Draft Minutes – IAFSS Committee Meeting – 15 April 2021

Venue: Zoom (https://lu-sc.zoom.us/j/62577478118)
Date: Thursday, 15 April 2021
Location: NA East Coast  UK  Central Europe  Beijing  Tokyo  Brisbane  Christchurch
Time: 07:00 – 09:00  12:00 – 14:00  13:00 – 15:00  19:00 – 21:00  20:00-22:00  21:00 – 23:00  23:00-01:00

1. Call to order
PvH called the meeting to order at 13:03.

2. Apologies for absence
No apologies were received. MG and PB joined late, as he had advised the Honorary Secretary.

3. Welcome to new members of the Committee
PvH welcomed new members and thanked continuing members. Welcomed also Barb Waronek (BWar) as new Secretariat.

4. Allegations against IAFSS leadership
PvH noted that this item is to make sure everyone received information – not to have discussion. More of a discussion may occur under Item 12, depending on timing. Challenge that we are in transition, but much going on. Many actions occurred during last two weeks, so not much time to respond.

5. Election of Chair
PvH described procedure for election and process to follow for Chair, Vice Chair, and other officers. Based on our Rules and input from the Past Chair, and as discussed with candidates. Candidates put into waiting room at this time.

PvH noted one-page vision statement provided. Idea is not to re-address that, but Committee members to have opportunity for questions (10 minutes per candidate).

Voting will be by polling tool in Zoom. No proxy votes were received. Person running poll, MM, cannot vote in poll, so has to be added separately. Polling tool was tested to assure all could vote.

Initial vote had no candidate with majority. Runoff vote was tie. Tie-breaker vote was for BJM. PvH congratulated BJM on election as Chair.
6. **Election of other Officers of the Association**

First vote is Americas Vice Chair. Vote is for EW.

Second vote is Asia-Oceania VC. LH runs unopposed. Vote is for LH.

Third vote is for Europe-Africa VC. BMer withdrew his name for this position. JW then runs unopposed. Vote is for JW.

Fourth vote is for Honorary Secretary. No nominees. EC decision.

Fifth vote is for Treasurer. MM runs unopposed. Vote is for MM.

Sixth vote is for ‘at large’ position Americas. JF and BL indicate interest. Vote is for JF.

Seventh vote needed for Asia ‘at large’ position. RD runs unopposed. Vote is for RD.

Eighth vote is Past Chair position. No vote needed. PvH confirmed.

7. **Chair vision for 2020-2023**

BJM congratulated those elected to officer and Executive Committee positions and noted that he looks forward to working with them, as well as the rest of the Committee, over the coming 2.5 year.

BJM then summarized his vision as outlined in one-page statement with some additional discussion on future structure. He noted with change in Association structure to a CIO, the EC and Trustees may become managing group, and balance of Committee to make up a Council, in CIO terms. All to be discussed.

8. **Responsibilities of Officers of the Association**

BJM outlined the 2015 agreed responsibilities for VC positions and noted his expectation that position descriptions will be created for all officer positions.

Also, expectation that EC members will chair Committee WGs. It was recognized that as structure of Association changes, so too may responsibilities.

To start, BJM suggested WGs to include:

- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)
- Communications and Outreach
  - Web, interaction with affiliated organizations, outreach to new members, …
- Research and Education
  - Working to help facilitate research funding, advocate for new FSS programs, develop support for PhD Summer Schools, …
- Early Career Researchers and Professionals
- Governance
  - Take the lead on restructuring, with Trustees, and developing new Constitution (replaces Rules in the charitable incorporated organization (CIO) structure)
- Finance
  - Led by Treasurer, look at investments, how to appropriately use our funds to advance mission, …
EG noted that Trustees should be also on Finance Committee. BJM agreed. Noted that as we restructure, EC and Trustees may likely be same persons, but for now, essential that both groups involved in Finance and Governance.

BJM asked for volunteers to chair WGs and noted positions need to be filled and will be managed by email if not today.

- DEI – JF
- Research and Education – JW (with CF supporting)
- Governance – EW
- Finance – MM
- Communications and Outreach – vacant
- Early Career – vacant

CF suggested Research and Education are two big topics, so maybe separate in some way. Discussion was perhaps have two components in the group, instead of two groups. CF agreed to participate in the group.

BJM noted that for time, this can be pursued by email.

9. **Election of Nominating Committee Chair**

PvH was elected unanimously.

10. **Responsibilities of NC Chair**

PvH noted that in past, NC chair was responsible for Rules changes, but maybe not appropriate. BJM confirmed that NC will not be responsible for Rules changes, that will be new Governance WG. NC needs to focus on nominations, balance and new nominations form.

11. **Responsibilities of Committee Members, WGs, and WG Chairs**

BJM noted that he expected all Committee members will be active participants on WGs. WG chairs were discussed under Item 8.

