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Executive Summary Prepared for the International Academic Board Strategic Planning Summit

March 29, 2024 | Tokyo, Japan

Prepared by Dr Melina Neophytou and Mr Apipol Sae-tung for Professor Anne Boddington and members of the International Academic Board (IAB)

Executive Summary

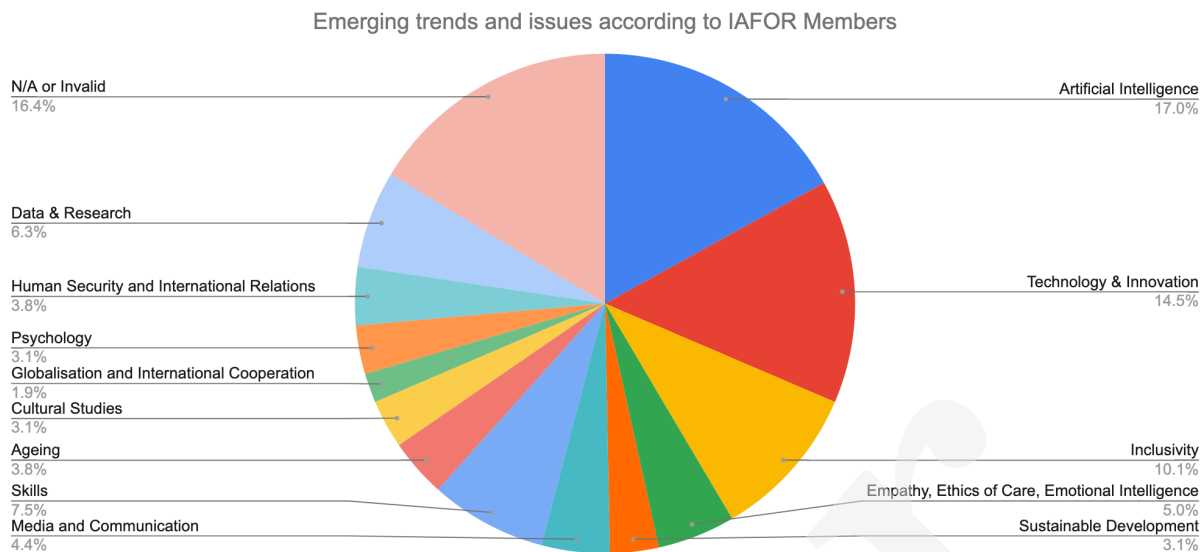
IAFOR | Strategic Planning Summit 2024 | Friday, March 29, 2024

14:00-17:00 JST (Friday, March 29, 2024, 01:00-04:00 AM EDT, 05:00-08:00 AM GMT)

On March 29, 2024, IAFOR's International Academic Board (IAB) gathered for a Strategic Planning Summit in Tokyo, Japan, to discuss: (a) IAFOR's annual performance in terms of scholarships, Journals, and conference reports; (b) future themes to be discussed in plenary sessions at conferences, (c) future capacity-building sessions at conferences, (d) IAFOR projects that are on hiatus, in progress, and upcoming; (e) the expansion of our membership offers, and (f) the future of the IAFOR Research Centre (IRC).

The priority for this meeting was for the IAB to consider the results derived from feedback that we received from extensive consultation with membership in regards to desired future areas and themes of focus for our conference programming. Earlier this year, IAFOR rolled out a questionnaire to our members due to a noticeable need to stray away from top-down agenda-setting, in an attempt to align our programming more in line with what people 'on the ground' perceive and require. The results from the questionnaire regarding emerging key issues and trends, as well as capacity-building demands, were compiled into the Strategic Planning Summit Report, which will serve as a guide for the IAB's decisions on IAFOR's future course.

Based on this consultation with our membership, and cross-referencing this feedback with insights from international organisations such as the World Economic Forum (WEF), the IAB has identified the following emerging key issues, which will shape IAFOR's conference themes in the next five years (2025-2029): (a) Artificial Intelligence, Technology, and Innovation, (b) Inclusivity, Ethics of Care, and Psychology, (c) Leadership (in Education and other fields), and (d) Global Citizenship, Education for Peace, and Human Security. The following figure shows all emerging trends that our membership has identified (for a detailed breakdown within each field, please refer to the Strategic Planning Summit Report):



Based on our membership's feedback, as well as performance reports, the following was agreed upon at the meeting:

(a) IAFOR Scholarships, Journals, and Conference Reports

- Scholarship criteria for assignment need to be re-evaluated and potentially aligned to regional or local participation depending on the conference, and data deployed from scholarship awarding must be utilised more efficiently.
- For transparency and integrity purposes, IAFOR needs to produce an official IAFOR Journal Publications Report open to the public to announce our Journals' performance.
- Conference reports were deemed essential for our community to stay in touch with academic debates and could aid policy-makers in important decisions. The Board has decided to produce such reports, with the [IICE/IICAH2024](#) and [SEACE2024](#) reports being a preliminary example, and the ACEID/ACP/AGen2024 report slated to be the first serious attempt at creating a series of such reports.

