

# Diversity and Accessibility Guidelines, Diversity Programs supported by IEEE VGTC, and Diversity FAQs

This document complements the IEEE VGTC [Code of Conduct](#) by outlining specific steps that organizers can take to support greater diversity and accessibility in our communities. Conference organizers should know that the IEEE VGTC has a specific budget available to sponsor diversity activities, and that the IEEE VGTC is committed to allocating extra resources to programs aimed at improving the diversity and accessibility of their conferences.

All IEEE VGTC conferences should have designated Diversity & Inclusion chairs, who can work closely with the conference organizers throughout the organizing process, from venue identification to post-conference assessment, to promote diversity and inclusion in their events. The IEEE VGTC recommends that conferences implement specific initiatives aimed at enhancing diversity and inclusion, such as: [Diversity and Inclusion Scholarships](#), [Student Volunteer Programs](#), and [Mentorship Programs](#). This document ends with an [Inclusion, Diversity, and Accessibility FAQ](#) that lists questions that should be considered by all conference organizers. Further suggestions on how to promote and facilitate greater diversity at conferences can be found in [this IEEE Computer Society Best Practices document](#).

## Guidelines for Venue Selection

When selecting the conference venue, the organizing committee should consider the extent to which candidate venues meet the IEEE VGTC accessibility guidelines (see the [Inclusion, Diversity, and Accessibility FAQ](#)). Some examples of factors to consider include: wheelchair accessibility, accessible transportation options, the availability of accommodation for service animals, the availability of sign language and/or captioning technologies, the ability to accommodate dietary restrictions, the availability of quiet spaces, and the accessibility of child care options. Additionally, conference organizers are encouraged to maintain accessibility for virtual participation via streaming options. We discourage bringing any of our conferences to venues that do not meet a large set of the aforementioned requirements.

## Programs

[Diversity and Inclusion Scholarships](#) These scholarships provide funds to support conference attendance for early-career researchers (graduate students and postdocs) from under-represented or historically marginalized groups. For example, these scholarships could provide **free registration** and a **partial travel stipend** (for example: [IEEE VIS 2020 Inclusivity & Diversity Scholarship](#)).

[Student Volunteer Programs](#) These programs can provide opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to volunteer at the conference and engage with the community. To support accessibility, these programs can offer **free registration** and **discounted hotel accommodation** (for example: [Bridge-to-VR](#), [IEEE Vis Student volunteers](#)).

[Mentorship Programs](#) These programs aim to connect newcomers to the conference (mentees) and experienced attendees (mentors) via shared interests (for example: [IEEE VR 2022 Mentorship Program](#)).

Child Care Programs There are multiple options conferences can consider to make attendance more accessible for parents with children. (for example: [VISKids](#))

After the conclusion of the conference, the event organizers should prepare a 1-page report for the IEEE VGTC Equity and Diversity chair providing information about the performance of their equity/access programs for our records. An example of such a document is available here: [Results 2021 IEEE VR Overview](#).

The IEEE VGTC also encourages conferences to implement additional diversity programs beyond those listed above. Special budget requests may be made to the IEEE VGTC for funding to support diversity and inclusion initiatives on a case-by-case basis. Pilot programs in the areas of diversity and inclusion that demonstrate value will have the potential to be incorporated into the list of programs above so that they can be expanded to other IEEE VGTC conferences.

All of our programs should abide by the IEEE and VGTC [Code of Conduct](#). Program/Diversity committees should make sure that no member of their committees is in the [IEEE Prohibited Authors List](#).

# Inclusion, Diversity, and Accessibility FAQ

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How should conferences advertise their commitment to accessibility and inclusion?

Conferences can reference the [IEEE VGTC Code of Conduct](#), the IEEE Computer Society Open Conference Statement, and the IEEE Event Conduct and Safety Statement. Additionally, conferences can include an accessibility FAQ on their website, prefaced like the one below:

IEEE <NAME 20xx> strives towards an inclusive and accessible environment to encourage conference participation by individuals of all identities and with diverse backgrounds. This page describes some of the accessibility and support features of IEEE <NAME 20xx>, to help you make an informed decision about whether the conference will be accessible to you and to better plan your attendance. We try to anticipate potential needs from the <NAME> community. However, if the conference arrangements are not sufficient to allow you to attend, or if you have any question that is not answered here, please contact us at <diversity20xx[at]NAME.org> (see below for more information). We will work with you, to the best of our ability, to make the conference accessible. And we are open to any suggestions and feedback.

