

# Expanding the Reach of the IEEE Winnipeg Section

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The IEEE Winnipeg Section has close to 450 members in Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario. Such a large territory made it difficult in the past to engage all members, reach student sections located outside the Winnipeg area, and have face-to-face interactions with nearby sections. Although there are many tools to facilitate collaboration and some were tried in recent years, it requires extraordinary efforts from many people to establish these connections. The following two examples highlight some of the recent initiatives to revitalize the membership across geographical distances.



## Cross-Regional Collaboration

On Sunday, September 11, 2016, the University of Manitoba IEEE Student Branch (UMIEEE) hosted a delegation of students from the South Dakota State University IEEE Student Branch. The students were treated to tours of local power



systems companies, a tour of the University of Manitoba, presentations from various student projects, and a dinner at a local restaurant. This was a unique collaboration of student branches from Region 4 and Region 7 that we hope will be repeated in the near future. This event was made possible thanks to Dr. Witold Kinsner (UofM) and Dr. Reinaldo Tonkoski (SDSU) and UMIEEE officers Chelsea Taylor, Matthew Kehler, Mark Rabena, and Erik Johnson who hosted the activities at the University of Manitoba. Plans are already underway for more visits in the future.

## WebEx Seminars & Meetings

The distance between Winnipeg and Thunder Bay is around 600 km, so travelling for a meeting



or seminar is not always practical. However, thanks to the efforts of Dr. Ian Jeffrey (University of Manitoba), Dr. Christopher Henry (University of Winnipeg), and Dr. Laura Curiel (Lakehead University), physical distance is no longer a problem. The recent seminars and meetings have been broadcast with WebEx (<http://sites.ieee.org/vtools/>) enabling us to reach and engage the Lakehead University student branch located in a different time zone. Furthermore, this enables members within the same city to attend seminars across town thus increasing the presence of IEEE within the Winnipeg Section.

Any initiative to organize events in different cities requires a lot of planning and collaboration. Whether it is a physical trip or a virtual collaboration, the individuals need to plan for international travel, coordinate event logistics, test audio/video connections, and many more tasks to make the events run smoothly. We encourage other sections to do the same and look forward to collaborations with others as we continue to add value for IEEE members. ■