

IEEE Region 3 Ad Hoc Committee on Area Chairs  
Report to the IEEE Region 3 Strategic Operations and Support Committee

November 1, 2020

The Ad Hoc Committee on Area Chairs consisted of the following members:

Gregg Vaughn  
Bill Ratcliff  
Mary Ellen Randall  
Theresa Brunasso  
Jim Howard (Served until his death during the year)

As explained in the Interim Report of June 1, 2020, the Ad Hoc Committee on Area Chairs followed the following Strategy.

- (1) make a list of all of the duties of Area Chairs,
- (2) investigate the best way (in the view of the committee) that these duties could be carried out,
- (3) form a decision as a committee about most appropriate unit to perform the duties in the list,
- (4) if possible eliminate duties from the list that no longer need to be performed at all,
- (5) make a recommendation about the future of Area Chairs based on the remaining duties that are best performed by the Area Chairs.

A list was generated from several sources including the IEEE Region 3 Operations Manual. This list was arranged by general topic by the committee.

Section Health:

1. Serve as a “first line of defense” for a troubled Section.
2. Assist the area’s sections in understanding the rest of IEEE.
3. Ensure that Section Officers understand their role within the Region.
4. Verify that each Section and its subunits are conducting activities on a regular basis and reporting all meetings via vTools.
5. Verify that a Section Nominating Committee is established in accordance with MGA Guidelines.
6. Identify new Section Officers via OU Analytics or direct contact with previous Section Officers.
7. Inform Region leadership if a Section seems to be floundering, assist or identify resources for the Section, as needed.
8. Become familiar with and use the Center for Leadership Excellence resources.
9. Lead training efforts for Section Officers (proactive).
10. Facilitate new member orientation at the Sections level.

Communication between Section and Region

1. Serve as a member of the Region 3 Committee
2. Serve as a member of the Region 3 ExCom
3. Represent the Area at ExCom Meetings; Ensure that the interests of the Area are understood and considered by the ExCom.
4. Maintain close working arrangement with the Region 3 Section Support Committee.
5. Make good use of the (Region 3 SOSOC) mentor. Create an ongoing list of questions that need to be addressed. Feedback on additional information that Area Chairs need will help future Area Chairs.
6. Act as a mentor to your successor.

### Communications among Sections in an Area

1. Coordinate Area meetings to share best practices among Section leadership.
2. Help subunits share information and speakers; assist with identifying Distinguished Lecturers.
3. Identify well-received activities that should become annual / semi-annual events. Planning should draw upon previous years' experiences and lessons learned. Share best practices among the Sections
4. Search for external (i.e., non-Section) funding sources. Potential resources include Region 3, IEEE USA, WIE, etc., plus local businesses.

### Rules

1. Stay informed about IEEE and its business, mission, services, policies and programs.
2. Be familiar with matters affecting the Area.
3. Review IEEE documents as they relate to the position of Area Chair, including IEEE. Bylaws, IEEE Policies, IEEE Financial Operations Manual and the MGA Operations Manual.
4. Become familiar with IEEE Policies regarding funding sources for Geographic Units, the appropriate use of IEEE Funds, establishing bank accounts, contract administration, annual reporting requirements and insurance coverage. Assist Sections with identifying appropriate funding sources, as needed.

After some discussion, the committee came to the following conclusions.

- (1) The duties listed under "Section Health" are the most important function of Area Chairs.
- (2) The duties listed under "Communication between Section and Region" may be no longer needed. The ExCom meetings are open to volunteers from all Sections, and these meetings are generally held by electronic means. Travel to the ExCom meetings is no longer an issue. Also with electronic communication, it is relatively easy to keep all Sections informed about issues at the Region level. The Region now has a Member Communication Committee to handle information transfer from the Region to IEEE members. There is a Section Support Committee that includes experts in various areas. The Area Chair no longer needs to maintain expertise in all of these areas.
- (3) Some of the duties listed under "Communications among Sections in an Area" may be best performed by a Geographic Council. Other items are of a communication nature that lend themselves to a sharing web site like IEEE Collabratec. Since the Councils are a product of the Sections, then it is logical that inter-Section communications would fall under the responsibility of the Sections themselves.
- (4) The duties listed under "Rules" are common to all IEEE volunteers at all levels.

The Committee decided that only the Area Chair duties listed under the topic of "Section Health" were applicable to the current situation. All of the other duties would be better performed by other volunteers and units. Given this conclusion, the Committee investigated various ways to organize the Area Chairs perform the ten duties listed under "Section Health." Also, the Area Chairs do not operate in a vacuum. They are a part of the overall function of the Region. The Committee considered how to organize the Area Chairs to work with the various other functional components in Region 3.

