Midwest Symposium on Circuits and Systems Steering Committee
Minutes of meeting held in Boise, Idaho, Monday, August 6, 2012

Steering Committee members present: Hoda Abdel-Aty-Zohdy, Moataz Mahmoud Abdelwahab, Rick Branner, Jong-Moon Chung, Shervin Erfani, Igor Filanovsky, Paul Furth, Takao Hinamoto, Mohammed Ismail, Ken Jenkins, Manuel Jimenez, Donald Lie, Neeraj Magotra, Hector Perez Meana, Wasfy Mikhael, Carla Purdy, Nader Rafla, Mohamad Sawan, Michael Soderstrand

Guests Present: Todd Brooks, Annajirao Garimella, Maher Rizkalla, Jose Silva-Martinez, Jose de la Rosa

The meeting was called to order at 7:55 p.m. by Prof. Mikhael, who welcomed the attendees. He circulated an attendance sheet and a Steering Committee membership list for updates and asked guests to sign the list. Prof. Purdy agreed to take the meeting minutes.

The minutes from the 2011 meeting in Seoul were approved.

Prof. Jenkins presented the treasurer's report. On August 1, 2011, the balance was $20,975.62. The Committee received $1,837 from MWSCAS 2011, and there were no expenditures. So the balance on August 6, 2012 is $22,812.62. Prof. Jenkins reminded the Committee that the money is in a gift account at Penn State. There is no interest but also there are no administrative fees. With this type of account, we do not have to verify to the IRS each year that we are a not-for-profit organization. The treasurer's report was accepted by the Committee. Prof. Mikhael thanked Prof. Jenkins for his work and reminded the Committee that if the conference makes a profit, the organizers are asked to contribute $5.00/registration to this account. Funds are used to help support MWSCAS in years it loses money, which has happened a couple of times. Prof. Soderstrand noted that the fund was originally established to support student awards but it has not ever been used for that. It has provided seed money to organizers a couple of times.

Old business:

2011 symposium: Prof. Chung presented the final report for the 2011 symposium in Seoul. He thanked the Committee for their help in making the symposium a success. There were over 408 paid registrations and 526 papers submitted (323 regular submissions, 203 invited). There were 427 acceptances (363 lectures, 64 posters). Three keynote talks were presented. The student contest had 168 participants and 8 finalists. Three awards (roughly $500, $300, $200) were presented at the banquet. The Technical Program Committee chose the Reed Award recipient. About 15 papers were selected for publication in 3 different journals. The symposium had several sponsors, including Yonsei University. A surplus of $8689 was sent to IEEE. Prof. Soderstrand noted that (by IEEE rules) life members pay the student rate and student presenters must pay the full ate unless they are the sole author. Prof. Mikhael thanked the organizers, Profs. Chung, Nooshabadi, and Soderstrand, and led the Committee in a standing ovation.

2012 symposium: Prof. Rafla presented the preliminary report for 2012. There were 289 paid registrations (not including onsite registrations), including 93 student registrations. The number of student registrations is small due to enforcing the IEEE registration rules. There were 369 submissions, 313 of which were accepted. Each paper had 3 reviewers. Prof. Rafla noted that this year's papers were very high quality. The symposium received $3000 in support from industry. Expenses so far are $109,600, and there will be a surplus. Prof. Abel-Aty-Zohdy noted that the tutorials this year were very good. Prof. Mikhael noted that everything is running very smoothly and thanked everyone who contributed. He led the Committee in a round of applause for this year's organizers.

Prof. Furth asked why the surplus from 2011 was sent to CAS. By tradition, each year's committee makes its own agreement with IEEE. A committee can choose to share the profit (and loss) 50/50 with IEEE, for example, or to let IEEE be the sole sponsor. Profs. Soderstrand and Chung noted that there were extensive discussions with IEEE about how the sponsorship would be split. The process took several months. Prof. Chung noted that organizers can get a loan from IEEE, which they did, but this must be returned to IEEE and so is not included in the profit or loss. The 2011 conference did receive a $1000 donation from South Korea Telecom. They also submitted 6 proposals for grants to various government agencies; 3 of these proposals were funded.

