

Proposal for a Committee on New Initiatives
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The precipitous drop in membership of the Information Theory society over the last few years has been a topic of much discussion and debate. One of the fundamental questions it raised is the following: with the ubiquity of IEEE Xplore for obtaining our Transactions without ITSOC membership, what benefits do we offer our members?

Improving the benefits of membership in our society has given rise to a number of new initiatives over the last several years, including the chapter of the year award, the ISIT student paper award, the student committee and the online committee. Many other new initiatives have been discussed at BOG meetings but have not been followed up on yet, including developing a Distinguished Lectures program similar to that of other IEEE societies and to understand better the reasons for our recent significant drop in membership and propose mechanisms that might reverse this trend. In general new initiatives are rare, and come mainly from one of the existing standing committees or from society officers or BOG members. There hasn't really been a mechanism in place to encourage or facilitate new initiatives proposed by society members, or a committee dedicated solely to proposing and evaluating new initiatives. This proposal aims to create a new ad-hoc committee for this purpose.

The new initiatives committee would have its chair appointed by the ITSOC president, and the chair would then select 3-5 additional people to serve. All standing committees, chapter chairs, and members would be encouraged to propose new initiatives to the committee for their consideration. The committee would report to the BOG at least once a year with a summary of proposals made and recommendations for which initiatives should be pursued, including an estimate of the associated cost. This committee would also monitor the progress and impact of initiatives it had already approved and make recommendations for changes or discontinuation when warranted.

If approved by the BOG, the recommendation is for the committee to be formed immediately, with its first report given at Allerton.