As part of this consideration the Committee discussed how many Area Chairs were needed. The MGA Operations Manual places constraints on the number of voting members of the Region Committee that are appointed by the Region Director. Currently the Region 3 Director appoints the Area Chairs as voting members of the Region Committee. As a consequence, not all of the Chairs of the ExCom Committees are allowed to vote in Region Committee Matters. The following text is from the MGA Operations Manual 2019 (9.1.F.3.a)

Voting Members of the Region Committee:

i. Officers: Region Chair, Region Vice Chair (Elect), Region Secretary, Region Treasurer, and Past Region Chair.

ii. Ex officio: Each Section Chair, the Region Coordinator of Professional Activities, where applicable, and the Chair of the Region Student Activities Committee.

iii. Selected Appointments: The Region Chair may appoint additional voting members. These may include Area Chairs, and the Chairs of Region committees such as Membership Development, Educational Activities, and Awards and Recognition, Region Chapters Coordinator, Young Professionals, Women in Engineering (WIE), etc. The number of additional voting members appointed shall not be more than one-fourth the number of officers and ex officio members, rounded up to the next whole number. Such additional members shall be appointed on a year-to-year basis by the Region Chair, subject to the approval of the Region Committee members designated in (9.1.F.3.a.i) and (9.1.F.3.a.ii).

In Region 3 there are 41 Sections, Director, Director-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, Past Director, Professional Activities Committee Chair, and Student Activities Committee Chair. In all there are  $41 + 7 = 48$  Officers and Ex officio members. So, the number of Selected Appointments (voting) is limited to 12.

Also in Region 3 there are 10 ExCom Committees with Chairs. However, some of the Chairs of these committees are already voting members of the Region Committee and so they do not need to be selected again.

Awards and Recognition Committee (1)

Member Communications Committee (2)

Conference Committee (3)

Finance Committee, Chaired by the Treasurer

Section Support Committee (4)

Nominations and Appointments Committee, Chaired by the Past Director

Operational Audit Committee (5)

Professional Activities Committee, Chair is an Ex officio voting member of the Region Committee

Strategic Operations and Support Committee (6)

Student Activities Committee, Chair is an Ex officio voting member of the Region Committee

So, 6 of the 12 appointments could be used to enable all ExCom Committee Chairs to vote in Region Committee matters. Then there would be 6 remaining appointments for the Director to make. If the Director reserved 1 appointment for a future Ad Hoc committee, 5 Area Chairs could be voting members of the Region Committee.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Area Chairs concluded that Region 3 should consider reducing the number of Areas from 9 to 5 or should consider eliminating the Area Chairs. The reduction would bring the number of Areas in Region 3 in line with the Areas in Regions 1-2 and 4-7. The elimination of the Areas would make Region 3 like Regions 8-10 in regard to the concept of Areas.

Here is a table of the Areas of each IEEE Region.

Region	Areas	Type
--------	-------	------

1	4	Geographic
2	4	Geographic
3	9	Geographic
4	4	Size then Geographic
5	4	Geographic
6	5	Geographic
7	3	Geographic
8	0	No Areas
9	0	No Areas
10	0	No Areas

In an effort to reduce the number of Areas, the Committee considered three alternatives: designate Areas by location, designate Areas by Section size, and eliminate Areas. Here, Section size refers to the number of voting IEEE members in a Section. Attached are detailed assignments of Sections to Areas in the first two of these alternatives.

#### Advantages of Area designation by Location.

- (1) Areas could approximately follow political boundaries and be referred to by location names.
- (2) Sections in the same Area would be quite diverse in size.
- (3) Sections in the same Area could have different issues based on size.
- (4) Regions and Sections fall under Member Geographic Activities (MGA).
- (5) Face-to-face interactions may be more practical.

#### Disadvantages of Area designation by Location.

- (1) Sections in the same Area would quite diverse in size.
- (2) The issues faced by small Sections could be different from those faced by large Sections.
- (3) Diversity of interest amongst the Sections may challenge the Area Chair's capacity to help.

#### Advantages of Area designation by Section size.

- (1) Sections in the same Area could have similar issues related to size.
- (2) Smaller Sections may bet more useful attention.

#### Disadvantages of Area designation by Section size.

- (1) Sections in the same area could be scattered all over Region 3.
- (2) An Area composed of small Sections could have no models of large Section functionality.
- (3) Large Sections tend to have more available funds than small Sections.
- (4) Changes in Section size could cause changes in groupings.
- (5) Large Sections may perceive they have less (per person) representation on the ExCom.

#### Advantages of No Areas.

- (1) Eliminate one level volunteer positions.
- (2) Encourage each Section to choose for itself the local organization it wants to join (for example a Geographic Council).

- (3) There already exists a Section Support Committee at the Region 3 level with specialists to help Sections with tools and best practices.
- (4) Years of effort by the Region to enable the Area Chairs has not resulted in spectacular results.
- (5) Opens up possibility of other voting Ex Com Positions such as Affinity Group chairs and technical/chapter coordinators).
- (6) Provides a team with detailed section support specialties.

