

# Iranian American Society of Civil Engineers

Engineers, Contractors, Architects & Developers



## IASCE Newsletter

## Fall 2008 & Winter 2009

*In this issue you will read:*

Society news, elections, referendum for Society name change, meeting reports, and the story of the first Iranian American

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:** So, Now What?



Let me start by saying that I am not expert when it comes to the economy in general, or the stock market in particular. I have a vague sense of the Dow industrial average and the term “tough credit market” does not leave me feeling warm and fuzzy inside. But it’s been hard to ignore the bad news coming out of Washington and Wall Street, and I suspect I am not the only one wondering how these tough times will impact our industry, our jobs and in general our lives.

I think this mess provides us with an opportunity. Now is the time to harness innovative thinking, promote multi-layer propositions, and commit to investing in our community and our country- its people, its structures, and its foundation. Now is not the time to freeze city works, shelve construction plans, or curtail in any way the repairs that must be made, the retrofits that must be installed, and the rehabilitation that our infrastructure desperately need. I am not the only one see it this way. Many agencies and their industrial and commercial counterparts are flourishing, even in this unstable atmosphere. The financial and institutional health our communities are directly dependent upon well being of our financial markets. Nobody got into this mess alone, and it’s doubtful that one-sided solutions will be strong enough to pull us out of this economic nosedive.

So, as our teachers always used to counsel- let’s put on our “thinking caps” and find a way to not just survive, but thrive in this new, lean, and mean marketplace.

### SOCIETY NEWS

**Board of Directors – Strategic Planning:** In the September 2008 Board Meeting, using a brain storming technique the following five issues out of thirteen possible issues were identified as major areas that the Board believes the Society needs to focus on:

1. **Business Development and Networking.** The Board believes that there is a need to have a complete slate of professionals in engineering, architecture, development and construction. This will allow further networking opportunities for the members. Founded in 1996, IASCE has already provided Networking opportunities to its members as well as the community, and intends to effectively continue this effort.
2. **Membership Attendance.** The membership committee has taken several initiatives that have resulted in an increase in membership. In 2007-2008 fiscal year, the Society had 50 active members. Furthermore, the regular monthly meetings as well as special meetings have attracted a large audience – in some cases more than 70 in attendance. Norooz 2008 celebration hosted approximately 200 members, their friends and families. Still, there is a lot more that needs to be done to increase the Society’s membership.
3. **Program/Speaker/Topics.** Society has had excellent accomplished speakers including the Irvine Mayor Pro Tem, Mr. Sukhee Kang. Out of the 12 meetings, a few of are intended to be technical and the rest to be social or hot topics, musical performance, and open forums.
4. **Name of Society.** The issue of name change has been on the table for quite some time. The Board invited the Society members to submit a name change form by November 17, 2008 to [iasce@iasce.org](mailto:iasce@iasce.org). Sixteen suggestions were received. Board members and three other society members present at the November 19 Board Meeting rated the proposed names and selected the top three names. The top ranking names along with the current name were put to referendum. For more details about the Society name change and proposed names, please refer to Referendum Section.

5. **Society Marketing.** The Board would like to encourage the members to get involved in marketing the Society. The quarterly newsletter, the Society website, and the word of mouth have been the most effective marketing tools so far. The Board intends to enhance the society membership and reach out to more professionals.

**Newsletter:** IASCE named Maryam Alborzfar as the new editor-in-chief of the Society Newsletter. She will assume the position from July 2009. Currently, she serves as the associate editor for this newsletter and the following issue for a smooth transition. Even though, an editor does not have to be a board member, it is preferred, since he/she is aware of all Society's matters.

**Field Trip:** Society organized a field trip to Orange County Water District on January 20, 2009. Several Society members attended this field trip which lasted a couple of hours. The field trip was a success and very informative. Society will organize more technical trips for the members in the future.

**Elections:** IASCE Board of Directors is comprised of five members. The term for three members of the Board (Ben Hushmand, Payam Khashaee, and Kamran Saber) is ending, while the other two members (Maryam Alborzfar and Mir Fattahi) will continue. The election for three open positions in the IASCE Board of Directors will be held at the February 2009 General Meeting. The newly elected board members will take office in July 2009 for a two-year term. Members elect officers and the officers in turn determine the executive positions. Self nominations are welcome and the members can also nominate other members in the Society. The nomination needs to be accepted by the nominee. IASCE call for nominations was announced earlier and also included guidelines for nomination process. The candidates were given the opportunity to write a short statement featuring their vision, plans, biography, or issues related to Society. *Majid Sarraf* kindly responded to this call and nominated himself, and his statement is included in this newsletter. Nominations for *other Society members* will still be open until the day of election. Candidates will be given the opportunity to speak for a few minutes before the voting. Voting will take place by casting ballots. If you feel you don't have enough time to serve as a Board member, involvement in the committees is always an option.