There was a general discussion about options for sponsorship, possibly from the host institution or from the Committee. It was noted that it is possible for an organizing committee to give more than $5/registration to the Committee before sending the surplus to IEEE. Also, a host institution can decide what per cent of the sponsorship it wants. But there is no contractual relationship between the organizing committee in a given year and this Committee. Prof. Mikhael noted that the symposium has lost money only once that he knows of, so the risks to the sponsors seem small and thus each year's organizing committee should feel free to decide whether to let IEEE be the sole sponsor or to share in the sponsorship. Each committee should talk to organizers from previous years and then decide how to set up the sponsorship. The current informal agreement is that if organizers can send $5 (or more) per registration to this Committee, they do. And if there is a loss, the organizers can seek funds from this committee to help cover that loss.

2013 symposium: Profs. Ismail and Purdy shared the call for papers and presented plans for the 2013 symposium at Ohio State. Profs. Steve Bibyk and Carla Purdy will be Co-chairs; Prof. Ismail, who is currently at KUSTAR, will serve as Technical Program Chair. Prof. Furth pointed that "OSU" should not be used in the symposium publicity, since Oklahoma State is also OSU.

Future symposia: In the discussion of proposals for 2014 and later, it was noted that the Committee has subcommittees for efficiency. For example, membership is overseen by Prof. Mikhael, Prof. Michael, and Prof. Soderstrand. Prof. Abdel-Aty-Zohdy has been managing future symposia requests for a number of years, but having a subcommittee helps with the process. Each subcommittee should provide a report to the Committee each year. Prof. Sawan requested that proposals continue to be circulated to the full Steering Committee so that everyone can comment on them.

Prof. Abdel-Aty-Zohdy discussed 4 proposals which have been received. A fifth proposal, from Peru, arrived too late to be considered this year, since the subcommittee had no time to discuss it, but will be considered for next year. Her committee's recommendation is that the proposal from Prof. Silva-Martinez for Texas A&M be accepted for 2014 and the proposal from Prof. Iskander to hold the symposium in Paris be accepted for 2015. More details, especially about budgets, need to be added to both proposals. The 2015 symposium would be the first held in Europe. If there are more than 500 attendees, bigger facilities will be needed. She asked for an update on the venue by October, since it is difficult to contact the necessary facilities managers in summer.

Prof. Abdel-Aty-Zohdy did not send full proposals to the Committee but can so do if members want to see them. Prof. Furth noted that it would be good to inform the Committee when a proposal comes in, since it is important to know that proposals are being put forward. There was no report on future proposals last year. There needs to be a report to the Committee every year. It should be distributed at the meeting or sent to Committee members before the meeting.

Prof. Abdel-Aty-Zohdy noted there was a good proposal for Paris for 2013. It was not voted on because the symposium can only be outside the U.S. once every three years. She also noted that the proposal is for the third week in July in 2015, not for August.

Two additional proposals, from Michigan Tech and Colorado State, have been received. These proposals are updates from 2011 (Michigan Tech) and from 2004 (Colorado State). These will be considered for future years.

Prof. Mikhael thanked Prof. Abdel-Aty-Zohdy for her presentation. He noted that the proposal from Peru should be added to the list for future consideration and encouraged a possible proposal from IUPUI, this would be a "Midwest" location.

Prof. Ismail moved to accept the recommendations for 2014 and 1015. The motion was seconded. Prof. Chung inquired about voting by email, but after some discussion it was decided that the tradition to vote at the meeting should be followed.

Further discussion addressed several points.

The Michigan Tech proposal, which had been considered previously, was discussed further. Prof. Jenkins added useful information about this proposal. There is still some concern about transportation to the proposed location. The organizers have tried to address this. There are also some concerns about the Peru proposal. These need to be addressed. It was noted that the Michigan Tech proposal, as well as the proposal from Peru, can be further refined and presented for future years. It was noted that any group that has made a proposal and has worked to address concerns made by the Committee has eventually been chosen to host the symposium. Thru Committee is dedicated and collegial, and can give advice on improving proposals. Refined proposals from these two groups are thus highly likely to lead to each group hosting the symposium in the future.

