

Report on  
IIFM Alumni Association Constitution Review

By

The Constitution Review Committee  
18 October 2021

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## **A. Key Recommendations - consolidated**

### **1: Paid membership vs free membership**

- It is recommended that the Life membership fees of Rs 5000 is continued for the foreseeable future and is mentioned as non refundable.
- Additionally, the Regular membership fees of Rs 1500 is made free, allowing for alumni to formally register and be connected with the Association.
- It is also recommended that this issue is put up for survey with the larger alumni for opinion.

### **2: Types of membership vs voting rights**

- It is recommended that no change is made in the current situation of voting rights

### **3: Why Reserve seats for Bhopal based alumni in the BoG?**

- 1. It is recommended that no change be made in the reservation of these positions
- 2. The Association explores online banking to see possibilities of remote banking

### **4: Alumni vs courses and representation in BoG**

- It is recommended to add the words certificate and short term course of at least 30 days along with PGDSM and CCCF to comprehensively cover eligible students
- It is recommended to add two BoG positions, one for PGDSM and another one for CCCF and other short term courses, so that they are represented.

### **5: Increasing the number of members in the BoG**

- Two new members have been recommended to be added as discussed in the section on courses and representation in the BoG members.

### **6: Non Resident Indian as part of BoG**

- It is recommended that at this early stage, the Association has three special invitees from different parts of the world who are formally linked with the association without being part of the board.

### **7: Method of voting**

- No change in voting method is recommended for now. As membership increases it may be useful to explore the other methods.

### **8: Provisions for Donations**

- Adequate provisions exists and no addition in constitution is necessary

## B. Introduction

The need to take an informed decision on various issues prompted the IIFM Alumni Association to undertake many attempts to review its constitution. This is the third attempt.

### The timeline

8th July 2018 - Finalisation of the constitution

14th January 2019 - Registration of the Alumni Association (AA)

19th January 2019 - First meeting of the BoG

3rd February 2019 - First AGBM

1st March 2019 - First attempt for constitution review. MoA shared with alumni for comments

31st May 2019 - Last date for comments. No comments received.

XX XX 2019 - Second attempt at constitution review

21 August 2021 - Third attempt for constitution review started with a MoM meeting and formation of a committee to be coordinated by Mr Ajay Rai

3rd October 2021 - Coordination of review given to Dr. Ajith Chandran

18th October 2021 - Draft report submitted to Alumni Association

The first and second attempts were abandoned as no feedback was received from alumni. This third attempt also aims for getting feedback and a direction from alumni. The third attempt was under the direction of Mr Ajay Rai (PFM 1990-1992) but due to time constraint was handed over for coordination to Dr Ajith Chandran (PFM 1991-1993) on 3rd October 2021. A letter to help have a framework for discussion was sent out to the team on 6th October, see Annexure 4. A background note about AA can be found in Annexure 5

Instead of letting the situation completely be based on survey outcomes (which was twice unsuccessful), we have taken the liberty to recommend a course of action to the AA. This is based on studying the situation and discussions with the team and with inputs from AA. Though recommendations are given, it is the prerogative of the Alumni Association to carry this forward in the manner it deems fit along with survey results. Each issue has a section titled **Context and Recommendation in Brief** that will give a quick overview followed by details. **For the survey, the AA can add parts of this document so that alumni can make an informed decision.** For ease, Annexure 1 is added; it is a synopsis of the situation that could be added to the survey.

Due to the process going on for sometime, some of the committee members had to take leave midway due to personal reasons. The following alumni members took part in at least one meeting between 3rd Oct and 18th Oct.

Ajith Chandran PFM 91-93, Bhushan Patil PFM 16-18, Sejal Agarwal PFM 16-18 and Dipak Jha PFM 98-00 (Invitees from AA were Ashish Mishra PFM 93-95, President AA and Archana Sharma PFM 94-96, Secretary AA)

The time was short, so this document may have its shortcomings. Nevertheless, numerous discussions took place during these 15 days for which a sincere thank you for taking your time out, specifically the AA members. Thank you also to Bhushan Patil for coordinating the meetings. Appreciate everyone's efforts including those of Ajay Rai PFM 90-92 and Tanushka Ojha, PFM 16-18 for their contribution.

## 1: Paid membership vs free membership

### 1.1 Context and Recommendation in Brief

Free Life Membership is an altruistic idea at this juncture. There are potential financial, legal and procedural challenges that AA could face. Financially, AA does not have any identified sources of funds for its activities other than membership fees. Making a case for recovering an estimated 50 Lakh rupees that students paid to IIFM as Alumni membership will become legally difficult if membership is made free. No noteworthy membership drive was undertaken since inception, as such drives were kept in abeyance. While contact with members have increased there are a substantial number of alumni who are not registered or even connected with the alumni. While potential exists for the AA to raise funds from other sources, till it happens taking such a decision has risks.

- It is therefore recommended that the Life membership fees of Rs 5000 is continued for the foreseeable future and is mentioned as non refundable.
- Additionally, the Regular membership fees of Rs 1500 is made free allowing for alumni to formally register and be connected with the Association.
- It is also recommended that this issue is put up for survey with the larger alumni for opinion.

