



## **Annual Report of the Advisory Board**

**2020-2021**

**Prepared for the IAPSS General Assembly, May 15, 2021**

### **General Overview**

Our 2020-2021 mandate has almost come to an end. During these times of crises, it is essential to evaluate the work and mission of IAPSS and find ways to adapt and continuously bring a solid contribution to the political science world. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, IAPSS has been affected given its portfolio of events and its revenue stream from membership fees.

We are glad to observe how the Executive Committee and the members of the board have worked to re-establish operations and navigate around the restrictions imposed by the pandemic. We recognize the important work carried by all departments and regional teams and the continued operations during the 2020-2021 mandate. We also acknowledged that international cooperation was strengthened. Aside from continuing previous partnerships, new ones were established resulting in raising the international profile of the Association.

As members of the Advisory Board, we are presenting our annual report, which aims to give (1) an overview of our work as members of the Advisory Board, (2) our assessment of the Association's financial administration, and (3) our recommendations based on what we have observed throughout the mandate.

#### **I. Overview of the Advisory Board's Mandate**

Our mandate heavily focused on the appeal of a decision taken during the previous mandate to expel a member of the Association. We received an email from the said member on the 18th of July 2020 informing us about the said member's appeal, which was submitted during the end of the previous mandate. We asked the said member to submit a written statement against the expulsion decision, which we received on the 18th of August 2020. After which, we set up a call with the said member on the 17th of September 2020 to further clarify points from the submitted written statement and to better understand the said member's perspective. After careful consideration in reviewing the appeal,<sup>1</sup> we decided to uphold the previous decision to expel the member. The said member was informed of the decision via email on the 11th of October 2020.

The said member decided to take legal action against IAPSS. On the 27th of December 2020, IAPSS received a summons via the said member's lawyer. Thus, the Advisory Board had to take action and find a lawyer to assist the Association with the matter at hand. Following a number of

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<sup>1</sup> Includes reviewing evidence related to the case, interviewing those involved in the previous decision, interviewing the expelled member, and careful discussions amongst ourselves.



legal consultations with the lawyer, together with the President (and on some occasions the Treasurer), we were advised by the lawyer not to appear in Court due to the financial implications of doing so and the financial status of the Association. This led into the **court's default judgment on the 3rd of March 2021 resulting in the reinstatement of the expelled member and the declaration of the IAPSS's decision of 25 May 2019 to amend the articles of association (statutes) as void.**

## **II. Assessment of the Association's Financial Management**

The financial administration overview was provided in a timely manner to us by the IAPSS Treasurer, who has been readily available to help us with further information and data. The Financial Report was all encompassing and comprised a variety of information drafted in a comprehensive manner. We would like to acknowledge the work that the current Treasurer put in preparing the financial report.

The general financial performance was low. Sixty-five percent of the Association's total income was spent on the legal assistance that IAPSS needed due to the legal action mentioned above.

While the circumstances surrounding the mandate need to be taken into account, there is a structural organizational problem within the management of the finances. We would like to further endorse the areas of improvement identified by the Treasurer in the Financial Report. These areas highlight the lack of continuity and competencies in the Finance Department (mostly during the previous mandate), and the Association as a whole. We believe that the Association would indeed financially benefit from drafting a handover process (which is critical in managing the bank accounts of the Association), adding more roles in the finance department, and having a more active financial strategy.

In terms of active financial strategy, we identify a strong need for developing a more robust fundraising structure in the Association as well as a long term financial goal setting. While the merchandise strategy provides a new source of income, it is not effective. However, given the amount of energy that was put into this initiative and its potential, we advise the next mandate to further develop this initiative.

## **III. Recommendations**

### ***Communication***

We advise that the incoming Executive Committee and board regularly update the website with the necessary information (especially regarding all our events from regional to global) to entice non-members to join and to encourage members to stay active.

We also recommend them and find ways to further develop and improve our website.



### ***Competence of the Advisory Board***

We advise that the Executive Committee (especially the Association's Legal Representatives) and Advisory Board meet in the next mandate to clearly define the role and competencies of the Advisory Board.

### ***Continuation of Online Events***

We advise that the Association continue holding online events even after the COVID-19 pandemic, especially at regional level. Considering the global nature of the Association and the limited funds students have to travel to in-person events, online events are a fantastic opportunity for the Association to foster memberships and student outreach as well as a way to keep volunteers and members engaged and connected. Senior professors and experts could be invited in a dialogue with students.

### ***Continuity***

We strongly advise that all necessary bureaucratic, financial, and legal matters related to the Association, most especially during the transition from one mandate to another, are handled in an effective and timely manner. We advise the creation of a clear document outlining all the necessary tasks such as registering in the new board at the Dutch Chamber of Commerce and handing over responsibility of bank accounts so that the transition between mandates can proceed smoothly.

We also recommend that members of the Executive Committee and the board train their subordinates in the event that they will not volunteer in IAPSS for the next mandate to help ensure continuity, especially in the context where there are many changes in terms of positions. At the same time, we advise them to actively engage in looking for new talents that can help strengthen and grow the Association.

### ***Financial Management***

We recommend setting up a long-term plan for fundraising including short term goals to ensure accountability and compliance. The plan should not only include already established fundraising initiatives such as the IAPSS merchandise initiative but also brainstorm new approaches and strategies.

### ***Implementation of the Nonresponse Clause***

We strongly recommend the strict implementation of the nonresponse clause, which gives all Executive Members 72 hours to respond to any communication they receive. Repeated noncompliance of this clause should result in a written warning from the President and continued noncompliance should allow the Excom to vote for their removal from office.

### ***Insurance for the Association***

In light of the legal proceedings that IAPSS had to face this mandate, we recommend that the Association make sure that its insurance covers legal protection so that its actions will not be financially constrained.



### ***Membership Engagement***

We strongly advise the Executive Committee and board members to look for opportunities to involve our members in the decision-making process of the Association. While we do send out newsletters actively, finding ways to involve the members in the direction of the Association (outside of the General Assembly) would make their membership more worthwhile. One example we propose is for the finance department to reach out to the members of the Association (perhaps via the newsletter) and solicit their ideas on merchandise items or even fundraising ideas to also make the members feel involved in the decision making process.

In relation to online events, the Association can perhaps hold online get-togethers where students can talk about a particular topic (academic or student life-related) to foster a more friendly community for our membership base.

### ***Relocation to Canada***

At the IAPSS General Assembly on the 12th of December 2020, IAPSS members voted to relocate to Canada. We fully support this decision as it is a good opportunity to expand membership and reach outside Europe, removing language barriers and making statutes and bureaucracy easier. We recommend that the outgoing and the incoming Executive Committee members meet and make sure any actions are properly followed-up by the incoming Executive Committee. Thus, we recommend setting up an actional and clear plan, most especially regarding financial management (which may involve closing and setting up new bank accounts). We strongly recommend the Executive Committee to work with a legal adviser in making sure all laws and rules are followed.

### **Advisory Board 2020-2021**

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Rose Smith  
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