

Minutes of the ISISA General Meeting, 27 September 2014, Penghu Archipelago, Taiwan.

Meeting opened at 9.10 a.m. in the conference room of National Penghu University of Science & Technology, Magong City, and was attended by 57 individuals including 9 Executive Committee members and 4 Advisory Council members.

Meeting Chair: Godfrey Baldacchino, ISISA Vice-President

The agenda as circulated was presented for adoption with the addition of two items proposed by the meeting Chair: Item 10 – nomination of Grant McCall as Honorary Life Member of ISISA; and Item 11 – adoption of The Penghu Declaration.

A motion to approve the agenda as amended was moved by Elaine Stratford, seconded by Laurie Brinklow and carried unanimously.

After some introductory remarks by the Chair there was warm appreciation expressed by the audience to Huei-Min Tsai and her colleague Wen-Cheng Wang, both from National Taiwan Normal University, for their leadership and dedicated work in organising this conference.

Item 1: Apologies for Absence

Ray Burnett, Grant McCall, Christine McMurray, Karin Topso Larsen

Item 2: Acceptance of Minutes of last General Meeting

Beate Ratter moved approval of the Minutes as distributed.

Sophia Rolle seconded the motion.

The motion to accept the Minutes of the General Meeting held on British Virgin Islands 31 May 2012 was unanimously approved.

Item 3: Matters arising from Minutes of last General Meeting

With reference to the Minutes of ISISA 2012, there was a requirement in Item 6c for a “set of criteria for Honorary Life Membership.” The Executive Committee has drafted the following statement of criteria that are proposed to the membership for approval at this General Meeting:

“Honorary Life Membership in ISISA is a prestigious membership category that shall be extended to deserving individuals who would have made, in the eyes of the ISISA Executive, a significant and notable contribution to island studies scholarship, policy and/or practice.

Candidates for the position of Honorary Life Membership can be proposed by any member of ISISA. Proposers should address the ISISA President and Secretary with the name and designation of the candidate, along with a citation of not more than 300 words justifying the nomination. The nomination shall be deliberated by the ISISA Executive and, should there be strong support, a motion for the granting of such a membership would be presented to the next General Meeting of ISISA.

Candidates for the position of Honorary Life Membership will be announced and so honoured at ISISA General Meetings, during which a suitable citation will be read and ratified by the membership present.”

Adam Grydehoj moved approval for this statement of criteria.

Anna Baldacchino seconded the motion.

The motion to accept this statement of criteria for Honorary Life Membership to ISISA was unanimously approved.

Item 4: President’s Report

Godfrey Baldacchino read out some excerpts from Grant McCall’s report as he was unable to personally attend the General Meeting due to a family wedding in Japan. The full text of this report can be found under Appendix 1. The meeting Chair deemed fit to highlight some aspects of this report, namely: the need for balance between formality and informality; the changing periodicity of meetings; and the importance of visibility and activity between conferences. With this in mind, the chair invited Bruce Potter (ISISA listserv moderator), Anna Baldacchino (ISISA newsletter editor) and Clyde Sakamoto (ISISA communications officer) to address the meeting.

Jonathan Pugh moved approval of the President’s report as tabled.

Cheryl Carmichael seconded the motion.

The motion to accept the President’s report was approved.

Item 5: Treasurer’s Report

Stephen Royle detailed his report to the meeting and a full summary appears in Appendix 2.

Prem Saddul moved approval of the Treasurer’s report.

Elaine Stratford seconded the motion.

The motion to accept the Treasurer’s report was unanimously approved.

Item 6: Amendment to Charter

Godfrey Baldacchino notes that the ISISA Charter (**at Article IV B**) already allows for “organisations” to be members of ISISA. This means that nothing precludes, for example, The University of Malta from becoming a member of ISISA, by paying the \$20 fee. The Article goes on to say, however, that each member will have one vote. How then would the University of Malta vote in a General Meeting?

