



IFSR Newsletter

**Official Newsletter of the
International Federation for Systems Research**

Editor-in-Chief: Gerhard Chroust

Volume 32, no. 1 (September 2015)



IFSR presentation at ISSS 2015: Mary C. Edson, Nam Ngyen, Stefan Blachfellner

Dear Reader!

You will have noticed a slight change in the layout of this Newsletter. The most obvious (but not so essential) change is a new logo.

This is aimed at modernizing our public image, and our services for our members, especially with respect to communicating with our membership, especially by improving our website. A quality project will lead us further.

Our prestige project are the IFSR Conversations. The 2014 Conversation was a great success and we are aiming at surpass this success in 2016, see inside!

The December 2015 Newsletter will be devoted to a special topic: Latin America. Our guest editor is Silvia Zweifel, Argentina..

Therefore we invite you to give us feedback,

Yours sincerely

Gerhard Chroust



ISSN 1818-0809 (print)
ISSN 1818-0817 (electronic)

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IFSR President's Letter

Gary S. Metcalf

Presidents Letter

One of my PhD students at Saybrook University recently completed her dissertation on the topic of organizational ambidexterity. Essentially, it is the ability for an organization to think both short- and long-term; to maintain its existing functions and processes while also innovating and adapting for the future. That creates an important metaphor for the IFSR.

Our membership numbers continue to stay strong, but our abilities to actively engage in projects remain extremely limited. There are five members on the Executive Committee, but all are volunteers with many other responsibilities. There are no paid positions in the Federation; only small amounts designated for occasional professional services, such as accounting or website design. There are two sources of income: royalties from the Systems Research and Behavioral Science journal, and membership fees from our organizations. (Full members pay \$100 per year; Affiliate members pay no fee.) We remain financially sound because we spend very little, but that limits our outreach and impact, as well. The question, then, is how we should plan and invest for the future.



It is clear that we cannot continue to exist on funding that ultimately traces back to educational institutions (library subscriptions for journals; travel and conference support for faculty members, etc.) But we are not, thus far, in a position to attract new scientific and other research funding, most of which is currently directed at technological solutions.

The Conversations continue to gain strength in participation and their outcomes. Those require a great deal of time and energy, but seem well worth the effort. We are rebalancing the amount of financial support that we share with participants, but are still able to host intensive five-day events, well below the costs for most conferences or other professional meetings. That will help to maintain our financial position, while continuing to provide a unique opportunity for our members.

The Ushuaia Initiative (the Conversations of the Extreme South), began in 2012, extending the Conversation format into South America, through the work of our member organizations there. We have the potential to expand the Conversation events further, possibly renewing the Asilomar Conversations in California or similar places, in order to make the process more accessible to new participants around the world.

Being a sustainable organization requires remaining relevant. We need not only to maintain our membership as systems organizations around the world. We also need to attract those people and

organizations who have similar interests and see the same problems, but may not identify with our history or language.

Some of our future planning will be driven by your input through the project headed by Nam Nguyen, "Improving the quality of the IFSR for its member societies," using the Think2Impact platform. We need your participation in order to have that data.

We will be holding elections for the officers of the IFSR again at the board meeting in Vienna in April (in conjunction with online voting by members who cannot attend in person.) We need to think carefully about who should be leading us into our next phase. These are positions for which any Full Member may nominate candidates, and for which all member organizations should cast their votes.

There have also been discussions about extending the leadership for the IFSR to include a Council – a group who might be responsible for specific projects, but not be committed to the amount of time and effort as the Executive Committee. We need your input, and your participation, if something like that was to work.

Lastly, I am well aware that our roles as the Executive Committee should be in support of you, our membership. We do not need to be taking on projects or initiatives which conflict with that. We do, though, all need to move forward if we are to have any hope of seeing our work take hold and make a difference.

I look forward to talking with you, and hearing from you through whatever channels make sense, in the coming months.

Gary Metcalf



1 IFSR Conversation 2014, Linz, Austria



Next IFSR Board Meeting (2016) *To all members of the IFSR!*

Note the date!

The 2016 Board Meeting of the IFSR is taking place on Saturday, April 2, 2016 in Vienna.

The meeting starts in the morning (around 10 am) and goes on into the afternoon.

The exact time, lieu, and the agenda together with a formal invitation will be sent to the representatives of all IFSR member organizations in due time.

Note that every member is entitled to send two delegates.

