

## Guidelines for Nominating Processes in IAFSS

Every three years the IAFSS elects a new IAFSS Committee and Officers. This document provides guidance on nominations processes for the IAFSS Committee and IAFSS Officers. Section 13 of the Bylaws contains most of the requirements for these processes. Section 13 is included at the end of this guide for reference.

### Composition of the IAFSS Committee

IAFSS is a worldwide association focused on all aspects of fire safety science. From the beginning there was specific attention paid to assuring that IAFSS would truly remain a global association which recognized and promoted all the scientific aspects of fire safety. This can be seen by reviewing the front matter of the first volume of *Fire Safety Science*. The broad selection of session topics was not an accident but rather was a decision by the founders to assure that the Association embraced all aspects of fire safety science. Similarly, the broad representation of the IAFSS committee, with respect to discipline and geography, was thoughtfully and specifically developed. IAFSS has always had strong participation from the academic community, national laboratories, and the private sector.

In most aspects of geographic and discipline diversity, IAFSS has operated based upon tradition rather than legislation (bylaws). While the founders embraced this diversity wholeheartedly, they also recognized that operational constraints could be a destructive force in difficult times. Reliance on tradition rather than bylaws for maintaining diversity should not be considered to make diversity of less importance than issues dealt with directly in the bylaws. Through the history of IAFSS there has been considerable attention to assuring that the very strong fire physics community does not dominate the association. Similarly, no country or region has dominated the association. Fortunately, there is considerable discipline and regional strength in IAFSS that bodes well for the strength and diversity of the association.

The IAFSS Committee needs to reflect the prestige and technical excellence that IAFSS seeks for our profession. IAFSS Committee members need to have passion and dedication to fire safety and fire safety science. At the same time, IAFSS Committee members need to have a focus on service to the association as well as judgment and integrity. IAFSS Committee members need to have the communication and management skills to fully participate in committee and association matters. To achieve this, the IAFSS Committee also needs to have diversity in both the disciplines of fire safety science and the geographic spread for the Association to be truly worldwide. While there is no limit to the duration of committee service, the needs of the Association demand that IAFSS Committee members be highly active in fire safety science, the Association, and the Committee.

## Nomination Process and Schedule for the IAFSS Committee

IAFSS Committee members are elected to the Committee by a vote of the Association membership (¶ 13(v)). Any member of the Association is eligible for election as a member of the Committee. Members of the Committee are eligible for re-nomination to serve on the Committee (¶ 13(iii)). The Committee comprises 24 members, including a Chair, three Vice-Chairs, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer and 18 Ordinary Members all elected to such office pursuant to Rule 13 (¶ vi). The Committee shall have power to fill any casual vacancy by co-option (¶ 6). At least one member of the Committee must reside in England or Wales. This requirement results from the registration of IAFSS as a charity in England and Wales (No 800306)<sup>1</sup>.

## Operations of the Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee<sup>2</sup> is required by the bylaws to include a Chair and four other members. The Chair and at least one other member must be members of the IAFSS Committee. Nominating Committee members are normally long time members of the Association who are familiar with the needs of the organization and familiar with the potential candidate nominees (¶ 13(ii)).

At least twelve months before the scheduled completion of the Committee's term of office, the Committee shall appoint a Nominating Committee, consisting of a Chairman and four other members. At least six months prior to the General Meeting (normally held at the Symposium) the Nominating Committee is required to provide a full slate of committee nominees (24) to the Honorary Secretary (¶ 13(ii, iv)).

The normal process for the Nominating Committee in their selection of a slate of candidates is first to query the existing Committee Members as to whether they wish to be re-nominated or not. In this process, members who have not been active or have no intention of being active in the future are encouraged not to seek re-nomination. There is no limit on the years of service on the Committee and there is no requirement for the Nominating Committee to re-nominate existing Committee members for an additional term. Nevertheless, existing committee members who wish to continue are commonly selected for re-nomination. In recent years the Nominating Committee has had significant difficulty in getting existing Committee members to respond to queries about their desire to be re-nominated, which has put the whole nominations process behind schedule. A time limit of 45 days for existing Committee members to respond to the Nominating Committee is recommended, with two reminders to be sent to unresponsive members during the period. If no response is received during the set period, it will be assumed that the existing committee member does not wish to be re-nominated.