How should attendees communicate their accessibility needs to conference organizers?

Attendees with accessibility needs should be encouraged to contact the conference accessibility and diversity chairs via a standard email address, such as diversity2023@ieeever.org. Attendees should be advised to submit their accessibility requests as far in advance of the conference date as possible in order to allow the conference organizers adequate time to prepare.

Will sign language interpretation or captioning be available?

Attendees should be advised to make any requests for sign language interpreters or captioners during the early registration period. The accessibility chairs (or other appropriate conference contact) should follow up with inquirees to discuss their needs in more detail. A disclaimer may state that after the deadline for early registration, such services cannot be guaranteed but that a best effort will be made to accommodate late requests.

What are the taxi and public transport options for getting to the conference venue?

Conference organizers should include, on the conference website, clear information about local transportation options for arriving to the conference venue, including any relevant accessibility details, such as wheelchair accessibility.

An example is provided below:

From the international airport, the easiest way to get to the conference hotel is by taxicab, airport shuttle, or bus transportation. More information can be found at: International Airport Ground Transportation (link).

#### **Taxicab**

- **Route:** From New Orleans Airport Terminal Departures to Hilton St. Charles
- **Pickup point:** First level of the Terminal outside of Baggage Claim Belts 1 and 14.
- **Cost:** \$36 (\$15 per person for 3 or more passengers)
- **Time:** 30 minutes
- **Wheelchair accessibility:** Passengers should contact vendors to ensure wheelchair accessibility.
- **Walking and steps:** Walking distance is minimal. Taxis will drop off passengers at the main entrance to the hotel. Presence of steps unknown.
- **Service animals:** Please check directly with the vendor.
- **Reservations:** Advance booking is not needed for the taxicabs.

#### Airport Shuttle

- **Route:** From New Orleans Airport Terminal Departures to Hilton St. Charles
- **Pickup point:** Bus transportation is located at the Airport Terminal Departures.
- **Cost:** \$24.00 (per person, one-way) or \$44.00 (per person, round-trip)
- **Time:** 60 minutes
- **Wheelchair accessibility:** Those needing Wheelchair-Accessible Service should call 1-866-596-2699 for assistance or request a Wheelchair-Accessible shuttle on the Airport Shuttle Website.
- **Walking and steps:** Walking distance is minimal. Airport shuttles will drop off passengers at the main entrance to the hotel. Presence of steps unknown.
- **Service animals:** Please check directly with the vendor.
- **Phone:** 1-866-596-2699
- **Reservations:** Advance booking is not needed for the airport shuttle. Passengers can purchase tickets at the airport at the airport shuttle ticket booths located on the first level throughout the baggage claim area. Bookings can also be made on the Airport Shuttle Website.

#### Regional Transit Authority

- **Route:** From New Orleans Airport Terminal Departures to Opelousas at Herman
- **Pickup point:** Bus transportation is located at the Airport Terminal Departures.
- **Cost:** \$1.25
- **Time:** 50 minutes
- **Wheelchair accessibility:** All standard RTA buses contain features and equipment that allow persons with disabilities to board, ride, and get out of vehicles easily and comfortably.
- **Walking and steps:** Walking distance is 0.5 miles from the stop Opelousas at Herman to the conference venue and hotel. Presence of steps unknown.
- **Service animals:** Please check directly with the vendor.
- **Phone:** (504) 248-3900
- **Reservations:** Advance booking is not needed for the transit authority busses.

Will student volunteers be available to provide accessibility assistance during the conference?

Conferences should ensure that student volunteers are available to provide needed assistance for attendees with accessibility needs. Attendees should be advised that some volunteer assistance is available and that they should contact the diversity/inclusion chairs to make arrangements. Attendees who require dedicated personal care assistance should be advised to bring their own assistant.

What is the conference space like?

