

Who was Benjamin Dasher?



Benjamin J. Dasher was born December 27, 1912 in Macon, Ga. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in electrical engineering in 1935 and 1945, respectively, and graduated with a doctorate in electrical engineering in 1952 from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. At MIT, Dr. Dasher worked on the electronics of instrumentation of electromechanical transducers and analog-to-digital converters. He was the author of "Dasher's method" for synthesis of resistance-capacitance two-port networks, which is found in standard textbook treatments.

While at Georgia Tech, Dr. Dasher served as a graduate assistant in 1936, then as an instructor in 1940, and became an assistant professor in 1945. While earning his PhD at MIT, he was an instructor from 1948-51. Before finishing with his PhD, he became an associate professor at Georgia Tech in

1951, was promoted to professor in 1952, and became director of the School of Electrical Engineering in 1954, where he served in that capacity until 1969. In 1968, Dr. Dasher was appointed associate dean in the College of Engineering.

At Georgia Tech, Dr. Dasher served as director of network synthesis projects and transistor oscillator projects. His fields of interest included advanced network theory, electronic theory, electronic circuits, electrical engineering education, machine translation, speech analysis, and pattern recognition. He was credited for bringing undergraduate engineering education to the forefront at Georgia Tech and for increasing interactions between undergraduates and industry.

Dr. Dasher was a member of Phi Kappa Phi, ASEE, Sigma Xi, and the American Association of University Professors; he was a Fellow of both the IEEE and the Institute of Radio Engineers. He served as a regional director for IEEE and as the chair for the Atlanta section of IEEE; he was on numerous committees for IRE, AIEE, and IEEE. He served as President of the IEEE Education Group in 1970-71.

Ben Dasher organized the first Frontiers in Education Conference; it was held in Atlanta in 1971, and attracted 100 participants. There were 34 papers in six technical sessions.

Dr. Dasher died of congestive heart failure on December 13, 1971 in Houston, Texas.

The Benjamin J. Dasher award for the Best Paper at the Frontiers in Education Conference each year recognizes his contributions as the founder of the Frontiers in Education Conference.

Contributed by James R. Rowland from materials researched by Jackie Nemeth, Georgia Tech

Ben Dasher Award Selection Process – FIE Conference

1. General Overview of Process

Each year the best paper/presentation combination at the FIE meeting is selected to receive the Ben Dasher Award. Papers are nominated for the award by reviewers. A committee with representation from each of the organizing societies (ERM, IEEE Ed. Soc., IEEE Comp. Soc.) is formed to review nominated papers. During the FIE meeting, the committee attends presentations of the nominated papers. The committee then makes a final recommendation to the FIE Planning Committee for the Ben Dasher Award winner based on the overall quality of both the paper and the presentation. The winning author(s) are announced at the following year's FIE meeting.

2. Dasher Award Committee Formation and Duties

- 2.1. During the months prior to the FIE meeting, each organizing society shall elect a Ben Dasher Award Committee (henceforth referred to as 'the committee') representative. Names of representatives and contact information are to be forwarded to the FIE Planning Committee Awards Chair and Steering Committee chair by the time of the ASEE meeting in June but no later than July 1.
- 2.2. Requirements for serving on the committee are:
 - 2.2.1. Committee members cannot serve on the committee if they are an author on a paper that has been nominated for the Dasher Award.
 - 2.2.2. Committee members must commit to attending the FIE conference during their year of service and to attending assigned sessions in which the nominated papers are presented.
 - 2.2.3. Committee members must commit to virtual/remote meetings after the FIE meeting to select the final Dasher Award winner.
 - 2.2.4. Committee members should ideally volunteer to serve for at least two consecutive years to maintain some continuity.
- 2.3. The chair of the committee is assigned through rotation. In 2007 the committee chair shall come from the Education Research and Methods (ERM) Division of ASEE, followed by the IEEE Computer Society in 2008, and the IEEE Education Society in 2009. The chairmanship returns to ERM in 2010 and so on.
- 2.4. Once identified, all committee representatives shall be given complete access to the on-line paper review database. The FIE Planning Committee Awards Chair shall contact the FIE website coordinator and general chair to create the necessary passwords for committee members. In addition, the FIE Planning Committee Awards Chair shall contact each committee representative to confirm that they have been given access to the FIE on-line paper review process. Access shall be granted to the committee no later than August 1st.

