

Date: October 4, 2018

Re: Proposed guidelines on IEEE CAS VSA-TC Liaison program

The guidelines below are to be used by the IEEE Circuits and Systems (CAS) VLSI Systems and Applications Technical Committee (VSA-TC) for the CAS TC Liaison program. The VSA-TC Liaison program is established in order to assess, as well as improve, the technical quality of conferences seeking technical endorsement from VSA-TC for CAS sponsorship. The program is initiated to deliver on the premise of the CASS expectation for TC approvals: “The conference committees (steering, organizing and technical) must include TC members with special interest in the conference.” See link here for the CASS guidelines: <http://iee-cas.org/sites/iee-cas.org/files/2018-cass-conferences-guidelines.pdf>

CAS VSA-TC liaison(s) are voluntary positions for VSA-TC members. VSA-TC liaisons are nominated to take part in a conference’s organizing committee. The duties of a liaison are 1) making recommendations for and 2) monitoring the quality process of a conference seeking a VSA-TC technical endorsement (for CASS sponsorship). The liaison(s) are asked to provide a brief summary of their observations to VSA-TC following the conference and prior to the next edition of that conference. The two most typical cases are:

1. For an established conference that enjoyed years of VSA-TC endorsement, continue monitoring the process by reviewing TPC acceptance rates and TPC formation,
2. For a newly established or less known (at least to VSA-TC) conference that does not or may not immediately win an endorsement, make recommendations to the TPC and OC about the factors our TC is interested in, such as establishing an international makeup of known experts, including VSA-TC members as suggested by CASS guidelines.

This document serves to provide guidelines for the processes of:

- A. Nomination of a liaison,
- B. Appointment of a liaison,
- C. Responsibilities of a liaison,
- D. Feedback mechanism of a liaison.

- A. Nomination of a liaison

The nomination period is typically two weeks or less and overlaps with the period where the TC members are contacted to provide their feedback for a conference technical endorsement request. Each TC member, when contacted to provide their feedback on the technical endorsement request from a conference, will be able to self-nominate to act as a liaison to that conference. Self-nominations are considered to be the main mechanism for collecting information about TC members with special interest in the conference and no endorsements are necessary. If desired, members can also provide nominations of other TC members through email to the TC leadership.

B. Appointment of a liaison

The TC chair, in consultation with the vice-chair, is responsible for selecting one or more potential liaisons for a conference. The TC chair may elect to contact the nominated TC members to request additional information. If there are no self-nominations to serve as a liaison, the TC leadership can reach out to individual members to solicit service, provided that there are TC members serving on other committees on the conference (i.e. steering, organizing or technical).

The appointment of a VSA-TC liaison to a conference is a process that needs to be mutually agreed on by the conference organizers, the nominees and the TC leadership. As such, multiple liaison self-nominations can be accepted by the TC leadership, and a list of these potential liaisons can be provided to a conference committee for their consideration. The conference committees are asked to reach out to one or more of the potential liaisons provided by TC and inquire about the availability and continued interest of the potential liaison(s), to account for the time-gap between the nomination process and liaison assignment. A conference committee can elect one or more VSA-TC liaisons out of the list of potential VSA-TC liaisons to the conference. The VSA-TC liaisons should become part of the organizing committee and be made privy to the technical review process as an observer (but not participate in review), in order to perform the responsibilities and provide the data detail in the feedback report to the TC.

C. Responsibilities of a liaison

The responsibilities of a VSA-TC liaison are broadly defined as assessing, as well as improving, the technical quality of the conference they are assigned to as the VSA-TC liaison.

For a newly established conference, or a conference that has not previously received the TC technical endorsement, the liaisons can make recommendations to the Technical Program Committee (TPC) and the organizing committee (OC) about the factors & features the TC are interested in, such as acceptance rates, TC members with an active interest in the conference and international make-up of known experts. For a more established conference, the liaisons are primarily charged with monitoring continued quality and continued special interest in VSA-TC members in the conference. No responsibilities shall be assigned to the VSA-TC liaison by the conference organizing committee.

D. Feedback mechanism of a liaison

The VSA-TC liaison to a conference is charged with delivering a report to the TC upon completion of the conference. The report needs to be delivered ideally upon completion of the conference but not later than request for technical endorsement in the next cycle of the conference. The report could include details on attendance and details of the TPC review process that include:

- Number of general attendees,
- Number of VSA-TC members in attendance,
- Acceptance ratio of scholarly contributions,
- Number of reviews per paper,

- Presentation time for full papers,
- Percentage of TPC members listed in the endorsement request for, who participated in the TPC review process,
- Number of non-presented papers due to no-shows.

These details are in line with the review process of IEEE Meetings, Conference and Events (MCE). Other details can be added to the report, as necessary. This report, in some form, will be made available to the VSA-TC, so anonymity should be provided, where necessary.

It is preferable that the VSA-TC liaison is not from the same geographical region of the conference. It is preferable that the VSA-TC liaison is not invited speaker or an (co-)author of a scholarly-reviewed work at the conference, unless the review process is double-blind. Standard rules of Conflict of Interest should be adhered to by the VSA-TC liaison and the conference organization committee. The VSA-TC liaison is not required to travel to a conference. It is acceptable for the conference organizing committee to host the VSA-TC liaison but not require participation, especially if in-person interactions during the conference are necessary (e.g. for instance for in-person TPC meetings and/or in-person steering committee meetings).

In addition to the qualitative feedback, the VSA-TC liaison is asked to provide a scalar rating for their personal scholarly assessment of the conference. The scalar rating is 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, and indicates the quality of a conference. The flagship conference of the CAS society, ISCAS, can be considered as a baseline in this metric. In case multiple VSA-TC liaisons are assigned to a conference, the average rating of the scalar assessment score, will be used in assessment.

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*The VSA-TC liaison program is approved by CAS VSA-TC on August 24, 2018.