

Assembly of Interest Networks

The Assembly of Interest Networks (henceforth referred to as the Assembly) comprises of all the Interest Networks within AAIDD. The Chair of each Interest Network is the designated representative to the Assembly, although other members of each Interest Network Executive Committee can also participate.

Purpose

The purpose of the Assembly is to:

1. Provide a structure for the Interest Network leadership to communicate and collaborate with each other;
2. Promote dialogue between Interest Network leadership and the AAIDD board liaison;
3. Promote Interest Network activities that further the vision and mission of AAIDD.

Organization of the Assembly (See Appendix 1)

1. The Assembly will be Co-Chaired by an AAIDD Board Liaison and an Interest Network Representative, who will be a current or recent past Interest Network Chair, to be chosen at the Assembly's annual meeting.
2. The responsibility for Board Liaison to the Assembly changes every two years—that is, the individual elected Vice-President of the national Board will work with *either* the Assembly for Interest Networks or Assembly for Geographic Regions for the two-year period prior to becoming President of the Board.
3. The Board Liaison will serve as Co-Chair for two years.
4. The Interest Network Representative will serve as Co-Chair for one year.

Assembly Activities and Expectations

The Assembly will:

1. Schedule an annual Assembly leadership business meeting at the conference;
2. Host a minimum of three additional Assembly leadership meetings (conference call/webinar) throughout the year;
3. Share activities, support collaboration among Interest Networks, and work together on strategies to strengthen the activities of individual Interest Network and the Assembly as a whole.

Interest Networks

Purpose

The purpose of Interest Networks are to:

1. Provide a professional home around disciplines/roles (e.g., Psychology Interest Network, Student and Early Career Interest Network) or topics of interest or common concern (e.g., Families Interest Network, Technology Interest Network) that help to further the mission of AAIDD.
2. Provide leadership opportunities for AAIDD members and provide a possible path to AAIDD Board service.
3. Network and share information pertinent to issues in policy, practice, and research in each respective discipline/topic.
4. Encourage participation in the national conference activities, including proposal development, submission and abstract review, and annual conference planning (for the national planning committee/local arrangements committees), as requested by the President Elect and national staff.
5. Educate and inform professionals within their respective disciplines or topics of interest.
6. Collaborate with AAIDD leadership on recruitment and retention of new and current members.
7. Provide information and consultation to the AAIDD Board of Directors and national staff, as requested.
8. Pursue any other activities that strengthen collaborative work and learning consistent with the vision and mission of AAIDD.

Formation of Interest Networks

Interest Networks can be formed by a petition of AAIDD members to the AAIDD Board or by initiation by the Board.

A petition or plan for a new Interest Network must include:

- A mission statement that aligns and supports the overall mission of AAIDD.
- A clear rationale that the new Interest Network addresses an unmet discipline/topic without duplicating an existing Interest Network.
- Identification of the initial leadership team (adhering to structure as specified below).
- A strategic plan of activities for the first two years, including plans to increase its membership.
- A minimum number of 10 members who agree to join the new group.

The AAIDD Board of Directors can approve, reject, or request a revised plan for a new Interest Network. If approved, the Interest

Network will be on a provisional status for the first two years, pending a report and review of its progress.

Current Divisions, Special Interest Groups, and Action Groups will be re-designated as an Interest Network. The re-designated Interest Networks will be required to develop an initial two-year plan for approval, but will not be on provisional status. Following the completion of the two-year plan, all Interest Networks are required to submit annual plans.

Organization of the Interest Networks

Each Interest Network is required to have an Executive Committee consisting of at least three members: Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. Other roles can be developed or assigned by the Executive Committee of each Interest Network to address their activities or projects. Each Interest Network Executive Committee is responsible for developing its own plan for leadership elections and succession.

Elections for leadership roles are expected and terms of office are limited to two (2) years. Ideally, those elected to Interest Network. Ideally, leadership will serve as Vice Chair in year 1 and Chair in year 2.

Interest Network Activities and Expectations

Each Interest Network will engage in objectives and activities that promote the mission of AAIDD.

Annual Plan and Yearly Report

Each Executive Committee is charged with the development of an *Annual Plan and Yearly Report* in consultation with the Interest Network membership. The *Annual Plan and Yearly Report* is to be submitted by July 31 to the Assembly Co-Chairs for AAIDD Board approval. The annual plan should detail objectives and specific activities and proposed expenditure of interest network funds that the Interest Network will engage in during the upcoming year. The Yearly Report should indicate objectives met, activities completed, and funds used from the prior year (see Appendix 2 for approved uses of Interest Network funds). Upon approval, each Executive Committee will share the *Annual Plan and Year Report* with its membership. The Executive Committee will only engage in approved activities.

