

## IEEE CIS VP-Technical Activities Vision Statement

It is a real pleasure and privilege to have been elected to and to serve as Vice President for Technical Activities of the IEEE Computational Intelligence Society (CIS) for 2024 and 2025. CIS is a vibrant home for individuals from all walks of life who are passionate about the theory, design, application, and development of a broad range of artificially intelligent systems. Just as the technology, the society is forever changing and evolving. Some of the exciting recent changes across CIS include an even stronger focus on industry and government engagement within our Bylaws, a new industry-focused flagship Conference on AI, and a multi-disciplinary flagship journal with the IEEE Transactions on AI, bringing together societies across IEEE and reaching out to (sub-)disciplines including and beyond Engineering, Mathematics, and Computer Science.

Our technical activities contribute to these developments and have seen rapid evolution themselves over the last four years, led and coordinated by Prof. Luis Magdalena as VP-Technical Activities 2020–2023. To only mention some of the highlights across the board, the new Technical Committee for Ethical, Legal, Social, Environmental and Human Dimensions of AI/CI (SHIELD) has been founded, led by Professor Keeley Crockett; the Mentoring and Skills Development Sub-committee has been launched,

led initially by myself and since 2023 by Prof. Nelishia Pillay; and a series of practical innovations have been taking place, from a revision of the technical activities operations manual, to a complete and ongoing re-development of the online presence and visibility of technical activities via streamlined technical committee web pages.

One of the most recently launched technical activities includes the exciting Breaking Boundaries initiative, designed as a post-Covid action to re-establish existing and create new links for technical activities and CIS, diversifying beyond our traditional ‘front yard’. Activities in 2023 have included engagement events with industry led by Professor Anna Wilbik, and traditionally under-represented geographical stakeholders via IEEE Africon 2023 attended by a CIS delegation including our then President-Elect, Professor Yaochu Jin.

Going forward, as VP for Technical Activities for the coming two years, I expect us to build on the exciting progress we have made, working closely with our members and volunteers across CIS to continue developing our activities so our society is best-placed to serve all its members, and importantly, society and humanity as a whole, following the IEEE motto: “Advancing Technology for Humanity”. As VP, following our Bylaws, my specific role is to support this process by coordinating CIS’s technical activities, working directly with

and chairing the Technical Activities Committee overseeing these activities.

Within a rapidly changing world, I would like to focus our agenda for the next two years specifically around further developing *engagement*, in four priority areas:

- ❑ **Facilitating and further developing engagement of today’s and tomorrow’s CIS members with our Technical Activities**, whether this means getting involved in existing or new Task Forces and/or Technical Committees, or indeed, putting themselves forward to drive new technical activities altogether. We are already working on the development of mechanisms which increase the visibility of technical activities, make volunteering easier, and facilitate communication and collaboration across the society. At the same time, we will look to further expand our activities to support existing and new members in their career development, through activities such as the mentoring program, and increasing their visibility as volunteers.
- ❑ **Driving stronger engagement and communication between our technical activity volunteers and the society**, including by developing a low-overhead engagement framework for volunteers to outline their vision for their technical activity, capturing specific actions—and requesting resources to support them in their delivery. The

same mechanism will help us to provide volunteers with clearer information in regards to the expectation and opportunities across CIS, from activity-specific requirements, to synergies with ongoing and upcoming initiatives.

□ **Fostering engagement with other societies and disciplines within IEEE and beyond.** Our field is changing the world we live in and has huge potential to help address some of the biggest questions of our time, from climate change to inequality and basic human rights. However, we cannot do this alone. Technical committees such as SHIELD are already reaching out broadly across disciplines such as law and the social sciences to understand and inform the ethics of AI, while the technical committee on Bioinformatics and Bioengineering, led by Professor Tayo Obafemi-Ajayi, is engaging with (computational) Biology—to mention only two examples. We will be developing this and similar outreach further, developing our network and the potential for enrichment and impact of our technical activities.

□ **Expanding our efforts in engaging with thus far under-represented communities within computational intelligence.** Artificial intelligence impacts all of humanity. As a society, we have an opportunity and responsibility to give a voice and support to all potential contributors to our technical activities, benefitting not just individuals and CIS at large, but society as a whole. We have made steps over the last year in this direction with the Breaking Boundaries initiative I mentioned earlier – which will be running for at least another year into 2024. At the same time, we want to further build our activities in this space, reaching out to diverse communities, regions and stakeholders who have thus far not been represented within the society, to contribute their ideas and innovation—and benefit from the network the society brings to its members.

In developing engagement around technical activities as per the above, we will keep a clear focus on the role of technical activities in contributing to and working with all areas of CIS, from Education, Publications, Conferences,

to Members and Industrial Activities. It is a real honour to be working with such an outstanding team of volunteers, from the current, past and future president, the vice presidents and of course in particular the fantastic technical activity chairs, vice chairs, volunteers and members who are the beating heart of our technical activities.

At this stage, I would like to explicitly say thank you to Luis and all of you who have been tirelessly contributing to our technical activities and the society over the past four years and beyond. It is because of your great legacy and enthusiasm that we are in the position to build on them with further exciting activities. As we adapt and grow with the rapid changes in our field, there will be even more opportunities to volunteer and get engaged with CIS via our technical activities in the years going forward. If you want to get involved, have ideas and/or views you would like to share with me, please do not hesitate to email me at [Christian.wagner@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:Christian.wagner@nottingham.ac.uk).

