



Advancing the field of Human-Animal Interaction: Engaging IAHAIO Members Globally

Strategy Document, 2014

The International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations (IAHAIO) is the global association of organizations that engage in practice, research and/or education in animal assisted activity, animal assisted therapy, and service animal training. These activities serve to promote pet ownership, the human-animal bond, and respectful approaches to engaging with animals. We have over 60 multi-disciplinary member organizations and professional associations globally such as the AVMA, AAHA, JAHA, WSPA, and AAH-ABV in the veterinary medical field, the HABRI Foundation, ISAZ (the global HAI investigator’s organization), and a wide range of academic centers, AAA and AAT practice organizations. The very large cadre of member organizations strongly positions IAHAIO to lead the HAI field in important directions.

IAHAIO has customarily held triennial conferences which provide a wide range of vital information and unique networking opportunities for those in the HAI field. We have also customarily held small annual general membership meetings which have promoted dialogue between some of our member organizations. IAHAIO has enjoyed a very rapid expansion in its membership over a four year period from 19 member organizations in 2010 to over 60 in 2014 and now represents over 100,000 individuals. This growth in membership, bringing extensive professional knowledge and practical experience, makes it apparent that IAHAIO should now facilitate more regular and purposeful opportunities for our member organizations to collaborate in setting a global agenda for the advancement of the HAI field. The IAHAIO Board of Directors has therefore elected to hold annual symposia aimed at fostering dialogue, information exchange and planning strategies to move the HAI field forward. Our goal is for each symposium to address vital issues in the HAI field so that from year to year, progress is made on key projects culminating in presentations at our triennial conferences. Representatives of our member organizations attending the annual symposia will work in small multidisciplinary groups to identify problem-solving strategies and develop projects. These will be taken back to their respective member organizations for further work and implementation. Each subsequent symposium will provide an opportunity to review, refine and further advance the initiatives started at the previous symposium. Topics for work at the symposia are identified by the IAHAIO Board of Directors with input solicited from our member organizations. The Board selected the following topics for the 2014 symposium:

Standardized Terminology in HAI	Identifying best practices in HAI
Forming a Global Database for HAI research	Accreditation and Sustainability in HAI

This exciting approach will enable IAHAIO member organizations to formulate--and then in their own countries--to activate new and more effective directions in the field of HAI. The IAHAIO Board enthusiastically endorses this new and innovative approach to engaging our member organizations and creating synergism between our tri-ennial conferences so that these conferences will be part of a cohesive, sustained and strategic global movement rather than isolated events.