1. Introduction/background

This report's four sections cover: a) background about the committee's management of the 2021 IHLA election process, b) timeline of the election process; c) lessons learned from managing IHLA's inaugural member election process; and d) a specific recommendation to change IHLA's bylaws and improve the nominations and voting process.

To backup momentarily, the first nominations and elections Committee was appointed by IHLA's Executive Board 2018-2020. The term was prolonged with one year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Committee received organizational standing to administer the IHLA elections from IHLA's Executive Board. As such, it takes responsibility for the administration of IHLA's first member election in 2021.

2. The Committee's management of IHLA's 2021 election process

The Committee met periodically starting in 2020 to outline its processes.

The specific milestones in the 2021 IHLA election process are outlined in the timeline below. The Committee managed four different administrative processes and tasks: the nomination of candidates; informing members about the candidates; voting; and the assessment of lessons learned from the election.

Spring-summer 2021

- The Committee recommended IHLA host elections in 2021 for Treasurer, Vice-President, and the Standing Committees on Research, Practice, and Nominations & Elections. This recommendation was approved by IHLA's Executive Board.

- The Committee recommended and IHLA Executive Board approved to continue the current President for another term without an election for this position. The decision was made to provide organizational institutional memory and continuity during IHLA's transition to a new structure based on its constitution and bylaws. IHLA's constitution and bylaws were generated and approved *after* the current (and outgoing) Executive Board was appointed in 2017.

- The Committee agreed to implement the election timetable and process outlined in Appendix A.

- Election Guidelines were developed including information that described the duties for each of the elected positions was supplied to i-hla.org for distribution to site visitors. The descriptions were developed by IHLA's Strategic Planning committee.

- The Committee prepared and coordinated the IHLA member communication during the election process, including the creation of an 'election' subhead on the i-hla.org's website home page.

- Information was provided on i-hla.org about how members can *nominate* candidates for open positions. The description included the approval of self-nomination and a reminder to nominators to receive the consent of a nominee prior to nominating him/her for a position.

- Information prepared for i-hla.org about the *voting* process and deadlines (and was withheld for distribution until after the nomination process was completed).

- The Committee prepared the information to be requested from candidates (for eventual distribution to members) to boost member election awareness and informed decision-making (see Appendix B).

- The Committee planned an IHLA-sponsored webinar which featured the candidates for the Vice-President and Treasurer positions so IHLA members could ask questions of the candidates.

- August-October 2021

- Consecutive one-month time frames for member nominations and to vote were approved by the IHLA Executive Board.

- Nominations for open positions opened on i-hla.org on October 11. Nominations forms were available via a link on the IHLA website for one month from October 11 to November 17.

- Information about the process for members to nominate candidates was posted on i-hla.org during the nomination period

- The Election Guidelines as well as information that described the tasks involved in each of IHLA's open positions was posted on i-hla.org during the nomination period.

- The Committee prepared and provided a presentation on the election process for the IHLA General Assembly during the IHLA Global Health Literacy Global Summit on Oct. 5

- In addition to the information on i-hla.org, IHLA members were informed by email of the deadline to nominate persons. Email reminders were sent periodically during the month-long nomination period and two reminders were sent during the last week prior to the deadline. Nomination information was distributed on i-hla.org and a reminder was provided to members via posts on IHLA's pages in Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Within the reminders, nominators were informed that they should be IHLA members and nominees should be IHLA members.

- Nominated candidates were sent a form to complete (similar to Appendix B) and given until Nov. 17 to provide the requested information. Nominees were informed they would be considered as an official candidate and placed on the ballot only if each nominee completed the requested professional information on deadline. Nominees were informed individually that their completion of requested information was a *de facto* acceptance of the nomination and their willingness to serve in the position, if elected.

- The process to administer member *voting* was finalized. Voters were to receive a link to the ballot provided an email sent to IHLA members on the IHLA membership database. The email explained that members were eligible to vote once, and members would be asked to attest that each person voted only once. Completed ballots were to be sent to an email address accessible only by the IHLA Secretary General and counted by the Secretary General and one volunteer from the Committee (once votes were cast).