Key agenda items will be the election of the next IFSR Executive Committee (President, Vice Presidents and Secretary General) and the Quality Improvement Project of the IFSR, led by Nam Ngyuen (see Quality Project of the IFSR :

Project Proposal



IFSR's activities at the ISSS 2015- conference

The IFSR Executive Committee Meeting 2015 took place during the International Society for System Sciences (ISSS) 2015 Conference, which was organized by or member society, the ISSS in Berlin from August 2 to 7, 2015.

- On Monday, Aug. 3, late afternoon and evening, we held the official EC Meeting, a further meeting was held on Thursday, August 6.

Key topics were :

- Final preparation of the IFSR presentation scheduled for Tuesday, Oct 4, morning, during the plenary session of the ISSS 2015
- Elections of the officers of the EC for the next period (starting May 2016)
- Increasing our contacts in the various regions of the world, by cooperating with local scientists, creating a 'Council' for supporting the EC.
- Planning for the next IFSR Conversation (April 3- 8, 2016) with Mary Edson as the main organizer.



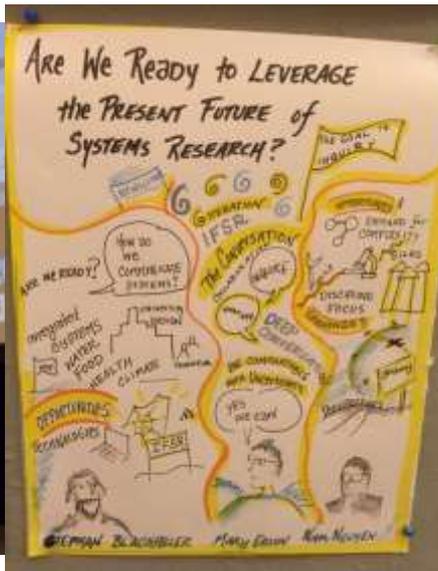
- Preparations for the next IFSR Board Meeting (April 2, 2016)
 - Quality Improvement Project for the IFSR based on the tool Think2Impact, lead by Nam Nguyen, see Quality Project of the IFSR : Project Proposal
 - Interesting contacts to Volkswagenstiftung, Germany,
- We placed a poster about the IFSR in the main conference hall of the conference center, with flyers to be taken home.
 - Gary Metcalf, Mary Edson, and Gerhard Chroust had a long and fruitful discussion with Michael Jackson, the Editor-in-Chief of our Journal 'Systems Research and Behavioral Science' (<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1002/%28ISSN%291099-1743a>) and Michael Lissack, the creator of 'EPI-Search' (<http://epi-search.com>), a contents-oriented search engine for scientific databases: The focal point was to help our member organizations' members to find citations more easily, faster and more completely and also provide access to many texts in scientific databases.
 - We were approached by officers of two scientific organizations in the systems field about a possible membership in the IFSR. It seems that at least one of these two contacts might soon turn into an actual membership.
 - Gerhard Chroust talked at some length with Delia McNamara (ISSS) about IFSR's experience with electronic voting. Gerhard promised some help.
 - All members of the Executive Committee also had their own scientific activities and thus visibility in their field of research:
 - Keynote: *Ockie Bosch and Nam Nguyen*: Capacity Building: *Think2Impact*.
 - Chair -Workshop: **Gerhard Chroust** : VSM Modeling in Practice
 - Chair - Workshop: *David Rousseau, Jennifer Wilby, Julie Billingham, Stefan Blachfellner*: INCOSE --- Systems Philosophy and its Relevance to Systems Engineering.
 - Chair - Workshop: *Ockie Bosch, Nam Nguyen*: Evolutionary Learning Laboratories (ELL)
 - Chair - Panel: **Stefan Blachfellner** : *Are we ready to leverage the present future of systems research? Personal reflections and institutional perspectives on current opportunities and constraints in the field.*
Panelists: **Stefan Blachfellner, Mary Edson, Nam Nguyen**
 - Chair - Panel: **Gary Metcalf** : Systemic Design Panel
Panelists: *Liss Werner, Michael Hohl, Katri-Liisa Pulkinnen, Stefan Blachfellner*
 - Paper: **Edson, Mary C.; Metcalf, Gary** : Systems Research: How Do We Discover What We Need to Know, According to Whom, and for What Purpose?
 - Paper: *Aumayr, Georg; Chroust, Gerhard; Randus, Rudolf; Haider, Gudrun* : Disaster---Management: Challenges for Computer--- Supported Process and Project Management
 - Paper: *Nguyen, Thich V.; Nguyen, Nam, Bosch, Ockie J. H.*: Developing Causal Loop Diagrams for Coffee Supply Chain: Supporting to Enhance Competitive Advantages of a Vietnamese Coffee Product



