

## A PARTNERSHIP IN THE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OF COMSOC

The IEEE Communication Society (ComSoc) strives to provide financial resources that support the programs necessary to achieve its mission. Its dedicated volunteers and staff do their best to create affordable opportunities and solutions for ComSoc members through efforts including conferences, workshops, publications, standards, certification, training, education and intellectual property. The ultimate goal is to provide these opportunities and solutions at a minimal cost possible to the members while both ensuring enough revenue is available to cover operating expenses, and trying to set aside some funds to invest so that those benefits and solutions stay relevant in the future.

## COMSOC'S FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Finance Committee, or FinCom, is charged to protect, preserve and invest in the future of the Society. To this end, the FinCom meets at the bi-annual Board of Governors meetings to finalize budgets and, with the guidance from the volunteer Treasurer and staff Director of Finance and Business Operations, provide strategic financial topics for discussion and decision. The members of the 2018 FinCom are shown in Table 1. The Treasurer has a watchdog role over all aspects of financial management, working closely with other members of the FinCom, to safeguard ComSoc's finances. The Treasurer is responsible for assuring sound financial practices, establishing prudent budgetary policies, overseeing the preparation and presentation of the Society's budget and working with IEEE on financial matters.

The current Treasurer, Fambirai Takawira, is a Professor in the School of Electrical & Information Engineering, University of Witwatersrand, South Africa. From 2012 to 2017 he served as Head of the School. Prior to joining the University of Witwatersrand in 2012, he was a faculty member at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa from 1993 to 2011, where he also served as Head of the School of Electrical, Electronic and Computer Engineering from 2002 to 2007 and Dean of the Faculty of Engineering from 2009 to 2011. He obtained the BSc (Electrical Engineering) degree from Manchester University, England in 1981, and the Ph.D. degree from Cambridge University, England in 1985. He has been an active volunteer in IEEE and ComSoc as an editor of *IEEE Transaction on Wireless Communications* (2008 – 2010), Director of the EMEA Region (2012-2013), Member of ComSoc's Nominations and Elections committee (2012-2017) and Member of ComSoc's GIMS committee (2013-2017). He has also served as General Co-Chair of IEEE-AFRICON 2015, Executive Co-Chair of International Conference on Communications 2010 in Cape Town, South Africa, and a member of the Technical Committee at several IEEE conferences.

Bruce Worthman is ComSoc's Director of Finance and Business Operations. Bruce has been with ComSoc since 1997 and has headed the Finance and Conferences Department during his over 20 year career. His duties involve compiling and managing the society's \$19 million annual budget, all



Khaled B. Letaief



Fambirai Takawira



Bruce Worthman

accounting and financial related tasks, and until recently was responsible for the entire operations of the 30+ financially sponsored and co-sponsored conferences annually. Bruce started his career with the Association for Computing Machinery. Bruce has a B.A. degree in accounting/information science from Queens College, City University of New York, passed the Certified Public Accountant exam, and currently possesses the Certified Association Executive (CAE) credential.

## COMSOC'S FINANCIAL STATUS

ComSoc is currently in a healthy financial state, but this has not always been the case. Figure 1 and Fig. 2 present a summary of the 2018 budget forecast, which estimates a surplus of over \$400,000. The trend of ComSoc's significant sources of income and expenses is shown in Fig. 3 and Fig. 4. Looking back over the last several years, the trend of the society's revenues are coming more from conferences, and less from membership, subscriptions and advertising. ComSoc has taken more of an interest in several publications, which has provided additional revenue to the society, and the growth in both the quantity and size of papers published in ComSoc journals has resulted in additional revenue. Society expenses have also increased due to traditional inflation, but also the growth of the conference portfolio has resulted

in an overall increase in expenses. ComSoc has been able to keep publications expenses constant, and due to recent increases in revenue, ComSoc has been able to increase expenses to fund numerous programs benefiting the membership.

A very important recent set of transactions, leading eventually to future revenues, is the investment in ComSoc's new areas of interest and initiatives. Conference and publications surpluses and revenue from IEEE intellectual property sales are used to first offset costs to run the Society and then to invest to ensure current levels of revenue are growing, or at least maintained. This is a very important task for the FinCom, while they also continue to find ways to stay, non-program, expense efficient.

## STRATEGIES AND GOALS FOR 2018-2019

Earlier this year, the Finance Team presented to OpCom1 a strategic financial plan for the society. The main objectives of this plan are:

- 1) Improve the finance governance and processes.
- 2) Achieve a comprehensive financial decision making.
- 3) Maintain a strong fiscal health of ComSoc.

Six initiatives have been identified and will be pursued in order to achieve the objectives of the strategic plan:

- 1) Achieve a more diverse FinCom membership by adding non-BoG, independent members to FinCom.
- 2) Update financial procedures.
- 3) Allowing authors to submit longer length papers without incurring additional cost to the author while minimizing financial impacts to the society.
- 4) Achieve different and flexible style of financial reporting to decision makers.