### 1.2 Context and Recommendation in Detail

This is one of the most contentious of the issues and likely to impact the Association the most. The situation is explored in detail.

The Constitution mentions Regular and Life membership. Fees for Regular members is Rs 1500 to be paid every two years and Life membership fees is Rs 5000 one time. Of these two types of memberships, only Life members can vote and stand for elections.

Since the registration of the Association in January 2019 some alumni have been suggesting that membership be made free. The reasons mentioned is to promote an inclusive Alumni association and fall into two areas: finance and governance (See MoM minutes)

**Financial:** No Alumni are left out of the Association just because they are not in a financial condition to pay the Alumni fees.

**Governance:** All Alumni are made automatic members so that they can take part in the governance functions i.e. stand for elections and vote.

Some pros and cons are discussed below:

#### Why Free membership?

- Universal membership, emphasizes engagement rather than funds and is based in an inclusive environment
- All alumni have a right to be given membership and their inability to pay should not prevent them from joining.
- Enhanced membership gives the AA greater representational value

## **Why paid membership?**

- Some amount of fees ensures that the AA has a minimum amount of funds to function and will not compromise the independence of the alumni association.
- Everybody having made a minimum common contribution creates the sense that the association has something of relevance to all alumni.
- A system that runs purely on donations can result in unintentional and unplanned power hierarchy and AA activities may become subservient to priorities of the small oligarchy.
- It is better to have a few willing and enthusiastic members rather than a large horde of indifferent members. The membership fees [esp. The Life Membership fees] of AA-IIFM is a very small sum, and it is difficult to believe that any of the alumni find it difficult to pay the sum. Their unwillingness to join might therefore be an indicator of lack of interest or clarity.

### **1.2.1 Background**

There are a number of situations that affect the change of membership fees. Some of them have been discussed in the MoM Open house of 24th August 2021. A few others are added based on discussions.

#### **1.2.1.1. Alumni fees collected by IIFM**

The initial batches of Alumni were fully funded through scholarships. This changed to a fee structure in XXXX. In XXXX, the student fees had a component of alumni membership fees amounting to (XXXX to XXXX) per student. This varied according to the programmes and continues till date.

The total amount collected by IIFM as Alumni Fees is expected to be more than Rs 50 lakhs.

During the MoM it was suggested this amount be recovered from IIFM. To do so it was suggested that AA should engage with IIFM and if need be go for filing a case or even go to media to get traction.

**Implications:** In case we decide to have no membership fees, the case for transferring money from IIFM to Alumni is likely to become weak. IIFM can argue as to why Alumni should ask for transfer of fees, when Alumni themselves have decided to do away with the membership fees. So changing to a zero membership fee at this juncture has a potential to create a serious financial loss.

#### **1.2.1.2. Alumni who have paid fees to IIFM: where do they stand?**

As mentioned, a number of students have paid alumni fees to IIFM. Many have receipts to prove it and have demanded that they be made part of this Associations member. While it is true that they have paid the fees, what we all can agree is that Alumni Association is a separate legal entity. Even though our aim is for the betterment of IIFM and all its alumni which requires close cooperation, coordination and agreement, it is not a part of IIFM. For this reason, we have to follow the constitution as currently present and require any member that joins to pay the prescriber fees. The above comment needs to be discussed with a lawyer to understand the full legalities involved.

**Implications:** It becomes necessary that any alumni who wants to become a member currently has to pay the prescribed fees. However, in the eventuality that the Alumni Association is able to recover the Alumni fees from IIFM, any member who has paid fees to Alumni and also to IIFM should be eligible to get the difference reimbursed. They could also be given an option to convert the amounts as donation to the Alumni.

#### **1.2.1.3 Alumni who have paid fees to Alumni Association: where do they stand, if fees are made zero?**

In the past two years 150 members have paid for Life membership and 5 members for Regular membership (as of August 2021). If the membership fees are made free at this juncture then morally the question arises if Alumni Association should return the amounts so collected. The constitution is ambiguous about returning fees once paid. The moral thing would be to reimburse the amount to the members.

**Implications:** This is likely to have serious financial implications for the Alumni as there will be zero money left in the bank for it to function.

#### **1.2.1.4 Membership drive**

Having uncertainty about having to pay for membership to the newly formed Alumni Association if you have already paid to IIFM as part of fees seems to have played havoc with membership drives. As per MoM the Alumni stopped membership drives due to this uncertainty as early as 2019. Since two attempts at reviewing the constitution did not come to fruition, no decision was made. It is absolutely imperative that the distinction between IIFM and IIFM Alumni association be made as far as membership fees are concerned.

**Implications:** This uncertainty has to be stopped with a clear decision. Membership drives are necessary not only for financial stability but also for inclusion. Apart from Membership drives by Alumni Association, alumni who want to stand for elections are likely key agents to help motivate members to register. So an unclarity in the membership fees can play havoc in a number of ways.