- Paper: *Pham, Nga; Segers, Mien; Gijsselaers, Wim; Bosch, Ockie; Nguyen, Nam*: Facilitating Training Transfer Effects Based on Systemic Influences of Training Design, Trainees' Motivation and Work Environment --- Empirical Evidence from MBA Programs in Vietnam
- Paper: *Ha, Tuan M.; Bosch, Ockie J.H.; Nguyen, Nam* : Practical Value of the Systems- Based Evolutionary Learning Laboratory in Solving Complex Community Problems in Vietnam
- Paper: *Banson, KE, Nguyen, NC & Bosch, OJH*: The Greater Push” for Growth and Sustainability in Africa - Evidence from Ghana
- Paper: *Banson, KE, Nguyen, NC & Bosch, OJH*: Systemic Structure, Conduct and Performance of the Agricultural Industry in Africa, Evidence from Ghana



Gary Metcalf presenting



An artist's rendering of the IFSR presentation



Gerhard Chroust presenting



IFSR presentation at ISSS 2015

Traditionally the IFSR holds its Board Meetings during or right after the biennial EMCSR conference in Vienna. For the years between the EMCSR conferences we choose a large systemic Conference. For 2015 we chose the ISSS 2015, the major reason being that we meet many scientists of the field and hold intensive discussions. On those occasion we also give a presentation of IFSR's achievements, activities, aims and visions. This year's presentation was given by IFSR's three Vice Presidents. A selection of the foils presented is printed below, the complete foil presentation can be seen on the IFSR Website

International Federation for Systems Research

Are we ready to leverage the present future of Systems Research?

The Executive Board of the IFSR



President	Vice President	Vice President	Vice President	Secretary General
Dr. Gray E. Nebuff USA	Dr. Mary C. Eiden USA	Wing Shihon Eichlmair Austria	Dr. Nam Nguyen Australia/Vietnam	Prof. Dr. Gerhard Ottwald Austria

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The International Federation for Systems Research

- founded in 1980 by George J. Klir, Robert Trappl, and Gerard de Zeeuw
- to stimulate all activities associated with the scientific study of systems, (...), and coordination of such activities on an international level; by coordinating systems research activities of private persons and/or organizations; organizing international meetings, courses, workshops, and the like; promoting international publications in the area of systems research; promoting systems education; and maintaining standards and competence in systems research and education

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Activities of the IFSR

- IFSR Conversation April 2006, 2010, 2012, 2014
- Journal: Systems Research and Behavioural Science; Editor in Chief: Michael Jackson, Deputy Editor: Amanda J. Gregory
- IFSR Book Series; International Series on Systems Science and Engineering, Springer Publications; Editor in Chief: George Klir IASCYS - International Academy of Systems and Cybernetics Sciences

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The members of the IFSR

- Today the Federation represents 44 organizational members from 26 countries on all continents as full members (active organizations in good standing) and affiliated members,

which are represented by the elected IFSR executive board

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Activities of the IFSR

- EMCSR Conference April 2010, 2012, 2014 Ross Ashby memorial lecture, fee for 10 students
- The Systems Science Archives in Vienna: Ludwig von Bertalanffy, Charles Francois, Gordon Pask, and Heinz von Förster
- IFSR Newsletter
- Web Site www.ifsr.org

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IFSR new website – changes from August

What is the IFSR? IFSR Publications IFSR's Members About Us

Journal of IFSR IFSR Newsletter IFSR Conferences IFSR Archive

WELCOME Visitors IFSR NEWS BOOKS EVENTS ARTS SOCIAL MEDIA

"a platform for interactive discourse of systems scientists across boundaries of specific fields and societies"
(Prof. Gerhard Croust, IFSR Secretary General)

Who participates in the Conversation?

- Five teams consisting of five – seven team members on-site
- Additional participants may join virtually (SKYPE, conferencing tech)
- Team topics and team members come from diverse disciplines such as Systems Engineering, Systems Philosophy, Cybernetics, Socio-technical Systems, Socio-Ecological Systems, Relational Systems, Complex Adaptive Systems, Social Systems Science, Public Policy (infrastructure, economic, health, and human services) and Systems Research

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IFSR Conversations

18th Conversation:
Linz, Austria
Sunday, 3 April – Friday, 8 April, 2016

Why is the Conversation valuable to the Systems Community?