Meetings

Each Executive Committee is encouraged to meet at least 6 times per year. Interest Networks are expected to develop and/or maintain a regular means of communication and communicate with its members on a quarterly basis. Each Interest Network is encouraged to host an annual business meeting at the annual conference.

Assembly Participation

The Interest Network executive committee will represent the Interest Network at the Assembly leadership business meetings.

Collaboration

Interest Networks are encouraged to collaborate with other Interest Networks on objectives and activities. These collaborations should be noted in all participating Interest

Network's *Annual Plan and Yearly Reports*.

Discontinuance of an Interest Network

The core purpose of Interest Networks is to provide on-going opportunities for collaboration and learning around disciplines or topics within the field that both align and contribute to the overall mission of the AAIDD. AAIDD will be alerted to signs of *inactivity* (e.g., no annual report and plan, no ongoing communication with its members, reduced participation in conference calls or in-person Assembly meetings).

When such circumstances arise, the national staff, in collaboration with the Assembly Co-Chairs, will contact the Interest Network leadership to assess the current status. A mitigation plan will be developed to address how the Interest Network can achieve activity expectations. This plan will be submitted to the Board of Directors for approval. If the mitigation plan for leadership within the Interest Network is not successfully implemented, the Interest Network leadership can make a request to the Board to be formally discontinued. The AAIDD Board of Directors reserves the right to discontinue and officially dissolve, either because of lack of activity or leadership, any Interest Network not adhering to the mitigation plan or who does not support the mission and values of AAIDD.

AAIDD Support for Interest Networks

AAIDD staff will provide the following support to the Interest Networks and the Assembly to further the AAIDD mission.

1. The AAIDD will provide the process for AAIDD members to join one or more Interest Networks.
2. The standard Interest Network membership fee is set at \$10 per member unless otherwise designated by the AAIDD (e.g., enhanced rate for products/journals associated with Interest Network membership to warrant increased cost).
3. The AAIDD will serve as a fiscal intermediary (i.e. collect funds/pay expenses etc.) for funds collected by the Interest Networks through other activities.
4. The AAIDD will provide membership lists on requests made by leadership of the Interest Group.
5. The AAIDD will collaborate with Interest Networks to ensure timely welcome of new members.
6. Upon request and when appropriate, the AAIDD will disseminate information regarding Interest Network activities to the AAIDD membership.
7. The AAIDD Board of Directors and national staff will provide support and consultation to the Interest Network leadership as appropriate and requested.
8. The AAIDD will work with Interest Network leadership to schedule business meeting spaces at the annual conference.

Responsibilities and Expected Activities of Leadership Roles

Each Interest Network has flexibility in determining additional responsibilities and activities, but the minimum expectation for each role is outlined as follows:

Interest Networks

Interest Network Chairs

1. Promote AAIDD's mission to professionals and others. This may include individuals who are not familiar with AAIDD.
2. Promote the Interest Network's professional interests and collaborate with other groups of the AAIDD.
3. Promote and support membership services and recruitment within one's Interest Network.
4. Ascertain important issues and information from members within one's Interest Network and communicate directly with other group leaders, state and regional chapters, and the staff of the AAIDD.
5. Actively engage the membership of one's Interest Network in issues and activities related to the shared professional interest of the group.
6. Develop the agenda and chair an annual business meeting at the annual conference of the AAIDD and at Interest Network meetings throughout the year.
7. Communicate relevant information to one's Interest Network before and after official meetings of the Assembly.
8. Submit an annual report and an action plan to the Board of Directors using the format supplied by the Board.
9. Orient incoming Vice-Chair, and serve as an ongoing consultant as past-Chair for a year, and be prepared to serve as the Assembly Co-Chair.

Interest Network Vice-Chairs

1. Assist the Interest Network Chair in their designated activities.
2. Provide leadership to specific activities as required/designated by each Interest Network.
3. In the Chair's absence, lead Interest Network meetings, and represent the chair at Assembly meetings as needed.
4. Assume the Interest Network Chair position in the event that the current Interest Network Chair can no longer continue to serve.

Interest Network Secretaries

1. Obtain membership lists (via AAIDD staff) and compile and maintain updated email contact/listserve for Interest Network member communications.
2. Take meeting notes and distribute minutes as needed.
3. Assist with scheduling, planning, and alerting Interest Network members of the Assembly and Interest Network meetings during AAIDD's annual meeting.
4. Assist in the creation and submission of the Interest Network annual plan/report.

Assembly of Interest Networks

Co-Chairs of the Assembly of Interest Networks

The Assembly will be co-chaired by a board liaison who will be the Vice President or President-Elect and an Interest Network Chair or Interest Network past-Chair, to be chosen at the Assembly's annual meeting.

1. Assure that the Assembly meetings are scheduled during the AAIDD's annual meeting.
2. Report recommendations of the Assembly to the Board of Directors and communicate Board decisions to the Assembly as necessary.
3. Orient incoming Interest Network Chairs, including supplying them with the Interest Network Manual.
4. Review *Annual Plans and Yearly Reports*.