12. **IAFSS policies, code of conduct, and related issues**

BJM noted that there are many important issues that we need to address in terms of a policies, including code of conduct, complaint, and DEI.

BJM noted that we have a complaint against IAFSS leadership and no complaint policy. We have been sent a recommended policy by legal counsel (firm of Russell Cooke). We should adopt that policy today if possible. He noted this should be joint agreement with Trustees.

EG noted that we should ask legal counsel to confirm that the policy follows ACAS suggested principles. Also it should clarify the subjects of actions.

**Action:** BJM to follow up with legal counsel. Trustees to be informed.

It was noted that, upon adoption, the Trustees are expected to work toward a specific process for the current complaint. A specific process was also suggested by legal counsel.

EG noted that this should also follow ACAS principles, and suggested that perhaps some steps had already been taken and do not need repeated.

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Annex 4

Annex 5
BJM noted that the advice is to (a) adopt a general policy, then (b) adopt a specific policy for the current case. As part of the specific approach, there may be a request for an independent investigation, but that the process should first be in place so as to allow for this if requested.

**Action:** It is understood that Trustees will lead the development of a specific policy for the current case.

BJM asked it there was any opposition to moving forward if legal counsel confirms adherence with ACAS policies. No opposition was voiced.

BJM also noted that we need a Code of Conduct policy and a DEI policy. Trustees have asked the Committee to develop the Code of Conduct, and that they will be looking at DEI policy.

**Action:** Code of Conduct policy to be taken up by Governance Committee as a priority.

It was noted that due attention be given to how policies fit together, and it was suggested to consider the IAWF policies on Diversity & Inclusivity - https://www.iawfonline.org/diversity-inclusion/

### 13. 13th Symposium Update

EW noted that the system was recently expanded to accommodate 550 persons, but has to be expanded again, which is good news. Some minor issues still being sorted, but things are in good shape.

### 14. Review of Bids for the 15th Symposium

Deferred to next meeting.

### 15. Report from the Past-Secretary and Secretariat

BJM noted again BWar joining as Secretariat and deferred additional reporting to next meeting.

### 16. AOB

No new items were raised.

### 17. Next meeting (at discretion of new Chair)

BJM noted that the meetings are typically held in conjunction with the Symposium, and that after decision is made on future symposium (15th, in this case), announcement would be made on last day. BJM noted criticality of other issues discussed, and noted he would work to find a date and time during the symposium. Given timing of this current meeting, the timing of the next meeting would look to be better for Asia-Oceania colleagues, and that all future meetings would be on a rotating time basis so no one group is disadvantaged all the time.

**Action:** BWar to create and distribute Doodle poll for Committee meeting during the Symposium. BJM to discuss with EW best date / time given other activities.

### 18. Adjourn

BJM thanked members for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 15:20 CET.
Annex 1a – Letter from PvH
Annex 1b – Email from SS
Annex 2 – Election Procedure
Annex 3a – Lattimer statement
Annex 3b – Meacham statement
Annex 3c – Trouve statement
Annex 4 – General complaints procedure
Annex 5 – Specific complaints procedure
Dear Colleagues and trustees,

I am reaching out to you as the new Management Committee to inform you that last week I received a complaint from one of our members (Dr Sayaka Suzuki) against three other members concerning their handling of a complaint that she made approximately 2 years ago. In reply to her complaint, I informed her that we are presently in transition between committees and that as I am no longer Chair (a new Chair will be elected later this week) I would forward her complaint to the next committee, which I am now doing. (see annex)

In essence, the complaint that Dr Suzuki feels was mishandled originated in April 2019, after a heated interaction between Dr Anthony Hamins (formerly of the Management Committee) and Dr Suzuki. The original complaint was made to myself (as Chair) and Dr Tuula Hakkarainen (as Chair of the Diversity Committee). I referred the complaint to Professors Margaret McNamee and Arnaud Trouvé as Co-chairs of the IAFSS Symposium Planning Committee as the interaction related to Dr Hamins and Dr Suzuki’s participation in said committee. In short, a meeting was organized between the two parties by Professors McNamee and Trouvé, apologies were made and accepted and the incident was thought to have been resolved. In December of the same year, Dr Suzuki reached out and stated that she regretted having accepted the apology and asked that Dr Hamins be silenced in the meetings. Professors McNamee and Trouvé related that it was not possible for them to reopen the incident unless there was a renewal of the behavior. Since then, Dr Suzuki has repeatedly expressed her pain in the situation and asked for the issue to be reopened. She has been offered meetings to discuss by Professors McNamee and Trouvé on multiple occasions but has declined. In the end, the Professors referred the issue back to myself as Chair. I also made multiple offers of meetings to discuss the situation which were declined. The latest occasion was the 28th January this year, an email to which I received no reply until the 7th April this year (see below).

