

President's Corner: The Council of the IGS



Jorge Zornberg

Dear Members of the IGS,

The IGS is not a society of societies; it is a society of singular members. Let me clarify this because it is crucial to how the IGS operates. The membership of the majority of our sister International Societies includes "national member societies," which in turn select delegates that represent them in the council that governs the International Society. That is, they follow a U.N.-like type of representation where the communication between the singular members and the international society should be channelled through the national societies. Instead, the membership of the IGS includes "singular members" (individual or corporate) who directly select delegates that represent them in the Council that governs the IGS. While national member societies of other International Societies may have singular members that opt not to belong to the international organization, such a concept does not exist in the IGS. That is, all members of our IGS chapters are also members, by definition, of the International Geosynthetics Society. The unique structure of the IGS, as designed by the founding parents of our International Society, has fostered rapid communication of our technologies and rich cross-fertilization of ideas.

One of the most definitive occasions when the direct communication between our singular members and the International mother ship crystalizes is for the selection of the IGS Council. Every other year, half of the members of the IGS Council are elected for a four year-term. And you, the IGS member, are given the privilege of casting a direct vote to select the representatives that will continue to define the direction of our International Society. This opportunity is approaching, as you will soon be asked to cast your vote to elect 8 seats for the IGS Council that have vacated for the 2012 - 2016 term. Please take the time to review the background and ideas of the candidates for the IGS Council, which appear in pages 3 of this issue of IGSNews.

Direct voting of IGS members has historically led to a good balance of constituencies in the IGS Council. As an example, Tables 1 and 2 show the make-up of the current IGS Council, illustrating that the current process has led to a balanced geographical and professional presence in the IGS Council. The IGS council meets typically once a year on the occasion of a major geosynthetics conference. While the decisions that define the direction of the IGS are taken during the meeting of the council, much effort goes into the council activities that take place within the multiple operating units that are related to the IGS Council. Figure 1 shows the current structure of the operating units of the IGS council, showing the flow of work that takes place during a typical Geosynthetics Conference that includes a meeting of the IGS Council. As shown in the figure, Operational Task Forces (e.g. Conference Resources, Membership Task Forces) and the Financial Committee provide input to the IGS Officers, who typically meet during a full day preceding the Conference. The IGS Officers are IGS council members holding the positions of President, Vice-president, Immediate Past-President, Secretary and Treasurer. Following the IGS Officers meeting, a full day of Council Committee meetings is organized. The Council Committees (Education, Communications, Corporate Members, and Regional Activities) are the "working arms" of the IGS Council and where much of the actual effort takes place. A full day IGS Council meeting, involving plenary meetings of the 24-member Council, takes place typically one day before the Conference, and it is here that the decisions of the course of the IGS are made. These meetings lead to a number of immediate action items that are articulated during Committee Chair meetings and Task Force meetings that typically take place now during the Geosynthetics Conference. The IGS Conferences are also the forum for one of the multiple meetings of the Technical Committees (see IGSNews Vol 26 No. 3 November 2010) that take place throughout the year.

In summary, much of the course of the IGS depends of your choice of the right candidates for the new IGS Council. I encourage you to take full advantage of your voice as an IGS member to select the leaders that will form the IGS Council. Consequently, please review the profile of your candidates and when you receive an email with your credentials as IGS member enabling you to cast your vote: **Do vote!**

