Professor Andrew Filby PhD
Professor of Practice in Enabling Technologies
Director of the Newcastle University Cytometry and Single Cell Unit
Lead of the Faculty Innovation, Methodology and Application (IMA) Research Theme
Faculty of Medical Sciences, Newcastle University, UK

Presidential Election Statement:

As a dedicated member of our vibrant international cytometry community, I am excited to present myself as a candidate for the esteemed position of President. I have worked in the field of cytometry and immunology for over 20 years and have been an ISAC member for the past 14 years. During this time, I have been very active and involved in the Society. I was previously a member of the ISAC Council and currently serve on the Innovation committee and the Image Cytometry Task Force. Previously I served on the ISAC Membership committee, E-learning Delivery Task Force and the Scientific Communications committee, the Meetings committee and the “Shared Resource Laboratory” (SRL) Emerging Leader (EL) committee. These roles have provided me with a broad yet detailed understanding of our Society and its membership, including the strengths, limitations, opportunities and potential challenges we may face in the coming years. It has been my pleasure to play an active part in the Society and to contribute my time and expertise. I have learnt a lot from the amazing cytometry community and seen real benefit to my career progression, culminating this year in my appointment to Professor; the first UK-based technical specialist/Shared Resource Laboratory (SRL) director to achieve that distinction. I also co-chair the “technician council” as part of the newly established “UK Institute for Technical Skills and Strategy” (UK-ITSS) and in combination with my role on several large UK-funding panels, I am working to redefine the technical careers landscape in the UK and further afield; a real potential benefit to ISAC members.

In my current role, I am director of a large, vibrant, research-active cytometry and single cell SRL at Newcastle University, a UK Russell Group institution. Alongside this, I lead a dedicated Faculty-wide research theme focused on “Innovation, Methodology and Application” (IMA). The IMA theme has over 400 members from across the Faculty of Medical Sciences and School of Engineering. In many ways, the IMA theme is a microcosm of ISAC with a very diverse membership composed of academic and technical job families as well as a broad range of technology, methodology and engineering specialisms. To date it is one of the most successful research themes in the University with focus on the development and application of innovative solutions to address key questions in human health and disease. It also focuses on parity of esteem and career progression for technical staff as well as academic colleagues toward a truly collaborative, “team science”- driven research culture. I feel that my experience in establishing and leading the IMA theme will be very relevant to leading our Society and I will bring the same attitude and ethos to the role of President should I be elected. In my career to date, I have been an academic, an industrial scientist, a commercial scientist and an SRL scientist too, so can understand and empathise with the majority of our diverse membership.

If elected, the main objectives for my term in office would be:

- To ensure that there are mechanisms and frequent opportunities for Society members to feed ideas, concerns and comments to ISAC leadership; a major part of leadership is the ability to listen effectively and respond appropriately.
- To work with and support ISAC staff, volunteer leaders, members and other stakeholders to ensure the onward stability and growth of ISAC as an independent and viable Society.
- To reaffirm/re-establish ISAC as the leading Society in the field of quantitative cell analysis and single cell technologies. This includes promoting the Society and its members to be visibly leading in key areas such as the development of new hardware, novel analytical algorithms and innovative SRL operational models. Innovation is at the very core of the cytometry community and it knows no boundaries with regard to where can take place or who may drive it.
- To ensure that ISAC remains an attractive, inclusive and supportive Society for its current and future members, embodying the principles of “equality, diversity and inclusion” (EDI) in all that we do.
- To provide opportunities and platforms for all Society members, regardless of geographical location, to highlight their skills, talents and to discuss the specific challenges they face and to ensure that these members are able to represent themselves and not have others speak for them.
- To ensure that ISAC and its members continue to visibly lead on the establishment of “best practices” in all aspects of cytometry from data generation to education and beyond.
DEI/EDI statement

I am wholeheartedly dedicated to promoting and advancing Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). Without considered thought and defined actions, equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) are simply three words or letters on a page. The real goal with EDI should be to reach a point where we don’t have to constantly remind ourselves and others what the principles are and where/how they need to be applied. Instead they should be wordlessly and effortlessly imbued in all that we say and do as a Society.

I am determined to ensure that our Society is an inclusive environment where every individual feels valued, heard, and empowered. I advocate for the celebration of diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences, recognising that they enrich our collective capacity for innovation and success. While ISAC has made significant progress in this area we must continue work together to identify the challenges that we as a Society face with respect to EDI and formulate effective strategies to overcome them. In my role as lead of the iMA research Theme at Newcastle University we have created a steering group composed of individuals with diverse backgrounds, views, experiences, technical/methodological specialities, job families, gender and other protected characteristics. We also have a liaison member who is part of the Faculty’s EDI committee who acts as a conduit between Faculty EDI policies and our own Theme strategies. Overall this group is highly functional and effective, creating one of the best regarded research Themes in the University. I believe that the same ethos will help ISAC meet its EDI challenges and by reinforcing the work already done by the Society to ensure better representation across the leadership, committees and task forces, and importantly our membership.

It is also essential that ISAC must take the “I” in its name more seriously and do more to attract members from other parts of the world, not least Africa, Asia and Latin America. We need to do more to provide a platform and opportunity for our existing members from these areas in a way that allows them to speak but not necessarily to be spoken for. By doing this the Society will promote authentic voices who will attract others by acting as ambassadors for the Society in their native countries, and in many cases their native languages too.

If elected then I will work tirelessly to serve the Society and its wonderful, diverse membership. Cytometry remains my passion, ISAC will always be my home, and it would be my honour to serve a term as President of the Society. Thank you for your consideration.