Conference organizers should aim to provide attendees with access to a map of the conference space, annotated to indicate the rooms that will be used, along with access information including: wheelchair/scooter access, walking requirements, locations of elevators, steps and stairs, provisions for

presenters, and facilities for assistance animals, as well as information about the restroom facilities, including the availability of and locations of gender-neutral and/or wheelchair accessible restroom facilities. Attendees should also be informed of the procedures for emergency egress in the event of an emergency, including any special procedures for those with mobility limitations or other applicable special needs.

### Will the conference be accessible by wheelchair or power scooter?

Conference organizers should ensure that the conference venue is accessible to wheelchair users, and that accessible local accommodations are available in proximity to the conference venue. Any required steps or stairways should be explicitly noted, including steps onto the stage (for presenters in wheelchairs), and sufficient clearance should be planned between exhibits, posters, etc. to accommodate a wheelchair.

### Are gender-neutral and/or wheelchair-accessible restroom facilities available?

Conference organizers should ensure that the conference venue offers accessible restroom facilities, including appropriate options for non-cis-gendered attendees as well as for the mobility-impaired.

### What are the arrangements for presenters with accessibility needs?

Appropriate accommodations should be made to enable requisite stage access for presenters who have mobility impairments. Presenters who may need accessibility accommodations should be directed to reach out to the conference organizers before the early registration deadline to explain their needs, and the conference organizers should do their best to accommodate those needs (e.g. a ramp to access the stage in a wheelchair; a student volunteer to assist in stepping up to or down from the stage; a volunteer to advance the slides, etc.)

### Can the conference venue accommodate a guide dog?

Conference organizers should endeavor to support the necessary use of service animals. Attendees should be asked to indicate on their registration form and hotel reservation if they anticipate bringing a service animal to the conference. If service animals are expected, the conference venue should provide an area where they can be provided with water. If the conference venue does not offer designated pet relief areas, the conference organizers should have information about the nearest available facilities ready to provide to attendees with service animals. Attendees should be expected to pick up after their service animals.

### Does the conference support attendance via robot?

Conference organizers are not expected to provide remote attendance robots, but if an attendee wishes to make private arrangements to use such a robot, the organizers should be willing to accommodate that need to as reasonable an extent as possible.

### How much walking or standing will be needed?

Information should be provided to attendees about the walking and standing demands associated with conference attendance. Accommodations should be made for attendees for whom mobility is a hardship. For example, if the conference is being held at a hotel, an attendee with mobility impairment might be given a room on the same floor. The conference venue should provide adequate seating to accommodate the needs of attendees who are unable to stand for long periods, including at receptions, etc. When considering optional activities that might require extensive walking outdoors, arrangements should be made to enable the equitable participation of attendees with mobility impairments. Attendees who have special needs should be encouraged to make their needs known to the organizers.

### Will speakers and audience members asking questions be using a microphone?

Speakers on-stage should use microphones while presenting. Audience members with questions should be asked to use a microphone so that their question can be more easily heard.

### How will the conference accommodate special dietary needs?

Attendees should be encouraged to indicate any special dietary requirements, including allergies, on their registration form, and appropriate accommodations should be made to ensure that accessible food options are available for those attendees at any organized meals and/or refreshment breaks. Detailed information about the dining options available at the conference venue should be made accessible to attendees with special dietary needs, e.g. through a hotel contact.

### Will the conference be held in a smoke-free environment?

All of the spaces used for conference activities, both indoors and outdoors, should be designated as no-smoking areas. Smoking may be accommodated in some adjacent/nearby outdoor areas.

### Will there be loud music, strobe lighting, spotlights, or other strong sensory experiences?

Conference organizers are advised to avoid uncomfortably loud music or other potentially discomfiting strong sensory experiences during conference activities. Individual presenters may include such audio-visual elements in their presentations, but they should be advised to forewarn the audience if any adverse impacts might be reasonably expected. These precautions should be observed in all venues, including VR demonstrations.

Attendees should be requested not to wear strong scents. The use of flash photography should be discouraged outside of controlled settings where all of the exposed are aware of and prepared for the flash. Attendees who have special sensory needs or restrictions should be encouraged to convey their needs to the conference organizers at the time of their registration.