Perhaps the General Meeting should qualify Article IV B, saying that only individuals can be members, and thus enjoy voting rights. Institutions, entities, associations can express their support via donations, but they should not be offered membership. In that case, should the words “entities, organisations and institutions” be deleted from Article IV B?

After much discussion, Godfrey Baldacchino decided to withdraw this motion.

Various alternative suggestions were put forward at the meeting including one idea by

Sophia Rolle, College of the Bahamas, that “entities, organisations and institutions” could be asked to pay a membership fee of \$350 but are restricted to having only two votes.

It was agreed that the incoming Executive Committee should consider and discuss this matter at greater length and report back with possible alternatives for the membership to consider at a future date.

Item 7: Proposal for *Island Studies Journal* to become the official journal for ISISA, now that two-year trial period has finished.

The Executive Committee had tasked Laurie Brinklow to assess the rapport between ISJ and ISISA during the last two years and to submit a recommendation to the general meeting.

Laurie addressed the usefulness of the journal to ISISA members and the general high regard it is held amongst academic scholars and island researchers alike.

Laurie Brinklow moved approval for the *Island Studies Journal* to become the official journal of ISISA.

Beate Ratter seconded the motion.

The motion was unanimously approved at the meeting.

Item 8: Nomination and Election of ISISA Office Bearers and Executive Committee Ordinary Members

At this point, the meeting chair invited Bruce Potter to take over the running of Item 8.

Bruce Potter guided the meeting through the election procedure and oversaw the smooth running of the secret ballot with assistance from volunteers at the conference secretariat.

All five Office Bearer nominees were uncontested, namely:

President	Godfrey Baldacchino
Vice President	Beate Ratter
Secretary	Graeme Robertson
Treasurer	Stephen Royle
Communications Officer	Clyde Sakamoto

Adam Grydehoj moved approval for these five candidates to be declared elected for a four year term.

Sarah McLane seconded the motion.

The motion was approved at the meeting.

There were four openings for ordinary members to be elected to the Executive Committee and ten nominees. In alphabetical order the candidates, together with the number of votes cast in their favour, following a secret ballot of members present, were as follows:

Laurie Brinklow	33
Ray Burnett	7
Ko Chang-Hoon	7
Adam Grydehoj	17
Marina Karides	31
Dana Lewis-Ambrose	29
Shansuke Nagashima	18
Jonathan Pugh	23
Prem Saddul	17
Elaine Stratford	30

Accordingly, Laurie Brinklow, Marina Karides, Elaine Stratford and Dana Lewis-Ambrose were declared elected to serve on the Executive Committee for a four year term.

Item 9: Future ISISA conferences

The Executive Committee met before the General Meeting to hear presentations and pose questions to three bidders seeking to host future ISISA conferences. After careful and due consideration, the Executive Committee decided that all three proposals submitted had equal merit in different ways and came to the conclusion that all three should be recommended for approval at the General Meeting. In reverse order, presentations were therefore made at the meeting and each was approved in turn.

Mid-June 2018: Prof. Gerard Persoon, Leiden University & Prof. Jouke van Dijk, Waddenacademie, both from The Netherlands. Their conference will start with a welcome in Leeuwarden, European Capital of Culture 2018 and then transfer to the island of Terschelling in the Wadden Sea.

July 2017: Mayor Jayne Bates, Kangaroo Island Council, South Australia.

May or September 2016: Prof Ioannis Spilanis, Laboratory of Local and Island Development, University of the Aegean, Lesvos Island, Greece.

The exact dates and themes for each conference will be made known as soon as the organisers have had the opportunity to discuss and further plan with their respective island communities.

Item 10: Nomination of Grant McCall to Honorary Life Membership

Beate Ratter read out the full citation (see appendix 3) inducting Dr Grant McCall as Honorary Life Member of ISISA.

Bruce Potter moved approval of this citation.