#### **1.2.1.5. A requirement for registration**

Membership is given after paying the prescribed fees, and formally registering with the Alumni. A register of members has to be kept by the association for informing the members about activities. Some of these are mandatory, like informing about elections. While having free membership will allow all alumni to stand for election and voting, they would still have to register.

**Implications:** Even though the Alumni Association has been trying to reach out to alumni, not everyone is connected to the Alumni Association, so many will be left out. A comprehensive list of all alumni has to be made. It should start with existing batches when they leave IIFM.

#### **1.2.1.6 Financial sustainability of AA**

The current expenses of AA are met by the fees collected from members. No money has been set aside as investment that can give a regular cash flow to take care of the expenses. One of the key areas of discussion during the MoM was also about having alternate sources

of funds. Based on the discussion there seems to be two categories of funds that can potentially give stability as well as fund some of its activities going forward.

**Tied funding:** Many alumni seem keen to contribute and raise funds for the AA. However, these funds are restricted for certain purposes only. For example the fund could be tied to scholarships. They cannot not be used for other activities other than what is agreed with the donor such as for regular expenses of the AA.

**Open funding:** These are funds that can be raised from the alumni for any activity that AA deems fit to fund. It could also go for long term investment or asset building (both within the ambit of the constitution) or for regular expenses.

While there is much enthusiasm in raising funds, these are early stages and having the structure and the resources to get it going is yet to happen.

**Implications:** While the potential for alternate sources of funds of AA exists, till these happen in actuality, the only source is membership fees. AA should quickly explore the other avenues and see what is possible. Many alumni are well endowed and could help AA to achieve its funding goals. It has been suggested not to link the financial viability of the AA with membership fees. Definitely, there is much potential for AA to raise funds. However, there is no evidence that it is happening to AA as of now. During the pandemic, many IIFM alumni groups have raised funds for different causes. Many alumni have been underwriting social meets. However, these are money that are independently managed by alumni groups and do not go through the Alumni Association. Till AA is in firm financial standing, relying on potential sources and giving up existing sources of revenue seems not a prudent idea.

This also raises the importance of the AA to have long term plans and ideas about regular cash flow, investments, endowments and asset creations. AA needs to explore resources that will help it expand its reach and impact while simultaneously helping its alumni and IIFM.

#### **1.2.1.7. Other institutions and their Alumni Association fees:**

There are examples of Associations having zero alumni fees. Many colleges that have accumulated money over the years or have identified regular sources of fund generation through activities do not charge alumni fees. Many colleges and universities charge it along with fees and later transfer it to the Alumni Association. Alumni Associations of prominent management institutions work with their institute to seamlessly transfer alumni fees. IIM Bangalore for example, have their caution deposit transferred as Alumni fees. Many others have endowment money and facilities given by the institution to their Alumni Association.

#### **1.2.1.8 Why are IIFM alumni unwilling to pay for Life Membership?**

**Unaffordability:** It is very unlikely that the amount is high and unaffordable. Most alumni get over Rs 50000 per month as per the alumni placement reports and a one time payment of Rs 5000 is not unaffordable.

**Worth:** The other likely reason that alumni may attach is the worth of this membership. What are the benefits that you will get by joining which you are not getting without. As of now the benefit of networks, the easy access to one's batch for help and all other non financial



benefits are available even without joining. In some cases even financial help is available without the alumni associations help.

**Already paid to IIFM:** A good number of alumni seems to have paid the membership fees to IIFM as part of their regular fees. The question they had was should they pay again for becoming an Alumni?

**No membership drive:** The membership drive has been half hearted. This is because AA had tentatively stopped alumni membership drives till a decision emerged as part of the Constitution Review (two of which did not have an outcome and this report is of the third). Despite all that, over 120 members have paid for the Life Membership in the past two years.

**Lack of a easy process:**

Membership payments are mostly automatic, where someone with a credit or debit card can pay the fees, get the receipt and be allocated the membership number after verification. Further an automated email gives them information and access to Alumni websites and networking groups. None of this exists with the AA right now and it is a tedious one to one process of transferring money, and one to one contact to see that it is happening. Many alumni do not have the time to go through all these processes.

In essence, it is very early stages to conclude that alumni are unwilling to pay. The reason is likely a combination of all this.

**1.3 Recommendations**

1. Continue with the Life Membership fees of Rs 5000
2. Discontinue fees for Regular Membership of Rs 1500 and make it free
3. Recommended for wider consultation

Other suggestions

4. Clarify that all Alumni who have to join have to register and pay the required fees, even if they have given to IIFM during their studies. If fees are recovered from IIFM the members who paid will be reimbursed.
5. AA should take up the case on behalf of students who have paid Alumni fees to IIFM and take steps to recover it.
6. Freeze the membership fees till circumstances change and clarity arises on recovery of fees paid to IIFM, accumulation of adequate funds through various activities like membership drives, alumni fundraising activities, donations and other methods.
7. Disinvestment discussions, the financial situation of IIFM and future of IIFM is to be constantly monitored with possible engagement where possible.

