

EDS YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

MENTORING

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Our EDS community is nearly 9000 strong, but our membership is drifting downwards each year as EDS members retire and are not being replaced by enough younger members, who are retained over their full career. Mentoring is a valuable tool for the most senior 3000 members to reach out to the most junior 3000 in order to mentor and life coach.

During my tenure as the seminal VP for Strategic Directions for EDS ('20-'21), we conducted a survey through IEEE Strategic Research of current and recently non-renewed EDS members of their opinions about EDS. One message that resonated with me is that younger members joined with high hopes and enthusiasm, but were met with a relatively quiet response of a self-administered, self-selected menu of choices. Granted our publications and conferences are extremely healthy and well run, but in 2022, this is not enough. I recall vividly that one member articulated in the comments section of that survey that they wanted to volunteer and get involved, but no one asked them.

Mentoring is a natural human trait. In our nuclear family, we may call it parenting, and in a former world where you begin and end your career at the same company, one may call it training. And in academia, we call it advising. But in 2022, engineers are likely to change jobs and move cities much more frequently. IEEE can play a significant role to mentor and recruit EDS members through mentoring, regardless of geolocation.



IEEE's Collabratec is an underutilized, but yet valuable tool. Many of us have a multitude of webpage profiles to maintain and monitor, such as LinkedIn, Google Scholar, Research Gate, Publons, as well as the social media of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. It can be overwhelming. So, adding yet another profile can be taxing in a hyper busy world. But IEEE Collabratec is a way to reach across time zones and borders to others in our community.

IEEE Collabratec has a mentoring feature, whereby any IEEE member can list themselves as a mentor. I personally have done this and responded to requests in two waves so far. The first wave, I tested the water with one student, who was from Chile. I was very pleasantly surprised to discover a very worldly, ambitious and aware individual, who simply needed to talk with someone senior to validate their career plans and goals. We probably spent more time

trying to find a suitable time slot than we spent on the actual Zoom call. But they simply needed a lifeline and a life coach.

My experience was quite pleasant, so I accepted a second tranche of mentees. Some are still trying to connect up, but through this tranche, I also met with another student, currently in the Philippines. Again, I was gob smacked by their maturity and self-awareness. It was another very pleasant experience and only cost me a 1-hour Zoom call. In fact, anecdotally, I feel that the Collabratec platform has also imparted a filter that only the more enterprising students and YPs actually utilize this request, thereby shielding more senior members from wasted time and effort. I came away fulfilled and I believe each student has gained self-assurance as well as a connectivity to the IEEE community.

So, I call upon us all to establish your IEEE Collabratec profiles and reach out to our EDS Young Professionals and EDS Student Members to give them a lifeline to their future, and our future.



USER GUIDE

About IEEE Collabratec, <https://iee-collabratec.ieee.org/>

IEEE Collabratec User Guide, <https://sites.google.com/a/ieee.org/iee-collabratec/>

IEEE Collabratec Basics Overview Video on YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-doaeroms>