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<sup>1</sup> In recent years this has been fulfilled by co-option of Carole Franks as a committee member.

<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this document, the word "Committee" without the modifier "Nominating" refers to the IAFSS Committee of the whole.

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For Consideration at Thursday IAFSS Committee Meeting in Christchurch

Once the re-nomination of existing Committee members has been resolved, the Nominating Committee can identify the remaining vacancies in the slate of nominees. The identification of potential candidates for the IAFSS Committee should include communication with the association membership to allow association members to indicate their interest in being considered for service on the IAFSS Committee.

By tradition the final slate of nominees has included eight nominees from each region (Americas, Europe/Africa, Asia/Oceania), though deviations from this aspirational goal by one or two members has been found acceptable with cause. This practice is designed to ensure the strength of IAFSS in all regions and to build a strong worldwide fire science community. The bylaws do not require that the members of the committee represent the wide range of disciplines within the fire science community, but nonetheless, by tradition a strong effort has been made to include representation from a wide range of disciplines. There has also been a tradition of ensuring that the Committee members represent a wide range of institutions. As such, multiple Committee members from the same institution have been rare.

Nominees for the IAFSS Committee should be respected members of the Fire Safety Science community who have made contributions to their respective disciplines and to the IAFSS. Furthermore, nominees should expect to become actively involved in IAFSS activities during their tenure on the Committee and should participate fully in Committee activities and deliberations. The Nominating Committee takes the view that membership of the IAFSS Committee is not a reward for professional status, but recognition of the potential service the nominee can provide the community.

## **Reporting of Nominating Committee and Petition Candidates**

The full slate of nominees selected by the Nominating Committee is to be communicated via electronic mail to the membership at least six months prior to the General Meeting. This communication should also explain the procedure and schedule for submitting petition nominations.

A member may be nominated for election to the IAFSS Committee by a petition signed by at least ten other members and submitted in writing to the Honorary Secretary (¶ 13(iii)) no later than three months before the scheduled completion of the Committee's term of office (¶13(iv)). Petition candidates present a potential challenge to the achievement of the multiple goals which are sought in the nomination process. Individual petition candidates may not have the opportunity to consider directly the broad objectives of the Nominating Committee. Nonetheless, over time, as the membership become increasingly aware of these objectives and provided there is only a small number of petition candidates, the election process can still produce an IAFSS Committee that meets the needs of the Association. Future Nominating Committees will have the opportunity of redressing any significant imbalance that is created in the Committee structure.

## The Election Process and Election Reporting

If the total number of nominees does not exceed the number of positions on the Committee as of three months before the scheduled completion of the Committee's term of office, then all nominees will be deemed to have been elected to the Committee without further action. In any other instance, an election by a vote of the members is required. Each nominee must provide biographical information and the candidate's objective if elected. This information is provided in the ballot. The ballot is assembled and sent out electronically by the Honorary Secretary (using pdf forms that are e-mailed to members). The ballots are counted by the Scrutineers (¶ 13(v)).

The results of the IAFSS Committee election are announced to the membership at the General Meeting (¶ 8(i)(g)). There is no requirement to announce the election results before the General Meeting, though there is definite value to announcing the election results as soon as they are finalized by the Scrutineers. This gives new members of the IAFSS Committee advance notice of their responsibilities which begin at the IAFSS Committee meeting after the General Meeting at the symposium. It also allows for more orderly election of IAFSS Committee officers, since potential candidates can be known in advance.

The term of members of the IAFSS Committee is three years (¶ 13(i)), designed to correspond to the period of time between IAFSS Symposia. The bylaws recognize that duration of terms between two and four years may be called for based upon the scheduling of symposia.

## Nominations and Election of Officers of IAFSS

The Bylaws do not provide a formal process for nomination of Officers of the IAFSS, which could result in problems with succession. The identification of officer candidates and their election could occur at the same meeting (the first committee meeting after the General Meeting) without the opportunity for Committee members to give their vote due consideration. The Nominating Committee has in recent years encouraged the informal identification of officer candidates before the meeting at which officers are elected. The Nominating Committee has also urged those interested in filling vacant positions to indicate their interest well before the meeting where the voting for officers takes place. It is thought that this enhances transparency and succession planning for IAFSS leadership.