Required Meetings of the Assembly

Following is a description of the activities at the Assembly's annual meeting.

1. The meetings of the Assembly shall be scheduled at the AAIDD's annual meeting.
2. Meeting agendas will be developed by the Assembly Co-Chairs.
3. The meetings are open to all interested parties; however only members of the Assembly (Chairs, and Vice Chairs) may vote. The Vice-President/President-Elect may vote to break a tie.
4. Assembly meetings are intended to provide:
 - a. Each member with the opportunity to express (verbally or in written form) views on any pertinent issue—such as membership, education, research, etc.—that the Assembly needs to consider. The discussion may or may not result in a vote.
 - b. A platform to discuss and vote on matters of action requested by the Board of Directors.
 - c. A platform to discuss and vote on recommendations to the Board or for issues referred to the Board for consideration.
 - d. The opportunity for reporting by members on the progress of Interest Networks.
 - e. A platform to discuss any special projects that the Assembly might undertake and assign members to committees as necessary.

Election Processes

1. Each Interest Network can develop and determine their own leadership elections process/succession plans for their Executive Committee member roles of Chair/Vice Chair/Secretary. However, each Interest Network must remain cognizant of the expectation for continuity and completion of required activities of the Interest Network, and required participation/representation in Assembly meetings.
2. At the Assembly annual meeting, Chairs or recent Past Chairs of Interest Networks are eligible for nomination/self-nomination for Assembly Co-Chair. If two or more candidates are nominated, a secret ballot election process for Assembly co-chair will be held at the meeting. Only one representative (usually the Interest Network Chair) per Interest Network can cast a ballot. ***

Appendix 1

Organizational Structure and Expectations

Assembly of Interest Networks

Leadership:

Co-Chaired by AAIDD Board Liaison and
Interest Network Representative

Membership:

Chairs of Interest Networks

Meetings Conducted:

Quarterly conference calls/contact

Annual assembly meeting at AAIDD national conference

Interest Networks

Leadership:

Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary

Membership:

Affiliated AAIDD Membership

Meetings/Activities Conducted:

Bimonthly conference call/contact

Activities outlined in annual plan

Outcomes submitted in annual report

Document Revision History

2/2003, *Conference of Professional Interest Leadership Manual*.
Committee Co-Chairs: Sharon Gomez and Genny Pugh.

12/2010, *Conference of Professional Interest Leadership Manual*.
Committee Chair: Sharon Gomez.

5/2017, *Interest Networks Leadership Manual*. Committee Co-
Chairs: Liz Perkins and Kim Fisher; Committee members: Melissa
DiSipio, Tom Fish, Bill Gaventa, David Helm, Maggie Nygren, Holly
Riddle, Matt Van Auken.

9/2022, technical updates on action plans and recognition
approved by the AAIDD Board of Directors.

12/2024, minor edits approved by the AAIDD Board of Directors.

7/11/2025, minor edit approved by the AAIDD Board of Directors.

Appendix 2

Parameters for Use of AAIDD Interest Network Budgets

Interest Networks will be reimbursed for expenses as indicated below, up to the amount of their budget/allocation and consistent with receipts submitted. Allocations are determined by the number of members who have paid dues in a calendar year for the specific Interest Network.

AAIDD will charge members for Interest Network membership, 50% will be allocated to the Interest Network and 50% to AAIDD's general fund. Unused funds are allowed to carry forward for a maximum of 24 months at which time the remaining funds will also revert to AAIDD's general fund. **

The information below is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but rather to identify the areas that the Board believes to be appropriate. In addition, Interest Networks can pool their financial resources for innovative activities (e.g., a Training Institute on topic that involves more than one area of professional interest). Requests to spend funds for efforts not included below can be directed to the executive director or finance director.

Examples Appropriate for Reimbursement

- CEU fees for presentations at the annual convention
- Communication with members. Includes: newsletters (although electronic methods are highly encouraged), postage, other mailings, conference calls
- Honorarium for a member to maintain an Interest Network web page
- Hiring a student to maintain the web page and/or manage the listserv
- Subsidy for a student member, young professional, or other reduced membership-fee member to attend the annual convention (e.g., partial expense)
- Refreshments (modest) at the Interest Network business meeting/event at the AAIDD annual conference
- Subsidy of registration fee for a speaker at the business meeting/event at the annual convention

Examples Not Appropriate for Reimbursement

- Interest Network Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary travel and registration fees for AAIDD's annual conference
- Interest Network Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary travel to conferences of other organizations
- Business cards
- Elaborate web page design by commercial vendor

**Note that an Interest Network that raises its own funds (e.g., Religion and Spirituality Interest Network's certification fees) will continue to have greater latitude on use of those funds.