

Should TAB Encourage S/C Mergers?

(Draft, 6-19-04; John Vig & Russ Lefevre, prepared for the TAB Governance Comm.)

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1. Preface:

The Governance Subcommittee of the TAB Management Committee is investigating the issue of whether or not to encourage S/C mergers.

There clearly need to be some compelling reasons for encouraging mergers. “I’m not sure there is enough energy behind ‘This looks like a good idea’.” Some feel that the “new” ASPP algorithm will lead to compelling reasons. Potentially, there are at least two types of mergers, friendly ones and “unfriendly” ones.

2. Sentiments FOR (some are clearly debatable):

- TAB has too many S/C for effective governance (mergers would lead to a more manageable TAB)
- Stronger synergy in a community by assembling related activities now present in multiple IEEE groups; improved networking opportunities among S/C with overlapping fields-of-interests
- Create a basis for larger conferences with strong exhibit and industry outreach activities.
- Too many overlapping fields-of-interests; too many turf wars
- Mergers will save money for TAB/IEEE (e.g., less travel to OU series and AdCom meetings)
- A larger S/C can (usually) better afford to have its own staff support (executive office).
- Would help some small S/C that lack the critical mass needed for success.
- Consolidate overlapping efforts in areas such as standards and publications.

3. Sentiments **AGAINST** (some are clearly debatable):

- Status quo is too easy to keep (inertia)
- “I do not buy the argument that TAB is too big to be manageable or effective. It is being managed, and it appears to be reasonably effective.”
- Major disincentive: new ASPP distribution gives a 15% “base” distribution to each S/C. Merged S/Cs would lose one of the 15%.
- May adversely affect a community and its identity
- Fewer active volunteers in society governance (one pres instead of two, one VP Finance instead of two, etc.)
- Takes away status and travel funding from some active volunteers
- Some societies line up well with industries; any change may cause ramifications with respect to industry relations. “Proceed with caution.”

Examples of “Merged” Societies (Multiple Communities in One Society)

1) The **UFFC-S**, one of the smallest (~2K members), consists of three communities which overlap only slightly: ultrasonics (U), ferroelectrics (F), and frequency control (FC). Each of the communities has its own VP, its own conference, and its own committees for awards, standards, etc. The UFFC-S N&A committee assures that each community is well represented on the AdCom. The society has one journal, T-UFFC (publishes ~1800 pages per year) the table of contents of which groups papers by subject matter. The society will be celebrating its 50th anniversary, with a joint symposium of the three communities, in August 2004. The “F” and “FC” communities joined the society in the 1970s. There has been minimal friction among the three communities.

2) **NPS-S**, another of the smaller societies (~3k members), consists of nine technical communities (called Technical Committees (TC)) with only minor overlaps; Computer Applications in Nuclear & Plasma Science (CANPS), Fusion Technology (FT), Nuclear Instruments and Detectors (NID), Nuclear and Medical Imaging Sciences (NMIS), Particle Accelerator Science and Technology (PA), Plasma Science and Applications (PSA), Pulsed Power and Technology (PPT), Radiation Instrumentation (RI), and Radiation Effects (RE). The NPS AdCom ensures that each Technical Committee has at least one member of the 16 elected members, and a survey is run each 5 years to apportion the remaining positions based on membership interest. The society independently publishes two transactions, Trans on Nuclear Science and Trans on Plasma Science. Both

run around 2000 pages per year. It also partners with 3 other societies on Trans on Medical Imaging. The society began with the origination of IEEE, and it seems to be adding a new technical committee every few years as a relatively small group of interested technologists seeks a cooperative and welcoming home. This has been the NPS-S history since the society originally started as Nuclear Sciences Society with only one technical Committee now known as Radiation Instrumentation. Although issues of preeminence do arise, the AdCom works as a BoD should work to create as win-win a situation as possible; hence its continued growth of technical committees.

A Possible Scenario for A Friendly Merger

- 1) TAB VP appoints merger mediators - a few wise and experienced TAB members
- 2) Leaders of two S/Cs agree that they are willing to explore a possible merger.
- 3) Groups of, say, three from each S/C meet with mediator(s) to discuss a possible path, and possible show-stoppers. Define the points of agreements and disagreements.
- 4) Mediators report to TAB leadership, including recommending incentives for resolving the disagreements, and staff support levels for facilitating the merger.
- 5) At some point, the two S/C co-locate their AdCom (=BoG) meetings. Mediator(s) present ideas for resolving the points of disagreement to a joint meeting of the AdComs. AdComs vote to proceed with the explorations.
- 6) Assuming that there are no show-stoppers, hold more co-located AdCom meetings - reserve time for a joint meeting at each.
- 7) Change the governing doc's of each to allow not replacing outgoing AdCom members - until AdCom size of each is reduced to some predetermined point.
- 8) Have the reduced AdComs vote to merge.

Possible Scenarios for Unfriendly Mergers

Establish criteria for S/C viability; e.g., minimum size and minimum financial resources. Task TAB FinCom and the Society Review Committee with identifying S/C who fail to meet the viability criteria. Give those S/Cs a time limit to either get well, as defined by the criteria, or find a merger partner. If they do

not, then it would be the TAB Management Comm's responsibility to broker a merger.

Another thought is that, whenever a S/C is created in the future, the creation be provisional, i.e., if within, say, two years the S/C has failed to meet the viability criteria, TMC shall arrange a merger.