Prof. Soderstrand noted that the Committee rules would allow Paris to be selected as the 2014 venue. Prof. Abdel-Aty-Zohdy indicated that the A&M proposal is more detailed. Prof. Sawan noted that it would be difficult to approve the Paris proposal since the budget is not yet detailed enough. Prof. Abdel-Aty-Zohdy stated that Prof. Iskander is aware of the need for more details and of the fact that Paris is expensive and has promised to provide more information by October. He is not able to get confirmation for some details until then. Prof. Ismail noted that this is a good reason to wait until 2015 for Paris. Prof. Soderstrand mentioned that the two proposals with detailed budgets are Texas A&M and Michigan Tech. As noted above, there are still concerns about the Michigan Tech location. Prof. Magotra suggested we accept the A&M proposal for 2014 and accept the Paris proposal for 2015, pending a more detailed budget. Prof. Sawan agreed with this. Profs. Ismail and Magotra also suggested that the Paris proposal involve more senior people. These suggestions were added to the motion as friendly amendments. Prof. Chung noted that all proposers should eventually get a turn but that he would like to see the actual proposals. Prof. Abdel-Aty-Zohdy agreed to provide the A&M proposal and also to provide the revised Paris proposal in October. The final motion, to accept the A&M proposal for 2014 and tentatively accept the Paris proposal for 2015, subject to receipt of a budget satisfactory to the Committee by October 1, then passed.

Prof. Mikhael reiterated that no one who wanted to organize the symposium has been turned down, but sometimes proposed dates are postponed for convenience or to obtain more details. It is important to involve the Committee members and benefit from their experience as much as possible. Committee members are supportive and will make good recommendations, this is the lifeblood of MWSCAS. We are all volunteers. It was also noted that it is very good to have so many proposals in the pipeline.

New business:

Several potential new Committee members were considered. Those attending the meeting were excused during this part of the meeting. The candidates nominated are Prof. Maher Rizkalla, IUPUI; Dr. Annajirao Garimella, Intel; Prof. Jose Silva-Martinez, TAMU, IEEE Fellow, 2014 Co-chair; Prof. Tom Chen, Colorado State; Prof. Ramy Iskander, Université Pierre et Marie Curie, 2015 Chair; Dr. Todd Brooks, Broadcom, today's keynote speaker; Dr. Raymond C. Garcia, Pluraldom Systems; and Prof. Jose de la Rosa, CSIC/University of Seville. Colleagues of each nominee briefly outlined their impressive qualifications, and each nomination was seconded. The Committee can have up to 50 members and currently there are only 41. Prof. Soderstrand moved that we accept all 8 nominees and Prof. Ismail seconded the motion. The motion was approved. The new members present were invited back into the meeting and congratulated.

Prof. Erfani made a motion that the subcommittee for future symposia consist of three people and that this subcommittee will submit a report that will be available to the Committee at each meeting. He proposed Profs. Abdel-Aty-Zohdy, Geiger, and Lie for this subcommittee. Prof. Magotra seconded the motion, and it was approved.

The issue of no-shows was discussed. Prof. Soderstrand noted that in the past anyone who paid the registration fee had their paper in the Proceedings. The question is what to do if someone pays the registration and then does not show up. Prof. Mikhael indicated his preference is to err on the side of the author. Prof. Rizkalla noted there may be a legal issue if the presenter cannot attend the symposium because of circumstances beyond their control, e.g., failure to obtain a visa. It was stated that the organizers for a given year should make this decision. Prof. Geiger noted that this could be handled on an individual basis, depending on the reason for the no-show. Prof. Rizkalla noted that if the venue has the technology, a presentation can still be arranged. Prof. Abel-Aty-Zohdy noted that those who do not show up on purpose decrease the quality of the symposium. She suggested that organizers make sure the symposium announcement addresses this issue. Prof. Sawan noted that a video can also be sent. No definitive solution was arrived at.

Prof. Mikhael expressed his gratitude for the Committee members' service and their collegial participation. He also expressed his hope that this would continue for many years to come. There being no additional business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Carla Purdy