(b) Future themes to be discussed in plenary sessions at conferences

- How we develop and agree on conference themes, identify emerging themes, and consider how the knowledge IAFOR gains from our conferences can be used to inform and support future conferences, as well as the development needs of our membership, delegates, and online audiences, needs to be one of the IAB's priorities.
- IAFOR's academic coordinators prepared a report based on the aforementioned IAFOR membership survey, inquiring about members' insights on key issues and trends. The Board welcomed the report and recognised the value of IAFOR members' opinions as an important guide for future thematics.

- The Board identified the common theme of Education throughout all strands and cautioned against attempting to add too many themes to the conferences, given that IAFOR has three key foci; International, intercultural, and interdisciplinary. The Board also noted that IAFOR should remain responsive to its diverse audiences, and create a place to bring new and emerging subjects to Education (e.g. Peace Education, Migration, Leadership in Education) and how these can introduce new perspectives to the ideas of interdisciplinary and/or international.

(c) Future capacity-building sessions at conferences

- The Board is aware that IAFOR attracts a wide range of constituencies, including public officials, graduate students, early career academics, those considering other career paths, and leaders and managers considering policy issues. IAFOR needs to think about how it wishes to segment its constituencies to support the organisation but, equally, to enhance the experience of delegates and members.
- Since the majority of IAFOR's delegates are early-career academics and PhD candidates, it is plausible that IAFOR offers capacity-building sessions in the form of workshops, mentorship, or online lessons (e.g. in 'how to' create and present a good poster, how to write a report or article, or to negotiate a book contract).
- The business model should be considered for different forms of delivery, as well as motives and incentives behind offering capacity-building opportunities. Implementation is complex and would need careful planning as a business strategy and also consideration of liability.
- The Board discussed whether to offer such capacity-building sessions during conferences and the exact timing and pricing thereof, encouraging a trial or pilot session at a forthcoming conference, to be determined at a later date.

(ci) IAFOR projects that are on hiatus, in progress, and upcoming

- IAFOR has acquired substantial funding from the Open Society Foundations (OSF) to pilot its "Global Fellowship Programme" in 2024. How fellows can be integrated into existing IAFOR projects and contribute to its growth should be further discussed. IAFOR aims to build on this project to attract new funders and sponsors.
- In line with the capacity-building discussion, IAFOR has decided to expand the Asian Undergraduate Research Symposium (AURS) into the International Undergraduate Research Symposium (IURS) in order to introduce the programme at more conferences. The inaugural IURS will be offered at ECE2024 (London), KCE2024 (Incheon), and ACE2024 (Tokyo).
- In line with listening to members' and audiences' ideas and feedback, IAFOR has decided to introduce 'The Forum', a new project in the form of a round table discussion, which will be trialled at IAFOR's upcoming May conference. It is formatted as an expectation for all registered presenters and will be conducted as a way to receive ideas for future conference themes. It was noted that skilled convenors will be essential for this project's success.

- Plans are underway to reintroduce the *THINK* magazine. The magazine will potentially constitute the link that will tie all these projects together, and offer added value to the membership. Another project to enhance capacity-building and membership benefits includes podcasts, which is currently under consideration.
- (e) Expansion of our membership offers
- The Board acknowledged that there has been no recruitment drive to increase membership, although members have been consulted on the future direction of IAFOR.
 - Currently, it seems that the only incentive for delegates to sign up as members is to receive discounts to attend a conference. Around 50% of new attendees join the membership, while the drop-off rate for the renewal of IAFOR membership is considerable.
 - The Board questioned what the ultimate goal was for retaining a membership. IAFOR needs to clarify membership goals and align them with future engagement so that it can expand and provide meaningful opportunities for the membership.
 - The survey conducted earlier this year was considered a useful mechanism for engagement and for developing a community, which will provide a necessary line of communication for determining specific projects of interest IAFOR can invest in for members, e.g. capacity-building workshops.
- (f) Future of the IAFOR Research Center (IRC)
- The IRC will review its *raison d'être*, rebuild, and restructure itself by working on small projects that IAFOR already has underway. The Global Fellowship Programme is a suitable project for involvement as it is already underway. Aligning fellowships from the OSF initiative will be mutually beneficial. A clear and purposeful agenda for the IRC is essential.

The Board has agreed on future topics of discussion, which include how to distil themes for IAFOR's conference programme, IAFOR's capacity to develop new ways of structuring conferences, questions around membership, how to navigate the international academic space and cross-fertilise ideas, redefining our audience, and building systems around what happens at, around, and after a conference. To this end, it is important to create an annual focus to assess progress, and a series of action points that distribute the responsibilities, actions, and leadership across the IAB.

Dr Joseph Haldane, the CEO of IAFOR, noted that previously there had been too much overlap between the IAB and the IAFOR Board of Directors. The reports presented at this meeting as a result of research and feedback initiatives have aided in the Academic Board's realignment, and helped decide overarching academic themes. It was proposed that the IAB should strictly focus on providing academic strategy in the future. This process of realignment is also important to

IAFOR's governance and transparency, and to how it develops an academic voice, recognition, and respect.

Attendees

Anne Boddington (Chair)

Grant Black

Dexter Da Silva

Joseph Haldane

Virgil Hawkins

Donald E. Hall

Ljiljana Markovic

Melina Neophytou

James W. McNally

Apipol Sae-Tung

Monty P. Satiadarma

Donna Zier (Secretary)

