

Complaint on procedure for selecting EIC of Proceedings of IEEE

The problems associated with the PSPB selection process prior to 2 November 2018 were documented in my previous email to the Presidents. I found that the election procedure used in the 16 November PSPB meeting continued the heavily biased methods in favor of PSPB leadership's candidate. This note brings you up to date on relevant events.

In his email to me of 3 November, Samir El-Ghazali, the PSPB Chair, asked three members of the PSPB, Gaurav Sharma, Ron Goldfarb and Steve Yurkovich to reach out to me regarding my objections to the selection process and the conduct of the chair and NAC from the June PSPB meeting until that date. Gaurav contacted me 4 November to discuss the problem. He contacted me again 5 November to tell me that he and the other two were going to discuss options and that he could share nothing with me after this time. After hearing nothing, I emailed Samir 12 November, noting that I had heard nothing and requesting that I be informed of the procedure that would be used at the 16 November meeting at least 24 hours ahead of the meeting. He responded that he was still working on the arrangements.

I heard nothing more. Early in the meeting of 16 November, Samir announced that the Nominations and Appointments Committee (NAC) had returned the nominations responsibility to the PSPB. About 11:30, it was announced that the PSPB would consider all nominees for the EIC *nominated by whatever method*. We would use single transferable voting to determine the selection to be passed on to the board of directors. These were actually put in the form of motions that were easily approved by the PSPB. There would be a discussion and vote immediately after lunch. Four two-page nomination forms were put online and linked via the online agenda shortly after noon. This gave very little time for members of the PSPB to read about the candidates, one of whom, Gianluca Setti, was well known but the three nominated by the PIEEE Board would be new to the vast majority of members.

I note that in the PSPB meeting of June, the candidate nomination forms were linked on the agenda. The candidates nominated by the PIEEE Board had submitted two-page forms as required by the PSPB announcement. Gianluca Setti's form was five pages. I have the files for reference. This is another way that he was given preferential treatment during the initial deliberations by the NAC. Shortly before the 16 November meeting, Gianluca was told of the problem and allowed to bring his form into compliance. The other candidates were not given the opportunity to update their forms. I am aware that between April and November, one of the original candidates was elected to a position in the IEEE that would have enhanced the candidate's value as EIC. The communication between the PSPB leadership and their candidate seems improper. It is an example of the preferential treatment that Gianluca has received, which I would have mentioned if I had more than two minutes to speak at the meeting.

When Samir started the session after lunch, he informed the board that each member could speak for only two minutes in discussing the candidates. I objected to this stating that there were three nominees from the PIEEE board and that was insufficient time to discuss their qualifications. The procedure for discussing nominees for the PIEEE board members has never had such a time limit, much less having such a short time limit imposed.

Furthermore, since the nominations responsibility had been returned to the PSPB, they should have been entitled to see or hear the information that was presented to the NAC for their deliberations. This was not permitted. It was always the custom for the current EIC to give an evaluation of the nominees. I had sent my evaluations in with the nominations on 20 April 2018

and an amended evaluation after I discovered that Gianluca Setti had been nominated by a method that is still unclear. The board was not permitted to discuss the nomination process but only to vote on permitting all candidates nominated by whatever method to be considered. I had not protested the inclusion of Gianluca in the motion made before lunch, as I thought I would be given time to give background information during the discussion of the candidates.

The process was clearly unfair to the three nominees from the PIEEE board. Few people knew these candidates and the two-minute limit did not permit me to discuss all of the original three candidates, the problems with Gianluca's performance on the PIEEE Board, and the irregularities of the nomination process. Four members who knew Gianluca well gave strong endorsements as would be expected, in any discussion. However, two basically challenged the documented evidence of his poor performance with no foundation other than saying that in their experience he had great record of completing tasks and had high integrity. Since I had used my two minutes, I could not point out that the evidence for his poor performance was documented and was verified by the managing editor.

I note that I had made the charge of poor performance in an email to the PSPB on 17 October and included links to the documentation. However, it is unclear how many members of the PSPB actually read the email. Furthermore, none of the PSPB chair, NAC or Gianluca openly challenged the documented charge of poor performance. In any discussion of this type, a reminder of the history of the situation would be appropriate to clarify the reason that we were having the discussion in the first place.

The two-minute limit on discussion, which was announced only at the beginning of the session that would have the voting take place, clearly favors the PSPB leadership's candidate. Since I am the main opposition, this gave me no time to think of an appropriate way to protest. I risked being seen as a trouble-maker if I went further than the protest on time-limits. I did not know I would be prohibited from discussing the problems with the nomination process. I had no time to plan how to use any amount of limited time that I would be given. My plan had been to give the PSPB the same information that was given to the NAC. Each of the three candidates had their strong points but time permitted me to give only a brief description of my top ranked candidate, even though in my written evaluation, I had said that all of the three were well-qualified to be EIC.

At this point, what would I like to happen? I would like an investigation of the actions of the PSPB leadership, including the chair and the members of the NAC. If the investigation shows that the leadership failed to follow written guidelines and permitted irregularities that gave an unfair advantage to a particular candidate, then the election results of 16 November for EIC should be overturned and a new election held that includes only the properly nominated candidates. The election can be done by email or at the February PSPB meeting. If the investigation concludes that no improper actions were taken by the PSPB leadership, then I will drop the matter.

Joel Trussell

11/20/18