Disadvantages of No Areas.

- (1) The duties in the area of “Section Health” would have to be absorbed by other parts of the Region ExCom.
- (2) Present area chairs could be disenfranchised.

It should be noted that the Ad Hoc Committee on Area Chairs has made no recommendations whatsoever about Geographic Councils. The Region has no authority over Geographic Councils. Such Councils are not a sub-unit of the Region and are not responsible to the Region. In no way does the committee recommend changing Geographic Councils at all. These Councils are formed at the pleasure of the Sections in their respective geographic locations. As such Councils are responsible to the Sections that formed them. On the other hand, Area Chairs serve as volunteers for the Region, and Area Chairs are appointed by and are responsible to the Region.

Submitted by  
Gregg Vaughn  
IEEE Region 3 Past Director  
Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Area Chairs

AreaBySectionSize

Area/Council	Council?	Section	Members	Rank	Area
Georgia		Atlanta	3374	41	1
North Carolina	y	Eastern North Carolina	2525	40	1
Florida	y	Florida West Coast	1784	39	1
Florida	y	Orlando	1180	38	1
Tennessee	y	East Tennessee	969	37	1
AL/MS		Huntsville	883	36	1
AL/MS		Alabama	803	35	1
Virginia		Richmond	733	34	1
Tennessee	y	Central Tennessee	704	33	2
North Carolina	y	Charlotte	687	32	2
Virginia		Central Virginia	600	31	2
Florida	y	Palm Beach	585	30	2
Virginia		Virginia Mountain	561	29	2
Virginia		Hampton Roads	540	28	2
South Carolina	y	Piedmont	521	27	2
Florida	y	Miami	518	26	2
Florida	y	Melbourne	500	25	3
Florida	y	Gainesville	419	24	3
Florida	y	Broward	400	23	3
Tennessee	y	Memphis	389	22	3
Florida	y	Jacksonville	382	21	3
AL/MS		Mississippi	381	20	3
South Carolina	y	Columbia	378	19	3
South Carolina	y	Coastal South Carolina	356	18	3
Kentucky		Louisville	349	17	4
Kentucky		Lexington	335	16	4
Tennessee	y	Chattanooga	319	15	4
Florida	y	Tallahassee	311	14	4
North Carolina	y	Central North Carolina	266	13	4
Florida	y	Northwest Florida	263	12	4
North Carolina	y	Western North Carolina	252	11	4
AL/MS		Mobile	219	10	4
Georgia		Central Georgia	188	9	5
Florida	y	Daytona	176	8	5
Georgia		Savannah	173	7	5
South Carolina	y	Central Savannah River	160	6	5
Kentucky		Evansville-Owensboro	160	5	5
Jamaica		Jamaica	154	4	5
Florida	y	Canaveral	145	3	5
North Carolina	y	Winston-Salem	128	2	5
Tennessee	y	Tri Cities	85	1	5

23855

AreaByLocation

	Section	Code	Members	Area		
VA-NC	1	Eastern North Carolina	ENC	2525	1	
GA-SC	2	Richmond	RIC	733	1	
FL	3	Charlotte	CH	687	1	
TN-KY	4	Central Virginia	CV	600	1	
AL-MS	5	Virginia Mountain	VM	561	1	
		Hampton Roads	HR	540	1	
		Central North Carolina	CNC	266	1	
		Western North Carolina	WNC	252	1	
		Winston-Salem	WS	128	1	6292
		Atlanta	ATL	3374	2	
		Piedmont	PI	521	2	
		Jacksonville	JAC	382	2	
		Columbia	COL	378	2	
		Coastal South Carolina	CSC	356	2	
		Central Georgia	CG	188	2	
		Savannah	SAV	173	2	
		Central Savannah River	CSR	160	2	5532
		Florida West Coast	FWC	1784	3	
		Orlando	ORL	1180	3	
		Palm Beach	PB	585	3	
		Miami	MI	518	3	
		Melbourne	MEL	500	3	
		Broward	BRO	400	3	
		Daytona	DAY	176	3	
		Canaveral	CAN	145	3	5288
		East Tennessee	ET	969	4	
		Central Tennessee	CT	704	4	
		Memphis	MEM	389	4	
		Louisville	LOU	349	4	
		Lexington	LEX	335	4	
		Chattanooga	CHA	319	4	
		Evansville-Owensboro	EO	160	4	
		Tri Cities	TC	85	4	3310
		Huntsville	HUN	883	5	
		Alabama	AL	803	5	
		Gainesville	GAI	419	5	
		Mississippi	MS	381	5	
		Tallahassee	TAL	311	5	
		Northwest Florida	NF	263	5	
		Mobile	MOB	219	5	
		Jamaica	JAM	154	5	3433
				23855		