### Will there be a designated quiet space at the conference?

Conference organizers should seek to provide access to some quiet spaces at the conference. If the conference is going to be held at a hotel, consideration should be given, during the selection process, to

whether the individual guest rooms are well-insulated and quiet. Attendees who have a special need for quiet space should be encouraged to make that need known to the conference organizers.

What procedures will be followed if an attendee has a medical emergency or health problem during the conference?

Conference organizers and student volunteers should know how to respond in cases of emergency. Options for urgent and non-urgent hospital care should be known by and readily accessible to responsible conference personnel, including how to phone for an ambulance, etc. Information about local medical care options should be on hand for easy access by conference personnel in the event of a medical need (urgent or non-urgent). Attendees should be advised when the conference locale is in an area where buying travel insurance that covers medical expenses is strongly recommended.

Are attendees allowed to bring their children with them to the conference?

Conference organizers are urged to check with the IEEE about their policy on allowing paid/unpaid conference attendance by children (under 18 years old). In some situations, conferences may want to make accommodations for parents to be able to bring their children with them free of charge, but care must be taken to avoid any potential liability concerns. Under no circumstances should children be allowed to disturb the functioning of the conference program.

Are there recommended child care options?

The conference organizers and/or diversity and inclusion chairs should consider making information about local child care options available to attendees.

Will there be a virtual version of the conference, which tools and platforms will be used?

Conference organizers are encouraged to make the conference content available virtually, including recording and streaming talks using a combination of Discord, Youtube and/or Twitch. Attendees who require assistance regarding the accessibility of any of these platforms should be encouraged to contact the diversity and inclusion chairs.

What accommodations will be made to facilitate the participation of attendees with hearing impairments?

Live versions of the talks should be accompanied by automatic closed captioning. Attendees with hearing impairments should be enabled to ask questions live and to communicate with authors and other participants using Discord text channels.

What accommodations will be made to facilitate the participation of attendees with visual impairments?

All talks should be recorded with subtitles that can be extracted as text files. Additionally, slides of the talks should be submitted by the authors ahead of time and made available in a screen-reader-accessible form on an as-needed basis via dedicated Discord channels. Conference organizers should proactively verify the accessibility of the tools and online platforms they intend to use to support attendee

participation. Attendees who have special needs for accessible conference materials should be encouraged to make those needs known to the diversity and inclusion chairs.

### Will there be networking events for traditionally underrepresented groups?

Conference organizers are encouraged to offer networking events, both in person and in virtual spaces, specifically for attendees and presenters from traditionally underrepresented groups such as: women, participants from certain geographical regions such as Latin America, or undergraduate students. Attendees should also be supported in self-organizing such events. Interested attendee organizers should be encouraged to coordinate with the conference diversity and inclusion chairs to reserve a room at the venue and advertise the event.

### Is funding available for students/authors to attend the conference?

Conference organizers are encouraged to make some funding available to support conference attendance by graduate students and early-career researchers from underrepresented backgrounds. This support could take the form of reduced registration costs and/or a small travel stipend (e.g. up to \$500). In addition, conferences should consider offering scholarships to defray the higher registration costs of paper authors from underrepresented backgrounds. There may be a very limited number of such grants available, and selection should be competitive.

Conference organizers are encouraged to establish student volunteer and/or bridge programs to provide a limited number of free registration opportunities to undergraduate and graduate students who are interested in attending the conference but have limited or no previous research experience.

### What programs will be available to support diversity and inclusion at the conference?

In addition to Diversity and Inclusion Scholarships, Student Volunteer programs and Bridge programs, conference organizers are also encouraged to work with their diversity and inclusion chairs to organize a mentorship program that can connect newcomers to the conference (mentees) with experienced attendees (mentors) via shared interests. An example of such a program can be found here: <https://ieeeverg.org/2022/attend/mentorship-program/>.



# Inclusion, Diversity and Accessibility Scholarships

## [template]

IEEE <NAME 20xx> is striving towards an inclusive and accessible environment to encourage conference participation by individuals of all identities and with diverse backgrounds. As part of this goal, we invite early career researchers to apply for the <20xx> **Inclusion, Diversity, and Accessibility Scholarship**.

