

Engineering Society of Systems Scholars



Annual Member Meeting | April 6, 2026

Paul T. Grogan, President

Welcome



- Inaugural **Annual Member Meeting** of the Engineering Society of Systems Scholars
- Culmination of a transition year from the Council of Engineering Systems Universities (CESUN)
- Help shape the future of the organization to support systems scholars in engineering

Leadership



Paul Grogan, President

Associate Professor, School of Computing and Augmented Intelligence, Arizona State University

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Emily Liu, Secretary

Industrial and Systems Engineering Department Head and Professor, Mechanical, Aerospace, and Nuclear Engineering, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

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Bryan Mesmer, Vice President and Treasurer

Department Chair and Associate Professor, Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering and Engineering Management, The University of Alabama in Huntsville

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Zoe Szajnfarber, Past President

Professor, Department of Engineering Management and Systems Engineering, George Washington University

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Meeting Agenda



- Background and Context
- Incorporation Status
- Financial Status
- Community Service
- Membership Initiatives
- Director Elections
- New Business – Open Floor
- Adjournment

The background of the slide is a complex network of light gray lines connecting small gray dots, creating a web-like or molecular structure. The dots and lines are distributed across the entire page, with some areas appearing denser than others.

Background and Context

Background



- Council of Engineering Systems Universities (CESUN) established in 2004 to provide a mechanism for universities to work together:
 - Discuss critical issues related to development of the field
 - Undertake joint projects of mutual interest
 - Share educational material
 - Provide a clearing house to match PhD students with faculty opportunities
 - Organize meetings, symposia, and conferences
 - Work with related professional societies (INCOSE, INFORMS, IEEE, IISE)
- Encompasses programs in: systems engineering, technology and policy, engineering management, innovation and entrepreneurship, system and decision analysis, operations research, manufacturing, product development, industrial engineering

What Has Changed?

- Broader recognition of systems/inter-/transdisciplinary engineering
- Proliferation of systems-relevant conference & journal venues
- Advances in teleconferencing and virtual meeting technology

What Has Not Changed?

- Few standalone systems programs
- Systems scholars embedded in disciplinary engineering units
- Need for systems knowledge to address societal challenges

Engineering Society of Systems Scholars



- Core identities of ESSyS:
 - Engineering: problem solvers, designers, builders, inventors
 - Systems: interconnected, complex, emergent, socio-technical
 - Scholars: those who create and disseminate artifacts that reflect expertise
- Limitations on scope:
 - Engineering includes both the artifact and the system that creates the artifact
 - Neither references engineering systems nor systems engineering
 - Does not encompass broader systems science
- Support career progression for systems scholars at multiple levels
- Coordinate future meetings of overlapping communities: ESSyS will not host a separate annual symposium

Acknowledgements

ESSyS Logo

- Credit: Jieun Hong, Systems Engineering Research Center



- Colors reflect traditional academic regalia hood colors for engineering (orange) and philosophy (dark blue)
- Icon illustrates interwoven strands, characteristic of complexity
- Interconnected font treatment presents a unified community

ESSyS Website

- Credit: Navrita Singh and Lisa Aultman-Hall, University of Waterloo

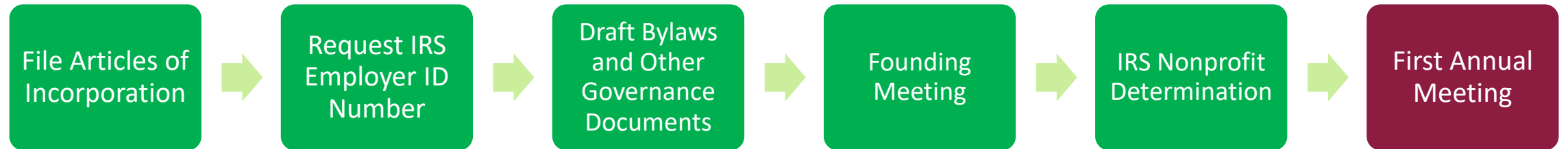


A background pattern of a network graph with numerous nodes and connecting lines, rendered in a light gray color. The nodes are small circles, and the lines are thin, creating a complex, interconnected web of connections across the entire page.