Cheryl Carmichael seconded.

The nomination was unanimously approved at the meeting

Item 11: The Penghu Declaration

Godfrey Baldacchino read out the text of The Penghu Declaration (see appendix 4) issued by the delegates present at the 13th Islands of the World Conference of the International Small Islands Studies Association that was unanimously approved.

AOB

Arlene Holmes-Henderson volunteered to open a Twitter account for ISISA.

Laurie Brinklow and Marina Karides indicated the younger members of ISISA may help to organise a Graduate/Postgraduate Student Summer School at the RETI conference to be held in Orkney, Scotland, in late June 2015.

There being no other business, the General Meeting was adjourned *sine die* by new President Godfrey Baldacchino at 11.05 a.m.

APPENDIX 1. President's Report

Many of you will know that I have had the good fortune to have been President of ISISA since 1998.

And all of you should know that I am not again nominating for that position.

I was elected President at Islands V, held on Mauritius and organized by Prof Prem Saddul, a very good friend of ISISA (since 1994, Islands IV) and strong supporter of the Association's goals and works.

My President's reports have not always found favour with some prominent ISISA supporters as they tend to have been informal and discursive, rather than flowing with gravitas. So, for my last report as President, I break with my own tradition and write it.

Over the time I have had the honour to have been President of ISISA, I have noted some abiding tensions that are with the Association still and likely will continue into the future. I also would like to make some remarks – some of them voiced in previous reports – about what ISISA might think about its future.

Right at the start of ISISA's foundation at Islands III on Okinawa there were the twin tensions of formalism vs informality. I was one of the ones who wrote the "ISISA Charter", so called as I argued that our foundation document should not be restrictive but allow for serendipitous flexibility: "Charter", I felt, did not convey the earnestness of "Constitution". Since the 1994 drafting of the Charter, it has been amended as people have seen needs arising. The formal structure of the Association has expanded to consist of an Executive Committee of 10 persons and an Advisory Council of 13, both elected at the General Meeting that is the ultimate governing body of ISISA.

I expect that these forces of informality and formality will continue to feature in the Association's debates.

The other area of abiding discussion is what is the purpose of ISISA? Does the Association exist to simply hold conferences or is there something more and continuous that the organization might take on? At the 1998 General Meeting, I proposed as the new President (Founding President, Prof Theo Hills having stepped down) a series of commissions to carry on cooperative work between conferences.

Unfortunately, although passionately debated and contested at the 1998 General Meeting, they never became a feature of ISISA's work. There will be proposals in future for overall projects that the Association might take on to give the group a greater role in international intellectual life between conferences.

A third area of contention has been the periodicity of meetings. I think it has been clear that the original four-year cycle is unlikely to return; two years between ISISA conferences is the norm. A smaller and more focused island studies group, SICRI (Small Islands Cultural Research Initiative), led for many years by Prof Phil Hayward, holds an annual conference. Within ISISA itself, there have been members who have asked for the Association's blessing for smaller, more focused "inter-conferences". Some time ago, Professor Hiroshi Kakazu (convener of Islands III on Okinawa) requested the use of the ISISA name for a locally focused Okinawa based meeting. More recently, a group of Canadian island scholars asked for ISISA's blessing in 2013 for a commemorative event on Gabriola Island, British Columbia. And, in a way to answer that demand for more islands studies conferences, there is the International Geographical Union's Commission 22, chaired by Professor Chang-Yi David Chang of Taiwan. They were founded in 2007, it seems from their website http://igu-islands.giee.ntnu.edu.tw/DispPageBox/igu_Cp.aspx?ddsPageID=IGUENCFR& and have conducted useful conferences in 2010, 2012 and 2013, the latter also on Penghu Island. Like ISISA, IGU Commission 22 shares as reference points the *Island Studies Journal* and GIN, the Global Islands Network.