3. Selection Criteria

- 3.1. Work-in-Progress papers are not to be considered for the Dasher Award even if they are nominated by a reviewer.
- 3.2. Presentations submitted as Special Sessions are not to be considered for the Dasher Award even if they are nominated by a reviewer.
- 3.3. The criteria for selecting the Dasher Award recipient are as follows:
 - 3.3.1. The written paper and oral presentation shall be given equal weighting in the selection of the winning submission.
 - 3.3.2. Evaluation criteria for the written paper are:
 - Importance of topic – Does the paper address an important research question or issue? Does the paper genuinely present a novel approach or a thought provoking analysis?
 - Value to audience – Does the paper have broad appeal to engineering educators? Does it merely advertise a single university/course?
 - Strength of background – Does the paper build on a body of engineering education knowledge? Does the paper contain appropriate references to the engineering education literature?
 - Methodology – Does the paper describe quantitative or qualitative research methods that are sound and well validated?
 - Results and discussion – Does the paper contain compelling results and discussion? Are the results innovative, informative and interesting? Are the results accurately determined and clearly presented?
 - Quality of writing – Is the author's writing style clear, concise, and grammatically correct?
 - Organization – Is the paper well organized and does the author show attention to detail?
 - Illustrations – Do the illustrations enhance the paper? Are they well prepared?
 - Overall rating – What is your overall impression of the paper?
 - 3.3.3. Evaluation criteria for the oral presentation are:
 - Technical content of presentation – Was the subject matter of interest to the FIE attendees/engineering education community?
 - Organization of talk – Did the speaker present the material clearly and directly?
 - Delivery and mechanics – Did the speaker enunciate clearly? Did the speaker maintain eye contact with the audience? Did the presenter speak without constant reference to notes? Did the speaker retain the attention of the audience?
 - Handling of questions – Did the speaker generate worthwhile questions? Were the questions answered clearly and succinctly?
 - Quality of visual aids – Were the visual aids effective tools in illustrating or developing the speaker's thesis? Could the speaker use visual aids without losing visual or auditory contact with the audience?
 - Overall rating – What is your overall impression of the presentation?
- 3.4. All criteria are to be evaluated on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent).

3.5. Selection criteria are to be reviewed by the committee prior to evaluating any papers or presentations. Any changes to the criteria are to be forwarded to the FIE Planning Committee Awards Chair and to the program chairs for the three organizing societies. Ideally, selection criteria will not change dramatically from year to year.

4. Identification of Nominees

- 4.1. During the on-line full paper review process, reviewers should be asked to indicate whether the paper in question is worthy of consideration for the Ben Dasher Award. If the reviewer indicates “yes”, they should be directed to a webpage that provides the following information:
 - 4.1.1. A brief description of the Ben Dasher Award and its history
 - 4.1.2. The list of criteria for selection of the Ben Dasher Award recipient as detailed in section 3.3.2 of this document.
 - 4.1.3. A ‘cancel’ button, offering a reviewer the opportunity to return to the review page if they change their mind about nominating the paper in question for the Ben Dasher Award.
 - 4.1.4. A text field where the reviewer may provide comments as to how the paper in question addresses the criteria detailed in section 3.3.2 of this document.
 - 4.1.5. A ‘submit’ button that adds the reviewers comments to the database and returns the reviewer to the main reviews webpage.
- 4.2. Following full review, the Dasher Award committee chair will access the list of nominated papers via the FIE website. Works-in-Progress and Special Sessions that may have been nominated for the Dasher Award will be removed from the list of nominees at this time.
- 4.3. The committee chair shall provide the program chairs with an opportunity to comment on any remaining papers nominated from one of their sessions. These comments can be used to further filter the number of papers nominated for the award. The committee chair should give the program chairs 2-3 weeks to respond. If no response is provided, the chair may move forward without further input from the program chairs.
- 4.4. Using the program chair responses, quantitative reviewer ratings, and the reviewers’ comments, the Dasher committee chair shall reduce the list of forwarded nominees to no more than 30 candidate papers. The number of candidate papers may be fewer than 30 at the committee chair’s discretion.