In the interim, between the 28th January, when I reached out asking for a meeting to discuss the nature of her discomfort with the resolution of the initial complaint, and the 7th April when she replied, Dr Suzuki registered complaints against Lund university (where Professor McNamee is employed) and University of Maryland (where Professor Trouvé is employed) concerning their actions in relation to the original complaint. Both Universities came to the conclusion that the complaint related to voluntary work the Professors were involved in and did not launch any investigation into the complaint. While the initial incident had been dealt with confidentially, the complaint to Lund University made the incident public and a special meeting was organized by me with both the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees. The minutes of both meetings are enclosed for your information. At that point there was no complaint to the IAFSS, therefore it was determined that until such a complaint was made to the Association, no action could be taken by the Association. The exception was the identification of an urgent need to develop a code of conduct and complaints process.

On the 7th April, Dr Suzuki contacted me again and stated her disappointment in the handling of this issue and related her complaints against Professors McNamee and Trouvé, also adding a complaint against Professor Dlugogorski (formerly part of the Management Committee, chair of IAFSS and chair of the nomination committee) for his communication within the latest nomination committee. As stated at the outset of this email, I answered that I would refer the complaint to the next committee which I am now doing.

In essence, our Association is lacking a complaints procedure and a number of necessary regulatory documents. These will need to be developed as priority actions by the new committee. The Trustees have also urged the Association to seek legal advice concerning all necessary regulatory documents which has been done. As you see from the minutes of the former EC and Trustees (both committees on which I have held positions in the previous cycle), I believe that Professors Trouvé, McNamee, Dr.
Hakkarainen and myself acted in good faith with the interests of our members at heart and with the traditional spirit of our association in mind. Even to my personal opinion our past Chair Bogdan Dlugogorski has acted in good faith as chair of the nomination committee during the last three years (he was not involved in the complaint to the universities and was therefore not discussed in the EC and Trustees meetings). Nonetheless, there is a need to launch an independent investigation into how the incident was handled in order for us to be able to evaluate how to proceed and ultimately close the issue.

There will be very little time at the meeting later this week to discuss this issue but I have asked that a point be added at the beginning of the agenda to allow questions should there be any before election of the EC officers of the Association. It is not the intention to discuss possible actions in response to the complaint at this meeting. This requires development of a procedure for complaints which the Trustees of the Association have charged a UK legal firm to assist the Association with.

Yours sincerely,

Patrick van Hees
IAFSS Past Chair
Trustee of IAFSS

Annexes.
Mail from Sayaka
Summary Incident IAFSS
Minutes EC
Minutes Trustees.
Dear Patrick,

Hope this email finds you well. I promised to talk with you, but I decided to write what I’ve been thinking.

My regret is that I believed people that they would do the right thing. I was wrong.

Anthony never needed to yell at me, nor threatened me. Yes, everybody makes mistakes, and some mistakes may be forgiven, but Anthony- who has the power- should not threaten me. This is unforgivable in any means.

Yet somehow, by Anthony’s apologies, Margaret and Arnaud (and Anthony) believed it should be closed and everything should go on like nothing happened. It cannot be. I had sleepless nights and nightmares, unnecessarily blaming myself for what happened to me. It might be done for them, but not for me. I shared my suffering and they did not offer the solution. Margaret and Arnaud escaped from decision and responsibility – maybe just because the decision is hard or they know Anthony – and that is really sad to see. They did not take the victim’s side. Protecting the abuser. Their excuse was they do not have responsibility – but they could have done something to ease my pain, rather, they claimed Anthony’s voice has to be heard for “inclusivity”, knowing my suffering. This is another abuse towards me, neglecting my suffering and causing more pain, by using their power as 13th IAFSS co-chairs.

Meanwhile, Bodzio caused another pain to me. I could not believe Anthony believed he should be in IAFSS management committee after threatening me, which makes me think Anthony did not think what he did is wrong – how come Anthony can think so? When the world or IAFSS is OK with anybody in power threatening junior person? And should we keep that person in power, knowing they are abusers? I could not believe Anthony’s behavior, and Bodzio thought Anthony should be in IAFSS management committee? Have we lost our mind? Bodzio told me I should work with him, I should accept him, knowing my suffering and fear so that one day I would lead IAFSS. I told him I do not wish to lead such kind of society – taking the side of abuser not the victim.

Many things which happened to me traumatized me, initially and now I have had sleepless nights and nightmares out of fear for Anthony. Then whole things – Margaret, Arnaud and Bodzio – traumatized me too. The whole event was horrific, and I regret even standing up for something I believed is right. If that anybody wants for IAFSS, maybe this is what it is. But I think all IAFSS membership should know it is OK for powerful people to yell at and threaten junior people at IAFSS, and IAFSS may arrange apologies call, but will offer nothing more. If you ask help, IAFSS may offer the talk, but no solution. IAFSS is enabling the abuser. My voice and suffering also needs to be heard if Anthony’s voice has to be heard for inclusivity. It is not fair and correct only the abuser get to speak, like nothing happened. This has to be addressed. I’m strong but I don’t have power in IAFSS like Anthony, Margaret, Arnaud or Bodzio. If I’m silenced because I spoke and being yelled at and threatened by the powerful one, this has to be shared.

