IEEE Region 1 Candidates Answer Important Questions

To ensure IEEE members are well informed about the Delegate-Elect/Director-Elect candidates for IEEE Region 1 (Northeastern USA), the three candidates provided their responses to four important questions provided below.

Please take a few moments to read what these candidates have to say, and be sure to vote in the election. Balloting ends on 12:00 p.m. Easter Time USA/16:00 UTC on **2 October 2023.**

2024-2025 IEEE Region 1 Delegate-Elect/Director-Elect Candidates
The listing order of the candidates was determined by a lottery process, and indicates no preference.

Charles P. Rubenstein (Nominated by IEEE Region 1)	Jason K. Hui (Nominated by IEEE Region 1)	Ali Abedi (Nominated by IEEE Region 1)
Candidate Bio →	Candidate Bio →	Candidate Bio →

>>Learn more about the annual election
>>Access ballot now

The sequence of candidates' responses to the Q&As was randomized and indicates no preference.

QUESTION 1: As Director-Elect, can you list two items you would want to get accomplished in your term?

Abedi. I will focus on members and in particular (1) Students and young professionals; and (2) Industry professionals. The main goals here are to invite the younger members to the table to shape the future of IEEE and empower them to offer services and value

that is of importance to them; and get help from industry professionals to connect academic members in a meaningful way to local industry through networking and industry day events for a more useful and connected partnership.

Rubenstein. Region 1, like most regions, needs to improve the services and activities that it provides their members. This is particularly true for the Young Professional (YP) and Women in Engineering (WIE) affinity groups, and could be extended to include Student (SAC) and Life Member activities. We need to "**Remember the MEMBER**" in all we do - but also make IEEE attractive for current non-members and be sure to provide our YP, WIE, etc., coordinators with the funding and tools they need to make a positive change.

Over the next four years Region 1 and Region 2 will be completing their merging into a new region. This is an opportunity for both regions to make use of each's best practices in Bylaws, Member Recognition, and overall structure to create this new entity. The slate is clean and working with leadership of both regions and drawing on the current practices of all IEEE regions will allow us to create a vibrant, pro-active, and activity rich environment for the future.

I am currently leading the Joint Region 1 – Region 2 Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) that is guiding this effort and as your Region 1 Director-Elect will co-lead the SPC with the Region 2 Director-Elect for the next two years and then finalize our efforts while I am your R1 Director.

Hui. Two items that I want to get accomplished in my term are:

(1) Similar to the ***IEEE Region 8 and IEEE Humanitarian Technologies Board Community Support Program,*** implement a program for Region 1 members to work on humanitarian technology and sustainable development projects that will support their local communities. As noted in my position statement, I would like the region to show more commitment and investment in humanitarian initiatives and service activities. I believe a community support program will help promote member engagement and volunteerism while addressing local community challenges.

(2) Work with Regions 1 and 2 leaders to develop a five-year shared strategic plan. Although both regions are not scheduled to be merged into one until 2028, it is important to document a common strategy for the next several years and communicate that with the membership.

QUESTION 2: Since most IEEE member benefits are delivered by volunteers how can Region 1 recruit more volunteers in the interest of expanding member value and benefits?

Rubenstein. Our SAC, YP and WIE groups are closest to the newer members that are likely to need more benefits and activities at the local section level to attract and keep them as IEEE members.

We currently have an annual Student Conference (StuCon) – now joint with Region 2 – in the Spring as well as additional student activities distributed throughout both regions. StuCan alternates between venues in Region 1 and Region 2.

We have an annual joint R1/R2 WIE Forum in the October-November timeframe which also alternates as appropriate between the two regions.

We need to create joint YP activities to attract those younger members.

In all of these activities we need to create 'micro volunteer' opportunities that allow the new volunteer to acquire training in a small part of the management of a local event. This could include chairing a session, working at the registration/badging table, collecting meal tickets, managing the vTools registration, being a member of the planning committee, etc. Giving a member a taste of volunteering makes them part of the overall success of the event and also shows them leadership soft skills they might not otherwise get through their employer.

Our responsibility as leaders, and mine should I be elected, is to expand these opportunities so more can understand the leadership capabilities THEY have and bring them to IEEE – as well as use them in their day job.

