President’s Message

Dear Members

I compose this message at Kolkata, where CSI has just concluded yet another successful Annual Convention. The Convention was a truly momentous occasion, and the splendid organizational efforts of CSI Kolkata Chapter team was evident in the painstaking planning that went into it. The event was further enriched by the different awards that CSI presents annually in recognition of eminent and distinguished contributions of both internal and external stakeholders, including the Lifetime Achievement Awards, Fellowships, CSI Patron Award, IT Excellence Awards, Service Awards, and Educational Awards. The event also saw several of the CSI internal meetings including the Annual General Meeting of the Society.

I wish to congratulate the Kolkata Chapter leadership for an excellent CSI Annual Convention, as well as for the well-conducted technical conference, Emerging Applications of Information Technology (EAIT 2012) held at ISI, Kolkata, during 30 Nov-1 Dec 2012. It is particularly noteworthy that Kolkata is historic in the annals of CSI as the first CSI Annual Convention was convened in 1965 at ISI.

I also wish to felicitate the winners of awards as well as the Convener and team members of the different awards who have been working extremely hard for the last several weeks to complete the process.

As always, the Annual Convention of CSI is an occasion for celebration; but it is also an occasion for introspection. The feedback from the different meetings—in particular from the AGM, National Council, President’s Council, and Think Tank—gives us room to explore opportunities for improvements in our structure and function, and gives us the impetus to consider re-engineering some of our own processes. I am enumerating below a few of the suggestions that came up in these meetings as well as during informal interactions with a number of members.

An important item that came up repeatedly was the need to better define the value proposition for CSI members, in particular for student members, given that they formed a large proportion of CSI members. There was consensus that even though we have enhanced our student services significantly, there is perhaps still scope for improvement. Not only was there a need for student member services to be better streamlined, and with tighter SLAs, but there was also a need for CSI to respond to some of the academic challenges. A student track in prominent CSI conferences was suggested as one way to add value for students. It was also pointed out that CSI could consider interventions in school-levels through initiatives such as computer clubs in addition to current programs such as SEARCC and quiz contests.

Another important suggestion that came up was the need for CSI to engage with external organizations and networks and derive benefits for its members from them. These included several categories of institutions—traditional partners such as IFIP, SEARCC, ACS or BCS; international fraternities such as IEEE & IEEE Computer Society and ACM; and new-generation organizations in the Internet Governance space such as BASIS and ICANN. It was pointed out engaging with these institutions would require the help of dedicated CSI volunteers and also additional flexibility on the side of CSI, but the rewards could be significant, especially for the academic & research communities among CSI members.

Another recurring suggestion related to engaging with corporates and large companies. It was felt that CSI could better engage with corporates in different ways, with bulk membership schemes and corporate social responsibility being the most-quoted dimensions. Better linkages with Indian diaspora in different regions around the world was also highlighted as a need.

Finally, working with the State and Central Governments was considered very important by several of the stakeholders. Co-operating in technical programs with the Government not only would contribute to nation-building but also provide for optimal use of the technical skills of CSI’s members, and fetch revenues to CSI.

These and the other suggestions made in various fora at the Annual Convention are valuable inputs to us to consider for the future. The ExeCom will consider these in its future meetings. I am also placing them before the members of CSI so that you may provide your comments and suggestions on them.

December is important to CSI for another reason as well. This is the usual time for the elections to the CSI ExeCom positions. The Nominations Committee of 2012-13 has finalized the slate well on time, and further information on elections would reach members shortly. I would also like to mention that this time, there would be voting also on the by-law amendments that finalized and handed over to the current ExeCom from the previous ExeCom during the joint meeting on 31 March, 2012. I am thankful to the Nominations Committee for their timely and effective work in these last few weeks.

As in any democratic institution, voting is crucial to sustaining CSI’s vibrancy. I request all members to exercise your voting rights and elect candidates of your choice.

With greetings

Satish Babu
President

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