The bylaws do not place any regional requirements on the IAFSS Chair or the Vice-Chairs, although it has been the tradition to select one Vice-Chair from each region: Americas, Europe/Africa, and Asia/Oceania. Similarly, it has been the tradition to circulate the office of IAFSS Chair among the three regions. These traditions were instituted to develop a worldwide fire science community with strength in all regions. The tradition of equal representation of Officers among the regions has served IAFSS well over the decades. These traditions were not made a part of the bylaws so as to allow the continued operation of the Association in times where full regional representation might not be possible. Fortunately, participation has been

strong among all three regions and there has been no need to deviate from the traditions formulated by the founders to ensure a strong cadre of Officers.

Upon commencement of a new term of office, at its first meeting the IAFSS Committee shall elect the IAFSS Chair, the three Vice-Chairs, the Honorary Secretary, and the Honorary Treasurer from amongst its own number. Officers shall be subject to annual confirmation by the IAFSS 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 (¶ 13(vi)).

The Executive Sub-Committee is made up of the Association officers plus two additional IAFSS Committee members. If not already among the Association officers, the two additional members typically have included the immediate past and future local arrangements chairs for the Symposia. This underlines the central nature of the triennial Symposium to the operations of the Association. It also assists in the transfer of knowledge from symposium to symposium and recognizes the significant commitment made by the local arrangements committees. Because the Symposium location rotates among the regions, this ensures that all regions are represented in the Executive Committee.

## **Scrutineers and Auditors**

Scrutineers and Auditors are elected at the General Meeting. There is no formal method for nominating IAFSS members for these assignments. Generally, it has fallen to the IAFSS Chair to identify potential candidates for these important posts. The posts are generally held by senior individuals within IAFSS who do not serve on the IAFSS Committee. In some instances they have been prior members of the IAFSS Committee and often are senior IAFSS members who have never served on the IAFSS Committee. Clearly, these individuals should be recognized and respected by the membership to ensure the confidence of the membership in the work of the Scrutineers and Auditors and by extension in the operations of the Association.

Written by the IAFSS Nominating Committee 2011-2014 for the consideration of the IAFSS Committee for use as a guidance document in the nominations and elections processes of the association.

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Section 13 of the Bylaws:

13. Election of Committee and Officers

- (i) Terms of office for members of the Committee shall be concurrent and shall normally be three years, subject to termination of office by resignation or otherwise. Prior to the commencement of a term of office, the Committee may change its duration so that it will end concurrent with a General Meeting, provided that the resulting term of office is not less than two years nor longer than four years.
- (ii) At least twelve months before the scheduled completion of the Committee's term of office, the Committee shall appoint a Nominating Committee, consisting of a Chairman and four other members. The Chairman and at least one other member of the Nominating Committee shall be members of the Committee.
- (iii) Any member of the Association shall be eligible for election as a member of the Committee. Members of the Committee shall be eligible for renomination to serve on the Committee. The Nominating Committee shall nominate candidates for all positions on the Committee. A member may also be nominated for election to the Committee by a petition signed by at least ten other members and submitted in writing to the Honorary Secretary.
- (iv) At least seven months before the scheduled completion of the Committee's term of office, the Nominating Committee shall submit its nominees to the Honorary Secretary. The nominees designated by the Nominating Committee shall be reported to the members of the Association in a newsletter or other general mailing, mailed at least six months before the scheduled completion of the Committee's term of office. This announcement shall also explain the procedure and schedule for submitting petition nominations. Petition nominees shall be submitted to the Honorary Secretary no later than three months before the scheduled completion of the Committee's term of office.
- (v) If the total number of nominees does not exceed the number of positions on the Committee as of three months before the scheduled completion of the Committee's term of office, then all nominees will be deemed to be elected to the Committee without further action. In any other instance, there shall be an election by postal or electronic vote of the members, which shall be completed prior to the scheduled completion of the Committee's term of office. The vote shall be conducted by the Honorary Secretary counted by the Scrutineers.
- (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.