## Meet a Candidate for the Board of Directors Position

**Majid Sarraf, Ph.D., P.E., P.Eng.**  
**Senior Project Manager/ Seismic Specialist**  
**PARSONS**

Email: [msarraf@earthlink.net](mailto:msarraf@earthlink.net)

Esteemed members of IASCE,

I have over 14 years experience in the area of design and analysis of bridges and civil infrastructure, as well as research and teaching in the area of seismic design and structures. I hold a B.A.Sc in Civil Engineering from Tehran Polytechnic University, M.A.Sc., and Ph.D. from University of Ottawa, and professional engineering license in both California and Ontario, Canada. I have served on a number of ASCE technical committees and currently act as an associated editor of ASCE Bridge Engineering Journal.

I wish to acknowledge admirable and sincere efforts made to this date by the former and outgoing members of the board to grow this society and keeping it as a vibrant and fruitful entity. As a new board member, I would like to not only continue in that direction but also expand the society's goals and its program, both quantitatively and qualitatively. As a board member, I would work with other members and wish to achieve the following:

- Increasing the visibility and membership within Persian/non-Persian professional communities
- Improve the quality and encourage member participations in technical and cultural programs
- Establish and promote relation with the academics
- Provide assistance/advise to professionals and students in career improvements and their projects
- Facilitate networking and business development amongst all professionals
- Lead efforts in providing scholarship to the talented students

I look forward to your support and having the honor serving our professional and cultural community.

**Referendum for Society Name:** The referendum for Society name change with four options will close in the February meeting. The four names on the ballot include the existing Society name Iranian American Society of Civil Engineers (IASCE), Iranian American Society of Engineers, Developers and Architects (i/a SEDA), Society of Engineers, Contractors, Architects and Developers (i/a ECAD), and finally Iranian American Society of Engineers and Architects (i/a SEA). The pro's and con's of proposed society names are presented in a matrix.

By the end of the January 2009 meeting more than ½ of the active Society members had already voted for the fourth option, i.e., Iranian American Society of Engineers and Architects. The sister organizations for this unofficially approved name are listed below. Even though this Society would like to cover Orange County primarily and welcome anybody from Southern California, it is desired to go beyond Southern California and build a better and stronger image for Iranians in North America and provide stronger networking opportunity among Iranian engineers and architects in North America. All sister organizations will operate independently, while acknowledging each other. Joint events might be organized in national or international level.

**Sister Organizations to Iranian American Society of Engineers and Architects** : انجمن مهندسان و معماران ایران

1. Iranian-American Society of Engineers and Architects (IASEA, Dallas, Texas)

[http://parastoo.us/ads/AIAE%26A/IASEA\\_Flyer\\_Jan\\_11\\_09.html](http://parastoo.us/ads/AIAE%26A/IASEA_Flyer_Jan_11_09.html)

2. Society of Iranian American Engineers and Architects (SIAEA, Los Angeles, California)

[www.siaea.org](http://www.siaea.org)

3. Canadian Society of Iranian Engineers and Architects (Toronto, Canada)

<http://www.mohandes.com/en>

4. Canadian Society of Iranian Engineers and Architects (Ottawa, Canada)

<http://www.csiea.org>, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CSIEA-Ottawa>

**Other Ethnicities:**

5. Asian American Architects/Engineers Association

Southern California ([www.aaesc.com](http://www.aaesc.com)) and Houston, Texas ([www.aaea-houston.org](http://www.aaea-houston.org))

6. North Texas Chinese Engineers And Architects Association

<http://ntceaa.org>

**Cooperation with Sister Organizations**

A contact has been established between IASCE and SIAEA in Los Angeles – Mr. Alex Biabani. It was decided for the board members to hold a kick-off joint meeting and start cooperation by holding occasional joint meetings and events.

A contact has been established between IASCE and IASEA in Dallas – Mr. Mike Okhovatian. Mike is an old friend of an IASCE Board Member. Future cooperation, sharing speakers, supporting events and members, networking in a level national are discussed.

