

Distinguished Lecturer Program

Dinesh Rajan

Southern Methodist University (SMU)

rajand@engr.smu.edu

Outline

- Mechanics of DLT
 - What, how ...
- Feedback from past tours
- New regional lecturers tour
- Suggestions for improvement
 - Open discussions

Objective of DLT

- Opportunity for members to listen and interact with an internationally renowned expert
- Funding is provided to enable a series of lecturer to address multiple groups
 - Individual lectures are not funded.
 - at least three (now 4) groups in separate locations within reasonable geographical proximity to each other.
- "Grassroots" organizers may be Chapters, Sections, local conference organizers, or even a group of members in an area where no ComSoc chapter exists.
- At least two months "lead time" is recommended to allow local groups time to advertise.

DLT: Financial responsibilities

- Funding is provided by COMSOC to cover lecturer's travel expenses.
- Chapter financial responsibilities
 - Living expenses, such as lodging and meals,
 - transportation to and from the airport,
 - reasonable business travel standards must be met.
- The Distinguished Lecturer must not profit financially from the lecture tour.
- Reimbursement
 - Receipts must be provided (in accordance with IEEE and Communications Society rules).
 - Final approval is the responsibility of the Director - Membership Programs Development.

Process: DLT coordinator

- Solicit DLT requests from interested chapters
 - Email is sent to all comsoc chapter chairs at the beginning of the year and at 2 other times during the year
- Availability and preference of distinguished lecturer collected
 - Some lecturers provide concrete day/week availability and regional touring preference
- Matching of interests
 - Based on responses from chairs, geographically close chapters are grouped together
 - Each group is given lecturer availability information
 - Feedback is sought from group as to preference from with in available lecturers
 - Potential dates are discussed
 - Involve additional groups as required to meet minimum chapter criterion

DLT goals

- Up to 5 tours in each region (e.g. North America)
- No more than 2 tours per lecturer per year
- 43 distinguished lecturers
- 75 active chapters in NA region

DLT: attendee cost

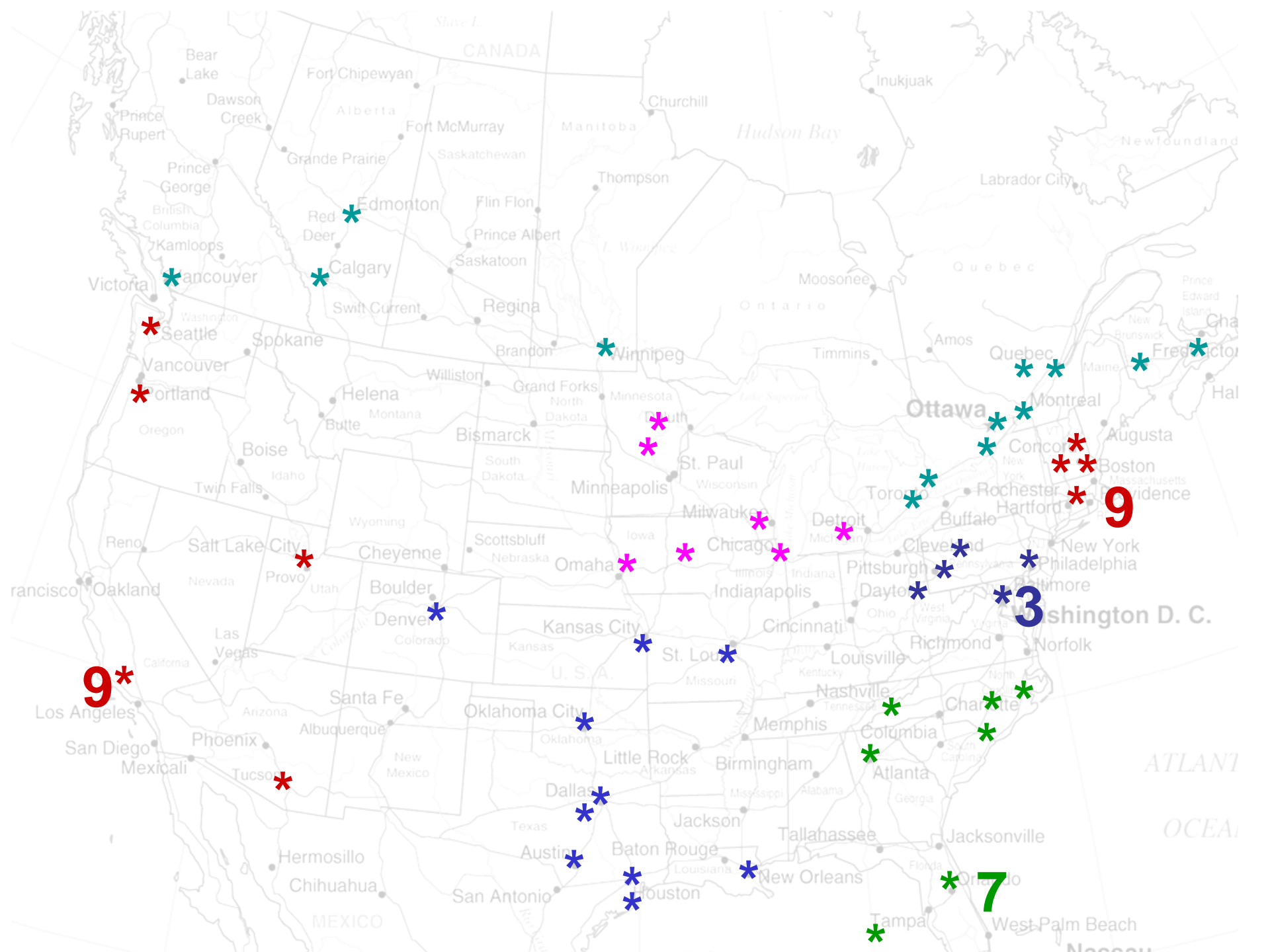
- Charging fees to attend lectures is not recommended
- Local chapters may charge attendees for lunch/dinner as appropriate

