

How I Benefit From IEEE®

by Skyler Nix

The last several years have been a whirlwind for me. I became a father in 2011 with the birth of my son, Gideon. In 2012 my daughter Madalena was born and shortly thereafter I started to pursue my formal education again. I was able to graduate from Cochise College quickly as a result of my on-again off-again relationship with college. The next semester I began pursuing a Bachelor of Science program with network administration emphasis at the University of Arizona South. I was excited to obtain the knowledge that would propel me to higher levels of expertise in my career, and scared to take courses taught by professors with doctorate degrees!

A well-educated friend informed me that I need not worry about the doctors, but rather the doctoral candidates since they had much more to prove. I had to take a leave of absence for two semesters to travel to Afghanistan and experience how hot/cold a relatively small country can be. Upon my return I found myself enrolled in a project management course with the program director presiding. It was there that I joined several of my classmates in forming a student branch of IEEE. I joined to network with professionals in my field and other fields. I was immediately welcomed by the Ft. Huachuca section leadership and active members. The inclusion of student members into the meetings and activities of the professional section was indicative of the opportunities for growth in the organization.

As my graduation date and end-of-term as the student chapter president approached, I was selected to attend a membership recruitment and retention conference in New Jersey. I learned about the SAMIEEE and Vitality Dashboard tools on the IEEE website. The aforementioned tools are helpful in running metrics for all levels of the organization and keeping track of section planning/events. In addition to the training, I listened to representatives from sections around the world and how they recruited new members. These skills are useful for not only IEEE, but for any organization that must recruit a workforce.

When many people hear about the benefit of “networking” they picture awkward conversations around the breakfast buffet at a conference. I have found that listening to senior members’ experiences and advice has made a difference for me personally and professionally. The engineering world is relatively small, and solutions for one individual or organization can often be applied to others. The mentorship and learning opportunities provided by my membership are numerous and high-quality. In 2015 there were IEEE sponsored conferences on cyber relations with China, the utilities industry in SE Arizona, Scrum/Agile, and others. The Ft. Huachuca section also enjoys healthy relationships with local academic organizations including the University of Arizona South. If anyone wants to learn about other industries or switch careers, there is no better place to start than the IEEE network.

I believe professionals in technology fields should join IEEE to help themselves and the community. With competition for the best jobs increasing every year, companies value employees who have relationships with the local community and hone their technical skills outside of work hours. It is also

How I Benefit From IEEE®

important to understand how protocols and frameworks are utilized to develop, maintain, and test electronic/IT systems. IEEE members are uniquely positioned to provide the innovative solutions needed in technical industries going forward. In addition to the human networks that can be tapped for advice or assistance, there are many web resources with special access just for members. I have been very lucky to represent the Ft. Huachuca section by volunteering for the Boys and Girls Club of Sierra Vista and the Air Force Association Cyber Patriot competition. The people I meet in volunteer activities make the effort well worth it. I hope that this message inspires you to join IEEE and tell your friends, colleagues, and classmates how the largest professional organization in the world has helped you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Skyler Nix". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the first name.

Skyler Nix
Chair, Ft. Huachuca IEEE®
22 JAN 2016