## Who Should Apply?

This scholarship provides funds for early-career researchers (early professors, graduate students and postdocs) from under-represented or historically marginalized groups to attend this year's conference. These groups may include (but is not exclusive to):

- Women
- People of color
- Indigenous persons
- People with disabilities
- Individuals from developing countries

We also invite researchers from regions and countries historically under-represented at the IEEE <NAME> conference to apply. The countries that are eligible to receive a registration grant are: any country in Latin America, Africa, Asia (excluding developed countries like China, Singapore, Korea and Japan) and the Middle East (excluding Israel, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait). Countries in eastern Europe will also be considered.

Given that we have a limited number of grants, you will need to submit an updated copy of your CV (1 page) and justify why you are applying for this grant in the registration form.

Undergraduate students with limited or no experience conducting virtual reality research or graduate students who don't fit this call are encouraged to apply to the **Student Volunteer Bridge to <NAME> Program**. Students in this Scholarship who want to participate also on the **Student Volunteer Bridge to <NAME> Program** can state so on the application form.

## Scholarship Details

This scholarship will cover registration costs and partial travel costs (up to 500\$) for attending the <20xx> **IEEE NAME>** conference. Funding is available for:

- Researchers with full papers accepted\*
- Researchers presenting posters
- Student researchers who are not presenting work but who may benefit academically or professionally from attending the conference

\*While funding for researchers with full papers is available, please note that it is more competitive than funding for the other types of applicants.

## Application Guidelines

Interested individuals may apply via this form [\(link\)](#). The deadline for application is **<DATE>**. The deadline is **<TIME>** AoE (Anywhere on Earth) == GMT/UTC-12:00, no matter where the submitter is located. Recipients of the Scholarship will be informed by **<DATE>**.

## Data Privacy Information

The information provided by the applicants will be accessible only to the members of the Inclusion, Diversity, and Accessibility committee. Applicants can request for their information to be corrected or deleted at any time until **<DATE>**. After this date, their answers to the essay questions as well as their institutional/company affiliation will be deleted. Their remaining data will be anonymized and made available to future Inclusion, Diversity, and Accessibility committees of IEEE **<NAME>** for statistical purposes.

## Questions?

This program is an initiative of the **<20xx IEEE NAME>** Diversity and Inclusion Committee, and supported by the IEEE VGTC. The committee can be reached via email at **<diversity20xx [a] NAME .org>**.

# Student Volunteers Program: Bridge to <NAME> [template]

## Overview

The Student Volunteer Program: Bridge to <NAME> funds outstanding undergraduate and graduate candidates to participate at IEEE <NAME> as volunteers.

Through this unique experience applicants will join an inclusive team of the world's best students who demonstrate leadership skills, participant-oriented service, team spirit, and a passion to experience the cutting-edge content in IEEE <NAME>. While providing integral operational support to the conference, students gain unique insight to the latest in technology and innovation, opportunities to network with industry professionals and fellow student volunteers, and receive an enriching career-building, often life-changing experience.

Being part of this program is a great way to learn the state of the <NAME> research community and to participate in the sharing of academic research. Awardees will also be able to attend presentations and demos at the <20xx IEEE NAME> conference.

## Application Guidelines

Interested applicants will be asked to write a short essay and may apply using the following Google Form: <LINK>. The deadline for application is <DATE>. Each deadline is <TIME> AoE (Anywhere on Earth) == GMT/UTC-12:00 on the stated day, no matter where the submitter is located. Recipients of the program will be informed by the <DATE>.

## Data Privacy Information

The information provided by the applicants will be accessible only to the members of the Inclusion, Diversity, and Accessibility committee. Applicants can request for their information to be corrected or deleted at any time until <DATE>. After this date, their answers to the essay questions as well as their institutional/company affiliation will be deleted. Their remaining data will be anonymized and provided to the future Inclusion, Diversity, and Accessibility committees of IEEE <NAME> for statistical purposes.

## Application Essay

Spend some time reviewing research from past conferences: <https://WEB.org/#past>.

- What is an important problem in the world that you think IEEE <NAME> can help address?

- How do you plan to share what you have learned at the IEEE <NAME> conference with your fellow undergraduate students?\*

\*Some examples include sharing information about the conference on social media or giving a presentation at a university club you are a part of.