**1.4 Relevant Clauses:**

7.1, 7.2, 7.4.4, 7.7.1.3.

See Annexure 2 for details of Clauses

## **2: Types of membership vs voting rights**

### **2.1 Context and Recommendation**

Currently voting rights are with Life members. Regular members do not have voting rights. This issue is connected with the free membership issue.

It has been suggested the fees for Regular members is made free with no voting rights. In such a situation, giving voting rights negates the purpose of continuing with paid membership.

It is recommended that no change is made in the current situation of voting rights

### **2.3 Relevant Clauses:**

See Annexure 2 for details of Clauses

### 3: Why Reserve seats for Bhopal based alumni in the BoG?

#### 3.1 Context and Recommendation in Brief

Secretary, Joint Secretary and Treasurer of the BoG are Bhopal based. For bank work two persons are required. For any legal disputes, resolution is based in Bhopal courts. In the eventuality of the Secretary not present, the tasks are taken up by the Joint Secretary. For these reasons the BoG has three persons based in Bhopal.

1. It is recommended that no change be made in the reservation of these positions
2. The Association explores online banking to see possibilities of remote banking

#### 3.2 Context and Recommendation in Detail

The current Board of Governors (BoG) for IIFM AA consist of the following 9 positions: President, Vice – President, Secretary, Joint – Secretary, Treasurer, Member 1, Member 2, Member 3, and Member 4. Of the nine positions, three positions are Bhopal based. Secretary, Joint Secretary and Treasurer.

Some of the alumni opinion from MoA meeting to keep the BoG position / as it is were:

- I believe all the IIFM Alumni Association related work can be done remotely/ virtually i.e. through calls or emails
- If required, members of BoG can travel to Bhopal on certain instances
- I believe local coordination work with IIFM, can be done with support of Bhopal based Alumni Association members
- It restricts ability of competent alumni from applying / taking up an active role in BoG of IIFM AA
- I believe it is essential for local coordination of activities (like financial transactions, BoG meetings) and it can significantly reduce the turnaround time of activities
- I believe it's good to have a representative based at physical office of IIFM Alumni Association (i.e. IIFM campus)

##### 3.2.1 Financial implications:

This provision was made to ensure that there are three signatories always present to get any financial transaction done where a person's presence is needed as the bank account of AA is in the SBI branch of IIFM. Of the four office bearers, President, V President, Secretary and Treasurer at least two are required to sign for the cheque to be passed. Of these, the Secretary and Treasurer are Bhopal based and likely issues related to the Bank are dealt with without much difficulty.

##### 3.2.2 Legal implications:

The other likely reason could be related to legal obligations of the Secretary. Clause 5 mentions that “The head office of the Association will be at Bhopal and **any legal dispute** shall be subject to resolution at local courts of Bhopal.” Similarly, Clause 11.23 Legal dispute: Any legal dispute shall be subject to resolution at **local courts in Bhopal**. In this context, in the eventuality of the Secretary being not available for any reasons it will be the Joint Secretary who will act on behalf of the Secretary.

### **3.2.3 Procedural implications:**

In the current atmosphere of disinvestment and other changes happening with IIFM it is also important for office bearers of the alumni to have regular contact with the IIFM management and take part in functions. It will not be easy for office bearers from outstation to do this easily.

### **3.3 Recommendations**

1. Because there are likely financial and legal implications it is important that these positions continue to remain in Bhopal. No change is recommended.
2. It is further recommended that the Alumni experiment with another online based bank and see if remote banking can be operationalised. This can be for the sub task, for example donations.

### **3.4 Relevant Clauses:**

Clauses 10.2.3, 10.2.4, 10.2.5, 10.2.7.1

See Annexure 2 for details of Clauses

## **4: Alumni vs courses and representation in BoG**

### **4.1 Context and Recommendation in Brief**

New courses, PGDSM and CCCF, need to be added to the list of courses whose students are eligible to be alumni association members. They also need to be represented in BoG. It is recommended to add the words certificate and short term course of at least 30 days along with PGDSM and CCCF to comprehensively cover eligible students. It is recommended to add two BoG positions, one for PGDSM and another one for CCCF and other short term courses, so that they are represented.

### **4.2 Context and Recommendation in Detail**

Two new courses - PG Diploma in Sustainable Management (PGDSM) and Certificate Course on Chartered Forestry (CCCF) are new. These need to be added into the list of courses whose passouts are alumni. PGDSM is a 2 year course and CCCF is a 4 month course.

Technically students from the PGDSM could be added by the AA without any changes, as it is a diploma course and is mentioned in clauses 7.1 and 7.2. However, the certificate course is not mentioned in any clause. This needs to be added. If we want to be inclusive then all courses should be a part. However, very short duration courses that are less than a month such as MDPs were seen as not alumni.

PGDSM being a course with a larger number of students and of longer duration, can have a regular representation in the BoG. For short short duration courses like the certificate course and all others that may come up in future a separate seat can be reserved in the BoG.

