

IAWBH Presidential Succession Planning

Discussion paper November 2019
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Background

The issue of succession planning for the IAWBH Board was raised at the f2f meeting in London (August, 2019). The founders of the Association in the Constitution were clearly of the view that there should be some kind of 'roll over' of Board members by staggering elections so that in the normal course of events three of the six Board members' positions would be contestable every 2 years (Clause 7).

As the constitution currently stands, the General Assembly of Members (GA) elects the Board (Clause 3). The IAWBH President is elected by the GA for a two year term and to be eligible for election they must hold a full-time academic position (Clause 6). The other remaining 6 Board members are elected by the GA from the candidates assembled by the Electoral Committee (Clause 7). If the President is unable to complete their term of office, the Board will appoint a new President from within the Board for the remainder of the term of office (Clause 12). The President can serve a maximum of 4 consecutive years (Clause 13).

As discussed at the London meeting, the status quo results in two limitations that the Board believed were worth of further discussion:

1. The Constitution is silent on the requirement or expectation that candidates for President have any prior experience in the governance of the IAWBH. There is therefore potential for an individual to be elected to lead the IAWBH with no prior knowledge or experience of the organisation outside of membership. However, it should be acknowledged that 11 years after the Association was founded, all Presidents have served on the Board prior to their election as President.
2. The Board was concerned that a two year tenure is too short given the scale and scope of the role. Recent Presidents have acknowledged that it may take 12-18 months to get comfortable with the role, leaving a term of less than 12 months to be effective.

This paper outlines 4 options that could be considered by the Board who may then choose any number of these options to present to the General Assembly.

Option 1: "President-Elect"

Create a position of President-Elect, which would consist of a 4 year term. The first two years would be served as a board member with the designate of "President-Elect", the second two years as "President."

Potential pros	Potential cons
This provides certainty, continuity and stability for the organisation and its members via a candidate who has knowledge of the history of the governance of IAWBH.	The concept of PE would potentially limit an individual to be in the President role for only two years. That is, the Constitution (clause 13) only allows "normally elected Board members" a tenure of 8 years maximum on the Board in any role (e.g. 4 years Board member, 2 years PE, 2 years President) whereas current Constitution allows for two x 4 year terms as Board member and two x 2 year terms as President.

There is the opportunity for the PE to build relationships within the Board before becoming President	If a 'bad choice' has been made, then are stuck with the person for the role of President with no recourse for being voted out by the membership
Opportunity to build external stakeholder relationships e.g. with an LOC, other scholarly bodies	Some complexity in working out the details, (including in the case of a resignation of the PE) and would not be able to be effected before 2022. If the PE stepped down during their term, then a Presidential election could take place as it does currently.
Opportunity to 'shadow' President in their dealings with a current LOC and/or M/C coordinators	It would highly unlikely that a President could serve two consecutive terms as they would need to stand for PE prior to the Presidential term starting.
The PE would know what they're up for in terms of the role and be able to 'hit the ground running'. There is also the potential to undertake longer term projects and to see them through to completion.	

Option 2: "Service Period"

Candidates for president must have completed a minimum of two years on the Board prior to standing for election as President.

Potential pros	Potential cons
Simple	
Has continuity and currency	Only complexity could come if a past Board member (i.e. not a current Board member) stood – this could be alleviated by a three month hand-over period from the immediate past-President. A contingency would be required should no previous Board members wish to stand for President.

Option 3: "Appointed President"

Eliminate the GA vote for President, and add another Board member (i.e. total 7 Board members). The Board would then be free to elect its own President and Chair.

Potential pros	Potential cons
Simple	Seen as less inclusive/democratic i.e. members only indirectly elect the President with no guarantee they will be appointed by the Board.
Easy	No guarantee of handover
Board members would likely have knowledge of the person from their experience on the Board	No one wants to be the President or reluctant president.
Consistent with most private sector governance situations	No guarantee of previous IAWBH board experience.

Option 4: “Status Quo”

Maintain the status quo (‘if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it’).

Potential pros	Potential cons
Simple - no Constitutional change required	Potential for a ‘green’ President who has no knowledge of the IAWBH governance requirements
We know this system, and to date, it has worked well.	No managed succession. This does not necessarily allow for relationship building outside the Association. However, given that the most significant external relationships are with the LOC of the conference , these are not ongoing relationships (as for example we might have with a major service provider or customer if we were a private sector company) so are likely to be developed and required only for the two year period of the Presidency.

It was noted during our discussions that the Constitution allows only for an academic to be elected as President. We touched on this in our f2f meeting as well, where, in effect, practitioners are ‘second-class’ members. Is this something we want to pursue as a recommended constitutional change?

Bevan and Shayne