



BY PAOLO GAMBA

A More Inclusive GRSS

This is my first message as the new IEEE Geoscience and Remote Sensing Society (GRSS) president, and I would like to start by thanking our Society's Administrative Committee for their trust, as well as many of you for your kind words and messages of congratulations. Thank you!

As I begin my term as GRSS president, I am extremely happy to report that our Society's membership has grown significantly during the past two years, under the leadership of Past-President Adriano Camps. This growth has been both geographical, with a phenomenal increase in the number of members in Regions 8, 9, and 10, and in number of Chapters, from 62 in 2016 to 76 at the end of 2018. The end of 2018 marked a very important milestone; for the first time, the GRSS boasts more than 4,000 members! This growth reflects a rapid increase in memberships in China and India, thanks to the work of Adriano Camps, as well as that of our director of Global Activities, Paul Rosen, and his team of regional coordinators.

These are excellent results and mean that the GRSS is among the fastest-growing Societies in the IEEE, but we still have too few members in important areas of the world, such as Africa, southeast Asia, and the Pacific region. While it is true that we have a diverse membership, fewer than 15% of our members are women, and members from industry represent only a small (too small!) fraction of our membership. During my time as GRSS president, I will strive to make our Society more inclusive and to build more connections, both internally among various groups within our Society and externally with other IEEE Societies and non-IEEE organizations. To that end, I have formed an ad hoc Inter-Society Committee, led by Steve Reising, to foster and enhance activities related to the memoranda of understanding we have with many other Societies and to improve cooperation with other groups.

Sharing knowledge through new or revamped educational initiatives will create a more inclusive GRSS. In 2018, Josée Levesque, GRSS's director of education, began monthly webinars, free for members, on some of the most important topics in our field. These webinars are useful for students as an introduction to potential research areas and for young professionals as they start to shape their own careers, as well as for anyone who would like to update his or her knowledge and learn about novel ideas within the GRSS fields of interest. Other educational resources available to our members include review articles in *IEEE Geoscience and Remote Sensing Magazine*, as well as tutorials recorded in English and Spanish to help students and practitioners in Latin America and around the world stay connected and benefit from the experience and background of other GRSS members.

We can make the GRSS more inclusive by discussing new ideas and attracting new areas of expertise to the conferences, workshops, and symposia the GRSS sponsors technically or financially throughout the year. These venues promote GRSS membership and resources, provide opportunities to share GRSS expertise and knowledge, and include new researchers and practitioners in the GRSS network. Additionally, these events are opportunities to incorporate technical areas that traditionally are not considered part of remote sensing but are becoming increasingly important, ranging from computer vision and deep learning to miniaturized systems and small satellites.

We also can make the GRSS more inclusive by devoting more sessions and events to new topics and trends during our flagship conference, the International

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really proud to serve on the panel. I wish I had attended something similar as a younger scientist, because I think I could have benefited from a lot of the messaging.”

Dr. Roth, also a panel member, noted,

I felt the panel was an excellent representation of the diversity of career paths women in GRSS can follow. We had women from government, academia, and industry, and in different stages of our careers. The presentations really built on each other to share a positive message and concrete examples of developing your career successfully. Two themes that emerged from my perspective were 1) the role of self-confidence and our need to focus on building this with respect to our careers and 2) the importance of lifting each other up and supporting other women in our field and across science and engineering.

After the series of short presentations, there was an open question-and-answer discussion. WIE activities then con-

tinued into the late afternoon, with a workshop on professional development led by Dr. Regina Eckert from the Center for Creative Leadership.

Rounding out WIE at IGARSS 2018 were announcements regarding continuing WIE activities, such as the IEEE GRSS Women Mentoring Women Program, which provides a framework and support for connecting early-career with senior professionals through a year-long program. We are also happy to introduce the GRSS IDEA (Inspire, Develop, Empower, Advance) Committee for anyone interested in participating in more inclusive GRSS education and outreach activities. For more information on this activity and others, please see the WIE website at <http://www.grss-ieee.org/community/women-in-engineering/>, or contact Mariko S. Burgin at mburgin@ieee.org.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *(continued from p. 5)*

Geoscience and Remote Sensing Symposium 2019 (www.igarss2019.org), which will take place in Yokohama, Japan. We are especially looking forward to the events in the Technology, Industry, and Education Forum, announced at <https://www.igarss2019.org/TIEEvents.asp>. This forum fo-

cus on connecting members in the academic community with those in industry, governmental institutions, and space agencies and on fostering more engagement from members of the latter groups.

Finally, a more effective communication program can make the GRSS more inclusive.

Our website ([www-grss-ieee](http://www-grss-ieee.org)

[.org](http://www-grss-ieee.org)) and social media accounts (@GRSS and @WinGRSS on Twitter along with the GRSS groups on Facebook and LinkedIn) are the main hubs for information, news, data sets, announcements, and novel trends in sensors and systems for remote sensing, as well as satellite, airborne, and ground-based geospatial observation and data analysis results. To increase inclusivity, we will mostly rely on our young professionals (YPs), whose involvement in GRSS

activities has been relatively limited until recently. We are beginning to improve this situation by providing annual support to two YPs and finding fresh ways to expand how GRSS volunteers engage with YPs. Additionally, our new Social Media Ambassador initiative is making our Society and its activities familiar to many young, and not-so-young, people who have not previously known about it, even though they are interested in remote sensing data, sensors, and applications.

Simply put, a more inclusive Society results from a real effort to open up and share, to connect and react, to be ready to change and listen to the requests of members and nonmembers. This is why I would love to hear from you and listen to your suggestions. The Administrative Committee consists of members who devote a significant share of their time to the GRSS. They are there to do what they can but also to accept help from others and so improve what we can accomplish together for the good of both the membership and the larger geoscience and remote sensing community.

It is your turn now! Come and help us make the GRSS more inclusive and open!

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SIMPLY PUT, A MORE INCLUSIVE SOCIETY RESULTS FROM A REAL EFFORT TO OPEN UP AND SHARE.