Not only IAFSS needs code of conduct or any kind of rules against abuse, harassment etc. IAFSS needs to remove people who mishandled the situation. In this case, Anthony should have gone from 13th IAFSS organizing committee, as well as any position within IAFSS itself (if possible, IAFSS itself). Margaret and Arnaud, as they handled the situation wrongly, should be gone from IAFSS management committee as well as any senior positions within IAFSS. Bodzio should be even removed from Emmons award –
Margaret, Arnaud, and Bodzio made environment unsafe for all members, enabling abuser, giving power and voice to the abuser despite being in senior positions within IAFSS. This is not acceptable in any society, and as long as IAFSS have them IAFSS cannot be better and safer environment for especially the weak.

I believe we all can learn from experience. Admitting what was wrong and can be done differently is a first step. At the same time, if we cannot even admit nor address what was wrong, whatever we do for IAFSS is meaningless – as we do not have the strength to admit a mistake, the same mistake will be repeated. We have resource to do better, time for all the talk is done.

I’ve thought a lot about this – actually almost 2 years since I was threatened by Anthony, so I’ve been thinking a lot about this. I’ve suffered a lot. From being threatened from Anthony, being bribed from Bodzio, my help being ignored from Margaret and Arnaud. I felt like I’m not respected. I felt I’m nothing. I’ll still suffer more as I haven’t healed completely.

Best Regards,
Sayaka
Procedure for voting the new EC

1. Chair

1.1. Candidates (in alphabetical order)

   Brian Lattimer  
   Brian Meacham  
   Arnaud Trouve

1.2. Procedure

In order to be able to have a transparent process I have developed the following procedure. The procedure has been developed with advice from the previous past chair and based on the Rules of the Association (annex 1 for some guidance).

1. Before the meeting (latest Wednesday morning 8 am Swedish Time) the candidates were asked to write a max 1-page document where they addressed the following:
   a. Your vision for IAFSS for the future
   b. Why are you candidate for the position?
   c. What is the major achievement you want to obtain in your period as chair?

2. These documents will be distributed to the Management Committee during Wednesday.

3. At the Management Committee meeting we will start with about 10 minutes per candidate for questions and comments from the Management Committee related to the document. The other candidates will be in the waiting room of Zoom.

4. After these about 30 minutes there is the possibility for a discussion within the Management Committee before the vote. All three candidates will then be in the waiting room.

5. For the voting all members can participate. I will also ask for proxy votes if one cannot participate as we do not meet in person and the different time zones can be difficult for all to participate. The voting will be done within the zoom polling tool (host and co-host votes from zoom will be added if needed as well as proxy votes). If no candidate has a majority, the two candidates with the highest votes will be used in the second vote. In case of any tie the vote of the past-chair will be decisive. Those who want to use a proxy vote will need to fill in a simple form ranking the candidates, see annex 2 to this document. This document needs to arrive by email to the chair (Patrick.van_hees@brand.lth.se) at the latest 1100 am Swedish Time.

NOTE that at any moment a candidate can redraw his candidature.
2. Vice chairs

2.1. Candidates (in alphabetical order in case of more than one candidate)

Vice Chair Americas

Jason Floyd  
Brian Lattimer  
Brian Meacham  
Elisabeth Weckman

Vice Chair Asia Oceania  
Longhua Hu (second term)

Vice Chair Europe/Africa  
Bart Merci  
Jennifer Wen

2.2. Procedure

The procedure is slightly simpler than that proposed for the election of the Chair:

1. I present the candidates and ask for confirmation of their candidature and a short statement if they want.
2. Then we go on to a vote. For the voting all members can participate. I will also ask for proxy votes if one cannot participate as we do not meet in person and the different time zones can be difficult for all to participate. The voting will be done within the zoom polling tool (host and co-host votes from zoom will be added if needed as well as proxy votes). If no candidate has a majority, the two candidates with the highest votes will be used in the second vote. In case of any tie the vote of the past-chair will be decisive. Those who want to use a proxy vote need to fill in a simple form ranking the candidates, see annex 2 to this document. This document needs to arrive by email to the chair (Patrick.van_hees@brand.lth.se) latest 1100 am Swedish Time.

NOTE that at any moment a candidate can redraw his/her candidature.
3. Other positions

3.1. Candidates (in alphabetical order)

Honorary Secretary: vacant (I ask that you all consider whether you are willing to self-nominate at the meeting)

Honorary Treasurer: Margaret McNamee (second term)

Free role position 1 (past symposium): Beth Weckman, if not selected as VC. If Beth Weckman is selected as VC I will ask for candidate(s) from the Americas for balance.

Free role position 2 (next symposium): Ritsu Dobashi

Past Chair: Patrick van Hees

NOTE that at any moment a candidate can redraw his/her candidature.

