

TEN REASONS TO JOIN GRAPES

Greetings from the University of South Carolina! As we celebrate the first anniversary of our research center for GRid-connected Advanced Power Electronic Systems I am attentive to the fact that we have missed your participation, guidance, and insight. I want to extend our invitation for membership so that we don't have to spend 2011 without you! I am thrilled to offer you ten new reasons to join:

Reason #1: You would be “buying into” a top-ranked research program. Although we have been saying for years that our performance exceeds our reputation, we were thrilled to have that statement validated by the recently released National Research Council report on quality of PhD programs. Here at USC, our PhD program in Electrical Engineering was ranked #1 in the South, and #7 in the nation. We are proud to be standing with the likes of MIT, UCLA, and CalTech. That is no small feat.

Reason #2: You would be buying into an elite group of like-minded companies who recognize the value of industry-driven research in grid-connected power electronic systems. Together with our partners at the University of Arkansas, we now have 17 participating companies, spanning the range from power electronic device manufacturers to equipment manufacturers to grid operators.

Reason #3: You are now buying into completed research, not nascent research. After a year of operations, our graduate researchers have produced real results that our industry members can really use. But if you don't join soon, these results will be old stuff and your competitors will have already capitalized on them.

Reason #4: You get to direct our research. What problems do you have, that you don't have enough time and manpower to solve? Tell us those problems and let us design new research programs to solve them. Keep up with our progress via periodic web meetings and semiannual center meetings.

Reason #5: You don't have to direct our research by yourself. You'll have like-minded industry partners who also have insights into salient problems and likely solution methods, who can help in the definition of research programs to develop pre-competitive solutions that you and your competitors can all use.

Reason #6: More bang for your buck! Considering just member dues, your membership fee will be leveraged by about 20:1. Think about it – pay for \$40k of research, and take advantage nearly \$1M of research results. Every year. And then multiply that by another factor of 5 to 10 if you count research that center-affiliated faculty conduct outside of the center. You benefit from that knowledge base without having to pay for it.

Reason #7: More-more bang for your buck! Faculty members of our Center have a proven record of attracting research funding beyond member commitments. For example, the center has already been awarded funding from NSF to start a Fundamental Research Project on GaN power converters. While this project was “too fundamental” to be of interest to, say, electric utilities, it will have large pay offs for them some time in the future.

Reason #8: The center research facilities are no longer a paper plan, they are operational. This includes substantial power routing facilities at USC, as well as the 6 MVA test facility at UA. Make use of these unique facilities at members-only rates, just as several of our member companies have already done.

Reason #9: Fill your empty personnel slots with tested, observed, proven graduates. Yes, after just one year, the GRAPES center has already produced MS and PhD level graduates. More than a half-dozen were graduated from the Power and Energy Systems research group at USC alone.

Reason #10: Your (boss/employees/stockholders) will admire the fact that you're smart enough to team up with a leading research group in a top-ranked EE program at a leading research university, that is developing innovative solutions to your problems while leveraging your scarce corporate R&D dollars beyond a 20:1 ratio, even while giving the best personnel recruitment leads to your HR department.

How can you afford not to join!

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