

Membership Survey: Whether to transition the IAFSS Symposium to a 2-year Cycle

At the 11th IAFSS Symposium in New Zealand, the topic of changing the symposium cycle from a 3-year rotation to a 2-year rotation was brought up. The management committee of the IAFSS decided it would be best to solicit input from our membership, in the form of a survey, before making a decision on this topic. A committee volunteered to provide a detailed review of other conferences and a list of pros and cons for the membership: Michael Gollner (USA), Mélanie Rochoux (France), Bogdan Dlugogorski (Australia), George Hadjisophocleous (Canada), Bjorn Karlsson (Iceland) and W.K. Chow (China).

The IAFSS was founded with the primary objective of encouraging research into the science of preventing and mitigating the adverse effects of fires and of providing a forum for presenting the results of such research. Our tri-annual symposia, now all freely available online, have served as a testament and resource of the outstanding fire science research that has been produced by our community. The question now is whether continuing the 3-year cycle for symposia or moving to a shorter, 2-year cycle would serve the best interests of the IAFSS and greater fire science community.

A review of relevant conferences and symposia by the committee indicated that a majority of other international symposia on fire and combustion (e.g. International Symposium on Combustion, ICDERS, Fire and Materials, Structures in Fire, etc.) operate on a two-year cycle. Larger organizations (e.g. AGU, IAWF, APS) tend to operate on a one-year cycle. Very few conferences (e.g. Interflam, IAFSS, Fire and Explosion Hazards) operate on the three-year cycle. Reviewing these organizations and conferences, we have assembled a list of *Advantages* and *Disadvantages* related to shifting our current schedule to a 2-year cycle:

Advantages to a 2-year Cycle

- As the symposium is the main scientific fire safety science symposium, this change will result in more interaction between fire safety scientists.
- The IAFSS symposium will become more accessible to MS and PhD students who now will have at least 1 opportunity during their studies to attend the symposium. Most students miss that opportunity with the 3-year cycle, which may contribute to the membership fall-off after graduation. This would also improve their educational experience, CV, job prospects, etc.
- The meeting could be staggered with the International Symposium on Combustion (the most closely related meeting), allowing a yearly opportunity for most students and researchers to present their high-quality research that will provide continuity and avoid time conflicts.
- More opportunities will be available to acknowledge members of our community with awards.
- The proceedings will reflect a more timely account of the state of the field and potentially increase international collaboration between members.

Disadvantages to a 2-year Cycle

- Time conflicts and competition could arise with conferences on a different schedule, such as InterFlam or Fire and Explosion Hazards; however, with the exception of the Combustion Institute, no other conference has such a fundamental focus as the IAFSS.
- A more robust organization and additional volunteers will be required for conference hosting and article peer-review.
- There is an unresolved conflict between publishing in the Proceedings of the IAFSS Symposium (which does not have the status of a journal publication) and publishing in a journal. This problem will become more severe.
- It could be more expensive for academics and researchers to attend more frequent conferences.

Based on this information, would you favor a transition of the IAFSS Symposium to a 2-year cycle, not to start sooner than reasonable as determined by the Management Committee of the IAFSS?

- Yes, I favor transition to a 2-year cycle
- No, I would prefer the IAFSS Symposia remain on a 3-year cycle.
- I have no preference.

Comment (optional):