

# I Am a Volunteer and I Do...

## Alan Harding



### What activities have you undertaken as part of your volunteering?

I have been UKAB chair and President of INCOSE UK (President-Elect, President and Immediate Past-President), and I am currently a Professional Registration Advisor/ Assessor/Interviewer. Internationally, I have been INCOSE President-Elect and President, Associate Director for Social Media, and I am CAB representative for BAE Systems and a founding co-chair of the Systems of Systems Working Group.

### What originally inspired you to volunteer for INCOSE UK?

As the BAE Systems representative to UKAB I put myself forward as a candidate for UKAB Chair to help shape pan-industry views on the future of systems engineering and INCOSE UK. I subsequently stepped forward as a candidate for presidential roles at INCOSE UK and INCOSE levels due to a desire to improve my leadership qualities and to develop more gravitas through the experience gained and the role held. I volunteer in support of Professional Registration because I believe in the importance of registration as an engineer (whether CEng, IEng or EngTech) to individuals and our industry.

### What do you get out of volunteering?

I have been lucky to lead INCOSE UK and INCOSE, and through coping with both the successes and challenges inherent in both roles I have gained experience in leadership, working with a diverse group of people, and I have also deepened my systems engineering expertise through shaping, presenting and getting involved in developments on the cutting edge. More generally I find that volunteering gives a sense of achievement in doing a job without seeking reward, the opportunity to work with interesting people from across the systems community, and often although not always it is fun!

### Do you have any advice or feedback to offer anyone who is considering volunteering?

Make sure you understand what the volunteering role is, and what is expected of you. If it is a significant role you may find it helpful to chat to someone who is already doing the role to get a proper sense of what it is. Make sure that your skills and available time are suited to the role. Having covered the practicalities I would say that volunteering is certainly rewarding, and you get to build your skills while doing it. Depending on your career stage, volunteering can also be a great way to enhance your CV with activities that your day-job does not include.