3.2. Procedure

If more than one candidate would be put forward for these positions (if applicable) at the meeting itself then the same voting will be done as for the vice chairs excluding of course the possibility of the proxy vote as I have not received these candidates before the meeting.

4. Concluding remarks

If any position is vacant at the end of this meeting, this can be resolved at the next meeting by the new chair who can look for the best candidate. In this case regional balance should be considered and it is to my opinion strongly recommended not to have one region with a majority i.e. more than 5 members. With the situation above we have a distribution as follows: Americas (3), Europe/Africa (3), Asia/Oceania (2).

According to our bylaws we need one member from England/Wales. If there is none, we need to co-opt one person (Jennifer Wen or Ed Galea).

We should try to strive to have at least three trustees in the EC. Current trustees are Margaret McNamee, Patrick van Hees, Ed Galea, Luke Bisby and Ritsu Dobashi.

Annexes:
1. Extract Bylaws
2. Proxy vote form
3. Input from the three candidates for the chair.
6. **Management and Officers**

The Association shall be managed by a Committee consisting of a Chairman, 3 Vice-Chairmen, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer and 18 Ordinary Members all elected to such office pursuant to Rule 13. The Committee may from time to time appoint from amongst the Ordinary Members of the Committee such other Officers of the Association as it thinks fit. The Committee shall have power to fill any casual vacancy by co-option. At least one member of the Committee shall reside in England or Wales.

7. **Executive Sub-Committee**

The Committee shall elect from its members two persons who with the Officers shall constitute an Executive Sub-Committee. During the interval between meetings of the Committee the Executive Sub-Committee shall possess and may exercise all the powers of the Committee in the management of the affairs of the Association, in such manner as it shall deem best for the interests of the Association in all cases in which specific directions have not been given by the Committee provided that all acts and proceedings of the Executive Committee are fully reported back to the Committee as soon as possible. At least one member of the Executive Sub-Committee shall reside in England or Wales.

13. **Election of Committee and Officers**

(vi) Upon commencement of a new term of office, the Committee shall elect the Chairman, the three Vice-Chairmen, the Honorary Secretary, and the Honorary Treasurer from amongst its own number. Officers shall be subject to annual confirmation by the Committee. Incumbent officers shall be eligible for election as officers in the same or different office, except that no person shall serve more than six years consecutively in the same office.
Annex 2 Proxy form.

Ranking order to be filled behind the name (1 is first choice, 2 is second choice, etc.)
It is important to give a rank to all candidates in case of a second vote process with only two candidates.

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<th>Chair</th>
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<td>Brian Lattimer</td>
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<td>Brian Meacham</td>
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<td>Arnaud Trouve</td>
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<td>Jason Floyd</td>
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<td>Bart Merci</td>
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<td>Jennifer Wen</td>
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Name:

Signature:
Annex 3

Statements of the different candidates for chair
April 13, 2021

Dear IAFSS Committee Members:

It is with great enthusiasm that I provide this brief statement for my consideration as Chair of the International Association for Fire Safety Science (IAFSS). As requested by the current Chair, the details below provide my vision for the future of IAFSS, why I am the candidate that will continue to grow the organization, and what my major achievement will be during my period as Chair.

I have been a part of IAFSS for 25 years and have seen the organization grow tremendously in terms of outreach through the digital archive, increasing the impact of the proceeding’s articles through publishing in the Fire Safety Journal, and supporting working groups that organize researchers. My vision for the organization is that we continue to expand our digital footprint so that we can more effectively reach all interested researchers and practitioners around the world. As we navigate the unprecedented time of the pandemic, one thing that has been clear is that we can effectively meet and communicate through digital media. Nothing will be able to replace the in-person conferences and meetings; however, the ability to also have an online component at these venues provides the opportunity to expand the attendance especially to those who cannot afford travel. In addition to the triennial conference, IAFSS can be a conduit for members to share video-based short courses / webinars related to different areas of fire science to support community education. Research is also evolving to be more digitally based. With data science contributing more to the prediction and understanding of complex phenomena such as fire and people’s response to emergency events, there is an increasing demand for data sets to support this type of research. IAFSS can be a resource for researchers to identify data sets needed to support their specific problem and organize groups to create new data sets. Most importantly, our organization must continue to actively support diversity, fairness, and inclusion.

The continued success and growth of IAFSS will depend on a Chair that is willing to further push on innovation to expand the organization while strongly supporting the successful ventures that have made IAFSS highly respected. My previous experience as Vice President of R&D at Jensen Hughes and current position as Professor in academia have provided me with a unique perspective on both what is desirable as an academic researcher and what is needed to support transitioning this valuable research to practitioners. In addition, I have been a collaborator on numerous international committees, research teams, and standards committees. This has provided me with the experience to guide this successful organization while also supporting scientific impact, financial growth, and education.