All best regards



Jorge G. Zornberg, Ph.D., P.E.
IGS President

tel: +1(512) 232 3595

e-mail: zornberg@mail.utexas.edu

Table 1: Geographical distribution of IGS Council Members

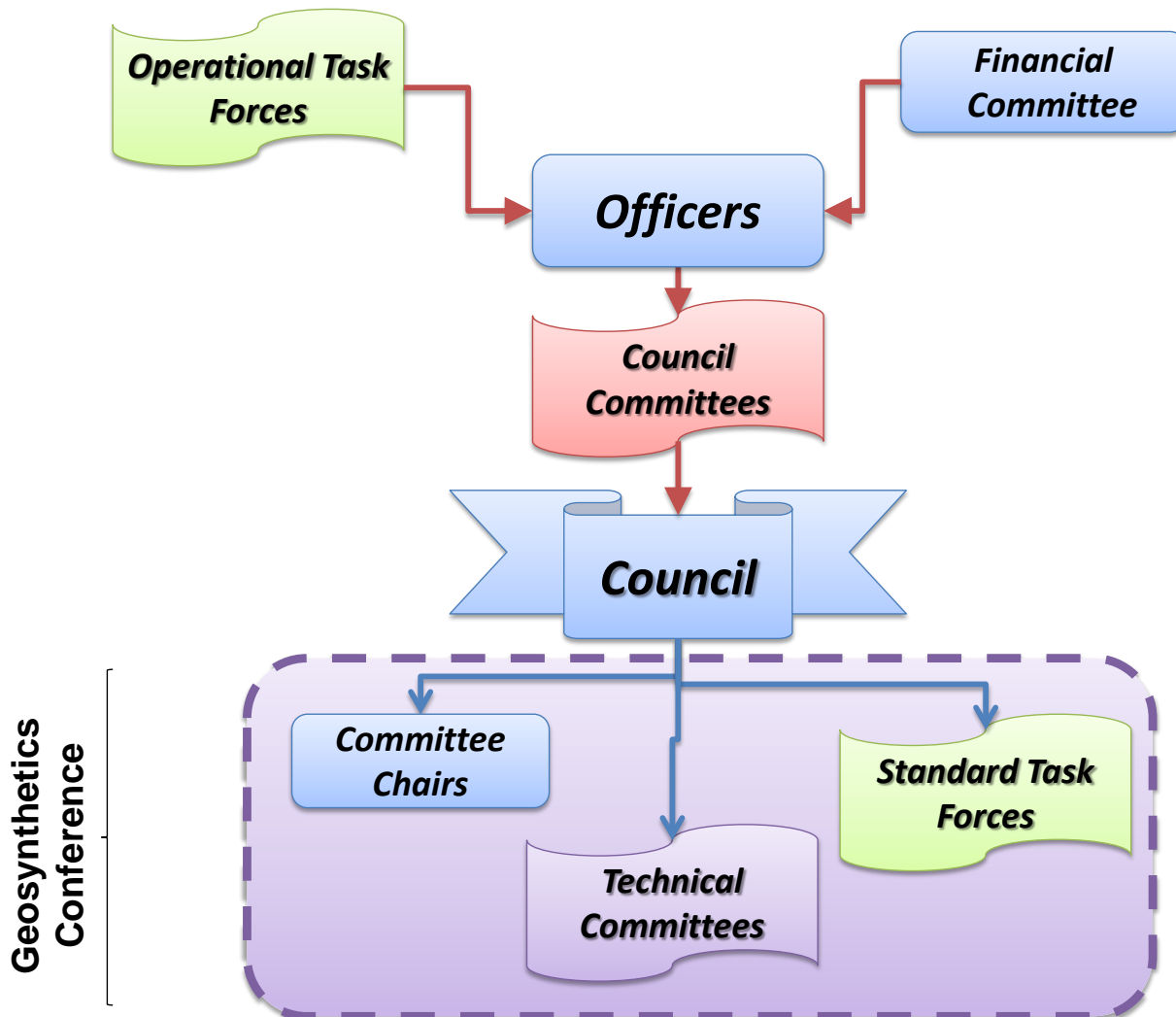
Africa	1 council member
Americas	6 council members
Asia/Oceania	11 council members
Europe	6 council members

Note: Data for the current (2010-2012) IGS council.

Table 2: Professional distribution of IGS Council Members

Academia	12 council members
Industry	12 council members

Figure 1: Work flow of the Operating Units of the IGS Council during a typical Geosynthetics Conference



General Information for IGS Members

Candidates for IGS Council: Term 2012 to 2016



Elizabeth Peggs

The IGS, in accordance with its bylaws, will hold mid-term elections in 2012. IGS Members will have the opportunity to elect eight Council Members. Each of the elected members will serve a four-year term, effective 13 December 2012.

The IGS encourages any IGS Member who is interested in furthering the IGS Mission and can attend all IGS Council meetings to consider standing for one of the Council positions. In a typical year, the IGS Council meets once for a two-day period preceding a geosynthetics event. It is the responsibility of the IGS Council member to travel to these meetings and participate in the plenary and committee meetings. The IGS council attempts to host the meetings in equal distribution around the world and based on the most suitable location in any given year.