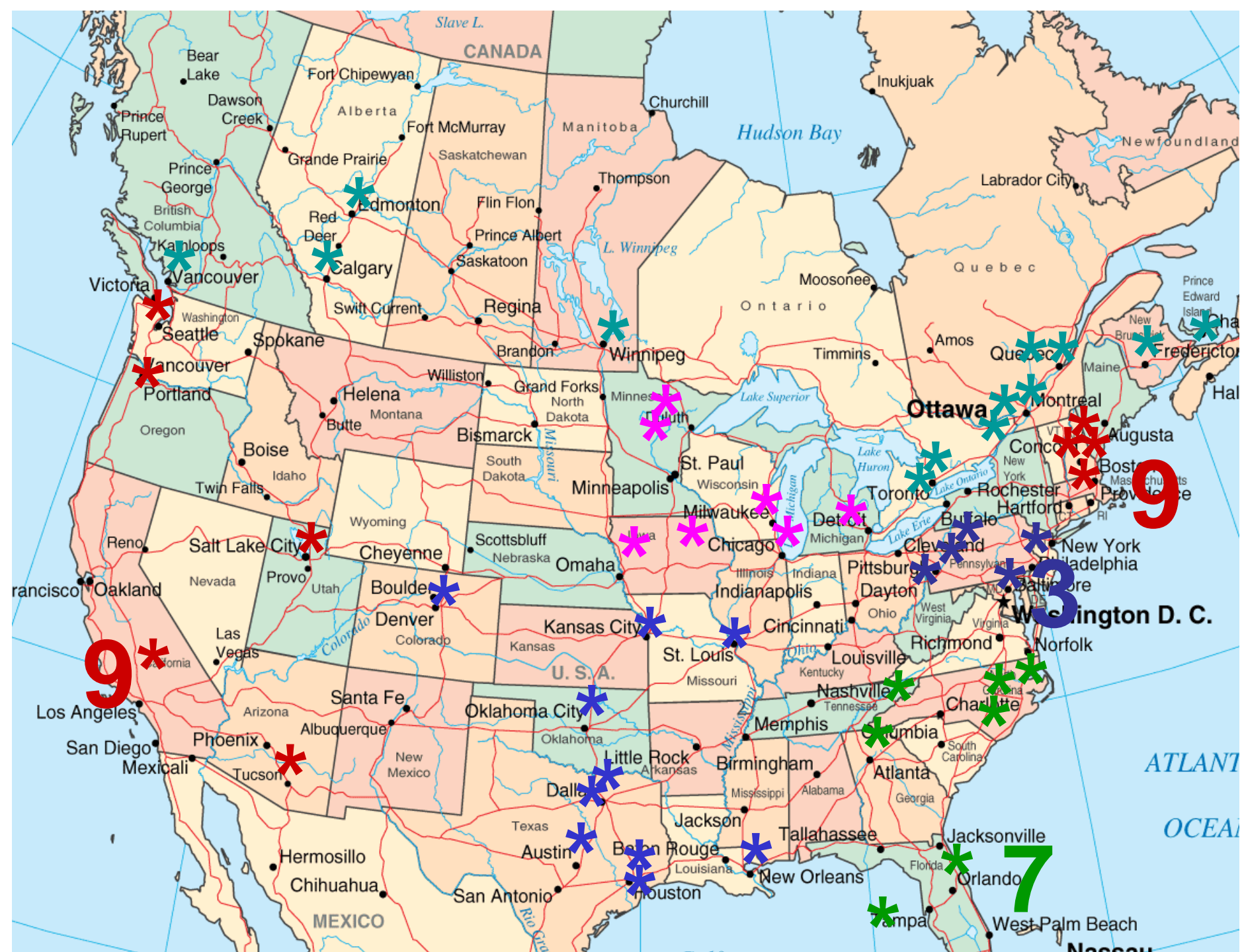
Comsoc Chapters in NA

Region	Number of chapters
1 (NE USA)	12
2 (Eastern USA)	7
3 (South eastern USA)	15 ₍₋₂₎
4 (Central USA)	8 ₍₋₁₎
5 (Southwestern USA)	11 ₍₋₁₎
6 (Western USA)	14 ₍₋₁₎
7 (Canada)	14 ₍₋₁₎