Incorporation Status

Incorporation Status

- Working with an AZ law firm specializing in nonprofit organizations:
 - Articles of Incorporation approved in AZ on Sep 3, 2025
 - Business bank account opened on Oct 20, 2025
 - Bylaws, policies, and initial directors/officers approved on Dec 2, 2025
 - IRS nonprofit determination letter received on Jan 5, 2026
 - Board meetings held on Jan 14, Feb 20, and Mar 13, 2026

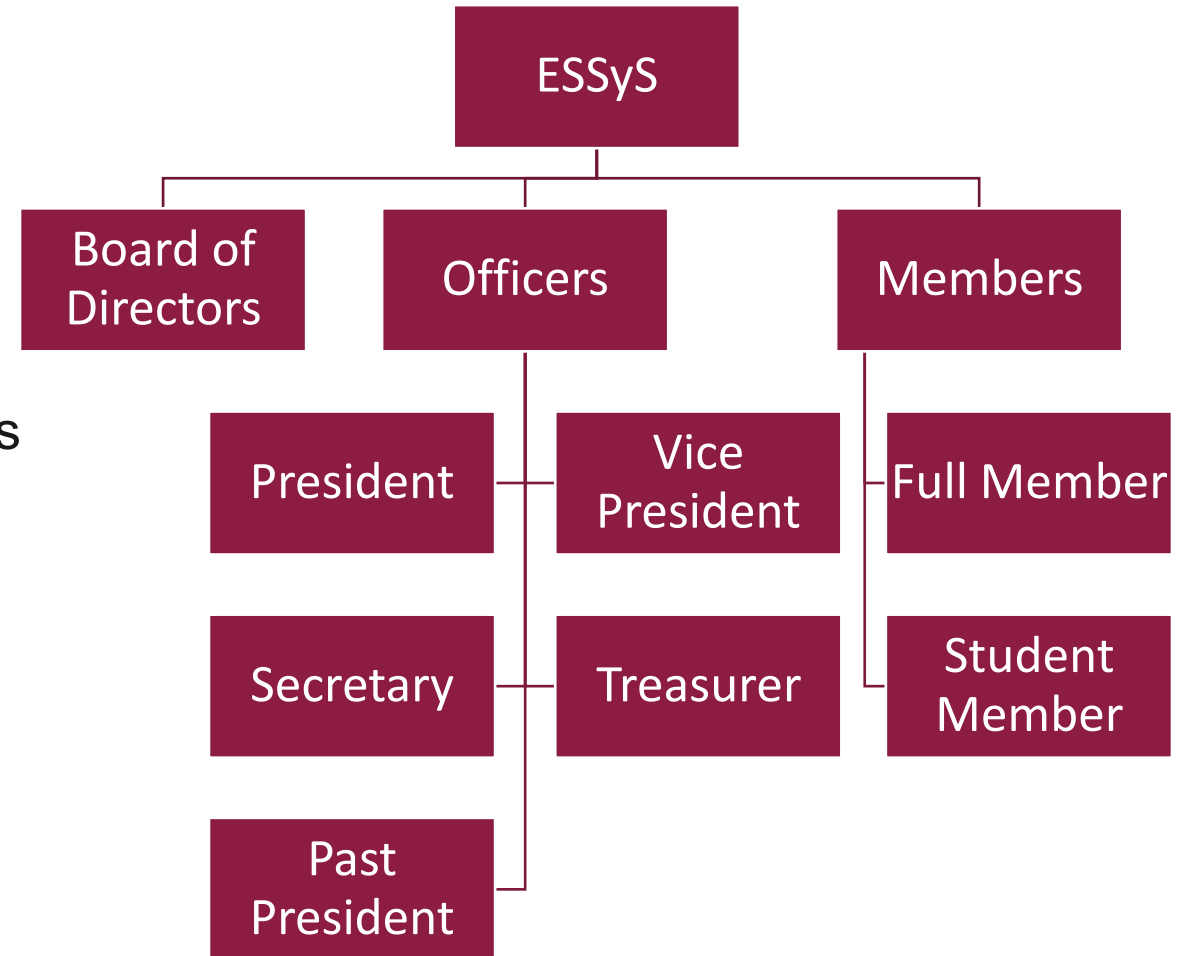


- Upcoming deadlines
 - Annual Report to Arizona Corporation Commission due August 26, 2026
 - IRS 990 Tax Return due November 15, 2026

