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Professor Masoud Farzaneh, DEIS President 2013–2014

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By Masoud Farzaneh

First, I wish you the best for the New Year, which marks the 50th anniversary of our Society. I am honored and grateful to have been elected as president, and I take this occasion to thank the members of the DEIS Administrative Committee (AdCom) for giving me the opportunity to serve the Society in this role. I recognize this is a great responsibility, but I will do my utmost to meet your expectations and to maintain the high standards of excellence established by my predecessors.

For those of you who do not know me, I am a professor and director of the International Research Center CENGIVRE at the University of Québec in Chicoutimi (UQAC), where more than a hundred researchers, graduate students, collaborators, and industrial partners are involved in various aspects of power network engineering in cold-climate regions. My dielectrics and electrical insulation research activities include surface and air discharges, nanocoatings, and outdoor insulation for cold-climate environments. These investigations have always been carried out in close collaboration with academia, industry, and international regulatory organizations. I want to make use of my experience to foster that kind of collabora-

tion and partnership, at all levels, with sister societies and other groups such as CIGRE and IEC.

It is timely in this commemorative year to review the history of our Society. In 1963 the Professional Technical Group on Electrical Insulation was created in response to a petition of 122 individuals. Its first meeting was held on September 19th of that year in Chicago. The name of the Society was subsequently changed to the present Dielectrics and Electrical Insulation Society (DEIS) on February 6th, 1985. The first task of the administrative committee was to write the by-laws and constitution and make plans to establish the Society's publications, now known as *TDEI* and *EIM*. In this anniversary year, several 50-year invited technology review articles will be published in the Magazine, and the July–August issue, handled jointly by Clive Reed and John Densley, will be dedicated to the memory of John Tanaka, one of our most effective and outstanding contributors.

It is a distinct honor to become president at this historical time. I am well aware of the challenge of following in the footsteps of many excellent past presidents, especially Bill McDermid, Hulya Kirkici, and Simon Rowland, whom I know best. I am particularly grateful to Simon, who helped me, as technical vice-president and then as administrative vice-president, to prepare for this new task.

Last October new AdCom members and officers were elected to join the existing team of highly skilled volunteers. The elected members were Andrea Cavallini, Marek Florkowski, Laurent Lamarre, Resi Zarb, Sundaresan Ramachandran, and Yingli Wen, the last two serving for the first time, and Ruy Alberto Correa Altafim, who joined AdCom as member-at-large for 2013, replacing Paul Lewin, who was elected technical vice-president. Frank Hegeler, who had been technical vice-president since early 2012, was elected administrative vice-president. We welcome them all to the Society's governing body.

Stability and growth of membership are central to the progress of our Society. Our members come from all over the world and from diverse backgrounds, thus enriching the Society. Membership has now stabilized at approximately 2,200. The Graduate of the Last Decade (GOLD) program enjoys much success, thanks to Frank Hegeler and Antonios Tsimas, and now represents about 10% of our membership. Besides recruiting new members at conferences, membership could also be increased by encouraging the development of Chapters through links with technical committees and conferences and through Distinguished Lecturer visits. Rodolfo Garcia Colon is to be commended for his excellent work in promoting Chapters. Establishing a regional ambassador program, especially for underrepresented regions, would also foster the development of Chapters and the recruitment of new members. Finally, it is important to develop an extensive program to attract students to DEIS activities.

To raise the quality of services provided for its members, the Society should further develop its efforts to act as a hub for the dissemination of new knowledge and its applications within our field, through our education committee, conferences, and publications. Following a recent review and restructuring, our conferences have been improved, thanks to the excellent work of Greg Stone and our meetings chair, Resi Zarb. We need to identify and support competent new leaders, who will find new ways to organize and coordinate high-quality conferences, year after year. Likewise, the quality of our publications could be improved by applying more stringent reviewing standards and expanding our pool of qualified, enthusiastic, and experienced reviewers. In the future, our conferences and publications should aim at reaching a wider audience of practicing engineers and industry managers. To encourage conference attendance by members from less-advantaged regions, long-term strategies should be

established to increase financial support by using conference-generated revenue.

The technical committees are key elements in making the next generation aware of the mission of the Society. Recent efforts have increased their number and expanded their scope. Further advancement can be achieved through sustained dialogue with conferences and

Chapters, the establishment of common membership with our sister societies, and the participation of practicing engineers and industry sponsorship through new cutting-edge research opportunities and areas of application. Advancement can also be achieved through the development of Standards and organizing panels.

I look forward to serving and working with all of you. I take this occasion to wish you a fruitful and enjoyable DEIS 50th anniversary. Please keep in touch through our website (<http://sites.ieee.org/deis>).