81 ₍₋₆₎ = 75 active chapters

Number in bracket implies inactive chapters





Summary of tours in 2006

- 5 completed tours
- 15 chapters involved
 - Not all groups that participated were comsoc chapters
- Budgeted expenses to comsoc ~ \$9300
- Estimate of expense to each chapter ~ \$100-\$300
- Effective cost per chapter involved in tour
~ **\$750**



Distinguished lecturers in 2006

- Dr. Biglieri (Italy)
 - Toronto, Kingston, Ottawa, Montreal
- Dr. Ephremides (Washington DC)
 - Nashua (NH), Portland (Maine), Orono (Maine), and Fredericton (NB)
- Dr. Bregini (Switzerland)
 - Dallas (TX), Galveston (TX), St. Louis (MO)
- Dr. Vaidya (Illinois)
 - Los Angeles, San Diego, Orange County (CA)
- Dr. Pursley (South Carolina)
 - Cedar Rapids-Iowa, Ames-Iowa, Schaumburg-Chicago (IL), Minneapolis-MN, and Rochester-MN.

Changes for 2007 tours

- Lecturers will be requested to record lectures for future use
 - Available for comsoc members worldwide
- Minimum of 4 lectures in tour (new requirement)
 - Pros
 - Increased economic value
 - Cons
 - Lack of seriousness from regional chapters that are forced to participate
 - Distinguished lecturer unhappy with treatment?
 - Scheduling becomes challenging

Observations from tour

- Some chapter requests could not be satisfied
 - Funding
 - Scheduling was difficult
 - E.g. there were 5 geographically adjacent chapters that were interested in a tour
 - Lack of cooperation from neighboring chapters
 - One or two requests from “isolated” chapters
 - Request came in later in the calendar year
- Some chapters (e.g. Dallas) seem to get more “lucky”
 - how proactive the chapter chairs are
 - What the relations with neighboring chapters are

Feedback process

- Collected from Distinguished lecturer after tour
- From chapter chair
- From all attendees of the lecture

Sample feedback

- Overall extremely popular and well received
 - Usually the highlight meeting of the year for many chapters
- Lecturers sometime feel: too much demand and too little reward
- Some attendees thought talk was not appropriate for average engineer

Possible ways to improve

- Possible single chapter tours
 - When a DL is visiting (for e.g. for a conference/meeting/...) in geographical proximity of a chapter, the chapter chair could contact comsoc regional director to arrange a special Distinguished lecture in that chapter
 - Cost of travel from “nearby” place to chapter could be covered by COMSOC
 - May not be appropriate to cover entire cost from local city of lecturer to chapter location
 - Especially useful for overseas lecturers

Other options for increasing value

- Give chapters the option of having a longer tutorial style lecture
- Make slides available to members later
- Have handouts during lecture
- Have more Q&A/interaction time with lecturer
- Panel discussion with distinguished lecturer

More options going forward

- Match interest of chapter audience with speaker background
 - Academic/industry, theoretical/practical
- Each time committee changes there might be a delay in process
 - Appoint committee in staggered/overlapping manner
- Increase funding
 - Increase interest level in chapters
 - Not “enough” requests for DLT are coming in!
 - Agree upon a reasonable method for allocating DLT to chapters
 - Reward more successful chapters
 - Help the newer/smaller chapters
 - No universal metric/ranking that will satisfy all chapters

Regional Lecturer tour

- New initiative by Dr. Goyal
- Enable lot more tours to increase member value
- Allows “prominent/potential future distinguished lecturer” comsoc members to tour and lecture in a nearby region
 - Typically one or two chapters involved
 - Lecturer need not be a distinguished lecturer but some one who is respected and well known in the field
 - Low cost per lecture
 - Expect to fund ~ 50 such lectures world wide
 - Final responsibility is with Director – MPD

DL tours of other societies

- Signal processing society
 - Single chapter tours allowed
 - Only active SPS chapters are eligible
 - At least 2 meetings in previous year
 - Filed annual report
 - *For approved Society DLs, Chapters may qualify for up to \$1,750 per year from the Society DL Program subsidy in addition to up to \$1,750 per year from the Society Chapters account to defray Lecturer travel expenses. **
 - *For speakers who are NOT Society Distinguished Lecturers but who are pre-approved by the Program Coordinator, up to \$1,750 per year from the Society Chapters account may be available to help defray speaker travel expense. **

* From Presentation by Prof. Alex Kot, Chapter coordinator chair, IEEE SPS.

Open discussions

Contact

Dinesh Rajan

rajand@engr.smu.edu

Thank you