Organizational documents are publicly available on the ESSyS website: <https://essys.org/org-docs/>

Bylaws

- Members
 - Full (voting) and student (non-voting)
 - 10% quorum to conduct business
 - Elects Directors
- Board of Directors
 - Up to nine volunteer members
 - 66% supermajority quorum to conduct business
 - Serve two-year terms
 - Affirms elected Directors
 - Elects Officers
- Officers
 - President, Vice President, Past President, Secretary, and Treasurer
 - Serve one-year terms



Bylaws are publicly available on the ESSyS website: <https://essys.org/org-docs/>

Governance Policies

- Confidentiality Policy*
- Conflict of Interest Policy*
- Fundraising Policies and Guidelines
- Gift Acceptance Policies and Guidelines
- Record Retention Policy
- Signature Authority Policy
- Travel and Expense Reimbursement Policy
- Whistleblower Policy

* All directors/officers must sign prior to the start of their term

Governance policies are publicly available on the ESSyS website: <https://essys.org/org-docs/>

Membership

- 43 Members as of April 3, 2026
 - 40 Full Members
 - 21 grandfathered from CESUN
 - 19 new ESSyS memberships
 - 3 Student Members
 - All new ESSyS memberships
- Annual membership model: will send periodic renewal notices
 - \$100 Full Membership
 - \$25 Student Membership
- 375 subscribers to ESSyS List
 - 40-50% open rate on newsletters
- Membership target: 50 during next fiscal year

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Financial Status

Financial Statement – Summary

- Currently hold ~\$2k of operating funds in business checking account
- Technical operating expenses (website, email, etc.) currently estimated at about \$500/year
- Business operating expenses (accounting, tax preparation) are not yet estimated
- Awaiting transfer of CESUN funds from GWU (~\$13k)

Financial Statement – Profit and Loss

| Operating Income | Total |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| Full Membership (20) | 2000.00 |
| Student Membership (3) | 75.00 |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| Total | 2075.00 |

| Operating Expense | Total |
|----------------------------|---------------|
| Payment Processing Fees | 67.31 |
| Website/Email Hosting Fees | 92.61 |
| Postage Fees | 8.85 |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| Total | 168.77 |

Financial Statement – Balance Sheet

| Assets | Total |
|------------------|----------------|
| Checking Account | 1982.26 |
| Pending Payouts | 23.97 |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| Total | 2006.23 |

| Liabilities & Equities | Total |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| Liabilities | |
| Reimbursement due to Paul Grogan | 100.00 |
| Equities | |
| Current Year Earnings | 1906.23 |
| | |
| | |
| Total | 2006.23 |

Financial Statement – FY26 Budget

| Service | Provider | Cost |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|--------|
| Website Hosting | Hostinger | 203.88 |
| Domain Registration (essys.org) | NearlyFreeSpeech | 13.09 |
| Domain Registration (cesun.org) | NearlyFreeSpeech | 13.09 |
| Mailing List | Mailchimp | 156.00 |
| Email Hosting | Zoho Mail | 12.00 |
| Election Service | Election Buddy | 29.00 |
| Misc Fees (Postage) | Caritas Law Group | 8.85 |
| | | |
| Total | | 435.91 |

Note: current budget does not include costs of professional accounting and tax preparation.

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Community Service

CSER 2026 Programming

Monday, April 6

- [w/ INCOSE] SEANET PhD Workshop (Wach lead; 9am-4pm)
- [w/ SERC] Conducting Research with the Department of War (McDermott lead; 10am-12pm)
- ESSyS T/TT Faculty Workshop (Mesmer lead; 2-4pm)

Tuesday, April 7

- [w/ SERC] Characterizing the Behavior of AI-enabled Socio-Technical Systems: What does a Testbed need to be? (Szajnfarter lead; 1:30-2:55pm)

Wednesday, April 8

- Roundtable Discussion on Advancing Systems Scholarship in Engineering (Grogan lead; 1:30-2:55pm)

