

ICA Board Member at Large Position Description

Key Position Features

According to the ICA bylaws, Board members at large (BMAL) participate in the board meetings to voice the opinion, hopes and concerns of the "underrepresented" regions and people in ICA.

They do not represent a division or interest group. Their **functional relationships** are:

- (A) With their fellow Board members
- (B) Through the Board, with the entire membership
- (C) Directly with prospective members in the least represented regions of the World.

Their unique position provides the latitude to work in different ways and fulfil a unique set of responsibilities compared to other Board members with defined and bounded constituencies and thus reporting lines.

The MBAL role is a **combination of liaison and advocacy** between and for regions whose voices and traditions are not influential within the organization. They are therefore in an ideal position to have a **monitoring role** – observing the assumptions, expectations and practices that predominate and suggesting how these might be refined or extended to be more inclusive and empowering.

Those in BMAL positions have the opportunity to be very active members of the ICA Board. A monitoring role provides scope to extend their focus beyond liaison and advocacy. Specifically, it provides the opportunity to **interpret the needs and aspirations of under-represented groups** and provide advice on both policy and practice. There is therefore a potential for BMAL roles to be framed as **educational** as well as liaison and advocacy roles.

Given that ICA is a far more international communication association than other communication associations such as NCA and the US regional associations such as ECA, and WCA, IBMALs are ideally positioned to work with the ICA Board to identify ways to use ICA's more international character as a positive point of difference. This point of difference should not simply be in terms of cultural diversity metrics. **A BMAL should play a key role in ensuring the ICA experience of all members is essentially international.**

This means a BMAL needs to recognize the ways scholarship varies between regions, in terms of priorities, practices and resourcing, and be able to draw

attention to these variations when they are likely to cause disadvantage. They also need to appreciate the implications of membership of an English-language organization (i.e., ICA) for those who do not have English as their first language and advocate for strategies that reduce the chance that language status will impact negatively on an individual's ease of participation in ICA. This applies particularly in relation to their chances of having papers accepted for conferences and published in ICA journals.

Furthermore, a BMAL should be mindful that ICA, while attracting far more international participants than its counterparts, and convening conferences in a wider variety of cities in the world, is still dominated by North American participants. It is very easy to unintentionally colonize rather than collaboratively create mutually endorsing experiences that foster a respectful understanding and a shared sense of global citizenship.

Fostering a sense of shared global citizenship should be the *raison d'être* of the BMAL positions. This would necessitate filling these positions with members who have a philosophy that aligns with this lofty objective. BMAL should not merely be chosen because they are a member of an under-represented cultural group or come from an under-represented region. This will not guarantee the qualities necessary to work effectively in an inclusive and global manner. BMALs should be chosen because they have the willingness and skills to identify the needs, problems and expectations of members in their region and then negotiate with other ICA Board members to implement strategies that successfully address these.

Responsibilities

A BMAL will:

1. Liaise with potential new members and communication associations in poorly represented countries in their region in order to establish their interests and needs and how they could become part of or affiliated to the ICA community.
2. Suggest initiatives (e.g., regional conferences, online activities, new resources) to promote the ICA experience to non-member groups.
3. Suggest new initiatives to enhance the international experience of existing members.
4. Contribute to Board discussions about policy and practices that could disadvantage or discriminate against any group of current or potential members.
5. Present a written report at each Board meeting (Twice each year). This report will describe the BMAL's activities since the last report as well as provide commentary on issues and opportunities for the organisation in relation to advancing ICA's profile as an international organization.

Person specification

The BMAL needs to be an established scholar who has sufficient experience in the academy to be able to anticipate where academic and administrative processes can disadvantage and discriminate. They need to have a high level of diversity awareness, appreciate why 'one size does not fit all' and be able to foster discussions designed to create more inclusive processes and practices. They therefore need to be equity focused and diplomatic

A BMAL should have enough experience to have developed a well-founded international perspective and the networks to allow them to anticipate and advise on differences in values, priorities, circumstances and behavioral norms between countries and regions.

Experience

1. International experience – travelled and collaborated internationally
2. Held roles requiring sensitivity towards diverse constituencies
3. Served on journal boards and in editorial roles

Skills

1. Liaison
2. Advocacy
3. Diplomacy
4. Listening

Personal qualities

1. Inclusiveness
2. Equity focused
3. Empathetic
4. Service orientated
5. Tactful
6. A global citizen – culturally aware, non-judgmental, not ethnocentric