In future, if there are any new courses, the students can automatically be given AA membership without changes in MoA since the generic label of degree, diploma and certificate exists to cover any new programme. The new programme names can be added to the MoA when other changes in the MoA are required. At that time the requirement for representative members in the BoG can also be considered.

### **Recommendations**

1. Recommends that the words "PGDSM" , "CCCF" and "certificate" be added in clauses 7.1, 7.2, 7.4.4, 7.5.1 and 11.1.1.
2. It further recommends addition of two new representative members to the BoG  
10.2.6.5 Member-5: Shall be a Life Member of the Association who has successfully completed PGDSM from the Institute and a resident of India.  
10.2.6.6 Member-6: Shall be a Life Member of the Association who has successfully completed Certificate Course on Chartered Forestry, and any other short term certificate course that is of a duration of at least 30 days, from the Institute and a resident of India
3. Replace "four" with "six" in 10.2.6 Members: "Six" members as follows:

### **4.3 Relevant Clauses:**

7.1, 7.2, 7.4.4, 7.5.1 and 11.1.1 and addition of new clauses 10.2.6.5 and 10.2.6.6  
See Annexure XX for details of Clauses

## **5: Increasing the number of members in the BoG**

### **5.1 Context and Recommendation in Brief**

Two new members have been recommended to be added as discussed in the section on courses and BoG members.

No additional recommendations was seen necessary at this moment for BoG

## **6: Non Resident Indian as part of BoG**

### **6.1 Context and Recommendation in Brief**

IIFM has many alumni spread across the world and are actively connected with other alumni. NRIs are eligible for being part of Associations however there are unclarity in legal and financial matters.

It is recommended that at this early stage, the Association has three special invitees from different parts of the world who are formally linked with the association without being part of the board.

### **6.2 Context and Recommendation in Detail**

There are a number of alumni who are settled abroad and are connected with the Alumni Association. They not only represent Alumni reach but also are potential collaborators for Alumni activities and fundraising abroad.

At present, there is no position specifically defined for NRI alumni in the BoG. While there seems to be no legal implications there are some concerns for example what if the President and or other key positions go to alumni who are citizens of another country now. These could trigger additional scrutiny under FCRA. Another challenge at this early stage is if there are meetings called by the board and the association decides to reimburse the travel costs. It is less expensive to reimburse travel costs if the person is India based.

A Chartered Accountant suggested that considering the FCRA scrutiny in the current context it is better to have a separate position like special invitee for the NRI which does not invite any trouble for the association at this nascent stage. Online search mentions "Organizations having foreign nationals, other than of Indian origin, as members of their executive committees or governing bodies are generally NOT permitted to receive foreign contribution" (<https://www.fcraforngos.org/board-members-of-an-fcra-registered-organization>)

### **Recommendations**

While possibilities exist for NRIs to be part of the board, the situations are unclear. At this early stage it is recommended to have three special invitees who are not part of the board but have a formal connection with the Association.

### **6.3 Relevant Clauses:**

None

See Annexure 2 for details of Clauses

## **7: Method of voting**

### **7.1 Context and Recommendation in Brief**

Voting mechanisms require to be robust so that there is trust as well as ease of handling it. Should we use newer applications that allow for remote voting? With increasing use of technology and remote voting becoming a normal practice, these applications are worth exploring. In the current context of very low membership it may be ok to continue with email based voting.

No change in voting method is recommended for now. As membership increases it may be useful to explore the other methods.

### **7.2 Relevant Clauses:**

11.14.2.2.8, 11.14.4.1

See Annexure 2 for details of Clauses



## **8: Provisions for Donations**

### **8.1 Context and Recommendation in Brief**

There are discussions on donations and endowment funds. Adequate clauses exist for the AA to take up any of these activities. In case of foreign funds FCRA will be required.

Adequate provisions exists and no addition in constitution is necessary

### **8.2 Context and Recommendation in Detail**

There has been mention of creating a separate Endowment Fund. There seems to be sufficient clauses for enabling donation in the MoA. Based on these the AA can formulate or apply for any activity. The clauses that specifically mention them are:

Clause 11.7.3 To raise funds, including accepting donations and subscription with or without any conditions, and frame guidelines for doing so.

Clause 11.9.5.4 Collection of grants and donations received by the Association

Clause 11.13.3.1 The Board should formulate all the necessary policies like loan facilities, donations, Investments, etc. and all other matters deemed necessary for the smooth functioning of the Association.

An area of concern is foreign funds. Currently all alumni give their membership fees from their Indian banks. In future if foreign funds are to be transferred to the society it will be necessary to follow FCRA requirements.

### **Recommendations**

No changes in constitution

The FCRA requirement can be decided by the AA on its merit.