November December 2021

- Approval was given by IHLA's Executive Board for Peter Chang M.D., outgoing IHLA vice-president, to be the representative on IHLA's inaugural Committee of Past Presidents. The decision was made to ensure the committee that represents organizational memory and continuity could contribute immediately to IHLA's Executive Board instead of waiting for three years. (The Committee of Past Presidents is part of IHLA's new organization infrastructure. IHLA President Kristine Sorensen will be the second representative when her presidential term ends).

- Member voting for elections opened on i-hla.org on November 17. The period to vote was one month- from November 17 to December 18. The latter information was distributed on i-hla.org and reminders were provided to members via emails and posts on IHLA's pages within Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

- The Committee hosted a webinar on Dec. 1 in which the candidates for the Vice-President and Treasurer positions presented their credentials and answered some common, prepared questions about his/her organizational goals. Notice regarding the webinar was provided via i-hla.org and posted on IHLA's pages within Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

- At the start of the voting period, voters received a link to the ballot that was provided in an email sent to IHLA members, who were identified from the IHLA membership database. The email explained that members were: a) eligible to vote once; b) asked to attest that he/she was an IHLA member and voted only once; and c) promised and the Committee would disclose only aggregate totals rather than individual results, which ensured partial confidentiality.

- Members were informed on i-hla.org and in posts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter that no ballots would be accepted after Dec. 18, 2021. Voters were informed that completed ballots from persons who were not IHLA 'members in good standing' after a deadline of Dec. 18 would not be counted.

- The Committee sent the following via email to members: a link to vote; informed persons about the deadline to vote; and reminded voters about the requirement that voters needed to be IHLA members. This was intended to counter hypothetical abuses of the voting process, such as ballot stuffing.

- Completed ballots were sent to an email address accessible only by the IHLA Secretary General in order to foster voter confidentiality.

- Voting was completed on Dec. 18, 2021.

- During the 2021 holiday season, aggregate votes were tabulated by the Secretary General and a Committee member. At the request of the Executive Board, the Secretary-General asked a third-party stakeholder who was not affiliated with IHLA to double check the accuracy of the aggregate results.

The tabulation process resulted in the following observations:
- The votes were derived from a global representation of the IHLA membership illustrated as well in the diversity of candidates on the ballot.
- Six names of candidates did not appear in the database despite being already accepted as candidates and placed on the ballot.
- Ten votes were provided by members not in the database.
- Ties did not appear in any committee based on tabulations of the 241 votes.
- After removal of 13 duplicates, there were n=241 votes.

The tabulation report with aggregated election report was shared with the Committee for further discussion and decision in order to make the formal announcement of elected candidates in January 2022.

January 2022

In early January, the Committee held several meetings with some including members of the Executive Board to discuss the complications related to the six missing names of candidates in the database as well as the ten votes provided by members not appearing in the database.

After a prolonged discussion, the Committee considered the inclusion of the six candidates because the process to apply for an open position was seen as a *de facto* membership application or a clerical oversight made by either the candidate or the secretariat regarding inclusion in the database. It was recognized by the Committee that IHLA's membership registration process currently includes an instant digital notification only, not a confirmation email.

The Committee decided the uncertainty in the determination of IHLA 'membership in good standing' merited the inclusion of all the approved candidates despite their status in the database. The decision was to err on the side of inclusion given the uncertainty in the administrative determination of IHLA membership that accidentally occurred

during the nomination-candidate determination period. The Committee determined that despite an oversight, the overall administration of the process to include approved candidates who were not listed in IHLA's member database was made in good faith.

To be consistent, the Committee decided the uncertainty in the determination of IHLA 'membership in good standing' also merited the inclusion of all the persons who voted in the IHLA election by the Dec. 18 deadline. The decision erred on the side of inclusion given the uncertainty in the determination of IHLA membership 'in good standing' during the voting period. Hence, the ballots of 10 voters (out of n=241) who were not listed in IHLA's membership database were counted. The Committee also found the overall administration to determine approved voters who were listed in IHLA's member database was made in good faith. The Committee acknowledges that the decisions concern the 2021 election only and recommendations are provided as lessons learned on how to enhance the election procedures in the future as outlined in this accountability report.

