

IAWBH General Assembly 2020 Background paper

The following is background information for current or future proposed constitutional changes. Please read these when considering the motions before the General Assembly to be held 19 June 2020.

Agenda item 9: Constitutional amendments

Standardised financial year for membership

In line with the growth of the range of activities offered by the IAWBH, the Board proposes that the financial year for membership be standardized so that all memberships begin/expire in the same month. This will be administratively simpler to maintain for membership renewal and removal purposes, but will also provide clearer information for budgeting purposes, election purposes, administrative costs and the future development of the IAWBH.

Should this be implemented, members' fees will be charged pro-rata for the period up to the commencement of the standardized financial year renewals. The majority of members currently renew around March, and should this motion be carried, it is proposed that this form the basis of the standardized renewal period.

The Constitution is silent on the matter of the timing of membership renewals. However, the Constitution does make one stipulation that is inconsistent with the proposed move to a standardised financial year. It indicates that non-members who pay the full fee for the conference receive a 12-month membership. Retaining this provision in Section 22 of the Constitution would mean these people had a non-standardised membership renewal date. Their membership would expire 12 months after the conference. As the conference date changes every two years, this introduces further complexity.

Clause 22 of the Governance section of the Constitution reads:

All paying participants at the 6th International conference on Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace in Montreal are eligible to participate in the First General assembly. For consecutive assemblies only fully paid-up members are allowed to take part and vote. Paid-up members will have reduced fees for all activities within the association, including the International Conference. The full fee for the Conference includes a one year membership of the Association for the following 12 months.

In relation to the free 12 month membership for those who are not members and pay the full conference fee, the following should be noted:

- In practice, providing 12 months free membership to those who paid the full fee has been difficult to administrate, and not all of these attendees chose to become members.
- Most people simply join the association before registering for the conference, in order to obtain the discount on the conference.

- Conference fees are discounted for those with regular membership by at least the same, or greater amount than the cost of standard membership. Purchasing membership is therefore more advantageous for people who are not already members, rather than paying the full fee for the event and receiving free membership after the event.

If the motion to implement a standardised financial year for membership is carried, then the issue of the 12 months free membership needs to be amended in the Constitution.

As outlined above, removal of the free 12 months membership has no practical disadvantages. The simplest solution is to remove the sentence as outlined in motion 8.2.

MOTION 4.1: That the financial year for membership renewals be standardised.

MOTION 4.2: Remove the sentence: “The full fee for the Conference includes a one year membership of the Association for the following 12 months.” from Clause 22 of the Constitution

MOTION 4.3: If motion 4.2 is not supported, amend the sentence from Clause 22 of the Governance section of the Constitution to read: “The full fee for the Conference includes a one-year membership of the Association *up to the next membership renewal date*”.

Removing barriers to the Presidency of the IAWBH

As an Association predicated on fairness, the Board would like to provide the opportunity for practitioners and non-full-time academics to be eligible to stand for the role of President. Currently, Clause 6 of the Governance section of our Constitution requires “*The President will be elected every two years by the General Assembly and must hold a full-time academic position.*”

The purpose of the proposed amendment to the Constitution is to embody the aims of the Association, specifically Aim 1: “to promote fairness, justice and dignity in the workplace” and Aim 6: “to bring together researchers and practitioners for collaboration and knowledge sharing.” By excluding practitioners from being eligible for President, and allowing only full-time academics to be President, the Constitution implies a ‘second-class’ membership status, and contradicts the stated aims of the Association. Requiring candidates for the Presidency to have a full-time (academic) role is potentially discriminatory, given that more women are employed in part-time positions than men. Given the greater requirements of the role of President as the Association has developed, a part-time employment role may arguably facilitate taking on the President’s role.

Arguments have been forwarded that the primary purpose of the IAWBH is to further academic research in the area of B&H, and that having a practitioner as the President may diminish the stature of this purpose. The counter-argument is that many of the practitioners hold post graduate degrees and/or have research experience. Others have many years of experience in the field potentially equivalent to post-graduate knowledge.

MOTION 4.4: To amend clause 6 of the Governance section of the Constitution to read:
The President will be elected every two years by the General Assembly. To be eligible for the role of President, the candidate must have been a member of the IAWBH for a continuous period of at least 3.5 years. ~~and must hold a full-time academic position.~~

Removal of President or Board

There is currently no mechanism in the constitution to remove a President or board member from office, other than their resignation, should the need arise. As a matter of good governance, it is recommended that the Board be able to remove a President or Board member for a range of reasons, for example should they not attend 3 consecutive Board meetings without sufficient justification; if they were in breach of the Constitution, or were guilty of any act or omission which, in the opinion of the Board, was unbecoming of a President or board member or against the interests of the Association.

MOTION 4.5: That a clause be added to the Constitution that reads:

The Board can remove a President, office bearer or Board member from their role on the Board by unanimous vote of the remaining Board members, in cases of maladministration, significant dereliction of roles and duties, or otherwise acting against the interests of the Association. An Extraordinary General Assembly can be called by any Board member as an appeal mechanism against the Board decision for removal.

Agenda Item 10:

Consideration of the role of a President -elect

Succession planning in relation to the President's role has been explored by the board to try to ensure the continuity that the Association's founders envisaged. The role of President of IAWBH is an important one, and there is a need for support for new Presidents, including a handover period. In the past, IAWBH Presidents have served on the Board before becoming the President, but there is no Constitutional requirement for this to be the case.

There were a number of options explored including:

- creating a role of President-elect
- having a minimum board service period for a President prior to election
- eliminating the GA vote for President and leaving it to the board to elect a President from one of the board members
- maintaining the status quo.

After discussion by the Board, a paper regarding the pros and cons of these options was forwarded to previous Presidents and the governance committee for their feedback.

Their favoured options were to either create a president-elect role or to maintain the status quo.

The Board seeks members' views in relation to this, through the GA, regarding whether to maintain the status quo or to further explore the options of a president elect in more detail. If there were any appetite for developing a president elect role, this would need be developed for consideration and approval at subsequent general assemblies. If there were no appetite for change from members, then this proposal would not be considered further.

MOTION 5: That the Board form a working group to explore the issues for creating and implementing a President elect role, including recommended options and any required constitutional changes.