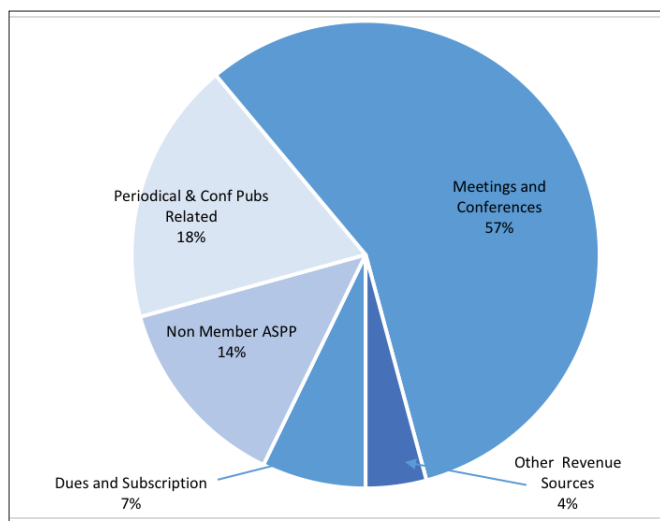


Figure 1: 2018 revenue.

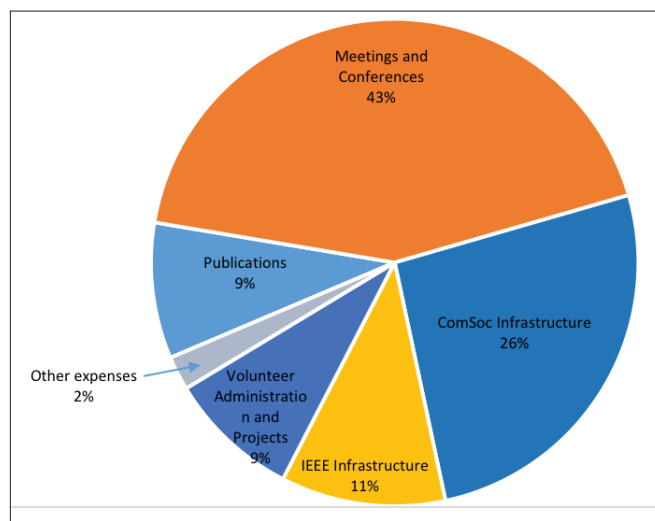


Figure 2: 2018 expenses.

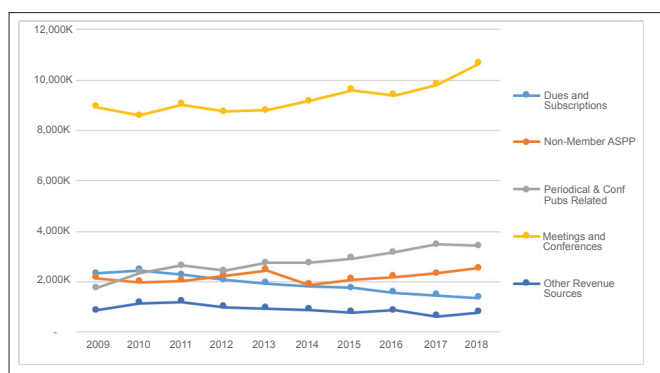


Figure 3: Trends of major sources of income (2009 – 2018).

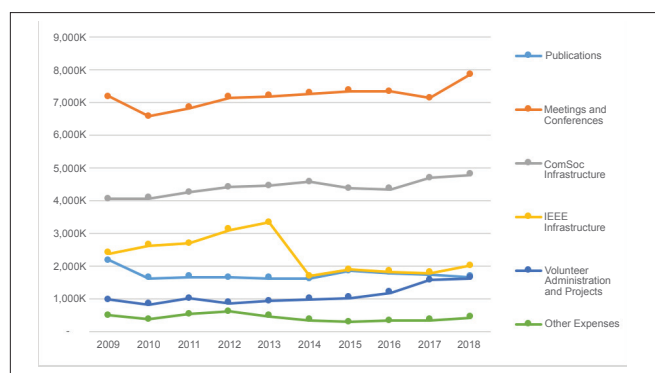


Figure 4: Trends of major expense items (2009 – 2018).

5) Working with the ComSoc Vice Presidents and President to stay efficient and to find new sources of revenue.

6) Conduct Financial stress tests to identify potential financial issues early so they can be resolved in time.

One initiative necessary to highlight is the financial reporting element. Traditionally, financial statements have been reported at a high/macro level showing the sources of revenue and types of expense. Also, ComSoc views its organization management in four major lines of operations: Membership, Conferences, Publications, and Education, consisting of a total of over 80 different products. The objective is to create financial statements for each line of operation, and even each product, so that the leadership can evaluate performance and be able to set financial goals/targets for each line of operation or product, so that the society's portfolio is diversified financially. We strive to avoid having the society's positive annual financial outcome dependent on one line of operation, or a couple of products. Analysis of the 2018 budget shows that the Membership and Education lines of operations are subsidized by Conferences and Publications, and that the Package Product Revenue/Proceeds is key to Conferences and Publications profitability.

In conclusion, the Finance team is committed to ensuring a healthy financial state for ComSoc by providing the Board of Governors with timely information so that it can perform its fiduciary duties. Growing revenues is key to the future sustainability of ComSoc, and going forward a key focus of the Finance Team will be to grow existing revenue streams and identify opportunities for new streams.

Khaled B. Letaief	ComSoc President
Harvey Freeman	Past President
Stefano Bregni	VP, Conferences
Stefano Galli	VP, Industry and Standards Activities
Sherman Shen	VP, Publications
Nei Kato	VP, Member and Global Activities
Nelson Fonseca	VP, Technical and Educational Activities
Wei Zhang	MAL (18-20 class)
Ricardo Veiga	MAL (17-19 class)
Tom Hou	MAL (16-18 class)
Zhi Ding	CIO
Fambirai Takawira	Treasurer (FinCom Chair)
Susan Brooks	ComSoc Executive Director
Bruce Worthman	ComSoc Director of Finance and Business Operations

Table 1. FinCom 2018.