### **8.3 Relevant Clauses:**

Clause 11.7.3 , 11.9.5.4, 11.13.3.1

See Annexure 2 for details of Clauses

## **Annexure 1: Alumni Survey: Suggested outline for issues**

### **1: Paid membership vs free membership**

There are potential financial, legal and procedural challenges that AA could face. Financially, AA does not have any identified sources of funds for its activities other than membership fees. Making a case for recovering an estimated 50 Lakh rupees that students paid to IIFM as Alumni membership will become legally difficult if membership is made free. No noteworthy membership drive was undertaken since inception, as such drives were kept in abeyance. While contact with members have increased there are a substantial number of alumni who are not registered or even connected with the alumni. While potential exists for the AA to raise funds from other sources, till it has happened taking such a decision has risks.

### **2: Types of membership vs voting rights**

Currently voting rights are with Life members. Regular members do not have voting rights. This issue is connected with the free membership issue. It has been suggested the fees for Regular members is made free with no voting rights. In such a situation, giving voting rights negates the purpose of continuing with paid membership.

### **3: Why Reserve seats for Bhopal based alumni in the BoG?**

Secretary, Joint Secretary and Treasurer of the BoG are Bhopal based. For bank work two persons are required. For any legal disputes, resolution is based in Bhopal courts. In the eventuality of the Secretary not present, the tasks are taken up by the Joint Secretary. For these reasons the BoG has three persons based in Bhopal.

### **4: Alumni vs courses and representation in BoG**

New courses, PGDSM and CCCF, need to be added to the list of courses whose students are eligible to be alumni association members. They also need to be represented in BoG.

### **5: Increasing the number of members in the BoG**

Two new members have been recommended to be added as discussed in the section on courses and BoG members.

### **6: Non Resident Indian as part of BoG**

IIFM has many alumni spread across the world and are actively connected with other alumni. NRIs are eligible for being part of Associations however there are unclarity in legal and financial matters.

### **7: Method of voting**

Voting mechanisms require to be robust so that there is trust as well as ease of handling it. Should we use newer applications that allow for remote voting? With increasing use of

technology and remote voting becoming a normal practice, these applications are worth exploring. In the current context of very low membership it may be ok to continue with email based voting.

### **8: Provisions for Donations**

There are discussions on donations and endowment funds. Adequate clauses exist for the AA to take up any of these activities. In case of foreign funds FCRA will be required.

## **Annexure 2: Relevant Clauses**

### **1. Paid membership vs free membership**

7.1: Regular Member- An alumnus/alumna, who has received or receives a PGDFM/ M.Phil. / FPM/ MRM/ any degree/ diploma awarded by the Institute and have not paid any subscription for Life Membership, shall be a Regular Member. The membership fees for regular members is ₹1500/-for two years.

7.2: Life Member- An alumnus/ alumna, who has received a PGDFM/ M.Phil. / FPM/ MRM/ any other degree/ diploma awarded by the Institute and paid the subscription of ₹5000/- shall be a Life Member of the Association.

In case of change in 7.1 only to zero fees:

7.7.1.3 A Regular Member ceases to be a member if s/he has not made fresh applications and paid membership renewal fees within three months of the expiry of his/ her previous membership term.

### **2. Types of membership vs voting rights**

### **3. Why Reserve seats for Bhopal based alumni in the BoG?**

10.2.3 Secretary: Secretary shall be a Life Member of the Association and a resident of India should have passed out from IIFM at least five years before the date of election and be professionally based at Bhopal during the tenure as Secretary.

10.2.4 Joint Secretary: Joint Secretary shall be Life Member of the Association and resident of India should have passed out from IIFM and professionally based at Bhopal during the tenure as Secretary.

10.2.5 Treasurer: Treasurer shall be a Life Member of the Association and a resident of India should have passed out from IIFM at least five years before the date of election and be professionally based at Bhopal during the tenure as Treasurer.

10.2.7.1 in case Secretary, Treasurer or Joint Secretary stops working at Bhopal, s/he has to submit the resignation as a member of the Governing Board to the President of the General Body. The post should be filled as per the decision of the General Body for the remaining period of the post till the next election.

### **4. Alumni vs courses and representation in BoG**

7.1. Regular Member:

An alumnus/alumna, who has received or receives a PGDFM/ M.Phil./ FPM/ MRM/ any degree/diploma awarded by the Institute and has not paid any subscription for Life Membership, shall be a Regular Member.

## 7.2 Life Member:

An alumnus/ alumna, who has received a PGDFM/ M.Phil./ FPM/ MRM/ any other degree/ diploma awarded by the Institute and paid the subscription of ₹5000/- shall be a Life Member of the Association.

And many other sections 7.4.4., 7.5.1., 11.1.1

Also clause 10.2.6 if we have to add additional representative members

Could Add the following clause:

10.2.6.5 Member-5: Shall be a Life Member of the Association who has successfully completed PGDSM from the Institute and a resident of India.

10.2.6.6 Member-6: Shall be a Life Member of the Association who has successfully completed Certificate Course on Chartered Forestry from the Institute and a resident of India

If above changes are made, the following change is required

10.2.6 Members: Six members as follows: (Four has to be replaced by six)

## 5. Increasing the number of member in the BoG

Could Add the following clause:

10.2.6.5 Member-5: Shall be a Life Member of the Association who has successfully completed PGDSM from the Institute and a resident of India.

