Board at their November meeting.

IEEE-USA currently budgets approximately \$38K a year for support of AAES activities (including dues, direct and indirect expenses, assigned overhead and staff support) and is willing and able to sustain this level of support through 2016. If AAES proposes a new membership model that substantially increases IEEE-USA's costs of participation, then a more fundamental decision would have to be made about future IEEE-USA/IEEE participation in AAES.