Hui. Volunteers are the lifeblood of IEEE. However, recruiting volunteers can be a challenge. In order for Region 1 to recruit more volunteers, it needs to implement best practices and tools at the grassroots level. This means Region 1 should be proactive in doing outreach with sections, particularly with young members. Another way to attract new volunteers is by promoting short-term micro-volunteering assignments, which works well for members who don't have a lot of time. Posting volunteer opportunities can be done using the ***IEEE Volunteering*** platform, a tool specifically designed to help increase the volunteer pipeline.

Abedi. I have been a member of the original pilot volunteer leadership training program (VOLT) and believe with more emphasis on this program we can cultivate more volunteers to help expand our offerings. I also believe that microvolunteering is a great tool to bring members in little by little and get the power of the crowd for running our events without overburdening a few.

QUESTION 3: What role can IEEE and Region 1 play in encouraging individuals from under-represented communities to pursue STEM careers?

Hui. Region 1 can play an important role in encouraging students from under-represented communities to pursue STEM careers by promoting IEEE Educational Activities (EA) programs that focus on pre-university and STEM education. Having been a volunteer with EA since 2017, I know that ***TryEngineering***, ***TryEngineering Summer Institute***, and ***TryEngineering Together*** are just a few of the resources available to introduce students to the exciting fields of engineering and technology. The third annual IEEE

STEM Summit will be held on 24-27 October and I would encourage members to participate in this free event to learn more about pre-university STEM outreach.

Abedi. As part of my academic career, I have been working on this problem for over two decades and have learned so much in this area. Bringing IEEE as a partner for local universities and local industry makes a big difference in exciting students to pursue STEM careers. Some examples are hands-on experiential learning workshops, not just on robotics, rather including new emerging technologies such as small Spacecrafts, Drones, AI, and wireless technologies that might resonate well with a broader audience.

Rubenstein. We have an opportunity, working through the local section Student Activities Coordinator, to encourage local Student Branches to reach out to their feeder high schools with technology workshops and projects conducted by our section members.

STEM and STEAM can be made attractive to all pre-university students if packaged properly and demonstrated to be doable and not outside of their reach. Soldering, Arduino Coding and other activities allow the pre-university student a glimpse into why they might select technology and engineering careers.

This is even more essential in sections that have one or more under-represented communities within them. Using our Student Branch leadership as examples of what these pre-university students might be able to do in their future, and having recent graduates indicate what careers they have been able to aspire to due to local – or global – IEEE activities would round out the plan.

The Region, through its Area Chairs, can assemble projects and workshops, etc., available to the local sections and the region can provide funding to make it happen.

QUESTION 4: With IEEE's stated goal to get more involved with Climate Control, how can you ensure Region 1 to become a leader in the climate control effort?

Abedi. We need to help the general public to understand how they can impact climate change, by providing easy to understand explainable visual data and tools to get buy in first. IEEE can help lead the way by bringing experts in climate sciences, modeling, AI, and digital twins fields to make this happen. Digital twin models with real time links through wireless sensors can predict the impact of a tiny change in one point on other regions. IEEE can lead summits, workshops, and encourage publications in this area to make a difference.

Rubenstein. Following the lead of the IEEE Board and building on its activities, many sections within Region 1 are already working towards sustainable energy systems with photovoltaic (solar) and wind farms and electric vehicle workshops and awareness outreach programs.

Region 1 can work through our colleagues at local universities making them aware of IEEE's initiative to collect climate change–related research data.

Working with IEEE-USA and the IEEE Ad Hoc Climate Change Committee, Region 1 can provide training in best practices and offer contacts with experts that can make technical presentations during local chapter and section meetings to spread the word about why change is needed, what smart grid and smart cities would do to improve our future, and how members and non-members alike can contribute to making changes in the short run as well as the long term to improve our future climate change challenges.

Hui. To ensure Region 1 becomes a leader in the climate control effort, I will push for it to be an explicit goal in the region's strategic plan. Doing so will show the region is serious in its commitment and aligned with IEEE's goal, and that we will dedicate time, energy and resources. Involvement with climate control will certainly spur new initiatives and programs in the region.