5. Review of Papers

- 5.1. Prior to the FIE meeting, the committee chair shall forward the selection criteria and written paper evaluation form to the committee members.
- 5.2. The committee members shall identify a system whereby each paper is reviewed by at least two committee members and, ideally, all committee members review an equal number of papers.
- 5.3. All papers shall be evaluated by the committee using a standard evaluation form. This form should provide ratings from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) in each of

the selection criteria described in section 3.3.2 above. Space for additional comments shall be provided.

- 5.4. Evaluations shall be completed and forms returned to the committee chair at least three weeks prior to the FIE meeting.
- 5.5. The committee chair shall tabulate the results of the paper reviews and provide a summary to the committee members two weeks prior to the FIE meeting.
- 5.6. At this time the committee may elect to reduce the number of papers using the tabulated results of the paper reviews. While both the paper and presentation quality should weigh equally in determining the Dasher Award recipient, it should also be understood that in order to receive the award both the paper and the presentation must be of high quality. Thus, any papers deemed to be of low quality by the committee can be removed from further consideration.
- 5.7. Using this reduced list of nominees, the committee chair shall identify a schedule of the remaining presentations at the FIE conference.

6. Review of Presentations

- 6.1. One week prior to the FIE meeting, the committee chair shall forward the schedule of remaining presentations to the committee members. In addition, the committee chair shall identify which committee members are to attend which presentations.
- 6.2. At least two members of the committee shall attend each presentation of a nominated paper. In the event that this is not possible, committee members may recruit surrogate evaluators to attend the presentation. However, surrogates must use the same evaluation form as committee members when conducting their evaluation.
- 6.3. All presentations shall be evaluated by the committee using a standard evaluation form. This form should provide ratings from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) in each of the selection criteria described in section 3.3.3 above. Space for additional comments shall be provided. The committee chair shall bring copies of this form to the FIE meeting for use by the committee members in their evaluations.
- 6.4. If feasible, evaluation forms should be returned to the committee chair prior to the end of the FIE meeting.
- 6.5. The committee chair shall tabulate the results of the presentation reviews and provide a summary to the committee members within one month of the completion of the FIE meeting.

7. Selection of Award Winners

- 7.1. The committee chair shall convene a virtual/remote meeting of the committee for the purpose of selecting a Ben Dasher Award recipient within one month of the conclusion of the FIE meeting.
- 7.2. The committee shall discuss the summary results of both the paper and presentation evaluation results during this meeting. Paper and presentation evaluations shall be weighted equally in selecting the winning nominee.
- 7.3. In the event that consensus cannot be reached on a clear winner, all members of the committee shall review the papers and reviewers comments of those

- nominees in dispute. A second meeting shall be convened to discuss the results of this second review and to arrive at a final choice for the Dasher Award winner.
- 7.4. In the event the committee feels that no paper is deserving of the Dasher Award, no nominee shall be selected for that year.
 - 7.5. The committee chair shall summarize the results of the committee's discussions. This summary shall be forwarded to the FIE Planning Committee General Chairs and Award Chair for the following years' FIE meeting, and the Planning Committee Awards Chair for the current FIE meeting.
 - 7.6. The committee chair shall send letters to the first authors of papers considered to be "Dasher Award Finalists" as recognition of the paper's high quality and as a means of encouraging others to submit equally high quality papers to future FIE conferences.