10.2.6.6 Member-6: Shall be a Life Member of the Association who has successfully completed Certificate Course on Chartered Forestry from the Institute and a resident of India

If above changes are made, the following change is required

10.2.6 Members: Six members as follows: (Four has to be replaced by six)

## 6. Non Resident Indian as part of BoG

11.7.16 To nominate Association representative(s), preferably member(s) of Association from India or abroad.

## 7. Method of voting

11.14.2.2.8 Voting by way of paper ballot,

11.14.4.1 Modes of Voting: Votes shall be polled through paper ballot either by physical presence at the election or by postal ballot.

## 8. Provisions for Donation

Clause 11.7.3 To raise funds, including accepting donations and subscription with or without any conditions, and frame guidelines for doing so.

Clause 11.9.5.4 Collection of grants and donations received by the Association

Clause 11.13.3.1 The Board should formulate all the necessary policies like loan facilities, donations, Investments, etc. and all other matters deemed necessary for the smooth functioning of the Association.

### **Annexure 3: Mistakes/errors that need to be corrected**

Clause 10.2.1 Vice Presidents: Shall be a Life Member of the Association and a resident of India and should have passed out from IIFM at least 15 years prior to the date of election. (The above sentence has been repeated, it needs to be removed. This is point 10.2.2.)

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11.5.4.1 The quorum of Annual General Body Meeting (AGBM) shall be thirty members or ten percent of the total number of **regular members**, whichever is less.

11.6.4.1 The quorum of Extraordinary General Body Meeting (EGBM) shall be thirty members or ten percent of the total number of **regular members**, whichever is less.

(Members of the General Body consist of Life Members only. A regular member as per 7.1 is not part of the General Body see Clause 8. Logical inconsistency has to be rectified. I think the “regular members” need to be changed to “General Body members”.)

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10.2.7.1 In case Secretary, Treasurer or Member-2 stops working at Bhopal, s/he has to submit the resignation as a member of the Governing Board to the President of the General Body.

(Why is Member-2 in this? Member -2 is not required to be in Bhopal. This has to be removed and Joint Secretary has to be added.)

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Clause number 10.2.4 Joint Secretary: Joint Secretary shall be Life Member of the Association and resident of India should have passed out from IIFM and professionally based at Bhopal during the tenure as Secretary.

(Add “Joint” before Secretary....professionally based at Bhopal during the tenure as **Joint Secretary**.)

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11.1.7 "Honorary Member" means as defined in Clause 6.1.3 of the Constitution of the Association.

11.1.8 "Regular Member" means as defined in Clause 6.1.1 of the Constitution of the Association.

11.1.9 "Life Member" means as defined in the Clause 6.1.2 of the Constitution of the Association.

**(Clause 6.1.1, 6.1.2 and 6.1.3 does not exist)**

#### **Annexure 4: Letter to the team with questions for discussion**

To

**The MoA Amendment Committee,**

IIFM Alumni

6 October 2021

**Dear committee members,**

Thank you all for the warm welcome and for giving a detailed update on the progress in the meeting held on Sunday the 3rd October 2021 (9.00 to 10.00 PM).

As you are all aware, Mr Ashish Mishra, President of Alumni Association (AA) requested me to assist the committee in completing its task. I thank Mr Ajai Rai who was coordinating the group so far but due to time constraints is having difficulty in taking part in meetings and taking this forward. I would request Ajayji to continue to remain in touch and give feedback whenever possible.

The aim of this letter is to create a tentative framework to help us complete our task. In this regard, the Whatsapp group will continue to remain our key mode for coordination. In addition we will post all important documents on a shared google folder so that we all can access it when required. A link to the folder has been sent by Mr Bhushan Patil, to all members of the team. If members agree we can have two meetings a week at 9.30 PM IST. We can finalise the days in the next meeting, so that we can block the time in advance.

There are no formal Terms of Reference documents by the AA for this committee. However, the terms and the composition of the team and informal deadline for completion of this task has been mentioned in many places. The committee has used the document "**2) MoM - Open House - 24-Aug-2021**" as the starting point and have added specific points as mentioned in "**3) Background note for MoA amendment\_29 Sep**" (Both these documents are in the shared folder). We will continue to use these to define our ToRs. We will also continue to work as a committee without any designated Chairperson, with all of us equally responsible for its outcome, with the exception of the role of coordination, that I will observe. Also I suggest 31st October deadline by which we submit a consolidated report to AA. Internally, I suggest completing it asap since we are long overdue.

After going through the Alumni's Memorandum of Association "**1) MoA IIFM Association 21.08.2018 \_for sharing**", plus the two documents mentioned in para above, and the discussions we had, it seems imperative that we clearly limit our task based on importance and its relevance in the current situation. The reason I mention this is because, we need to take cognisance of the situation that IIFM is currently undergoing (disinvestment) and the challenges that IIFM Alumni (nascent organisation, getting its systems in place) are facing. We will elaborate on these in our forthcoming meetings.

Broadly I see two categories of issues that this committee requires to resolve. Issues that are likely easy to address (say Category A) and issues that require deliberation and understanding of the context for a solution (say Category B).