**Future Society Logo**

After the approval of the name a logo competition will be organized. The deadline, rules, and cash prize amount to be announced. The selection will be made either through a Jury or through another referendum.

**Scholarship and Honors Committee:** IASCE has named **Majid Sarraf, PhD, PE** as the co-chair of this committee. Majid has passion to help students by providing scholarship since he believes that he has been a student once and contribution of IASCE can make a difference in the educational endeavors of students. Please share your ideas about student scholarships and honors with Majid at [msarraf@earthlink.net](mailto:msarraf@earthlink.net).

**Table 1. Matrix of Con's and Pro's for the Four Proposed Society Names**

ROW	PROPOSED NAMES FOR THE SOCIETY	PRO's	CON's
1	<p><b>IASCE (current name)</b></p> <p>Iranian American Society of Civil Engineers</p> <p>انجمن مهندسان عمران ایران انجمن مهندسان راه و ساختمان ایران</p>	<p>Established &amp; somehow recognized name due to its similarity to ASCE. Covers the trade of the founders of the society (civil engineers). Implies nationwide. Easy to pronounce the abbreviation. The abbreviation matches exactly with the society name.</p>	<p>Does not cover architects, developers, and other engineering disciplines. It does imply a national organization, where in reality, it covers mostly OC and some LA and Inland Empire. Preliminary polls indicate that two-thirds of the Society members show interest in including other disciplines.</p>
2	<p><b>IAECAD (i/a ECAD)</b></p> <p>Society of Iranian American Engineers, Contractors, Architects, &amp; Developers</p>	<p>Covers all the disciplines. Implies CAD (Computer Aided Design) which is a common trade among all disciplines. Includes Iranian and American terminology. Implies nationwide.</p>	<p>A very long name; somewhat hard to pronounce. The abbreviation does not exactly jibe with the proposed name. It does imply a national organization, where in reality, it covers mostly OC and to some extent LA and Inland Empire.</p>
3	<p><b>IASEDA (i/a SEDA)</b></p> <p>Iranian American Society of Engineers, Developers, &amp; Architects</p>	<p>Covers all disciplines. SEDA in Farsi means voice in English, as we would like our SEDA to be heralded. Implies nationwide. The abbreviation exactly matches the society name.</p>	<p>A long name. It does imply a national organization, where in reality, it covers mostly OC and to some extent LA and Inland Empire.</p>
4	<p><b>IASEA (i/a SEA)</b></p> <p>Iranian American Society of Engineers &amp; Architects</p> <p>انجمن مهندسان و معماران ایران</p>	<p>Covers all engineering disciplines and architects. Implies nationwide. There are several sister organizations with this name in other parts of Northern America (Canada, Los Angeles, Texas, ...) as well as other ethnicities. The abbreviation exactly matches the name. The "SEA" in English has the connotation of vastness, and being ubiquitous. Easy name. Reads well in Persian. The engineers from other disciplines as well as architects have attended the Society past. Many contractors are already included since majority of them hold an engineering degree.</p>	<p>A long name. It does imply a national organization, where in reality, it covers mostly OC and to some extent LA and Inland Empire. Does not cover Developers.</p>

**IASCE October 2008 Program Report: Sam Ali, PE, LEED A.P** presented ‘Civil Engineering Applications to Sustainability.’ More and more cities, counties, school districts, water district, state agencies, federal agencies, builders, private developers and others are requiring their projects to be designed and constructed to sustainable standards.

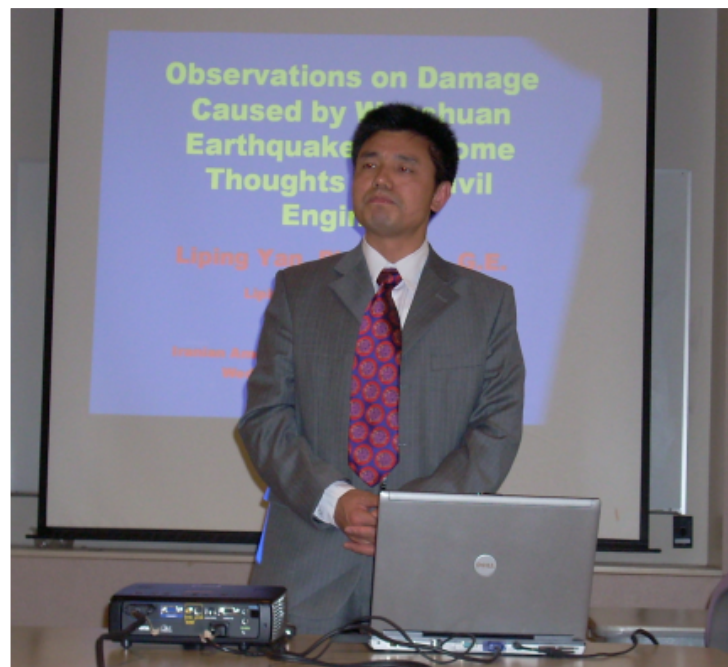


This presentation covered the following topics:

