

**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF AFFECTIVE
TOUCH (IASAT) FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Minutes

Date: 21/03/2015
Number of attendees: 40
Proceedings directed by: Dr Katerina Fotopoulou

1. Society membership:

- Everyone attending is officially a member.

No objections

- Proposed: membership should be renewed every year.
- Alternative suggestion: membership should last two years.
- Opposition: this may be difficult to maintain in terms of cost. But in the first case, funds can be obtained from small grants and contributions.

No objections to 2-year membership

2. Executive committee nomination procedure: In future proceedings, members can nominate individuals for the executive committee up to 20 days prior to the next AGM.

No objections

3. Roles in the committee:

1. President
2. Treasurer
3. Secretary
4. Honorary secretary
5. Active members (x2 to be elected in future meetings)

No objections

4. Election of the first executive committee:

1. Katerina Fotopoulou (Treasurer)
2. Hökan Olausson (co-president)
3. Francis McGlone (co-president)
4. India Morrison (secretary)

No objections

5. Future proceedings:

- Future meetings will be ever 2 years
- Executive committee elections will be every 3 years
- Succeeding president will be elected a year in advance

- To maintain continuity, only half the committee will be changed in each election

→ *Suggestion*: society should also represent non-neuroscientists

→ *Response*: The content of discussions and activity of the society will be separate from the administration. Other international chapters, task forces and sub-groups may be started in the future. The society will also endeavour to support interdisciplinary and public engagement events in the future (e.g. schools and art).

→ *Suggestion*: society should support both qualitative and quantitative research

→ *Response*: Agreed.

6. Website:

- A website for the IASAT would be very important for spreading the word and expanding the society.

- Funds from membership could easily cover the cost of creating/running the website.

→ *Suggestion*: Perhaps a PhD student or post-doc should run the website.

→ *Suggestion (F. McGlone)*: It would be important to get the website online as soon as possible, and then deal with the issue of web admin later.

→ *Response*: It could be possible to set up a rough web page by next week.

→ *Suggestion*: There should perhaps be a website task force.

→ *Response*: That is a possibility.

8. Journal:

- The society could have an official journal: *Journal of Affective Touch*.

→ *Suggestion (F. McGlone)*: There are already too many journals.

→ *Suggestion*: A journal would be a good idea, but perhaps the journal should have a board overseeing submissions to ensure an interdisciplinary approach.

→ *Response*: It would be important to build high caliber empirical research to ensure the journal has a respectable impact factor, but separate sections could be included for related dialogue, such as "*Clinical communications*". The proceedings began with neuropsychology not because it is more important, but because it is fundamental – the first step in our understanding of complex entities such as the mind.

→ *Suggestion*: The society should interact with other organisations, such as the societies for pain and neurophysiology.

→ *Response*: Agreed. And to gain dissemination and recognisability for IASAT, it would be important to attend external conferences as members of the society.

→ *Suggestion*: Perhaps the society should have a 'membership journal', for only members to read, in case authors want to submit their work to a more general journal as well.

→ *Response*: This would be too much work for too little gain.

→ *Suggestion*: Will the proceedings of the current conference be published?

→ *Response*: There are no concrete plans, but a special issue can be submitted to a mainstream journal.

- The journal is not a pressing issue – further considerations can happen after 2 years.

9. Touch manifesto:

- The society needs to commit to the implications of its work publicly. Touch is underrepresented in mental health. In order to do this, it would be important to come up with an official manifesto as a society. It may also be necessary to publicly advertise the combined scientific credentials of members so that the manifesto is given due attention.

Key points of the Touch Manifesto, drafted by: O. Turnbull.

The IASAT seeks to:

1. Recognise and advance the fundamental science in the field of affective touch.
2. Recognise the importance of affective touch across the lifespan for physical and mental health, particularly in early development.
3. Promote the widespread use of affective touch in mental health maintenance and treatment and areas that influence early development (e.g. parenting, education).
4. Recognise that some current legislation may undermine the basic evidence and fundamental need for affective touch in these areas.

No objections

→ *Suggested*: Camilla would be important in addressing the cohort of public this is most important to. And it is good that the manifesto is concise and easy to understand.

→ *Response*: Agreed. We are very good as scientists at talking to each other, but not so good at talking to society as a whole. We do need a clear message to convey, but we must be careful not to oversimplify the message.

10. Practical necessities

1. Appointing a ‘task force’ for the society.

→ *Proposed*: O. Turnbull and Nadia as active members, and the floor is open to others interested in joining the task force.

→ *Response*: Over 10 members interested in joining the task force.

→ *Suggestion*: Perhaps the society should come up with an agreed definition of ‘affective touch’.

→ *Response*: This will take too much time and most likely be inconclusive. “Scientists can share their toothbrushes but not their concepts.”

2. Handling money and registering the society.

→ *Proposed*: The name ‘International Association for the Study of Affective Touch’ is unlikely to be taken by another organisation, so it may not be a necessity to register the society. The money could be handled by another charity, which funds Katerina’s research.

→ *Response*: It may be necessary to register the society. The acronym ‘IASAT ‘ may be taken by another body – the name could be trademarked. Banks will recognise the society if it has a constitution and clear minutes.

→ *Conclusion*: there will be a separate meeting of the executive committee where registration of the society will be discussed. Minutes of this meeting can be submitted.

The society voted to approve the opening of a bank account, where the money of the society can be kept and managed by its appointed treasurer.

No objections.