



The International Commission for Optics, Part 2

In my last editorial I covered some general organizational, structural, and mission statements about ICO. The members of ICO represent “identified optics communities.” Furthermore, “a member adheres to the Commission through its Territorial Committee for Optics.” You might well ask how that works! The answer is that it does work, but the structure is quite complex. It was described to me by a recent correspondent as “a little byzantine.” So, I thought that I would use this editorial to try to explain how one Territorial Committee works. I do that from the vantage point of being the current chair of the “Territorial Committee” for the United States.

The ICO statutes state that “each Territorial Committee for Optics shall either (a) be a subcommittee of the body representing the Members in IUPAP; (b) be recognized by the body representing the Members in IUPAP; (c) if no such body exists, be recognized by the council of IUPAP.” (IUPAP stands for the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics.) The United States committee is constituted using (a) above.

The National Academy of Science is the official United States adhering member of IUPAP. To effect this adherence, the Academy has established a United States national committee. (I do enjoy the term “adherence” as it is used in the official language of ICO.) The national committee for ICO (USNC-ICO) is a subcommittee of the national committee for IUPAP. The USNC-ICO is a small three-person committee that has the responsibility for fulfilling the Academy’s adherence to ICO. The work of the national committee is really carried out by an advisory committee—the United States Advisory Committee for ICO (USAC-ICO). Thus it was the USAC-ICO that had the responsibility for preparing the bid to have the 1999 triennial meeting of ICO in the United States. To complete this part of the story, I am currently the chair of USAC-ICO and a member of USNC-ICO.

USAC-ICO

Under the constitution of the USAC-ICO, the rules governing membership are as follows:

1. Appointed Voting Members:

There shall be twelve Appointed Voting Members. Each of the Sponsoring Societies shall appoint three to overlapping three-year terms. The Sponsoring Societies are the American Physical Society Topical Group on Laser Science, the IEEE Lasers and Electro-Optics Society, the Optical Society of America, and SPIE—the International Society for Optical Engineering.

2. *Ex Officio* Voting Members:

- a) the chair and chair-elect or past chair of USAC-ICO
- b) officers of the ICO who are resident United States citizens
- c) members of SCOM-ICO who are not appointed members of USAC-ICO.

3. *Ex Officio* Nonvoting Members:

- a) past officers of the ICO who are resident United States citizens
- b) the executive director of OSA.

The members appointed by the Sponsoring Societies should *in toto* provide a balanced representation of the active fields of optics.

The twelve appointed Voting Members shall each have a term of office of three calendar years, with at least three members being appointed each year. Appointed Voting Members shall not be eligible to serve more than two full consecutive terms of office.

The USAC-ICO is required to meet at least once a year although we have been meeting twice a year recently. To assist with those meetings, the Executive Office of the Optical Society of America serves as the secretariat. Thus our most recent meeting was in Portland, Oregon, in conjunction with the OSA meeting and our next one will be in San Jose, California, in conjunction with the SPIE meeting.

Editor’s Anecdote

As a follow-up to my editor’s anecdote in the September issue, I received the following message:

“After reading your anecdote in your editorial in the latest *Optical Engineering*, I thought that you must have been relieved to find out that you were not somebody else....”

Brian J. Thompson
Editor

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