- Civil Engineering Applications to Sustainability
- LEED Certification and Accreditation
- How to Prepare for the Test to Become LEED AP
- LEED Certification and Cost Implication
- The Latest on LEED-ND (Neighborhood Development)
- The construction cost for LEED certifying a project, Silver, Gold...

Sam Ali, PE, LEED AP is Vice President of Land Development Services at Psomas with 29 years of consulting experience in Orange County. He has managed a variety of public and private development projects including schools, colleges, medical center, retail centers, commercial, industrial, public infrastructure and masterplan development. He is in charge of coordinating the LEED training at Psomas which resulted in more than 40 employees passing the LEED-NC test. Chairman of the Sustainability and Continue Education Committees for the ASCE, OC Branch. He has a Bachelor degree in civil engineering and master degree in water resources from CSULB. Sam can be reached at [sali@psomas.com](mailto:sali@psomas.com).

**IASCE November 2008 Program Report: Liping Yan, PhD, PE, GE**, Civil Engineering Associate, Geotechnical



*Photo By: Kamran Saber*

Engineering Group, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) presented his talk entitled ‘Observations on Damage Caused by Wenchuan Earthquake and Some Thoughts as a Civil Engineer.’

The devastating Wenchuan earthquake on May 12, 2008 caused severe damage to buildings, roadway, and bridges. About one month after the earthquake, Dr. Liping Yan went to some of the affected areas to observe the damage. Afterwards, he also collected many photos taken by others in the affected areas. In this presentation, Dr. Yan will talk about the observations on the damage and summarize the lessons learned from this earthquake. Also Dr. Yan will share his thoughts on a civil engineer’s role to have a seismically resilient world minimizing earthquake-induced destruction and suffering of people.

Dr. Liping Yan has more than seventeen years of intensive experience in various aspects of geotechnical and earthquake engineering. Some of his research projects included numerical analysis and testing on seismic stability of earth dams and embankments,

dynamic soil-structure interaction analysis, and development and implementation of improved seismic design and retrofit procedures for bridge abutments and footings.

In consulting practice, Dr. Yan has managed and designed a variety of projects, covering a broad spectrum of geotechnical issues for design and construction, mainly relating to transportation systems. Currently he is a geotechnical engineer in Water Engineering & Technical Services Division, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.

After Dr. Yan’s presentation, the members discussed the strategic planning of the society.

**IASCE December 2008 Program Report: Nasser Abbaszadeh, PE**, Public Works Director/City Engineer, City of San Juan Capistrano gave a presentation on Leadership to the Membership. In today's marketplace, the engineering world is facing two serious challenges: Lack of interest in the field and shortage of leadership. The business side of engineering, professional groups, and even some cities (City of Los Angeles, for example) are trying to entice high school students to choose engineering as careers. On the other hand, in order to combat the leadership void, more and more companies are organizing "leadership academies" to teach necessary skills for those already in the field.

While the old thinking was that leaders are born, not made; it is now proven that leaders may be trained. It used to be that many managers, without education or training, were placed in leadership roles and were expected to deliver. However, as more and more large companies are experiencing, without proper training, most managers cannot succeed.

Studies have shown that a successful leader has several characteristics that anyone can emulate or "nurture" them. These characteristics are:

<b>Performance</b>	Effective and efficient application of knowledge.
<b>Drive</b>	Motivation with clear objectives.
<b>Vision</b>	Understanding where you are today and where you want to be tomorrow.
<b>Ownership</b>	Assuming responsibility.
<b>Character</b>	Trust + respect + responsibility + fairness + caring + civic virtue and citizenship
<b>Interpersonal skills</b>	Building trust + handling conflict + etiquette + working with difficult people + valuing diversity + handling office politics.

The above characteristics need to be explored further. By focusing on them and realizing what each quality means, one can dig deeper and draw out how these traits can be improved upon. Individuals, who have mastered the above skills, have become successful leaders and even on personal level experience satisfaction in that they become a high performer, maintain good life/work balance, have low stress, possess self-development skills, and enjoy great relationships.

