

2003 IEEE Canada GOLD Leadership Training Workshop Report

by Verona Wong
IEEE Region 7 GOLD Coordinator

BACKGROUND

The 2003 IEEE Canada GOLD Leadership Training Workshop was conducted to achieve the following:

1. Introduce the IEEE Organization to GOLD leaders
2. Explain IEEE GOLD mission and operation to GOLD leaders
3. Empower GOLD leaders with information and tools to run a local group
4. Provide an opportunity for GOLD leaders across the Region to meet one another in person, share ideas
5. Provide an opportunity for GOLD leaders to meet student leaders and student branch counselors of their own Section
6. Introduce GOLD to student leaders and branch counselors to foster their future involvement in GOLD

The GOLD workshop was held in London Four Point Sheraton Hotel, London, Ontario on Sept 20 - 21, 2003. Similar to the workshop conducted 2 years ago in year 2001, this workshop was held in conjunction with the IEEE Canada Student Branch Workshop. The GOLD workshop consisted of 3 parts:

1. Introduction to the IEEE
2. Leadership Development Workshop
3. GOLD Leaders Discussion Session

1) Introduction to the IEEE

The Introduction to the IEEE Session was held in the morning of Sept 20, 2003. During this session, GOLD leaders watched presentations along with student leaders and student branch counselors.

The R7 Regional Student Representative Jorge Aguirre and University of Western Ontario Student Branch Counselor Luiz Capretz provided welcoming remarks followed by R7 President Elect Bill Kennedy's presentation "How to get employed and stay employed".

The rest of the morning was filled with presentations about the IEEE organization. Jorge Aguirre provided an Overview of IEEE Organization, Introduction to IEEE Student Activities, and IEEE Student Programs. Before an Introduction to the GOLD Program was presented by R7 GOLD Coordinator Verona Wong and R7 and RAB Past GOLD Coordinator Slawo Wesolkowski, ICF Treasurer Luc Matteau made a presentation of the IEEE Canadian Foundation.

2) Leadership Development Workshop

The GOLD leaders and student branch counselors participated in the Leadership Development Workshop facilitated by R7 Professional Development Chair Gerard Dunphy. This session took place in the afternoon of Sept 20, 2003 aims to improve GOLD leaders' leadership skills.

3) GOLD Leaders Discussion Session

During the morning of Sept 21, 2003, all GOLD workshop participants gathered together to discuss individual group's progress and operational challenges. Verona Wong also presented additional information concerning forming an affinity group, running a group, and funding. All participants were able to share ideas in running a group and many made suggestions to promote GOLD at a national level through regular communications.

PARTICIPANTS

- Verona Wong, IEEE Canada GOLD Coordinator
- Slawo Wesolkowski, IEEE Canada and RAB Past GOLD Coordinator
- Jason Long, Souther Alberta GOLD Volunteer
- Aleksandra Jeremic, Toronto Interim GOLD Chair
- Andy Balser, Vancouver GOLD Chair
- Deborah Messina, Hamilton Incoming GOLD Chair

- Roni Khazaka, Montreal Interim GOLD Chair
- Dawn Nedohin-Macek, Winnipeg GOLD Chair
- Jeffrey MacKinnon, Dalhousie University Student Branch Leader (Sunday Discussion Only)

EVALUATION

All the 6 purposes outlined above have been achieved. Particularly, GOLD leaders now better understand that GOLD Chair's primary task is not to recruit members but to improve the quality of membership benefits and recent graduates' satisfaction. GOLD leaders also have the chance to discuss what works well and what not, to learn from one another. By introducing GOLD to students, several student branch leaders approached myself expressing interest to get involved in GOLD after graduation. Dalhousie University's Jeffrey MacKinnon took the time to attend the GOLD discussion to find out how he can start GOLD there even there is section resistance. The workshop was able to clear some misconception students and GOLD leaders have in GOLD and explain to them the benefits of the GOLD program to the IEEE, their sections and themselves.

Benefits of the workshop as seen by participants:

- Networking opportunity, with other GOLD leaders, students, student branch counselors
- Better understanding of IEEE GOLD
- Bill Kennedy's presentation was a bonus
- Leadership Development Workshop offers alternate skill training

Improvements suggested by participants:

- Introduction to student activities is irrelevant
- Increase the interaction in the Leadership Development Workshop
- Include skills application activities in the Leadership Development Workshop
- Tailor the Leadership Development Workshop for GOLD leaders for their leadership needs
- Insufficient time for the GOLD Leaders Discussion (on Sunday)

SUGGESTIONS

- Rearrange IEEE GOLD and ICF presentations to be made prior to Students Activities in the first session (Morning of 1st day) so that GOLD leaders can move to a separate room for their own activity after the break.
- Tailor the Leadership Development Workshop to run shorter and leave an hour or 2 to simulate skills application. For example, putting participants into groups and perform case-study on topics such as conflict resolution, team-building.
- Group presentations time limit be enforced
- Allow volunteers who have attended the workshop to attend again only if that section has no new GOLD volunteer. Consider this as re-training, let everybody brainstorm and figure out the problems that particular GOLD group is encountering.
- Continue holding the workshop with Student Branch Leadership Training Workshop
- Produce an Operations Manual for GOLD volunteers similar to the one for student leaders
- Make this an annual event so that more volunteers can be trained

FINANCE

Sponsorship and sources of funding:

- IEEE Canada: \$4000
- IEEE Canadian Foundation: \$3000

Expenditure:

Other than conference rooms and accommodation, funds were used to cover participants' travel expenses. The Region 7 GOLD Committee had an agreement with the Region 7 Committee that in addition to the expenses of the GOLD workshop, the GOLD Committee also sponsors half of the expenses of the Women In Engineering presentation made by Anna Zyniewski.