My major achievement as Chair of IAFSS will be to more broadly serve our international community through increasing our ability to connect digitally with a more diverse group of members in real-time. This will be through offering an online component to all future conferences, creating opportunities for short-courses / webinars by our member experts, and expanding our working groups to include interactive data set generation. Thank you for considering me for the Chair position, and I look forward to serving our community.

Best Regards,

Brian Y. Lattimer, Ph.D.
Professor
Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for your service to the IAFSS, and for considering me for the position of Chair. I look forward to working with you over the next 2.5 years. I have been a member since the 1990s and I have served on the Committee since 2014. As a fire safety engineer, it has always been clear that my profession would not exist without the fire safety science that underpins it, and that fire safety science includes a wide range of specialties: from combustion to human behavior; from analytical and deterministic methods to probabilistic and risk-informed approaches. We are founded on a mutual recognition that fire safety science is incredibly important, that fire safety science is a broad field of study, that the knowledge base is global, and that we are strongest when we actively seek, include and promote contributions from all.

**My vision for IAFSS going into the future** is one of increased diversity, equity and inclusion – expanding beyond our current three regions, welcoming more members from underserved populations and disciplines, and developing new relationships with kindred organizations – and together helping to tackle major global challenges where fire safety science and engineering can help facilitate a more fire safe world for all. I share, and completely support, the vision and needs as outlined in our IAFSS agenda 2030 for a fire safe world, which I helped to draft. As chair, I will work to advance and advocate in these areas on behalf of our members, within the remit provide me by the Committee.

I decided to become a candidate for the position of Chair because I do not think we have been able to make adequate progress in these areas, and as Chair, I would make them a priority. This is not a failing of past leadership – there are always challenges and issues that impinge on plans. I congratulate our leadership for navigating the COVID-19 crisis and keeping us moving forward in difficult times. As we now look to emerge from COVID, we need to focus on expanding our community and our influence. Yes, our Symposium is important, but we should be much more than that. We need to have a more proactive outward facing presence, we should be making others aware of what knowledge we have and how it can be applied to tackling global challenges, and we should expand into new regions. As President of the Society of Fire Protection Engineers, I was extremely pleased to help facilitate the formation of SFPE Asia and SFPE Europe, helping facilitate the latter as a legal entity. I supported the establishment of the fire safety engineering programs at University of Stellenbosch in South Africa and the ETH in Zurich, Switzerland. I have helped the World Bank address fire safety regulatory challenges in several African nations. I bring this experience and passion to advancing our association, our vision, and our reach.

The major achievement that I would like to obtain for our association is the advancement of our IAFSS agenda 2030 for a fire safe world, with a more diverse and inclusive membership and network of allied organizations around the world, to make a substantial impact. Unfortunately, I cannot tell you yet what the substantial impact will be. It may be facilitating new fire safety science programs in low- and middle-income countries, or helping to secure research funding for fire, or raising the global profile of IAFSS and of fire safety science. We will not know until we try. In addition, we have internal challenges to address, including reviewing and changing our legal status, establishing and promulgating needed policies and procedures, and finding appropriate ways to leverage our funds to the advancement of our aims.

To the latter points, the most important achievement that I, and the Committee, need to obtain, is the legal restructuring of our association. We have urgent needs, from moving to incorporated status to provide trustees and organization with the protection of limited liability, to implementing policies required by the UK Charity Commission. We have engaged legal counsel to start this process. In addition, we critically need to revise our Rules to address operational gaps, and to facilitate working in the digital age, to better engage our members and extend our reach. I hope you share my vision for IAFSS and the goals we must achieve, and that you consider me the appropriate person to lead the charge. Thank you.

Brian J. Meacham, Ph.D., P.E., EUR ING, C.Eng., FIFireE, FSFPE
**Past contributions:** I have served the IAFSS as a member of the Committee and of the Executive Committee since 2009, as the Host Committee Chair for the 10th Symposium (2011), as a Program co-Chair for the 11th (2014) and 12th (2017) Symposia, and as a Symposium co-Chair for the 13th Symposium (2021). I am a co-leader of the IAFSS Working Group on “Measurement and Computation of Fire Phenomena” (the MaCFP Working Group – WG); the MaCFP WG is an international collaboration focused on the topic of CFD-based fire model validation, launched in 2014 and endorsed by the IAFSS; the MaCFP WG has now evolved into a forum for discussions between experts (in computational modeling and experimental methods), a digital repository and a regular series of workshops; following the success of the MaCFP WG, similar initiatives have emerged within the IAFSS and two additional WGs (LOF&BE and Human Behavior) have been endorsed. I am also the Organizing Committee Chair for a Summer School on Fire Safety Science; because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Summer School has been delayed until June 2022.

**Vision for the future:** I would like to continue serving IAFSS and am a candidate for the position of Chair of the association. My motivation for this candidacy is my belief that the IAFSS needs significant changes to reach the levels of stability and maturity required for its intended role as a global leader in fire research and education. A list of proposed changes is listed below as action items.