While the road to becoming a successful leader may not be an easy one, as all great things in life come as the result of hard work, it starts with a "plan to succeed." The plan should be SMART and must be written down. A SMART plan should be: Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.

Once the plan is written down, at least once every six months, it should be reviewed for possible and necessary adjustments to either stay the course or make revisions.

Great leaders are not born, they either learn their life lessons well, or they seek education and training to develop the skills they need to succeed in life. If you have read this article to this point, pick up a pen, write a career goal (make it a SMART one!) and focus on the six areas that are highlighted above. You can make one conscious decision, take positive action, and watch your professional and personal life bloom.

## Leadership Traits

High Knowledge  
(HK)

High Emotional  
Intelligence (HI)

Low Knowledge  
(LK)

Low Emotional  
Intelligence (LI)

**The January 2009 meeting:** Ali Bavarian presented ‘Investing 101 and Brief Market Update’ and discussed:

- The definition of diversification with regards to investments
- The fees pertaining to different investment choices
- What individual investors can and cannot control during periods of economic uncertainty

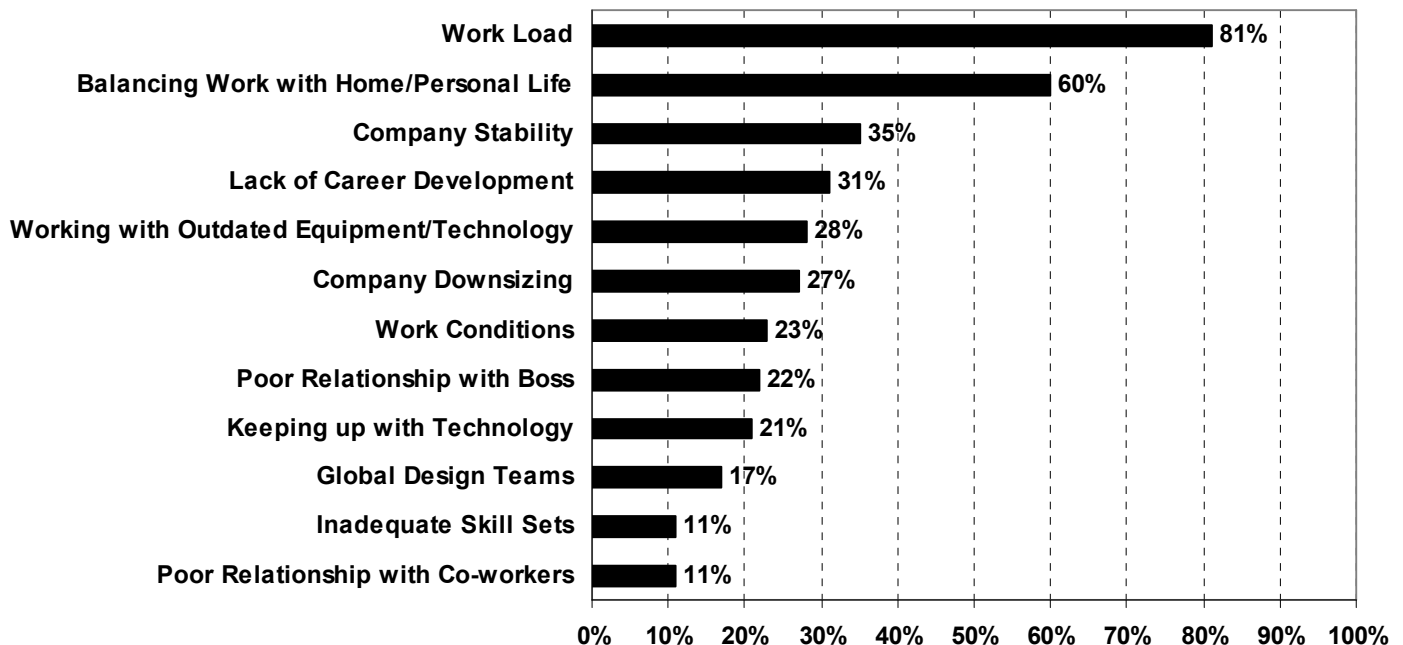
Ali Bavarian graduated from University of California, Santa Barbara with a major in Business Economics and a minor in Music. He began his career as a financial advisor in 2005 and specializes in helping individual investors and business owners with their investing and retirement planning goals. Currently, he is Financial Advisor with Edward Jones Investments. Ali is available for a complementary review of IASCE members investments and retirement plan. Please feel free to contact Ali at (949) 858-5774 or [ali.bavarian@edwardjones.com](mailto:ali.bavarian@edwardjones.com).

