

International Small Islands Studies Association

Annual General Meeting

July 9, 2026

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Laurie Brinklow, University of Prince Edward Island, Canada

It is a pleasure to be writing this President's Report and presenting it at the 20th Islands of the World Conference here in beautiful Jaeundo, Shinan County, South Korea. It's a testament to our determination as islanders seeking to study islands 'on their own terms' that we have reached this milestone of 20 conferences. This is no small feat.

Last year was the first time we hosted an Annual General Meeting online. This year is the first time we are hosting an AGM both online and in person. Thank you to the conference organizing team for supporting us with this meeting. And hats off to those who have shown their dedication to ISISA by getting up in the middle of the night to join us virtually for this hour. I give you permission to go back to bed after this!

It's also the first year that we've had an election online. If all goes according to plan, we'll be reporting the final results at the end of this meeting. Thank you, Adam Grydehøj, for researching online voting platforms and test-driving this one: OpaVote. Fingers crossed it works!

I want to thank Genève Phillip-Durham and Gerard Persoon for serving as our nominating committee. They have been working tirelessly on our behalf to make the process as transparent and seamless as possible. I also want to thank the 20 island scholars who put their names forward for the positions of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and five Ordinary Members. ISISA is the richer for your engagement.

The year has been busy with planning for not one, but TWO conferences. As reported last year, we accepted bids to have four conferences back-to-back: in South Korea, Curaçao, Gozo (Malta), and Yokohama (Japan). We invited Luky Adrianto from the 2024 Lombok (Indonesia) conference and Jae-Eun Kim from this year's South Korea conference to join the Executive to ensure the smooth passing on of knowledge and experience. After this conference, we will thank Luky for his contributions and invite the organizers from Curaçao to join. Thanks go to Executive members Adam, Sarah, and Anica for being part of the organizing committee for this conference, as well as to those ISISA members who served on the Scientific Committee to assess abstracts and award scholarships.

Adam, Sarah, Ayano, and I have been working with organizers in Curaçao – from whom we’ll hear shortly. And we’ve heard from organizers in Gozo and Yokohama that preliminary planning is already in the works for 2028 and 2029. The next Executive will ramp up to work with them over the coming year.

I would like to congratulate the winners of this year’s ISISA conference scholarships: Isao Kato (Ferris University, Institute of Okinawa Arts and Culture, Okinawa), Joy Paderog (Central Mindanao University), Yuejian Lin (South China University of Technology), Laura Willström (University of Jyväskylä, Finland), Prahelika Deka (University of Leeds), and Ilham Akbar Darmawan (Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta). Having received a scholarship to attend the conference in Penghu in 2014, I know exactly what it means to be recognized in this way. We are happy to reward you for your dedication to creating scholarly excellence in the discipline of Island Studies.

Last year I reported that we were building collaborations with the Small Islands Culture Research Initiative (SICRI) and the IGU Islands Commission. We had discussions with SICRI about co-hosting the Curaçao conference, but in the end, they understandably felt they needed more lead time to be fully involved. I would encourage the incoming Executive to continue the conversation about working with them to co-host our Gozo and/or Yokohama conference(s). And a huge congratulations goes to ISISA Ordinary Member and our Newsletter Editor Anica Čuka for being elected to serve as President of the IGU Commission. I can’t think of a better person to take on this role. Something the future Executive might do is talk with Anica over the coming months about possible collaborations.

Once again, a huge thank you goes to Anica and all the people who contributed to two editions of our popular ISISA newsletter. It’s a rich resource of island stories, photos, publication announcements, and events – always beautifully and professionally presented. Thanks, too, to Anna and Sarah who kept the website and social media networks vibrant and up to date. The flagship *Island Studies Journal*, ISISA’s official journal, has just published Volume 21, Issue 1. Congratulations and thank you to the editors and contributors for continuing to make it a world-class journal we’re all so proud of.

This conference will see the launch of Jennie Teasdale’s beautiful book (and labour of love) about island gardens. In the works for several years, *Island Gardens: Isolation and Imagination* includes 42 chapters from 71 contributors from dozens of islands – a truly global islands project. Former ISISA President Godfrey Baldacchino recently reminded me that ISISA officially endorsed *A Taste of Islands* published in 2013; perhaps this is something we can do for *Island Gardens*. I would welcome a motion to that effect after my report.

I was moved by Sun-Kee's passionate Shinan Islands Declaration, which we will hear about shortly. With islands at the frontlines of so many issues – from climate change and natural disasters to threats to ecological and cultural diversity and geopolitical unrest – islands and islanders continue to be affected disproportionately. I urge the ISISA membership to support the declaration and to help get it out into the world. We all know about David and Goliath... let's do our utmost to have this story end similarly.

I will conclude by thanking the Executive members for their dedication to ISISA and for all their hard work this past year. They are Sarah Nimfhür, Vice-President; Anna Baldacchino, Secretary; Bobby MacAulay, Treasurer; Anica Čuka, ordinary member and Newsletter Editor; ordinary members Ayana Ginoza, Adam Grydehøj, Rose-Marie Azzopardi; and co-opted members Luky Adrianto and Jae-Eun Kim. We have been a mighty team, and the organization has benefited immeasurably from our combined knowledge, ideas, experience, passion, and dedication to furthering the study of islands 'on their own terms'. As I write these last words, I can't help but think of the late great Grant McCall, who brought this phrase – and *raison d'être* – into the popular lexicon of Island Studies. I wish the incoming Executive similar inspiration and a tiny sprinkling of fairy dust. May you continue to keep the magic and spirit of islands alive.

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President, International Small Islands Studies Association