

Alexandria University, Egypt:

Student Branch membership soars during 2005

THE IEEE Alexandria University Student Branch has witnessed an exponential increase in the number of active subscriptions this year, reaching a total of 384 student members, of which 245 members are new.

This represents an incredible 176% increase in student membership over the 2004 figure, which was an already impressive 139. The statistics reveal the general understanding among students that IEEE is the best provider of technical and social activities.

Acting upon feedback from existing members, we organised an electronics course fair at which IEEE members who attended the previous year's electronics course exhibited their circuits and demonstrated their experience with the IEEE. Another promotional tool was a series of small activities, such as single-topic seminars, that we conducted throughout the year, all of which were well-attended.



Attendees pack the hall during a session at the Robotics Workshop, held this summer.

The Alexandria Student Branch Publications Committee, founded in the summer of 2004, published activity reports and an IEEE wall magazine, aiming to reflect the benefits of the IEEE to student members.

Summer activities

During the summer, we were involved in a whole series of events, including:

- Technical IT career seminar, held in and given by New Horizons – Computer Teaching Centre, Alexandria.

- An annual electronics course with over 200 participants. The main aim of the course was to increase the students' practical electronics skills especially in microcontrollers, and develop non-technical skills such as teamwork, leadership and

communication skills.

- Seven study groups took place over the summer: AVR, Microcontrollers, Robotics, Graphics, Computer Maintenance, Web Design, C Programming and Microwave.
- Advanced Electronics Course on higher electronic



Alexandria Student Branch active members.

applications, including RF, DTMF, I2C and other technologies.

- A Trip to Bahgat's IT Factories on 13 July.
- Robotics Workshop, jointly organised by the IEEE Alexandria Student Branch and IEEE AAST Student Branch.
- A trip to the Egyptian Engineering Day 2005, organised by IEEE Alexandria Student Branch and including 150 students' participation.
- A Visual Basic and Matlab Course that was held in the collage laboratories from the 24 July to 1 September.

In summary, the IEEE Alexandria Student Branch has come to the end of its startup phase, and is now concentrating on maintaining continuity and conserving its role in student life.

The next step is to build further on this success, fulfilling the needs of student members through new achievements, and through even greater creativity.

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Student Branch Congress 2006 registrations

Paris, 31 August – 3 September 2006

The biggest student event of Region 8 is once again waiting for you: during four days, Region 8 students will meet in Paris for workshops, training, networking and fun. The Student Branch Congress is a unique opportunity for student branch volunteers to learn more about IEEE and to get in contact with other IEEE members from all over the world.

Registration for the Student Branch Congress 2006 will open on 31 January, so watch out for more news about this great event in the future. For more information on funding and registration, go to www.ieee.org/sbc2006.

Scientific literacy quiz

WHAT IS the difference between saying "the risk is high" and "the risk is 85%" (guess vs prediction)?

Speaking with numbers signifies computations/calculations. Making calculations/computations means (mathematical or not) using specific models. Using models implies many assumptions, approximations, general rules (relations), etc.

It is no surprise that understanding the meanings of numbers necessitates scientific literacy in society.

Any conversation, TV or radio news, or public announcement today can have scientific or technological content. Progress in science, followed by fast changes in technology, have revolutionised life styles in

modern society, from communication to marketing, education to medicine. But without scientific literacy, it is difficult to distinguish a scientific explanation from an absurd statement.

Critical skills

Here are some useful critical response skills:

- Have all the information before reaching a decision.
- Clearly indicate all assumptions of your statements and claims.
- The results shall logically be obtained from the evidence you present.
- Use the right object/subject when you make a comparison.
- Do not use indefinite or uncertain phrases like "science tells us ...".

- Remember there is always a control group against the test group.
- Do not forget the intersection when using groups like "young people", "white people".
- Keep in mind the difference between error and uncertainty.
- Declare the accuracy, resolution and precision of your data.
- Do not present your results and explanations as if there were no others.
- Give and analyze data that does not fit into the others.
- Do not depend on the data lingering at the edge or boundary of your measurement or record.

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Answer these questions...

- What is wrong with presenting 189 patients out of 550 total as 34.36%?
- Measuring one Volt with 0.2% accuracy requires a 4-digit digital voltmeter capable of displaying 3 decimal places. Is this true? Why?
- Can you say which country reserves more R&D money in 2005 if I say "Turkey increases its R&D budget 50% in 2005 while the increase is 5% in Germany"? Why?

Win a Skype Internet VolP Starter Kit! Email your answers to r8news@ieee.org with the subject 'Literacy Quiz Dec'.