



Election **2025** IAAI Candidates for Foundation Board of Directors



Jason Mardirosian (IL) IAAI Candidate for the Board of Directors

Elections will be open until noon (EDT) April 7, the results will be announced at the 2025 ITC General Meeting and on www.firearson.com.

In Ballot Order

How long have you been a member of the IAAI? I have been a member of the IAAI since 2009 and a member of the Illinois Chapter of the IAAI since 1999

How many annual meetings have you attended; Which Years? 8 total. However, the most recent were 2019, 2022, 2023, and 2024

What IAAI Committees Have you Served on; which years? I am currently a Director on the Board for the IAAI Foundation. Additionally, I am currently on the Awards committee since 2023 and the Marketing Committee since 2024.

Do you regularly attend your state/provincial chapter meetings and activities? Yes

Offices held state/province chapter?

Illinois Chapter:

- Director
- 2nd Vice-President
- 1st Vice-President
- President

Please list any international offices held, special projects or committee work, indicating years of service. I am currently a director on the IAAI Foundation. I am a Certified IAAI-CI and 00 an approved instructor for the 40 hour Fundamentals in Fire Investigation Course. I had previously served on the IAAI Student Liaison Committee.

Describe, in 100 words or less, why you feel you are qualified for this position: I have served 28 years in the public sector (17 years as a fire investigator) with the Chicago Fire Dept., 17 years as a Part-time Police Officer with the Summit, Illinois PD, and over 21 years as a private sector investigator, now with FEC LLC. Additionally, I have taught various fire/arson/explosion investigative topics for organizations such as the IAAI, various chapters, the DOJ, and the University of Illinois since 2005. I believe my experience makes me uniquely qualified to help address the many professional concerns of our membership!

What would you say your greatest assets are if you become a director or officer of the IAAI? Without a doubt, my eagerness and inner need to “give back” and willingness to keep an open mind. I have been very blessed to have been surrounded by many people who have guided me, in one form or another, along my professional journey to becoming as best an investigator as I can be. I believe this reflects in my many years as a supervisor/training officer in the Chicago Fire Department’s Office of Fire Investigation, years teaching new investigators, and staying involved with as many IAAI chapters as I can! My open mindedness and diplomacy have served me well so far in my career, and I believe it will be a true asset as an IAAI Director.

What type of leader are you, and how would you apply those leadership traits as a director or officer of the IAAI? I have always been the type of leader who keeps diplomacy at the forefront of my actions as much as possible. I strive to be as patient and understanding as I can. When dealing with individuals from a leadership/supervisor standpoint, I’ve always felt that it is best to remember that you are trying to get the best out of people, so conduct yourself accordingly. Be firm, but always fair. And above all else, “pull as you climb”! Meaning, don’t forget to give that next person an opportunity to develop as someone once gave you!

What steps do you believe the IAAI should take to reduce or eliminate membership shrinkage? First and foremost, introducing an “autopsy” option to assist our members who have busy lives and may forget to renew. Another possible option would be to allow members to “break up” the annual dues into payments.

Additionally, we need to expand our relationship with institutions of higher learning! We need to reach forensic students in the fire/arson/explosion fields and show them the value of IAAI membership, thus hopefully leading to the realization that maintaining their membership would be in their greatest interest.

Finally, we need to make sure that we are reaching out to our members and let them know that the Executive Board and the Board of Directors

are NOT beyond their reach of contact for questions, concerns, or professional dialogue.

What steps do you believe the IAAI should take to grow membership? I believe it is still necessary to maintain a working relationship with other public fire service and law enforcement organizations so that we can reach potential new members and explain the professional benefits of the IAAI.

In the private sector, I would like to see the IAAI expand their influence and relationship with institutions of higher learning. Our field is becoming more and more science driven. Having said that, I would love to see the IAAI become more involved with colleges and universities that have forensic science majors so that we can help possible future investigators with their initial formal education and NFPA 1033 compliance.

How would you propose to improve relationships and communications between the international and chapters? The Chapters members are the bedrock and life blood of the IAAI. Many members at the chapter level are not members of the IAAI. We need to double our efforts of working with the Chapters to explain the benefits to all chapter members, possibly by having members of the Board and the Executives attend a certain amount of chapter conferences. We need to remember that our members are much more likely to first join their local chapters first. So, we MUST improve the lines of communications with the Chapters and ensure the individuals assigned as Chapter Liaisons are enthusiastically and thoroughly doing their job to promote the IAAI.

What is your vision for the future for the IAAI? One thing in particular that I would like to try and develop is a data base of court decisions that affect fire investigators. I would like this data base to be accessible to all members. Finally, I would like to have these court decisions summarized by an attorney and a practical explanation provided so that our members can conduct their investigations fully aware of any legal ramifications that may affect them.

In my many years teaching and having polled students during those occasions, “legal issues” was/is always a topic that is consistently brought up as a concern. I believe that this data base could go a long way to relieving some of those concerns.

Other than training fire investigators, what two or three other elements do you consider as critical to the mission of the IAAI? The IAAI needs to be at the forefront at advancing the importance and awareness of the science related to fire investigations globally, particularly for the public sector. The public sector oftentimes suffers from being “time and resource limited”. Staying at the cutting edge of the science, and documenting and PUBLISHING various scientific information for access and review, would go a long way to improving the knowledge of our members. The IAAI needs to look to partner more with organizations such as NIST and UL labs and the international community to continue this research and documentation.

I’d like to see a growing understanding, appreciation, and knowledge of conducting investigations involving Hazardous Materials. Books such as the ERG for haz-mat incidents are a great reference, but do not necessarily make the investigator functionally aware of such hazards and risks that are inherent to investigative incidents when such dangerous materials may be involved. I also feel that a growing understanding of such incidents would also go a long way to improving members’ investigative knowledge of CBRNE and/or terrorist-involved events.

What do you perceive is the biggest challenge facing the IAAI in the coming years and how would you address that challenge? Well, I’m going to say the quiet part out loud: calming members and reassuring them with the release of NFPA 1321!

One of the advantages of teaching and conversing with so many investigators, on both the public and private sector, is that I get to talk with them and listen to what their major concerns are going forward in their careers.

NFPA 1321 has now come to the forefront of those concerns. The IAAI NEEDS to stand ready to help its members navigate this new standard so that they may continue to do their best work!