**PROPOSED IEEE ETHICS CONFLICT RESOLUTION SERVICE**

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**INTRODUCTION**

This is an overview of what former IEEE President and then Member Conduct Committee Chair (1998) Martha Sloan, wanted the IEEE to establish as part of the mission of the Member Conduct Committee. I volunteered and became the Editor and led the MCC in drafting a proposal for such a service, but it never went anywhere.

**WHAT AN ETHICS CONFLICT RESOLUTION SERVICE COULD PROVIDE**

Here are some thoughts about Martha Sloan's proposed Ethics Conflict Resolution Services, which the EMCC could be authorized to provide to IEEE members.

**3. Ethics and Conduct Resolution Services -**

**(1) providing education to the member(s),**

This should be a no-brainer. The EMCC ought to return to the practice, under Steve Unger's Ethics Committee during the 1996-98 time period, where on alternate months, an Ethics Column would be published in The INSTITUTE. Generally, either a member of the EC or the MCC would be invited to write an article. The EMCC should return to this practice so ethics would be kept before the membership through commentary, review of real or hypothetical cases, discussion points, etc.

**(2) interpretation of applicable IEEE governing documents,**

Periodically, the EMCC could take parts of the governing documents and offer interpretation of them. Further, the Code of Ethics ought to be supplemented with a set of Guidelines, which could amplify them, cite examples, and offer guidance to practitioners, the EMCC, and the Hearing Boards when cases come before them. And of course, if members ask for interpretations, they could be provided too.

**(3) holding face-to-face interactions with those charging or asking for**

**support,**

At times, it could be helpful to provide face-to-face interactions with members who are facing difficult choices or potential conflicts with ethical matters.

**(4) providing a sounding board function, electronic or hard copy media**

**assistance,**

In addition to face-to-face interactions, the EMCC could also provide other media forms for enabling members to interact with them and obtain guidance, help, support, etc when they are faced with tough ethical choices.

**(5) utilizing a third party hearing panel of independent expert(s) or peer**

**review,**

At times, it could be very helpful to convene a panel of technical/ethical experts to provide an independent, third party set of resources to both parties in a conflict, to listen to the issues in the matter and to offer insight which could go a long way helping to diffuse or clarify

misunderstandings or to provide a sound technical basis for supporting or refuting claims.

**(6) whistleblower avoidance advice,**

IEEE's current document spelling out ways to mitigate ethical conflict, leading to whistle blowing, could be supplemented by actions and advice from the EMCC. This could go a long way to mitigate the need for one to have to resort to whistle blowing.

**(7) mediation or arbitration  efforts aimed at resolving the matter**

If the preceeding services are not successful in resolving potential conflicts heading to a formal case, then the EMCC, with the assistance of third party experts, could offer to and/or perform mediation or arbitration for the parties in conflict. The goal always would be to try to resolve the

matter so as to negate the need for a member to have to resort to filing formal charges against another member.

**and (8) membership in and soliciting and coordinating the assistance of the**

**Ethics Officers Association in matters of resolution.**

In organizations, which are members of the Ethics Officers Association, the EOA could be invited to participate with the EMCC in trying to resolve, educate, mediate, counsel members so as to resolve potential/real conflicts.

These are some initial views as to what a set of Ethical Conflict Resolution Services might be.

What are your views on these proposals?