I think that the demand for ISISA conferences will continue, being taken on in the first instance with smaller and more local events, such as the Gabriola meetings <http://islandstudiesconference2013.org>.

A final and recurring tension is between the aspirations of local organisers and ISISA itself as a group of scholars. There always is a local reason why hosts for Islands of the World conferences invest such an enormous effort in bidding, organizing and conducting international/multi-disciplinary Islands of the World conferences. Local committees wish to promote their own places or institutions. They may wish to highlight elements of their local history and politics. Sometimes this manifests itself in locally based panels taking on a sensitive topic important to local organisers. Other times, this may manifest in the choice of local tours and specific sites visited. Delegates to an Islands conference may have little understanding or appreciation of a deeply personal community concerns.

I am certain that people here can think of other tensions in ISISA, such as whether to charge for membership or not, the arguments about "balance" in choosing conference sites, the role of academic institutions in the organization of "Islands of the World" conferences and the central role of the General Meeting.

On the latter many, especially those not present today, have observed that those ISISA members who cannot attend the conferences for whatever reasons are disenfranchised since all crucial decisions (office bearers, conference sites and general policy) are taken at the General Meeting. In the past, some members who have been dissatisfied with decisions voted have continued their protests in lively online debates, either through general email or the ISISA Discussion Group, managed by the highly-skilled Bruce Potter, extending his focus on the Caribbean to Islands of the entire world.

Deriving from the above, will be a future debate on the structure and purpose of ISISA; whether it should be more of a professional, scientific association, with commensurate charges and activities.

From the very generous donations of previous “Islands of the World” conveners, such as Prof Prem Saddul (Islands V, 1998) and Prof Clyde Sakamoto (Islands IX, 2006), the Association has a small treasury. This chronic lack of funds means that all activities of the Association rely on generous donations of volunteer labour. Prof Clyde Sakamoto has garnered resources from his own institution, the University of Hawai'i Maui College to maintain the ISISA website. Many of you will be familiar with the contributions of Graeme Robertson (convener of Islands VI, Isle of Skye, 2000) as director of the Global Islands Network (GIN) and Secretary of ISISA, sharing that role with Prof Beate Ratter, whom we must thank for her efforts with the redoubtable Prof Huei-Min Tsai to shepherd this present Islands XIII on Penghu.

I just mentioned Islands VI on the Isle of Skye in 2000: apart from the first “Islands” meeting in British Columbia in 1986, it is the other ISISA conference that I have missed. I was confined to a hospital bed having been viciously attacked in the night by an “Atualoa” in a chiefly house in Samoa, just a few weeks before the conference. That brought up the desirability of creating the office of Vice-President, so ably filled by Prof Godfrey Baldacchino over the last little while.

The role of Ordinary Members of the Executive, taken by the enthusiastic Laurie Brinklow and the serene Prof Elaine Stratford has been helpful in discussions and debates and I thank them for the time. Ray Burnett, who must be drowning himself in single malt at the moment at the defeat of the Scottish referendum on independence, has often pointed to how he lives on the smallest of islands and has that as the backdrop to his thinking and approach to island studies.

As I mentioned, ISISA's financial affairs only recently have required much attention as there was so little to count. That notwithstanding, the Association has had a Treasurer since its inception, with little to do. Whether it is because of Prof Stephen Royle's influential presence or other factors, the role of Treasurer has grown in complexity and we are grateful to Steve for his dedication to matters monetary on our behalf.

I think a feature of ISISA that requires further careful thought is what the Advisory Council is meant to achieve. When names are proposed at the General Meeting, people are taking into account various balances, but the group hardly can be said to be representative: apart from the general membership the Advisory Council has no constituency. What is to become of the Advisory Council should be a major topic of debate over the next few years, although I would imagine that many of the Association's members would be content to simply let this group continue. In order to bring the election of Executive and Council into alignment, there was a one off extension of time for the latter: positions on the Advisory Council come up for election at the next Islands meeting in 2016 so there is ample time for discussion and debate.