- Widen the reach of the Systems Community through advancement of Systems Philosophy, Theory, Thinking, and Practice
- Building bridges between seemingly disparate disciplines for innovation (transdisciplinarity)
- Creation of new models of understanding using systemic perspectives
- Deployment of systemic approaches in resolving wicked problems
- Path toward publication (articles, books, internet media)
- Development of a Systems Community of Inquiry (S-COI)

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What is the Conversation?

Originally conceived by Bela H. Banathy in the 1960s, the IFSR Conversation is a deep dive into Systems Research, Theory, Philosophy, and Practice through generative dialogue amongst colleagues. Advanced exploration and development of Systems related projects is encouraged. The Conversation is an opportunity to spend five days engaged in rich discussions to understand specific dimensions of Systems and incubate innovative projects, which will advance the application of Systemic approaches in the current, complex environment for improved outcomes.

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Join us!

- If you work in the systems area ...
- talk to us!
- connect with us!
- INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR SYSTEMS RESEARCH
- <http://www.ifsr.org>
- Gerhard.croust@ku.at

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Quality Project of the IFSR : Project Proposal Invitation-to-join!

Project Proposal

Project Title: Improving the 'quality' of the IFSR for its member societies

Project Team: The Executive Committee (EC) of the IFSR

Project Coordinator: Dr Nam Nguyen (a Vice President of the IFSR)

Project Co-Investigators: Professor Ockie Bosch, PhD Candidate Kwamina Banson, PhD Candidate Tuan Ha and the [Think2Impact™ Team](#)

Project Duration: September 2015 – April 2016



Project Aim and Objectives: The overall aim of this project is to improve the 'quality' of the IFSR for its 44 member societies and their members. The specific objectives of this project are:

1. to identify the barriers and drivers towards improving the IFSR's quality (the issue under consideration)
2. to develop a systems map (big picture) of the issue under consideration
3. to identify the leverage points and systemic intervention strategies in the system
4. to develop operational plans for implementing the systemic intervention strategies
5. to implement some of these plans (#4 above)
6. to reflect on the plan implementation (#5)
7. to integrate, share lessons and new innovations amongst the systems societies in the world

Project Approach: The project will use the systems-based Evolutionary Learning Laboratory (ELLab) framework and the Think2Impact platform to facilitate the necessary steps to achieve the aforementioned aim and objectives.

The ELLab is a generic framework that enables the flexible use of a participatory systems analysis approach and other systems tools to promote shared vision, mutual learning and actions among stakeholders during the whole learning and decision making process (Bosch, Nguyen et al. 2013). Full participation by all stakeholders in an interactive and 'safe' learning and decision making environment enhances mutual understanding and accountability toward joint actions and thereby sustainable outcomes

(Nguyen, Bosch et al. 2011). True participation also generates a sense of ownership.

EL Labs use a tested seven step process to build capability in the area of Systems Thinking. The universal design of this process keeps it relevant to organizations, governments, companies and individuals. The ELLab framework has been used and applied successfully in solving complex problems in a variety of contexts, ranging from 'breaking down the silos' in government's departments to improving the quality of life for small-holder women farmers in South East Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa (Bosch, Nguyen et al. 2013).

The successful application of ELLabs for dealing with complex issues, the growing need for its application and potential benefits in different global contexts led to the evolution of Think2Impact™. As a collaborative web-based global platform for applied Systems Thinking,

Bosch, O. J. H., N. C. Nguyen, T. Maeno and T. Yasui (2013). "Managing Complex Issues through Evolutionary Learning Laboratories." *Systems Research and Behavioral Science* **30**(2): 116-135.

Think2Impact™ is aimed at scaling up the successful ELLabs model to create an ecosystem that can help individuals and organizations understand and manage complex challenges more effectively.

Nguyen, N. C., O. J. H. Bosch and K. E. Maani (2011). "Creating 'learning laboratories' for sustainable development in biospheres: A systems thinking approach." *Systems Research and Behavioral Science* **28**(1): 51-62.

===== INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE =====

Dear IFSR Colleagues,

You are cordially invited to participate in a project to help us understand how to better meet the needs of our 44 member societies and their members. For those of you who attended our strategy meeting in Vienna, following the EMCSR in 2014, this is the project which developed from the offer by Nam Nguyen and Ockie Bosch to use their systems-based approach with our members. It is being framed in terms of quality improvement, that is, how to help us work better together. The specific objectives of this project are included in the enclosed project proposal.

The project team includes the Executive Committee (EC) of the IFSR and various other co-investigators. Dr Nam Nguyen (a Vice President of the IFSR) is the project coordinator.



The project will use the systems-based Evolutionary Learning Laboratory (ELLab) framework and the Think2Impact™ platform to facilitate the necessary steps to achieve its overall aim and objectives.

1. The project will use 'online' workshops (one of the functions of Think2Impact) to conduct different workshops with the participants – meaning that the participants can provide their answers/comments at their own time on line (i.e. there is no need for participants to meet face to face at the same time);
2. The project team will work together to develop the systems models (e.g. a causal loop diagram, systems archetypes and Bayesian Belief Networks) to identify potential systemic interventions that will improve the quality of the IFSR. This will be done based on the data/information collected from the participants;
3. The project team will then work further with the participants (via the Think2Impact platform) to refine the models and identify the systemic interventions/action plans – as the member societies are involved in the whole process – they will most likely take 'ownership' of the systemic interventions/actions and work on their own or work in collaboration with other members or societies and the IFSR on these actions;
4. Actions with a high likelihood to improve the quality will then be implemented and the impact will be reflected upon (using Think2Impact);

5. The project will also integrate and share new lessons and innovations amongst the systems societies in the world.

The project team will soon be in contact with you provide you with access to the Think2Impact platform, and to take you through the necessary steps for participating. If you agree to participate we can assure you that your involvement will not take an excessive amount of time. If you would prefer NOT to participate, please contact Nam (nam.nguyen@adelaide.edu.au) so that your name can be removed from future communications.

Thank you very much for your involvement and assistance!

With our best regards,

Gerhard Chroust (Sept 6, 2015) Gary Metcalf



In September 2014 the IFSR-EC bestowed the title of FELLOW OF THE IFSR on Charles François, Argentina, Honorary President of GESI, for outstanding services to the IFSR and the Systems Community at large.



This honor is given with a certificate as shown at right. The greatest problem proved to be getting the certificate (with its glass frame) to Charles. This problem lasted until the ISSS 2015 when Alexander Laszlo was able to take it with him to Argentina and hand it to Charles. In return we received the following e-mail:

Dear friends,

I am very glad to let you know that yesterday your beautiful plaque finally arrived to my hands; after its long travel across continents...it is now with this Fellow of yours at home. I enclose some photos with the friends from GESI, who brought it to me from Alexander Laszlo's hands. He is now at Ushuaia, most extreme southern city in the world, sharing the "3rd. Conversations of the Southern Extreme". The envelope containing the reimbursement was also well received, and I hope the books sent will be useful and motivating, within the collections of the valuable Bertalanffy Center.

You may see behind us a painting received from Prof. Ernesto Grün which was done by him from a photo at the Fuschl lake, and taken in one of our Conversations there; very nice and opportune to have it here, for this occasion to remember.

with thanks and best wishes,

Charles



Charles Francois (middle) with Ing Néstor Antonio Domínguez and María Teresa Barinotto.



IFSR Conversations (formerly Fuschl Conversations)

The IFSR conversations are one of IFSR's key contributions to the Systems Community.



What is the IFSR Conversation?

Mary C. Edson



When asked about the value the IFSR brings to the Systems Community, the answer can sound heavy. After all, the IFSR serves as the umbrella organization that connects many Systems Science related societies with one another as a

central core. Its mission is to advance the Systems Sciences through research, education, and collaboration between the entities. That response sounds laden with administration. And yet, the IFSR sponsors biennial Conversations, which put these objectives into practice at collective and individual levels. So, exactly what is the IFSR Conversation?

First, it is important to set the context of the Conversation. Bela H. Banathy conceived the Conversations in the 1980s. Bela's life's work focused on education and learning systems. His design of the Conversations speaks to his philosophical understanding of complex adaptive social systems (CASS) as self-organizing, characterizing emergent properties, and learning in a supportive environment (matrix hierarchy) through iteration and recursion. He created safe space for collaborative dialogue that promoted inquiry and innovation (Byrne, 1998; Banathy & Jenlink,

2008). Historically, Conversations took place in Fuschl and Pernegg. The last two (2012 and 2014) have been held at Sankt Magdalena near Linz, Austria. The 2016 Conversation will also take place at Sankt Magdalena.

