

ISFLA AGM
University of Glasgow and online
10/07/2025

Present: Meg Gebhard (Chair), Akila Selami-Baklouti, Nick Moore, Pauline Jones (minutes), Derek Irwin (ex officio), Hana Elghoul, Shumail Ashee, Sandra Zappa-Hollman, Akin Samuel, Kasimawa R Stephen, Pin Wang, Wilfred Xuan, Dongbing Zhang, Zhigang Yu, Jim Martin, Rachel Sales Didner, Juana Maria Blanco Fernandez, Yaegan Doran, Carlos Gouveia, Jamie Williams, Yuly Andrea Gonzalez, Honglin Chen, Jorge Arus Hita, Daniel Rodriguez Vergara, Tajudeen Y Surakat, Awni Etaywe, Yusen Altameeni, Jittimaporn Tonjumpn, Zhouping Wei, Cassi Liardit, Akiko Nagao, Hiroshi Funamoto, Esmaeel Abdollah Zadeh; Soule Petrous^[1], Arianna Maiorani, Francis Troyan, Ruth Harman, Kieran McGillicuddy, Sheena Gardner, Beverly Derewianka, Marin Kaltenbacker, Beatriz Quiroz, Sally Humphrey, Esther Asare, Isaac N. Mwinlaaru, Gail Forey, Eric Cheung, Tom Bartlett, Georgia Carr, Yannei Han, Mick O'Donnell, Andres Ramirez, Souranil Paul, Kathryn Accurso, Shumaila Ashee, Rodrigo Esteves de Lima Lopes, Hana Elghoul, Colm O Ciardubhain, Akin Samuel, Sandra Zappa-Hollman, Peter Makinde +1.

Apologies: Shooshi Dreyfus, Alison Moore, Marta Filipe Alexandre, Sonia Molnar, Rosemary Huisman

Meeting began at 5.40 pm

Minutes from the 2024 AGM (Pauline Jones, ISFLA Recording Secretary)

Matters arising Nil

1. Chair's report (Meg Gebhard, ISFLA Chair)

Several issues were discussed and voted on by the ISFLA Executive Committee this year. These issues included the problem of holding ISFC51/Ohio in the context of the Trump Administration; a call for norms regarding posting to the sysfling listserv; a request for funds for a scholar from Africa to participate in the Halliday Tribute at ISFC 50/Glasgow; and requests for endorsements. Discussion of each issue proceeded as below:

ISFC 51 in Ohio: Concerns regarding low attendance given the difficulties of holding an in-person conference in the US in the context of the Trump Administration:

Arguments Against Holding ISFC51 in Ohio:

Equity issues regarding traveling to the US:

- The increased vulnerability of scholars coming from certain countries or who represent specific racial, ethnic, or religious groups
- The increased vulnerability of scholars who have spoken out against the Trump Administration in their publications or on social media
- The boycotting of travel to the US because of US policies and actions

- The cost of travel for graduate students and many scholars who self-fund conference attendance, especially in the context of global university budget cuts

Concerns regarding global warming

Arguments in Favor of Holding ISFC51 in Ohio:

- An online conference already exists: SFLIG, Vinh Toh, University of Tasmania
- Let individuals make their own decisions

The pros and cons were discussed over email. In collaboration with Francis Troyan, the Chair of ISFC51/Ohio, we created an anonymous Qualtrics survey. The results were:

<u>Prompt</u>	<u>Votes</u>
Find an alternative university to host the congress in 2026, if possible given timing	3
Host the congress online or in hybrid format from Ohio 2026	8
Find an alternative host university for 2027 (ideally in North America, but could be anywhere, to be discussed at ISFC2025 in Glasgow)	4

Note: We attempted to see if hosting in Canada was possible. It was not.

Sysfling Listserv (to be discussed further during proposals)

Funding Request received for funding for a scholar from Africa to participate in the Halliday Tribute at ISFC 50/Glasgow. The issue was voted on and approved by the Executive Committee. Funding was to come from the European Association's account and be reimbursed after ISFC50 with surplus money following past practices. The scholar could not attend for a variety of reasons, and no funds were used.

*Other Items for discussed during the executive committee meeting**

- Request for a letter of support for University of Cardiff's Linguistics Program.
- Request to endorse the online Symposium in Honour of M.A.K. Halliday's Centenary was held on April 13, 2025, at the Guangzhou Campus of Sun Yat-sen University (no financial or administrative support requested or given).
- Nick Moore raised ideas about which bank in the UK

Meg Gebhard, 10/07/2025 (*raised for noting)

2. ISFC Glasgow 2025 report (Tom Bartlett, Conference Chair)

Tom Bartlett reported all going smoothly – boat trip and civic reception were successful with approximately 240-250 Congress attendees.

