

A Virtual Affair: Proposal to Host the 49th IAMSLIC Annual Conference in 2023

Submitted by Sally Taylor, Mayu Ishida, and Mathew Vis-Dunbar (March 23, 2021)

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a proposal to host the 49th IAMSLIC Annual Conference *virtually* from the University of British Columbia on the west coast of Canada. By hosting the conference online, we can provide learning and networking opportunities to more IAMSLIC members while at the same time reducing our collective carbon footprint.

The first ever virtual IAMSLIC conference in 2020 with 122 attendees demonstrated that as an organization, we can bring together more members online than we ever could in person. Despite the challenges of time zones and technology, attendees were engaged and enthusiastic to see each other. Without the need to travel, participation better reflected our global membership, and sponsorship funds were used to benefit more attendees.

Also in 2020, IAMSLIC joined more than 100 societies in signing the [Statement of World Aquatic Scientific Societies on the Need to Take Urgent Action against Human-Caused Climate Change, Based on Scientific Evidence](#). In addition to the impact on the aquatic environment, we are concerned for many colleagues whose homes and libraries are threatened by sea level rise, floods, droughts, fires, or hurricanes. By meeting virtually, IAMSLIC has the opportunity to create a more inclusive and accessible conference that is better for the health of the planet.

About UBC

The University of British Columbia (UBC), with two main campuses, is the second largest university in Canada and consistently ranks among the top 40 universities in the world.

UBC Vancouver is located on the Pacific coast on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Musqueam people. It is home to the Institute for the Oceans and Fisheries (including the Centre for Indigenous Fisheries, Marine Mammal Research Unit, and Project Seahorse), the Biodiversity Research Centre, and the Department of Earth, Ocean and Atmospheric Sciences.

UBC Okanagan is located in the Okanagan valley on the unceded territory of the Syilx Okanagan Nation, and has a Department of Biology, and Department of Earth, Environmental and Geographic Sciences.

While a virtual meeting by its very nature is not tied to place, in keeping with past IAMSLIC conferences, we would highlight research at UBC, and share the unique environments of the coastal and interior regions of the province. With no shortage of world-class researchers, we can arrange for presentations on scientific topics as well as themes such as open science, data management, and Indigeneity.

Hosting Committee

In addition to the IAMSLIC members listed here, we expect to have additional support from UBC and Cymus colleagues as well as iSchool students from the Vancouver campus.

- Sally Taylor, Woodward Library, UBC
- Mayu Ishida, Woodward Library, UBC
- Mathew Vis-Dunbar, Okanagan Library, UBC

Proposed Dates

We propose holding a 4 or 5 day conference with 4-5 hours of programming each day to minimize screen fatigue. Our preferred dates are: Oct 2-6, Oct 16-20, or Oct 9-13.

Conference Format

We envision the conference to be a combination of live and recorded presentations, digital posters, workshops, field trips, and social events. We would like to provide the traditional elements of an IAMSLIC conference while exploring opportunities available in the virtual environment.

Examples include:

- panel of scientists from different Cyamus institutions speaking on the same theme; this could be done with pre-recorded individual talks and a live discussion
- highlight student research and projects through lightning talks or digital posters
- formal and informal networking activities in small groups - roundtable discussions, committee meetings, icebreakers to meet members from other regions
- pre-conference workshops to permit attendees to go deeper with a topic
- field trips - Beaty Biodiversity Museum, Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver Aquarium
- social events - cooking class, music performance, movement exercise

Technology

UBC has a site license for Zoom meetings with the capability to host webinars for larger audiences. By 2023, we expect that there will be additional technologies at our disposal.

Our goals include:

- providing synchronous and asynchronous content to address the time zone issue
- applying closed captioning to make content more accessible to a global membership
- creating space to reproduce a poster session or the informal encounters that occur during an in person meeting (currently exploring the tool Gather.town)

Costs and Registration

- Although costs are lower for a virtual conference, we would like to charge a modest registration fee to cover any specialized technical needs, honoraria for special guest speakers or performers, and virtual field trips.
- Online registration will be done through the Wild Apricot IAMSLIC site.

Cyamus meeting

The 49th conference is being held in the Cyamus region. If Cyamus would like to hold its annual meeting at this time, we can add a day to the virtual event, and plan a program with the Cyamus representative.