

REPORT**BX- 1 of 2**

TO: IEEE Board of Directors – November 2011

FROM: Michael Williams, IEEE Director

SUBJECT: IEEE History Committee Archives Policy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The IEEE History Committee has adopted an Archives Policy to assure that IEEE records of long-term historical value are preserved for future Institute use, in accordance with the IEEE Records Management Policy. The History Committee wishes to bring this to the attention of the board.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In June 2009, the IEEE Board approved a Records Management Policy (IEEE Policy 12.8). The policy called for specific procedures related to records retention to be contained in a Records Management Program approved by the Executive Director. This program document notes in section 1.7 that IEEE has historical records, which it defines as "A record of activities where there is a high likelihood the IEEE will want to preserve the information as a long term record of a highly significant activity." Further, section 2.8 of the program, titled Historical Records, states: "Records should be evaluated for historical value prior to destruction. Any questions should be directed to department liaisons and/or the program coordinator."

The History Committee, working with its staff arm, the IEEE History Center, is the correct organization to implement section 2.8, as one of its core functions is the IEEE Archives. IEEE established the archives in 1980 to collect historical records of IEEE and its predecessors in anticipation of the 1984 centennial. The History Committee has maintained it ever since.

The largest user of the IEEE Archives has been and is expected to continue to be the IEEE History Center staff itself, as part of its mission.

The IEEE History Center provides access to IEEE Archives material to IEEE volunteers and staff as needed for IEEE business purposes.

The Records Management Program lists many classes of records, each with a specified period of retention. Most of these classes (e.g. tax records, employment records) are of no historical interest. History Center staff has the expertise to identify those relatively few classes of records that merit evaluation on a case-by-case basis as potential historical records, and to determine which specific items within those classes have historical value.

Therefore, the History Committee has directed the IEEE History Center to implement the following archival policy which shall become the IEEE Board-accepted Archives Policy upon acceptance of this report:

- The History Center works with originating departments to identify and transfer historical records once those records are no longer needed for current business and in accordance with the retention schedules in the Records Management Program. Both physical and electronic records may be transferred.
- The IEEE History Center processes, preserves, and catalogs its records according to best archival practice.
- The IEEE History Center provides guidance to IEEE Organizational Units on how to identify, collect, and preserve their own historical records, but due to resource limitations does not collect such records at the IEEE Archives. The IEEE Global History Network provides one venue that IEEE Organizational Units can use to preserve these records. The IEEE Archives does not collect non-IEEE records. But recognizing that these records can be important in documenting the history of IEEE's technologies and members, it will try to assist the holders of such records in finding a suitable repository for these records.
- The IEEE Archives collects records of IEEE members to the extent that those records document volunteer activity with the overall IEEE.
- On occasion, the Archives may acquire material that, while of long term historical value, must for one reason or another have restrictions placed upon its distribution and use for some period of time. The Archives will respect such restrictions.
- The IEEE History Center provides access to IEEE Archives material to IEEE members, scholars, and the general public, subject to IEEE proprietary rights, and any restrictions imposed on specific records. The IEEE History Center seeks to disseminate significant records in the IEEE Archives through a variety of means, including the IEEE Global History Network.