SMC eNewsletter Student Chapter Corner (December 2023 Issue)
Chun Sing Lai

In this issue, we interview Sivanesh K.S, an MTech student at the Sai Ram Engineering College, Chennai, helping run the new IEEE SMC Student Chapter there.

1. Please tell us a bit about your background and your research area

I am Sivanesh K.S, currently pursuing my MTech at Sai Ram Engineering College, Chennai. My research focuses on web development, machine learning, Internet of Things, and societal projects. With a background in full stack development, I contribute actively to the IEEE SMC Student Chapter leveraging critical thinking, flexibility, and strategic planning. Currently, I am engaged in research for a startup, aiming to establish an autonomous EV business, showcasing my commitment to impactful projects.

2. How did you learn of IEEE and the SMC society and decide to become interested in volunteering?

I first learned about the IEEE and SMC society through our college management, as our principal serves as the chairman of the IEEE Madras section. This connection has been incredibly beneficial and motivating for us. Personally, my passion for volunteering has driven me to contribute selflessly to all our endeavors. The spirit of volunteering and collaboration has been ingrained in me since my school days when I was an active member of a Scouts and Guides. The experience of working as part of a team and the gratification of assisting others in their times of need were truly engaging throughout my school years. Now, as an enthusiastic volunteer within the IEEE and SMC society, I find that I have retained this spirit. Being part of these organizations has provided me with the opportunity to explore various communal activities. These tasks have given me real exposure to social work and the promotion of communal welfare.

3. What type of events have your Student Chapter organized and which seemed to be the most successful/attended?

Our student chapter has successfully organized a variety of events and technical sessions aimed at enhancing the research and entrepreneurial qualities of our members. Through workshops, symposiums, and industry-academia collaborations, we provide personalized guidance to help students achieve their goals. As part of our initiatives, we have conducted hackathons and ideathons, allowing students to introspect and develop their technical skills for optimal outcomes. Among our endeavors, the event titled "From Trash to Treasure: Uniting Waste Management and Mushroom Cultivation for a Sustainable Society" stands out as particularly successful. This innovative step towards mushroom cultivation has garnered praise and recognition. Notably, we received a $210 fund allocation from Region 10 for this project, marking a moment of delight on our path to success. This support has further fueled our commitment to fostering a culture of innovation and sustainability within our student community.

4. What things, in your opinion, contributed the most to the success of your Student Chapter?

The paramount success of our Student Chapter can be chiefly ascribed to the unwavering dedication of our peer community. Guiding a sizable group through projects is no small feat, but the infectious enthusiasm of our students plays a pivotal role in motivating team members during training. Our journey has unearthed remarkable potential, and key qualities contributing to our success include team spirit, active collaboration, and invaluable support from faculty and management. Providing opportunities for students from diverse departments has proven advantageous, fostering creativity through cross-disciplinary collaboration. Effective collaboration, mentorship programs, and tailored events catering to varied interests were pivotal contributors. Regular communication and member engagement played a crucial role in our triumph.

5. What are some of the challenges or struggles your Student Chapter faced?

Our Student Chapter confronted significant challenges, notably in securing consistent funding for projects and events, hindering their progression. However, with the steadfast support of our Chapter Advisor, Dr. M. Nithya, and proper training, we overcame this crisis. Another hurdle involved refining member engagement criteria, requiring enhanced leadership training for managing a diverse community across various sectors. Juggling these responsibilities amid demanding academic schedules added another layer of complexity. Nevertheless, our tenacious spirit prevailed, fueled by the collective dedication of our community members. Despite these challenges, our Student Chapter not only weathered the storm but emerged stronger. These experiences underscored the importance of collaboration, mentorship, and the indomitable spirit of our members in overcoming obstacles and achieving success.

6. What would you do differently if you could lead the Student Chapter again?

If granted the opportunity to lead the Student Chapter again, I would consider the past year's leadership a success and aim to enhance productivity further. Recognizing the importance of communal support, I would implement more efficient strategies. One key initiative involves organizing peers into smaller groups, each led by a designated member. This approach allows for personalized training in specific areas of interest, fostering individual growth. Emphasizing the significance of practice, I would promote hands-on learning for optimal outcomes. I would prioritize raising awareness about the program among students, anticipating increased volunteer participation through clear instructions and guidelines. My leadership would focus on fostering a collaborative and skill-enhancing environment for the Student Chapter.

7. Finally, what is your advice for other students who may be interested in creating Student Chapters?

For students aspiring to establish Student Chapters, I recommend prioritizing clarity, resilience, and knowledge acquisition. Embrace a proactive and impactful approach, understanding that failures are a natural part of the learning process. Demonstrate selfless volunteering, unwavering determination, and consistent hard work to advance organizational goals. Foster inclusivity through counseling sessions for new members, ensuring a sense of relevance and connection. Prioritize innovation, sustainability, and community engagement. To fellow Student Chapter leaders, my advice is to create a supportive environment, explore diverse event formats, and build meaningful connections with industry professionals. Regularly assess and adapt strategies to meet evolving needs. Ultimately, it's crucial to raise awareness about the societal impact of these chapters. Members should feel that they benefit significantly from the society, and events organization and community engagement should reflect that.

Sivanesh (LinkedIn: sivanesh-k-s-6a9991218) is a highly motivated M. Tech student specializing in Computer Science and Engineering at Sri Sairam Engineering College in Chennai. Currently holding the position of Chairperson at IEEE SMC Student Chapter, Sivanesh is driven by a passion for content strategy and is on the path to becoming a successful entrepreneur with a focus on autonomous electric vehicles. Demonstrating an impressive track record, Sivanesh has achieved notable milestones, including championship victories, securing grants from prestigious institutions like IIT, and leading impactful projects for societal progress. Actively involved in Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA) and serving as a contributor to IEEE SEC SSIT SB, Sivanesh exemplifies a dedication to both professional and academic excellence. Furthermore, Sivanesh's commitment to community service is evident through active volunteer work for NSS.