Friends,

The IEEE SPS **ME-UYR** (Mentoring Experiences for Underrepresented Young Researchers) steering committee will launch the second installment of its mentoring program for young IEEE SPS researchers and would like to invite you to join as potential student mentors. The program has been proposed to address a critical diversity issue in SPS, as well as IEEE: the low percentage of non-male individuals and members of underrepresented minorities. The number of non-male researchers in signal processing within the IEEE community is around 10%. The numbers for other underrepresented minorities and other technical areas within signal processing are similar or even worse.

To address this imbalance, the ME-UYR program will connect young researchers from underrepresented groups with established researchers in signal processing to support a student research project coordinated with the mentor which is of significant interest to both. Each project will last for about 9 months. The young researchers will also be supported with travel funds that can be used to visit the mentor's laboratory and/or to attend one flagship conference after the project duration. An event in conjunction with the annual ICASSP conference will also be held to bring students and mentors together to share their experiences. A special session will be proposed at ICASSP 2025, so the students and mentors can submit a paper about the output of their research projects.

The previous installment of the project ended recently and the received feedback from the participating young researchers was very exciting. As a highlight of the young researchers' testimonials, some of them reported the experience of working with an established researcher was so positive that changed their career paths and made them decide enrolling into Ph.D. programs and continue an academic career, that they were not considering by the time they joined the program.

In this message, the ME-UYR steering committee is first recruiting potential mentors interested in increasing diversity within IEEE SPS and identifying their areas of research interest. We will send out a call to potential student participants soon and ask them to sign up for an online "students meet mentors" event which we will also invite you to. This online event will be designed to match students with mentors in their field. Once you have accepted one of the students as your mentee, the two of you will write a proposal of up to two pages together describing a research plan of interest to you both and submit it to our committee for review (the deadline is October 31st, 2023). This online connecting event will be held on September 18th (date to be confirmed). Please send an email to sp-me-uyr@listserv.ieee.org to manifest your interest in joining the program as a mentor. In the e-mail please provide a brief description of your research area and preferably a link for your institutional website or online CV.

Once mentors and students have been connected, the 9-month research mentoring projects will begin. We expect the first ME-UYR program to support up to 24 projects in this second edition. View the detailed description of the program on the SPS website.

As a highly respected researcher in IEEE SPS organizations, we would very much like you to participate with us in this program. The lasting benefits to young diversity students themselves as well as to IEEE itself and the signal processing societies are extremely significant, so we would really appreciate your acceptance! Please respond by September 3rd, 2023, if you can join.

Sincerely yours,

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