

## Chairs' Welcome

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On behalf of the Conference Organizing Committee, the Antennas and Propagation Society, and USNC-URSI, we welcome you to Puerto Rico and the 2016 IEEE International Symposium on Antennas and Propagation and USNC-URSI Radio Science Meeting.

This year is an historic year for AP-S and URSI as, for the first time, the flagship conference is being held in IEEE Region 9. Region 9 encompasses all of Central and South America and the Caribbean, and is one of the most important regions of the world for future growth in Antennas and Propagation fields. AP-S is actively recruiting students and professionals to join our ranks from countries throughout Region 9, and the Society is actively forming chapters throughout the Region. With the major investments in education and infrastructure throughout the region, we expect to see increased technical activities from this area over the next decades.

This year also is the first time that we are hosting the symposium at a full-service property. Almost all of the conference activities will take place on site at the El Conquistador Resort and Hotel, and many of these activities will leverage the natural beauty of the island. We are in the tropics, and it will be warm, so please feel free to join me in making yourself comfortable in the warm climate. On Monday evening all attendees are invited to join us poolside for a friendly welcome reception, and on Tuesday and Thursday we are offering shuttle services for dinner in Fajardo and San Juan, so please avail yourself of the opportunities presented by this unique destination.

The technical program is packed full of exciting, leading-edge content. We have over 1500 technical papers organized into oral, poster, and special sessions running Monday through Thursday. For the first time, it will be possible to take short courses during the week, with two-hour courses offered on Wednesday afternoon on Antenna Design with Characteristic Modes and Mindfulness Practices for Engineers and Scientists. We have lowered short-course fees this year, so please sign up! On Monday at lunch-time there will be a special open presentation by Dr. Joan Schmelz, the Assistant Director of the Arecibo Observatory, and on Tuesday and Friday, there are (sold out!) special behind-the-scenes tours of the Arecibo Observatory. If you weren't able to get tickets to the tour, I encourage you to consider visiting the facility yourself while you are on the island. On Wednesday, Prof. Mona Jarrahi, the 2015 recipient of the IEEE AP-S Lot Shafai Mid-Career Distinguished Achievement Award will be the keynote speaker at the Women in Engineering Luncheon. On Thursday, Profs. George Hanson and Hao Xin will host a panel discussion on Multiphysics and the Role of Commercial EM Solvers in Graduate Education. Finally, while there are no technical talks on Friday, if you find yourself on the island, consider registering one of full- or half-day short courses being offered late in the week.

Of special note, Tuesday is "Student and Young Professional" day at the symposium. The Student Paper Contest finalist poster session will be held, as will the finals of the Student Design Contest. The day concludes with a beach party dinner on Palomino Island. Tickets may still be available for that event, so please check at registration.

We wish you a great week here in Puerto Rico, and we hope that you take the time to enjoy both the technical aspects of the meeting and the relaxing activities that Puerto Rico has to offer.

J. Scott Tyo, *UNSW Canberra at the Australian Defence Force Academy*  
Richard Ziolkowski, *University of Arizona*  
Rafael Rodríguez-Solís, *University of Puerto Rico - Mayagüez*