

IEEE-USA R&D Policy Committee Seeks Young Professional Members

Invitation to Participate

You are invited to participate in the IEEE-USA RDPC. As an active member of the committee, you will contribute to the preparation of position statements, help develop supporting materials, share information with other parts of IEEE, work with staff to provide timely responses to Congressional requests, and share information with members on R&D policy matters that impact their lives. You can raise S&T policy issues of concern to you and your colleagues, and help IEEE-USA influence the formulation of national S&T policies. To explore membership, contact RDPC Chair Brendan Godfrey, at brendan.godfrey@ieee.org, Vice-Chair Randy Moses at moses.2@osu.edu, or Secretary Aline McNaull at a.mcnaull@ieee.org.

Why Science and Technology Policy Is Important

Today's science and technology (S&T) policies can have far-reaching effects on the nation's research and development endeavors, the economy, and national security. Most policies considered and ultimately adopted are complex, including:

- How much federal funding is devoted to research and development (R&D), and in what areas?
- How are these funds distributed between basic and applied research or advanced research and scheduled development?
- How is this federal R&D funding distributed among various agencies?
- Who performs this R&D — universities, government-owned laboratories, or companies?

Answers to such questions have a profound impact on the lives and careers of scientists and engineers. Small reductions in federal R&D funding can result in the loss of thousands of jobs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields (STEM). S&T policies usually are thought of as the exclusive domain of politicians, lawyers, power brokers, or government executives. In a democratic society, however, scientists and engineers are well positioned to help formulate national S&T policies. IEEE-USA offers members the opportunity to do so.

Many engineers often feel powerless to influence S&T policy. Although it is true that there may not a lot an individual can do, there is strength in numbers. IEEE-USA, with 205,000 members, holds a great deal of influence. As an active member of RDPC, you have the power to collectively make a difference. S&T policy should be something that is good for the country; for that to happen, engineers must be engaged in developing it. RDPC needs you and the country needs you.

About the IEEE-USA R&D Policy Committee

R&D is critically important to maintaining our country's competitiveness in the global science and technology enterprise, and is vitally important in the creation of jobs in the knowledge economy. R&D employs a large number of workers in the physical and biological sciences, engineering, information technology, and many supporting areas. IEEE-USA created the R&D Policy Committee (RDPC) to develop and effectively advocate well thought-out S&T policies.

The overall objective of the RDPC is to contribute to the rational formulation of R&D policies. The RDPC provides balanced, data-driven, and technically sound information on R&D related matters, so that decision-makers can understand the implications of specific policies and legislation. Functions of the RDPC include the preparation of position statements and supporting material on R&D technology legislation, regulation, and policy-related issues.

RDPC's Current Priorities

RDPC priorities include:

- Increasing federal investments in science and engineering R&D, including university research and education initiatives.
- Simplifying, standardizing, and -- when appropriate -- eliminating burdensome regulations and reporting requirements for federally sponsored research.
- Facilitating professional development of federal scientists and engineers by participation in technical conferences.
- Revitalizing U.S. high-tech manufacturing through robust manufacturing R&D, a strong SBIR/STTR program, public-private partnerships, proactive technology transfer, and incentives for businesses to establish and retain R&D operations in the United States.

Recent RDPC Activities

Within the past two years, RDPC has developed or updated position statements on federal support for fundamental research (including reducing regulatory burdens at universities), participation in professional conference by federal S&Es, and strengthening the SBIR/STTR program. All have resulted in recent or pending legislative action, as has earlier RDPC advocacy to make permanent the R&D tax credit.

The RDPC and IEEE-USA staff continue to consult with the Congressional R&D Caucus on the most pressing S&T policy issues and legislations. Congressional Visits Day brings scientists and engineers to Washington DC in face-to-face meetings with Members of Congress, Congressional staffers, and key Administration officials to raise awareness on the importance of science, engineering, and technology to the nation. Good S&T policies are non-partisan.

**For more information about the RDPC,
go to: <http://www.ieeeusa.org/volunteers/committees/rdc/>**