## Who Can Apply?

- Undergraduate student currently enrolled in an accredited college or university
- Students from under-represented or historically marginalized groups are encouraged to apply. This may include, but is not exclusive to, women and persons of color, transgender and/or non-binary individuals, and applicants from developing countries.

Previous experience in the field or academic research is not required. This program is intended to support students with an interest in pursuing research in areas close to IEEE <NAME>.

## Benefits of Participating

In exchange for the volunteering service and enthusiasm, Student Volunteers and Team Leaders receive:

- Complementary registration to the IEEE <NAME 20xx> conference
- Networking opportunities with current IEEE <NAME> scholars
- Networking with other fellow students interested on the advancements of IEEE <NAME>

## Expectations of Students

- Student Volunteers are responsible for volunteering approximately 20 hours to help provide operational support for <NAME>.
- Team Leaders volunteer approximately 60 hours to help provide operational support for <NAME>.

Operational support includes helping during registration, assisting attendees with particular accessibility needs.

## Contacts

This program is an initiative of the <20xx IEEE NAME> Diversity and Inclusion Committee, and supported by the IEEE VGTC. The committee can be reached via email at <diversity20xx [at] NAME.org>.

# Mentorship Program [template]

## Overview

The goal of the IEEE <NAME 20xx> Mentorship Program is to connect newcomers to the conference (mentees) and experienced attendees (mentors) via shared interests. This program is a great networking opportunity for both mentees and mentors to learn both about each other and the field in general!

## How do I participate?

Interested individuals can opt-in to the Mentorship Program after registering for the <20xx IEEE NAME> conference. Mentors and mentees will be matched by the program organizers based on different levels of IEEE <NAME> experience and research interests and will be put in contact before the conference begins.

A sign-up form will be shared with all registered attendees of the IEEE <NAME 20xx> conference. Interested participants should complete this form ([link](#)) by <DATE>. This deadline is to give time for the committee to match mentors and mentees before the conference begins.

## Data Privacy Information

The information provided by the participants will be accessible only to the members of the Inclusion, Diversity, and Accessibility committee. The participants can request for their information to be corrected or deleted at any time until <DATE>. After this date, their data will be anonymized and provided to the Inclusion, Diversity, and Accessibility committee of future iterations of IEEE <NAME> for statistical purposes.

## What is involved in this program?

Mentors and mentees are expected to participate in several activities together throughout the conference. Some suggested activities include:

- Attending a paper session together and discussing afterwards
- Meeting during coffee breaks/meals to discuss research and/or general career guidance

We ask that the mentors also introduce their mentee(s) to at least one (1) colleague that is attending the conference. Preferably, this colleague will be someone at an institution that is different from the mentee's so as to encourage further networking.

Participants will also be asked to complete a closing survey providing feedback on the program after the conference.

## Contact

This program is an initiative of the <20xx IEEE NAME> Inclusion, Diversity, and Accessibility Committee, and supported by the IEEE VGTC. The committee can be reached via email at <diversity20xx[at]NAME.org>

# Results 2021 IEEE VR Overview

The 2021 Inclusion, Diversity, and Accessibility Committee worked on three main programs this year at the conference: the [Mentorship Program](#) (MP), the [Inclusion, Diversity, and Accessibility Scholarship](#) (IDA), and the [Bridge to VR \(undergraduate\) Program](#) (B2VR). This year, we provided registration fees for 24 undergraduate students as part of the B2VR program and 16 participants for the IDA scholarship. We also matched 26 mentors and 82 mentees as part of the Mentorship Program. Specific information for the scholarship programs is provided in the subsections.

The committee also served as a resource for conference attendees with questions or requests regarding inclusion, diversity, and accessibility [[Accessibility Frequently Asked Questions](#)].