The first action item in my view should be a review and re-write of the “Rules of the Association”. The review should lead to proposed modifications of the governing structure of the IAFSS as well as to the proposed inclusion of a Code of Conduct and a set of procedures for addressing violations of the Code. The bulk of this work can be performed by two new Task Groups (a “Governing Structure” Task Group and a “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” Task Group) staffed by members of the IAFSS Committee as well as by selected members from the general membership.

The second action item should be to increase diversity. Until now, the IAFSS has paid careful attention to geographical diversity (Americas, Europe/Middle East/Africa and Asia-Oceania) and to topical diversity (e.g., fire dynamics and material flammability; evacuation and human behavior; structures in fire; and more recently, wildland fires). There is an unmet need to address other aspects such as gender diversity, racial diversity, representation of low-and-middle-income countries, etc. A new reflection on diversity, hopefully leading to actionable proposals, can be led by the proposed “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” Task group.

The third action item should be to increase the role of students and early-career researchers. The IAFSS is suffering from the small size of its membership and one way to address this problem is to develop activities targeted at students/early-career researchers with the objective to retain many of them as members when they walk their first professional steps in the fire safety engineering field. A new effort can be organized around the development of IAFSS-endorsed Summer Schools that would provide visibility to the IAFSS and promote a stronger sense of belonging to the same research community.

Another action item is to develop collaborations with other fire safety organizations. The “Rules of the Association” state that the IAFSS will “seek to co-operate with other organisations concerned with the application of fire safety science”. The IAFSS has not been active in this area and the fire safety engineering field still suffers from insufficient communication, e.g., between practitioners and researchers. A new effort can be led by a new Task Group (“an Outreach” Task Group) aimed at developing closer ties between the IAFSS and relevant professional societies (e.g., SFPE, IFE, NFPA, FORUM, etc) as well as between the IAFSS and sister fire science societies (e.g., IAFW, SIF, etc).
IAFSS – Feedback and Complaints Procedure

The International Association for Fire Safety Science (IAFSS) aims to be the trusted leader in its global community.

We have built a powerful community over many decades and we are proud of the value we deliver through the services and benefits that we provide to our growing global membership.

We realise that there may be times when people are dissatisfied with IAFSS or when IAFSS’s work does not meet the standards we set for our organisation. When this happens, we want to hear about it so we can deal with the situation, learn from it, and improve.

This procedure explains how you can give feedback or make a complaint about IAFSS and sets out how we will respond.

Tell us if you are not happy

If you are dissatisfied with the behaviour of a member of IAFSS or of its staff we encourage you to tell the person why you are unhappy as you may be able to resolve the matter with them. If you would not feel comfortable speaking to the person directly, or if you are dissatisfied with their response, you can follow the complaints procedure below.

How to give feedback or make a complaint

If you wish to give feedback or make a complaint you can send an email to [NAME@email] or write to us at [POSTAL ADDRESS].

If you would prefer to contact us by telephone, you can call us on [TELEPHONE NUMBER] on [DAYS] between [9am and 5pm]. Outside of these hours you can leave a message and a contact number and someone will return your call.

Please include your name and your preferred contact details so that we can get back in touch with you. If you are making a complaint, please also explain what it relates to and tell us how you would like to see it resolved.

It is important that when you make the complaint you set out fully all the issues that you wish to raise as it may not be possible or cause difficulties if you seek to raise related issues at a later date.

We will make a record of your feedback or complaint. If you want to know how we will use your personal data, you can find our privacy policy [here]

IAFSS cannot respond to complaints made anonymously, but we will always do our best to investigate an anonymous complaint and (where applicable) we will use the information provided to learn and improve.

Responding to complaints

We will aim to respond to complaints as quickly as possible. If we think it will take longer than you might reasonably expect we will let you know.

We may respond to complaints in a range of ways for example asking someone to investigate the complaint and produce a report, appointing a small committee to hear the report, raising the matter with the Trustees, or we might refer the matter to mediation or if it is not appropriate for IAFSS to deal with the matter we might inform you of that.
We will give you the name and contact details of the person who is managing your complaint and we will do our best to ensure that your complaint is dealt with by someone who is unconnected to the matter you have complained about.

We will do our best to resolve your complaint to give you the outcome you want, but we cannot guarantee that a particular remedy will be offered.

In certain cases, IAFSS may decide to pass a complaint to a regulator or to another external agency such as the police if we suspect the complaint may involve illegal activity.

From time to time we may receive complaints that do not relate directly to our work or something that IAFSS has done. We will not generally comment on, or engage in discussion about, issues are unrelated to our work.

If you are unhappy with the response we have given to your complaint you can send a letter or email to our Chair at [NAME@email]. Please include a summary of your complaint and explain why you are not satisfied with the response you received. The Chair will share this information with IAFSS’s Trustees at the next Board meeting. You will be informed of any decision.
International Association For Fire Safety Science

By Email Only: Brian.Meacham@meachamassociates.com

Our ref: CG/JST/183249/1

Dear Brian

Complaint

I am writing to advise on an appropriate procedure to deal with a complaint which you have received from one of your members who I will refer to as SS. We have prepared a complaints procedure for your board to adopt and the complaint should be dealt with under this procedure.