Conversations originated as an alternative to traditional conferences. They acknowledged the insight that most of the benefit for participants resulted from the discussions and conversations with one another rather than from the formal content or presentations. The initial format for the Conversations was built around Social Systems Design.

Bela defined a conversation as:

- a collectively guided disciplined inquiry
- an exploration of issues of social/societal significance
- engaged by scholarly practitioners in self-organized teams
- who selects a theme for their conversation
- which is initiated in the course of a preparation phase that leads to an intensive face-to-face learning phase.

Some past topics include:

- Basic Concepts of the Systems Sciences
- Systems Theory as a Foundation for Systems Engineering
- Systems Engineering Praxis
- Cybernetics to Second Order Science
- Systems Philosophy: Continuing Development of GST*
- Systems Research: Foundations, Quality and Evaluation
- Evolutionary Learning Labs
- Thrivable Systems
- Conversation

At a recent meeting of the International Society for the Systems Sciences (ISSS) in Berlin, I was asked whether we are ready to leverage the present future of Systems Research. Through the Conversations, I believe we can for several

reasons. Through the dialogic space provided in the Conversations, we can create the conditions for the emergent strategies that will cultivate resilience in systems.

One of the most important competencies for systemicists is being comfortable with uncertainty, an intersection of unpredictability, boundarylessness, and complexity. The Conversations provide an atmosphere for this competency to develop and deepen because the participants, while given a general understanding of the topic, are in an emergent environment. The outcomes of the Conversation are not known going into it, for a reason. Comfort with uncertainty liberates cognitive space through acceptance of a given problématique as a challenge. The environment of the Conversation provides a safe space for exploration of ideas through curiosity, inquiry, generativity, creativity, and learning. Even when conflict arises, it emerges as creative destruction (Schumpeter, 1942). This safe space allows individuals to move from fear to innovation through mutual respect and trust in the team's endeavor for deeper understanding of a topic.



Seminar Hotel St. Magdalena, Linz

The Conversation provides a dialogic space in which inquiry and learning are encouraged with few constraints or expectations of outcomes. Conversations are not goal-oriented. The “goal” is learning and discerning development in the Systems Sciences. While specific strategies may emerge, the primary output is insight, understanding, and illumination of a path forward.

The intimate environment of the Conversation provides an atmosphere for reflective learning. Sankt Magdalena is just outside the city of Linz.



Its bucolic environment draws participants into the adjoining woods for lunchtime strolls which often lead to new insights into the day's dialogue. The sense of nurturing ideas in a nourishing environment is palpable here.

In addition to being an intense inquiry into the Systems Sciences, Conversations prove to be profound human experiences - openly discussing topics, opinions, ideas, and reflection. As one participant said, "When you leave Fuschl (the Conversation), you are a different person." Through the Conversation, we sharpen our cognitive tool set by becoming comfortable with uncertainty because we learn to trust the emergent process of collaboration and collective learning through dialogue. Transformation was Bela's vision for the Conversations and his spirit lives on as we plan for 2016. It is our hope you will join us by submitting a topic for consideration.

Summary reports and proceedings from the Conversations are documented in the newsletter and on IFSR's website at ifsr.org. For further information about the Conversations, please send an email with your inquiry to ifsr.org@gmail.com.

References:

- Byrne, D. (2008). *Complexity Theory and the Social Sciences: An Introduction*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Banathy, B. H. & Jenlink, J. P. (2008). *Dialogue as a Collective Means of Design Conversation*. New York, NY: Springer.
- Schumpeter, J. A. (1942). *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. New York: Harper.



Conversation Proceedings 2014 published

Edson, M.C. and Metcalf, G.S. and Chroust, G. and Nguyen, N. and Blachfellner, S.; Systems Thinking: New Directions in Theory, Practice and Applications, Inst. f. Telecooperation, Johannes Kepler University Linz, Austria, SEA-SR-41, March 2015), ISBN 3-902457-41-7

See also : <http://www.ifsr.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/IFSR-Conversation-2014-Proceedings.pdf>



Announcement of the IFSR-Conversation 2016



International Federation
for Systems Research



**Announcement of the Topic Teams for the
Eighteenth IFSR Conversation
Linz, Austria
Sunday, 3 April – Friday, 8 April, 2016**