## THE FIRST IRANIAN AMERICAN

**Mirza Mohammad Ali** (1836-1925), better known as **Hajj Sayyah**, meaning ‘the traveler,’ was a famous Iranian world traveler and political activist. Hajj Sayyah was born in Mahallat, Iran. At the age of 23, Hajj Sayyah started a journey around the globe that lasted for 18 years starting from Central Asia and Europe, and then United States. He stayed ten years in the U.S. and met with many prominent personalities such as President Ulysses Grant on several occasions. He travels across the United States from New York all the way to San Francisco. Upon returning to Iran in 1877, Hajj Sayyah became politically active and was imprisoned for having instigated a clandestine letter writing campaign to the monarch and clergy regarding the unbearable living conditions in Iran. After his release, fearing further persecution he sought the protection of the United States Legation in Tehran. This move puzzled many Iranians who didn’t know why he felt the United States government would protect him. Hajj Sayyah went on to play a major role in the Constitutional Revolution of 1906 in Iran, and remained active until his death in 1925 at the age of 89. Source: Wikipedia

## JOB STRESS AND DISSATISFACTION WITH CURRENT JOB

In June 2008, Reed Business Information published the results of a survey on an ensemble of 2,089 engineers with a median age of 48, primarily mechanical and electrical/electronics engineers. Their salary ranged from less than \$40k to over a \$150k with a median of \$82k. The factors that contribute to **job stress** are demonstrated in the figure below, where workload is the highest contributor.



According to the same survey the factors that most greatly impact on **dissatisfaction with current job** include: Company Politics (69%), No Room for Advancement (65%), Salary (58%), No Recognition (52%), Workload (39%), Stress Level Too High (39%), Company Unstable (36%), Lack of Adequate Technology (32%), Lack of Benefits (28%), Not Challenging enough (25%), Outsourcing Offshore (24%), Colleagues (17%), Location (16%), and Other (10%).

## IASCE ORGANIZATION CHART 2008-2009

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS\*

NAME	POSITION	E-MAIL
Maryam Alborzfar	Secretary	Maryam.Alborzfar@CH2M.com
Mir Fattahi	President	mfattahi@ieua.org
Ben Hushmand	Public Relations	ben@hushmand-associates.com
Payam Khashaee	Vice-President	PKhashaee@ThorntonTomasetti.com
Kamran Saber	Board Member	ksaber@norrisrepke.com

\* Mr. Bijan Khamanian serves as Assistant Treasurer.

### COMMITTEES

<b>BY-LAWS</b>	<b>Chair:</b>	Maryam Alborzfar, Shafi Sharifan
	<b>Members:</b>	Ben Hushmand, Payam Khashaee
<b>HOUSE</b>	<b>Co-chairs:</b>	Safa Kamangar, Peyman Kaviani
<b>MEMBERSHIP</b>	<b>Co-chairs:</b>	Payam Khashaee, Shafi Sharifan
	<b>Members:</b>	Maryam Alborzfar, Yadi Farhadi, Safa Kamangar Peyman Kaviani, Javad Rahimzadeh
<b>NEWSLETTER</b>	<b>Editor:</b>	Payam Khashaee
	<b>Associate Editors:</b>	Maryam alborzfar, Siamak Jafroudi, Amir Zand
	<b>Graphics:</b>	Keyvan Raoufi
<b>PROGRAMS</b>	<b>Chair:</b>	Kamran Saber
	<b>Members:</b>	Mir Fattahi, Ben Hushmand, Shafi Sharifan
<b>SCHOLARSHIP &amp; HONORS</b>	<b>Chair:</b>	Mir Fattahi, Majid Sarraf
	<b>Members:</b>	Nasser Abbaszadeh, Ben Hushmand, Maryam Alborzfar
<b>INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY</b>	<b>Chair:</b>	Payam Khashaee
	<b>Webmasters:</b>	Bijan Khamanian, Farzad Tasbihgoo
	<b>Members:</b>	Safa Kamangar

**Get involved!** Members and interested parties are invited to join an IASCE committee. Contact the chairperson for information on current activities and meeting times, dates, and locations. If you have any idea, suggestion, criticism, or concern, please contact committee chairs or board members. Thank You!

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