#### **Category A issues:**

1. Adding alumni from new courses as AA member

2. Clarity on reserving seats for the Bhopal based alumni
3. A clause for donation to be added for revenue generation
4. Any inadvertent mistake/error that exists in the MoA to be rectified

**Category B issues:**

1. Changing paid membership to free membership
2. Types of membership vs voting rights
3. Non Resident Indian (NRI) alumni as part of the Board of Governors (BoG)
4. Increasing the number of members in the BoG
5. Method of voting

My suggestion is that in the forthcoming meeting on Thursday, 7th evening at 9.30 PM, we resolve the Category A issues first. Hopefully this can be achieved in one meeting or at the most two. The document “**3) Background note for MoA amendment\_29 Sep**” that has been prepared gives a brief about the issues, which can be further deliberated.

**For each of the issues, I suggest we follow some basic criteria. The following questions could help:**

1. What does the MoA mention regarding this subject - what are the relevant clauses. If it does not exist which main clause is closest to the subject where it can be included.
2. What is the background to the situation? What is AA's experience (or opinion) on this?
3. What changes or additions can we consider to the existing clauses?
4. How does these changes affect the overall functioning of the Alumni Association, how will it enhance its abilities and how will it hinder? Are there any legal implications? Are there any financial implications? Are there any procedural implications (say, difficult to implement)?
5. Do we require to reach out to the larger alumni to get their views? If it cannot be resolved now, what additional information, resource, or time is required?
6. What recommendation can be given by the committee?

Everything may not fit into the above criteria suggested. So we can keep this criteria as a work in progress and modify it when needed.

**For each of the issues identified we prepare a document** after roughly deliberating on the above questions. The document will be posted on the drive. After we have deliberated this in the meeting, we all can **individually give our recommendations** either in the meeting or adding it to the document that is on the drive. These can be collated so that the diverse views of the committee are captured and a collective recommendation made as part of the final report.

Hope this helps. Look forward to a fruitful deliberation.

Thank you,

Warmly,  
Dr. Ajith Chandran



## **Annexure 5: A background note about AA**

### **About Alumni Association of IIFM**

Alumni Association (AA) of IIFM got registered as a society under the MP Society Act 1973 on 14 January 2019. The association currently has 155 members - 150 Life Members and 5 regular members. The Head Office of the AA is Room no. 82 in IIFM.

#### **1 Background**

The association initially started off with the temporary Board Members in 2018. At that time, the Alumni Network Committee [ANC] of IIFM had drafted the MoA. They prepared the document after consulting many different MoAs of Alumni Associations across India.

Around Jan-Feb 2018, ANC proposed establishing a formal association for IIFM alumni. They tried to coordinate with the alumni through WhatsApp. But the process didn't move as desired. So some Bhopal based alumni decided to take it forward and met the ANC at IIFM. A few alumni – 7 out of 9 among whom were Bhopal based, were nominated for the inaugural board. A meeting was called on 8th July 2018, where nominated board members were present along with ANC members and the MoA was discussed and finalized. This was sent for expert opinion by Chairperson Alumni Affairs to one of the alumni.

The inaugural Board got “Alumni Association of Indian Institute of Forest Management” registered on 14th Jan 2019 and the first elected Board of Governors took over the office on 26 March 2020. As the MoA was finalised without much input and suggestions from the alumni, the Board decided to get the MoA reviewed and amended based on the feedback received.

#### **2 Objectives of association**

As laid down in MoA, following are the objectives of AA:

1. The AA will give the platform to alumni to stay connected with the alma mater and the faculties as well as network with the other alumni and current students.
2. The ability to assist deserving and needy students from the Institute suitability in a collective manner.
3. Help the alumni in their hour of need in any manner the AA can.
4. To contribute to the Institute's vision of being recognized among the world's leading institutions in academics, research, outreach, and innovation, collectively.
5. To raise substantial issues that are of prime importance to the institute.
6. Other benefits in collaboration with IIFM like rooms at Guest House at subsidized rates and many more are being discussed with respect to branding of the institute and professional development of the students.

### **3 Review attempts for Memorandum of Association**

#### **3.1 1st attempt at review**

The Inaugural Board had shared a soft copy of MoA with alumni for comments on 1 March 2019. However, no suggestions were received by the board till the last date of 31 May 2019. It was then decided that the Elected Board would be best suited to take this activity up.

#### **3.2 2nd attempt at review**

In the very first meeting post elections, the newly elected BG decided to constitute a MoA Review Committee (MRC) with the following broad objective to have a fresh look at the MOA in force and review all the debatable clauses/ points of MOA. The MRC had 7 members and were to further appoint "Anchors" from each Batch of IIFM Alumni. This process never took off and batchwise meetings could not be held.

#### **3.3 3rd attempt of review**

Post the internal meeting organised by AA on 20 August for all the alumni of IIFM, a new committee of five alumni has been formed to decide the important issues. A survey poll will be created seeking opinion from the alumni on the issues.