The suggestion by SS that she deal with the complaint by raising it at a meeting of your members is not appropriate and I would most strongly recommend that the complaint is not dealt with in that way. My advice is that the IAFSS should deal with the complaint as follows.

Firstly you should appoint a member who is not amongst those being complained about to investigate the matter and inform SS of that appointment. This person should ideally have some experience of conducting investigations or, alternatively, I will be happy to arrange an online meeting with the appointed member to provide guidance on best practice in fact-finding investigations.

If SS objects to that person acting as the investigator, the grounds of her objections should be considered and I would be happy to advise further. On the assumption that she does not object, she should be asked to provide the investigator with a written statement setting out her complaint. I would suggest that she's given a reasonable period to provide the detailed complaint say 21 days.

When writing to the complainant, the investigator should ask that the response include what she believes would be an appropriate outcome to this process. She should also be asked whether she would be prepared to deal with the complaint by mediation. If the parties agree to mediation this complaints procedure should be halted.

At the same time you should appoint a small committee to decide the outcome of the complaint after its investigation (I would suggest 3 people) and notify SS of the composition of the committee in the same letter as I've referred to above. Again if she objects to any person on the committee you will need to consider the nature of the objections and I would be happy to advise further.

Once the investigator has received the written complaint from SS, those individuals complained about will need to be provided with a copy of the complaint and asked to submit their response. The number of witnesses should be restricted to the minimum required in order to establish the facts surrounding the complaint. It is possible for both the initial complaint and the responses to be
dealt with verbally but, given the geographical spread of your members and current difficulties I 
would advise that it is dealt with in writing. A similar timeframe should be provided for those 
complained against to respond.

On receipt, the responses should be shared with the complainant. The person appointed to 
investigate should then consider whether they need to ask any questions to clarify any issues 
raised by the complainant or those complained against and should consider whether they feel they 
should undertake any further steps to investigate the matter. If they do, any further evidence 
adquired should also be shared with the parties to enable them to comment.

Having concluded the investigation, the investigator should prepare a report setting out the scope 
of the investigation, the process followed to investigate and a summary of their findings, copies of 
which should be sent to the complainant and those complained about offering those persons the 
opportunity to comment on the report within a reasonable time period. If those comments result in 
any changes to the report a final version of the report should be sent to the complainant and those 
complained about prior to it being provided to the committee. The committee should read and 
consider the report.

The committee could give the complainant and those complained about the opportunity to make 
representations to them in appropriately set up digital meetings. At this stage I would not 
recommend this, but it will be a matter for the committee. If this was to be done, the meetings 
should be set up in a way that allows all the parties to hear one another or if that is not possible 
any statement of the complainant should be recorded and made available to those complained 
about (and vice versa) so that they may comment prior to the committee considering the matter 
and making their decision. However, the committee should take care to avoid a courtroom style 
cross-examination – this type of adversarial approach is best avoided in dealing with a complaint.

Once the committee reach agreement on their findings and any recommendations they should 
provide this outcome to the complainant in writing. If the committee concludes that any follow-up 
actions are to be taken in respect of the members who SS has complained about, we can provide 
further advice on the procedure for putting those actions into effect.

On reaching their decision the committee should as quickly as possible communicate it to the 
Trustees and the complainant together with their statement of their brief reasons and any 
recommendations. SS will have no further right of appeal.

The investigator and the committee should seek further legal advice if at any stage they feel they 
need it.

Throughout this process, information provided by the complainant and those complained against 
should be treated in confidence and only shared with those necessary to undertake this process. 
SS and witnesses should be advised to not discuss the complaint or the investigation with other 
IAFSS members or third parties. The data protection rights of all concerned should also be 
safeguarded and anyone who is asked to provide written representations to the investigator should 
be told that their responses will be shared with the other parties to the investigation and with 
members of the committee. All the parties should be encouraged to collaborate in trying to move 
forward this process as quickly as possible.

One final point to bear in mind is that any internal written correspondence relating to the complaint 
and its investigation (including emails, text messages, or other internet messages such as Slack or 
WhatsApp) may have to be disclosed if SS makes a subject access request under the data 
protection legislation. Our correspondence will be protected by legal privilege and would not need 
to be disclosed, but all IAFSS personnel involved in this process should be reminded not to put 
anything in writing internally that could undermine the investigation process and/or which they 
would not want SS to see – sensitive discussions are better done by phone or online meeting.
I would be happy to advise further if required.

Kind regards

[Signature]

James Sinclair Taylor  
Partner  
Direct Dial: +44 (0)20 8394 6480  
Email: James.Taylor@russell-cooke.co.uk