The Executive Committee of the International Federation for System Research is pleased to announce the Topic Teams for the Eighteenth IFSR Conversation in Linz, Austria, which will be held at the Seminarhotel, St. Magdalena, Linz, Austria. Thank you to all members of the IFSR community who submitted topics this year. The Executive Committee was challenged to choose just five topics. The topics and team leaders are:

1. Systems Engineering: The Role of Systems Science in Developing a Foundational Theory – Janet Willis Singer and Michael Singer
2. Unity in Diversity: Making the Implicit Explicit - Gary Smith and Brigitte Daniel Allegro
3. Looking for Systemicity through Boulding's Skeleton of Science, Hierarchy Theory and Transdisciplinarity - Jennifer Wilby
4. Systems Philosophy and General Systems Theory - David Rousseau and Julie Billingham
5. Systems Research: Evaluation – What is “good” Systems Research? - Mary Edson

Please join us in congratulating these teams on the acceptance of their team proposals. They can now begin preparations for the Conversation.

Questions about the 2016 IFSR Conversation should be directed to Mary Edson at ifsr.org@gmail.com. We look forward to a vibrant Conversation in Linz this coming spring.



Next Newsletter (December 2016)

on Systems Sciences in Latin America

Call for Contribution

The next IFSR Newsletter (December 2016) will be especially devoted to information and News from Latin America.

Silvia Zweifel, Argentina; has agreed to be the Special Guest Editor for this issue

For more details and contributions Please contact Silvia: silviazweifel@fibertel.com.ar



News from our Member Societies



International Society for Knowledge and Systems Sciences (ISKSS)

KSS2014 (Sapporo, 2014)

Professor Xijin Tang

The annual event of the International Society for Knowledge and Systems Sciences (ISKSS, one IFSR member organization), the 15th International Symposium on Knowledge and Systems Sciences, was held in Sapporo during November 1-2, 2014. The venue of KSS2014 is located in the School of Information Science and Technology, University of Hokkaido. Over 40 participants from China mainland, Hong Kong SAR China, Japan and UK attended KSS2014.

"Knowledge Management in Economic Forecasting" by Professor Shouyang Wang (CAS Academy of Mathematics and Systems Science, China),

"Computational Semantics in Knowledge Engineering" by Professor Rossi Setchi (Cardiff University, UK) "Service Ecosystems Innovation in Multi-level Adaptive Cycles Model Perspective" by Professor Kyoichi Kijima (Tokyo Institute of Technology, Japan),

There were 3 keynote speeches:

together with 8 parallel sessions covering topics on data management, decision analysis, information / knowledge strategy, knowledge management, knowledge science, service science, service systems, and socio-technical systems.

During the symposium, the council meeting of ISKSS chaired by Professor Shouyang Wang (AMSS-CAS, ISKSS president during 2008-2014) was also held on November 1, 2014. Professor Jian Chen (Tsinghua University, China) was elected as the new president of the society. With Professor Yanzhong Dang (Dalian University of Technology), Kyoichi Kijima (Tokyo Institute of Technology), Professor Marek Makowski (IIASA) and Professor Gerald

Midgley (University of Hull) are still serving as vice presidents of the society, Professor Tiejun Ma (East China University of Science and Technology) A/Professor Van Nam Huynh (JAIST), A/Professor Mina Ryoke (Tsukuba University), Professor Xijin Tang (CAS Academy of Mathematics and Systems Science), Professor Jiangning Wu (Dalian University of Technology) and Professor Taketoshi Yoshida (JAIST) were nominated as new vice presidents.

A pre-symposium themed Knowledge Synthesis and Justification was held on October 30, 2014. More details can be found at <http://www.jaist.ac.jp/KSS/KSS2014/>



Professor Shouyang Wang (ISKSS President) gave a lecture



Professor Rossi Setchi gave a keynote speech



Professor Kyoichi Kijima replying to Professor Jifa GU



ISKSS council meeting



Group photo taken after all activities



New Books on the market

B., LENT Cybernetic Approach to Project Management Springer 2013.

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IMPRESSUM: Mediuminhaber, Herausgeber, Satz und Layout: Int. Federation for Systems Research., Wien
f. d. Inhalt verantwortlich: Prof. G. Chroust, Johannes Kepler Universität Linz, 4040 Linz, Druck: WLK Druck, A-2340 Mödling,
Austria, version 1.0