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Jim Keller
University of Missouri, USA

Midyear Musings

Hi all,
As this issue is published, 2023 is well underway. I don't have a set theme for this message – I will just ramble along for a while writing about accomplishments, on-going activities, and plans for the Computational Intelligence Society. Not so original, eh?



(Right to left): Tom Compton, the new CIS Executive Director with Jo-Ellen Snyder, Simon Lucas, and Pablo Estevez enjoying the evening in Lisbon after an Executive Committee meeting in 2019

IEEE CIS has grown over the years in membership, structure, activities, and dreams, but we have operated with only one (albeit very talented) full time staff support for over 15 years. In the last few years, we were fortunate to add another talented part-time staffer, focused primarily on our electronic outreach: web, social media, e-mail. Last year the AdCom let me stand up an AdHoc Committee to study our staff needs relative to both operational and strategic issues. After a careful and detailed analysis that included input from all of the CIS Vice Presidents, AdCom approved a motion to search for an Executive Director for the Society. Early this year, a search committee was formed that ultimately hired **Tom Compton** as the CIS Executive Director. Welcome to this new role, Tom. With respect to CIS members, Tom will

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be at the helm as volunteer officers, like yours truly, cycle in and out. We now have a corporate leader to smooth the transitions and keep member benefit programs and initiatives moving along without interruption. In this role, Tom will be crucial to our strategic planning as well as operational aspects.

Speaking of strategic planning, **Pauline Haddow** is bringing incredible energy as chair of that standing committee. We have made a serious commitment to mapping out our near and midterm future to offer the best experience for our members. Our perspective is that the strategic plan (SP) must be a living document that we continuously update and refine. Pauline has set up a structure for small working groups to monitor action items resulting from defined goals and objectives, to linguistically assess/grade ourselves (how could it be anything else for me), and to suggest modifications. I've many times resisted strategic planning because I've seen too often a complex exercise resulting in a document that essentially gets filed away. I think CIS has a process now where the SP adapts and grows along with CIS.

Part of our strategic efforts involve initiatives to be of better service to CIS members. I mentioned the exciting 2023 projects in my message in the first issue of CIM in 2023 [1]. They are all moving forward and we're expecting cool things to evolve in all the areas. I want to mention just one here that concerns qualitative metrics to assess our goals for diversity, equity, and inclusion because we need your help. Professors of Social Work Erin Robinson (erinrobinson25@hotmail.com) and Virginia Ramseyer Winter (proframseyerwinter@gmail.com) are collecting and analyzing data and perceptions of how CIS is doing with respect to DEI and will provide us with recommendations for the near term and tools so that we can perform assessments in the future. They began with some multi-person round tables and are actively engaged in personal interviews. If you are willing to share your experiences (with privacy protection), please contact Erin and Ginny. We'd like broad participation across CIS.

I thought this was going to be short, but I realize I could ramble along for many pages about all the neat things going on in CIS. So, I'll stop here, but I have a challenge for you. CIS can only function

with the energy and great ideas of its members. My request to you is that you take some time looking through the CIS webpage, find at least one area that resonates with you, and contact the Vice President to offer your services. I started in Pubs way back in the Jurassic Period 😊. But, like me, I have confidence that once you start volunteering, it will get in your blood, and you will receive much more than you give. Enough already, Jim!

As always, feel free to contact me at kellerj@missouri.edu with your thoughts, suggestions, questions, and innovative ideas. Please stay safe and healthy. I hope to see many of you as we emerge from the pandemic.

Reference

[1] J. Keller, "Spring forward, fall back [President's message]," *IEEE Comput. Intell. Mag.*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 3–4, Feb. 2023, doi: [10.1109/MCI.2022.3223266](https://doi.org/10.1109/MCI.2022.3223266).



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