CSER 2027 Planning

- Established a process to solicit host proposals for future Conferences on Systems Engineering Research (CSERs)
 - Convene a CSER Host Selection Committee under the ESSyS Board
 - Solicit host proposals following guidelines for:
 - Event Outline and Vision
 - Community Commitment
 - Logistical Capacity
 - Technical Program
 - Financial and Event Management
 - Committee reviews and votes to select host
- CSER 2027 host to be announced during CSER 2026 program
 - Convene a CSER Executive Committee under the ESSyS Board for ongoing coordination and knowledge transfer

Host proposal guidelines: <https://essys.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/cser-host-proposal-guidelines.pdf>

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Membership Initiatives

SE Education Community of Practice

- Joint ESSyS/SERC effort to share SE education knowledge across the community
- First meeting of 13 attendees had strong discussion around 5 topics:
 - Project-based SE Courses
 - SE Seminar Courses
 - SE and AI (SE4AI/AI4SE)
 - Research Methods
 - Intersection of AI and Teaching
- Pursue regular cadence and add to the calendar of events

Other Initiatives

- Speaker Series: led by Casey Eaton and Bryan Mesmer to disseminate impactful work throughout the community
- Coordinate with related groups: Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) Conference, Council of Industrial Engineering Academic Department Heads (CIEADH), IEEE Systems Council, IISE, INCOSE, INFORMS, International Society of Transdisciplinary Engineering (ISTE)
- Lightweight mentoring: virtual coffee meetings
- Podcast-style media for rich discussion of scholarly works
- Novel publication models: e.g., pre-print reviews
- Your ideas!

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Director Elections

Director Elections – Process

- Two Directors to be elected for two-year terms starting July 1, 2026
- Full Members have voting privileges, 10% quorum required
- Election will be administered by Election Buddy (electronic ballot)
- Election to open at 12:00pm MST on Tuesday April 7, 2026 and close at 12:00pm MST on Thursday, May 7, 2026
- Winners to be based on a preferential voting system (ranked choice) using Meek's Single Transferrable Voting (STV) tally method
- Election results to be affirmed by current Directors at the May 8, 2026 annual Board meeting

Director Elections – Candidates

David Broniatowski

My objective as a member of the Board of Directors is to work to solidify the Engineering Society of Systems Scholars' scholarly footprint. I intend to catalyze a comprehensive synthesis of the field by mobilizing the expertise of our global membership to identify core research voids and emerging socio-technical challenges. By fostering a collaborative environment, I will work to define a unified direction for systems scholarship that addresses current fragmentation. My goal is to empower the ESSyS community to produce the foundational knowledge required to navigate the complexities of modern engineering and society.

Casey Eaton

ESSyS has the opportunity to shape systems research and education, and in turn, practice. The ability to address systems problems across multiple domains is compelling and needed as systems related domains can be siloed. My objectives if I were to participate as part of the ESSyS Board, in coordination with the ESSyS Board Members, would be to 1) broaden participation from the systems community in ESSyS, 2) seek to demonstrate the necessity of systems research to those outside the community including scholars from other domains and funders, and 3) encourage collaboration amongst with systems scholars through dedicated opportunities such as workshops.

Director Elections – Candidates

Philip Odonkor

My research at Stevens examines how networks of intelligent systems coordinate to address complex societal challenges. I believe ESSyS can apply this systems thinking to enhance our scholarly community by fostering deeper collaboration. Having recently transitioned from PhD student to assistant professor, I'm motivated to help doctoral scholars find a sense of belonging within ESSyS. If elected, I will focus on strengthening doctoral engagement through peer cohorts, recognizing emerging scholarship, and facilitating early exposure to senior leaders. These efforts aim to create a more coordinated, sustainable future for systems research.

Yinshuang Xiao

As an Assistant Professor at Colorado State University and Director of COSINE Lab, I am honored to self-nominate for the ESSyS Board of Directors. Having involved and contributed to CESER and CESUN as a researcher, reviewer, and session chair since my PhD, I have benefited immensely from this community's mentorship. My objective is to give back by fostering deep collaboration in complex socio-technical systems engineering, mentoring junior researchers, and continuing to provide support for organizational services like paper reviews and workshops. I am committed to leveraging my expertise to advance ESSyS's mission and support the next generation of system thinkers.

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New Business – Open Floor



Adjournment

Comments/Questions/Ideas

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Emily Liu liue@rpi.edu

Bryan Mesmer bryan.mesmer@uah.edu

Zoe Szajnfarber zszejnfa@gwu.edu