## Inclusion, Diversity and Accessibility Scholarship

By analyzing the geographical origins of previous years' IEEE VR attendees, the committee identified a need to increase the participation of individuals from Latin America and India. The IDA Scholarship provided registration fees for 4 full paper authors, 1 poster author, 1 workshop author, and 8 general participants. Five awardees identified as female ( $n = 5$ , 35.7%), and seven awardees identified as a person of color ( $n = 7$ , 50.0%). Seven awardees identified as being from a country or region under-represented at the conference ( $n = 7$ , 50.0%). Awardees came from a variety of countries, such as the United Kingdom ( $n = 3$ , 21.4%), Brazil ( $n = 3$ , 21.4%), the United States ( $n = 2$ , 14.3%), and India ( $n = 2$ , 14.3%). The following countries each had 1 awardee: Belgium, China, Germany, and Japan.

## Bridge to VR Overview

The main goal of the program was to provide undergraduate students who had no or little experience with XR with an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the possibilities and current research topics within the field. 24 undergraduate students were offered complimentary registration at 19 different academic institutions. Most awardees ( $n = 17$ , 70.8%) attended an institution in the United States, but there were also students from institutions in Germany ( $n = 2$ , 8.33%), Colombia ( $n = 1$ , 4.27%), Japan ( $n = 1$ , 4.27%), Hong Kong ( $n = 1$ , 4.27%), and China ( $n = 1$ , 4.27%). 16.7% of awardees attended institutions with an undergraduate enrollment of 5,000 students or less ( $n = 4$ ).

## What Worked Well

Feedback for the Mentorship Program was positive. Many attendees gave verbal feedback regarding enjoying the Mentorship Program to Stevie Carnell. These participants also hoped that the program would

return next year. A feedback form was shared in the appropriate Discord channel. While few participants (n = 5) completed it, feedback there was also positive, as shown in the following form responses:

- *The mentor-mentee pair worked the best! I loved getting an hour to myself just to talk to a more experienced researcher about anything that I thought about.*
- *The mentorship program was great! I learned a lot about how to apply to a PhD program and I made connection[s] with different professors and PhD students. I also enjoyed the meeting with mentors and the discord conversations.*

Participation in the B2VR program was encouraging, as applications for it (n = 30 applications) outpaced the IDA program (n = 24 applications). Some feedback from participants is included below:

- *Thank you so much for the awesome experience! I hope to return to IEEE VR next year, possibly as an author or a mentor :))*
- *I am grateful for this opportunity and it has made me even more interested in learning about VR so thank you for the opportunity.*

This hopefully demonstrates the potential this program has for reaching new undergraduate students with VR research and widening the diversity of future VR authors and attendees.

## What Needs to Be Improved

- **Clarity around who should apply to which scholarship programs** Graduate students and above applied to the B2VR program, and vice versa.
- **Consistent data collection between programs** The B2VR application did not collect information on identities in the same detail as the IDA scholarship.
- **Guidance on essay questions for scholarships** For both scholarships, several applications did not advance because responses were too short for the committee to evaluate sufficiently.
- **Diversity in applications** Most applications seem to have come from direct word-of-mouth advertising, which limits the overall reach of the programs.
- **More widespread/persistent feedback mechanisms for the programs** Feedback for the programs was only available at the end of the conference and was completed by very few people.
- **Greater mentor participation** Far more people signed up as a mentee than as a mentor, and for some time zones, there were few to no mentors to serve it. This perhaps stretched those who did serve as mentors a little thin.
- **Coordination with the registration timeline/committee** Several authors needed to be refunded to take advantage of their registration, and several awardees needed new codes generated at the last minute because their status as an author was not clear from their application



## Recommendations for Next Year

- **Integrated application for all scholarship programs** The IDA and B2VR applications should be combined into one application with logic that asks the appropriate questions based on the applicants' responses. In addition to the questions already present in this year's applications, the new integrated application should ask applicants to indicate what type of registration they will need.
- **More developed publicity strategy for all programs** Word-of-mouth was the main strategy of publicity this year (apart from official IEEE VR social media channels). Next year, additional strategies should be implemented to reach participants outside of the committee's immediate circle. Improved publicity should also help with the number of mentors participating.
  - Stevie - I had one minor successful strategy to target indigenous students by emailing tribal college administrators and posting on indigenous society job boards, as we had 1 awardee from a tribal college this year.
- **Networking between participants within and across the scholarship programs.** Hopefully, next year's conference will allow for in-person attendance. Part of the scholarship funds should be set aside for a local networking event in the form of a brown bag lunch or dinner.