I am grateful to have been elected President of ISISA at successive meetings and I look forward to participating in the affairs of the association as an ordinary member in future years. I am grateful for the support and encouragement that I have received from many in the membership, office bearers or not.

As I was going into the University of Sydney the other day, I noticed a quotation that some nissologist – student of islands – had carefully painted on one of the walls, a most unusual occurrence on a campus these days:

“One cannot discover new oceans unless they have the courage to lose sight of the shore”

This insightful quotation from the French philosopher and writer André Gide portrays exactly the excitement and adventure that ISISA has been for me. I am certain that such enthusiasm shall continue with our Association into the future with the support of the membership navigating over enticing oceans and on to new discoveries.

APPENDIX 2. Treasurer’s Report 2012-14

(Last Report: Islands of the World XII, British Virgin Islands, May 2012)

	Current Account (GBP)	Business Reserve Account (GBP)	PayPal (GBP)	Total (GBP)
Brought Forward	5726.07	11,571.91	93.00	17,390.98
Income				
Memberships BVI	1434.47			
Other memberships	133.70	399.63	467.14	
<i>Total Membership fees</i>				<i>2434.94</i>
Refund by Treasurer!	406.09			
Interest		14.88		
Total Income				2855.91
Expenditure				
Scholarships, BVI	549.07			
Scholarships, Gabriola	510.00			
Scholarships, Penghu	750.00			
<i>Total Scholarships</i>				<i>1809.07</i>
Newsletter prize	45.00			
Treasurer’s mistake	406.09			
Total Expenditure				2260.16
Excess of Income				595.75
Carried Forward	5440.17	11,986.42	560.14	17,986.73
				US\$29,188.03; 876,824.71TWD

APPENDIX 3. Citation to induct Dr Grant McCall as Honorary Life Member of ISISA

Grant McCall is an Associate of the Department of Anthropology, University of Sydney, Australia. He has researched and taught anthropology at various other universities, including Oxford, Cambridge, New South Wales, South Pacific, Copenhagen, California at Berkeley, Chile, Australian National and Provence, as well as having been a visitor for various periods of time to many other locations.

His first research dealt with migrant populations, especially the Basques in the Americas, but his lifelong interest has been in the peoples and cultures of the Pacific Islands.

He has supervised research students on a variety of topics including water policy, missionary development, environmental theory, ethnicity, demography, youth development and photographic representations of colonialism. For some time, Dr McCall convened an innovative fieldwork course where students lived the daily lives of Pacific Island villages in Fiji, the Solomons, Samoa, Tonga, and New Caledonia.

Dr McCall is also interested in the particular features that mark island societies, proposing the concept of ‘nissology’ – the study of islands on their own terms – as a way of targeting such research. His two seminal papers on this subject, penned in 1994 and 1996, are regularly quoted in the island studies literature.

He has produced short ethnographic films, beginning with Australian topics. The most recent of these is *Churches of ‘Eua*, a film shot in Tonga in 2007.

Dr McCall was the founding Director of the Centre for South Pacific Studies (1987-2003) and of the South Pacific Studies Resource Centre (2004-2008), at the University of New South Wales, Australia. These institutions sponsored conferences, produced a newsletter and monograph series, and worked with public and non-government organizations, in Australia and overseas, to promote knowledge about, and the well-being of, the peoples of the Pacific islands.

Dr McCall has been foundation convener and Vice-President of the Australian Association for the Advancement of Pacific Studies (AAAPS). He is also on the editorial and advisory boards of various journals and non-government organizations, and a frequent contributor to professional publications. He has written and/or edited 14 books and various articles. He has three, single-authored monographs in progress.

Dr McCall regards the interactive transmission of knowledge as being core to academic work. He also asserts that collaborative research with the local populations who are their hosts should be the guiding research methodology for all anthropologists.