- Institute 6 workshops – 70 participants

- Congress 8 plenaries, 6 colloquia, 165 papers
- Incoming £74,000 – Outgoing ~£73,000 (Glasgow City Council contributed £3,000)

3. ISFLA Treasurer's reports:

Nick Moore, Treasurer (Europe) 9595.45 Pounds

Sonja Molnar, Treasurer (Australia) No changes to report \$11,982.46

The ISFC49 conference at UNSW in 2024 was classified as a UNSW event to avoid being charged an overhead of 25.92% by UNSW, which would have significantly increased cost and registration fees. As a UNSW event, the surplus of \$23,552.33 was to remain with the university (detailed figures below). ISFLA would like to thank Mira Kim and Peter White and the team at UNSW for running such a wonderful conference. We also thank the ISFLA community for attending the conference.

4. Future congresses:

2026 will be in the USA. Winfred Xuan has indicated an interest to hold 2027 in Hong Kong*.

Some discussion about conference sites with confirmation that there is no proposed list but a general agreement that the conference move around regions. Africa is keen to host a conference as is India (as discussed at ISFC 2024).

The confirmed process is that ISFLA receives proposals from regions wishing to host ISFC and matters move forward from then.

5. Norms for use of the SYSFLING list-serve

Chair tabled a code of conduct proposed by ISFLA executive. The purpose of the norms is to encourage a forum in which all members engage in a safe, welcoming, respectful and intellectually stimulating way.

Key points of the proposed Code of Conduct:

- Harassment, off-topic discussions that derail the academic focus of the listserv are discouraged.
- Hate speech, discrimination, and offensive remarks are not tolerated.
- Spamming, trolling, misrepresentation, and intentional provocation is not tolerated.
- Disrespecting someone's privacy is not tolerated.

Consequences:

Breaches of the Code of Conduct can be reported to the executive committee. The committee will treat the issue with confidentiality and evaluate it from both sides.

The first infraction would be a warning from the monitor; the second infraction would be a notification to the chair and the deputy chair, who will deliberate it. That would then go to the full executive committee for a vote to determine whether the person should be suspended for 3 months.

For repeated infractions, then the same procedures would be followed, and the person could be permanently suspended.

Appeals process:

Members who have received disciplinary action can submit an appeal. The Executive Committee will make a decision in 7 days that would be final and communicated to that person in writing. Objections to be forwarded to the executive

All communication will be kept confidential.

Discussion ensued around issues such as censorship, current surveillance in universities and public institutions. Participants agreed that the listserv is an important forum for discussing theoretical issues and for supporting newcomers to the community. There was also a reminder that some members are in very different cyberspaces and topics can put them at risk. The point was made that members of the community should be made aware of the code of conduct.

Gail Forey and Tajudeen Surakat moved that the proposal be put to the vote by all in attendance. Proposal accepted: in favour 31, against 1 and 1 abstention.

6. Conference attendance and climate crisis

This matter was raised by Annabelle Lukin who also circulated a paper^[2] based on research involving over one thousand academics from a UK university. The authors make the following recommendations for mitigating the impact of conference attendance in terms of emissions and other environmental impact (displayed at the meeting)

1. Devalue in-person conference attendance for promotions and grant funding.
2. Shift to virtual attendance by organising online or hybrid conferences. This will facilitate participation for those “unable to travel” and “those with limited travel budgets.”
3. Hold fewer conferences (e.g., biannual instead of annual).
4. Hold conferences in regional hubs simultaneously.
5. Increase charges for conference-related flying in the form of “mandatory carbon offsetting, extra charges imposed by universities and taken from the staff’s available travel budgets, or even by using researcher carbon budgets.”

Discussion ensued and the following points were raised:

- Virtual conferences less valued than face to face; lack of community building online community; technology is still an issue
- Two sides - Face to face conferences are difficult to organise, and not accessible for all.

- Some solutions – back-to-back meetings so that people are coming for more than one (as per Bath symposium this year), multi-site conferences (as during Covid); a biannual conference at an international level and regional conferences in ‘off-years’
- A colloquium on climate change
- Consider other actions such as compostable food and utensils in addition to travel issues.
- Climate change issues are not unrelated to conference funding. Support to early career researchers from newer regions is important but it should be recognised that this may increase general registration costs – another point in favour of hybrid or online conferences.

7. Funding for equitable conference participation

Various solutions to supporting individual scholars to attend conferences were proposed, including billeting (as in ISFC 2012), bursaries and opportunities for participants to donate to scholarship and bursaries when registering for a particular conference. One further idea for supporting individual scholars was via a permanent donation option on the ISFLA website as well as on future conference web pages.

8. ISFC 2026

Frances Troyan spoke at length about the difficulties of planning the 2026 Congress in the US. Major difficulties with the conference, including the university might shut the conference down. Could shift to a Plenary Series with a workshop component with online presentations, networking and communities building activities.

Question was also raised about visa refusals, but ISFLA is limited in what it can do.

8. Regional news and welcomes (this item was not addressed due to lack of time)

Meeting closed at 6.40 pm (Glasgow time)

^[1] Apologies from the minutes secretary but this is best guess as name on the attendance record is difficult to read; another attendee’s signature is indecipherable (+1).

^[2] De Vos, J., Hopkins, D., Hickman, R., & Schwanen, T. (2024). Tackling the academic air travel dependency. An analysis of the (in) consistency between academics’ travel behaviour and their attitudes. *Global Environmental Change*, 88, 102908.