IHLA's President emailed the winning candidates on Jan 11 to confirm their intent to serve. The unofficial election winners are scheduled to be announced on Jan. 14, 2022.

As established in the Committee's policies (see Appendix C), a period of 5 business days for member comments and questions will occur from Jan. 14 -20, 2022 Assuming there are not widespread objections to the election process, the elected candidates will become official on Jan. 21, 2022. If there are widespread objections to the election process, IHLA's new Executive Board will determine a course of action that could include the acceptance of the results, partial elections, or new elections. IHLA's bylaws require a run-off election when ties occur, which did not occur in the 2021 elections.

The Committee proposed a process for the incoming/elected Committee on Elections and Nominations to work with IHLA's Executive Board to select members for IHLA's new *appointed* committees. This process is attached in Appendix D. The process entails to offer all candidates who were not elected to the positions as Vice-President, Treasurer or the Committees of Research Standards, Practice Standards, and Nomination and Election an opportunity to serve in appointed committees.

3. Lessons learned

1. A successful election depends on the development of specific criteria to determine a 'member in good standing' (as well as updated member inclusion) within IHLA's member database.

2. It is important for IHLA to support the administrative maintenance of a responsive membership database with continuous upkeep and maintenance. The upkeep and maintenance of a member database is critical during an election process. An efficiently monitored accurate, reliable, and up-to-date member database mitigates the possibility of uncertainty regarding member status to participate in the nomination process as well as to vote.

3. The future Standing Committee on Elections and Nominations committee should include IHLA's Secretary-General, the webmaster of i-hla.org and a representative from the appointed committee on communications as ex officio members. In order to address internal controls, two or more IHLA committee members should have access to the membership database in order to confirm all voters and nominees are members in good standing. Of course, it is possible that a person in one of the aforementioned positions could be elected to any position on the slate (e.g. Standing Committee on Elections and Nominations committee). Either way, the coordination helps ensure a fair election process.

4. The nomination and voting eligibility and process need to be based on well-disclosed, specific criteria, which should be proactively communicated to IHLA members.

4. Specific Committee recommendation (proposed bylaws change)

The Committee recommends the following change to IHLA's bylaws:

Current:

In section 9 under 'elections:'

8) The voting period shall close 30 days following distribution of ballots. Completed ballots shall be returnable to the office of the executive director, who shall notify all members in good standing of the results at least one month before the annual meeting. If a tie occurs between candidates for an office, a runoff shall be conducted by the elected Standing Committee on Nominations and Elections by ballot of the membership.

Suggested changes:

In section 9 under 'elections:'

8) The Secretary General, or a designee by IHLA's President, needs to determine if each candidate nominated for office is an IHLA member in good standing and appears in IHLA's membership database. A nomination will be forwarded to the ballot only for IHLA members 'in good standing' who appear in IHLA membership database. The IHLA membership committee needs to establish specific criteria to determine a member 'in good standing.' Nominators and nominees need to assert they are members in good standing. The Secretary General or a designee by IHLA's President needs to ensure the IHLA membership database is updated continuously, is comprehensive, and all data discrepancies are settled concurrently with the closing of nominations.

9) The voting period shall close 30 days following distribution of ballots. Ballots (and voting rights) will be available only to IHLA members 'in good standing' who appear in IHLA membership database. The IHLA membership committee needs to establish specific criteria to determine a member 'in good standing.' Voters need to assert they are IHLA members in good standing. The Secretary General or a designee by IHLA's President needs to ensure the IHLA membership database is updated continuously, is comprehensive, and all data discrepancies are settled concurrently with the closing of voting during an election period.

10) Completed ballots shall be returnable to the office of the executive director (if appointed) or IHLA's secretary general. If a tie occurs between candidates for an office, a runoff shall be conducted by the elected Standing Committee on Nominations and Elections by ballot of the membership.

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