In recognition of his contributions to the communities which he has been working with, Dr McCall has been awarded Honorary Citizenship of Jeju Island, Korea; and Honorary Membership of *Te Mau Hatu*, the Rapanui Elders Council.

Dr McCall was elected president of the International Small Islands Studies Association at the Mauritius conference in 1998. For 16 years, he has led the Association, inspiring many young researchers interested in the study of islands, their people and their biota;

coordinating the work of the ISISA Executive and the Advisory Council; and assuring the successful hosting of memorable biennial conferences in collaboration with many hospitable and generous hosts. His friendliness, approachability and enthusiasm for his subject have inspired many researchers, young and old, to take an interest in islands, their people and their biota.

APPENDIX 4. The Penghu Declaration

A declaration issued by the delegates present at the 13th *Islands of the World* Conference of the International Small Islands Studies Association (ISISA) on the theme, “Small is Beautiful: Island Connections and Innovations,” meeting in the Penghu archipelago, Taiwan, September 22-27, 2014, herewith referred to as **The Penghu Declaration**.

The delegates hereby:

1. **Acknowledge** the United Nations (UN) designation of 2014 as the International Year of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the 20th anniversary of the establishment of ISISA.
2. **Express** their commitment to promoting research on, understanding of, and engagement with, the specific challenges facing small islands and their communities. These include the absence of economies of scale, resource limitations, environmental sensitivity and exposure to natural disasters; as well as identifying development opportunities and innovations based on the celebration and distinctiveness of island lives and spaces.
3. **Reaffirm** the particular challenges facing small islands in a globalized world that jeopardize the quality of island life. These require more recognition by international bodies, highlighting the role of policy makers at all levels, and demanding their commitment to the accelerated modalities of action as prescribed by the ‘Samoa Pathway’ document, agreed upon at the recently held third international UN conference of SIDS in Apia, Samoa.
4. **Support** grassroots and local island organizations and the collaboration and exchange of island networks, in order to inform national, regional and international policies of the particularities of island constituencies.
5. **Build** on the spirit and intent of past ISISA declarations, including the Kinmen Declaration of 2004, urging the adoption and expansion of appropriate initiatives that are based on the recognition of local island cultures, diversity and resilience, in recognition of the interconnectivity of islands worldwide.
6. **Encourage** island-focused study and action to inform, support and service the islands of the world and to promote culturally appropriate strategies that respond to the impact of global climate change and other hazards.
7. **Emphasize** the promotion of responsible tourism which is sensitive to local needs and which supports the uniqueness of natural and cultural island environments.
8. **Recognize** that, by being ‘geographies of hope’, islands can guide policy by showcasing various initiatives that offer viable examples of blue/green sustainability and community engagement, and which can be transferable to larger contexts.

9. **Understand** that, despite having experienced a history of political and economic marginalization, small islands lead the globe in addressing urgent environmental issues which are quite central to both their island residents and the world at large.
10. **Encourage** collaboration amongst island based institution, including our hosts (National Penghu University, the County of Penghu), and institutions in Taiwan and beyond, to build local capacities, strengthen formal and informal educational opportunities, and partake in the comparative and interdisciplinary study of islands, through ISISA and other channels.
11. **Thank** and offer their sincere appreciation to the local organizers and sponsors of the 13th 'Islands of the World' Conference for extensive community engagement, facilitation and participation, assuring a high degree of transferability of knowledge, friendship, expertise and experiences, providing generous opportunities and spaces for conversations, debates and future plans regarding the challenges facing islands worldwide. We particularly appreciate the considerable presence of youth in every aspect of this memorable event.
12. **Suggest** that this declaration be titled *The Penghu Declaration on the theme **Small is Beautiful: Island Connections and Innovations*** and recommend its adoption.

On Behalf of the Delegates

Professor Godfrey Baldacchino

President, ISISA

Chien-Fa Weng

Magistrate, Penghu County Government, Taiwan