

Who we are!



Dear IFSA friends,

Almost one month has passed since the IFSA officials were elected and appointed at the International Forestry Students' Symposium (IFSS), held in the Philippines. Among them were the Direction and Council members (also known as IFSA 7 or the Board). Now that we have had time to settle back in the places we call 'home' all around the world, we would like to officially introduce you to this year's IFSA 7.

In the Direction and Council statement at the last plenary session, we used this analogy: IFSA has spent a lot of time since we were founded building a really strong foundation, but we have discovered that the world we live in now is changing quickly and we need to meet these new challenges not just as 'foresters' but as 'society-ready foresters'. So this year, our central vision is to kickstart IFSA's bridge to meet the challenges of this world by building a balanced and strong 'keystone'. This keystone will be the foundation built on IFSA's strengths to help guide our bridge in the next few years.

Here's to a great IFSA year of learning, forests & friendships!

On behalf of **IFSA7**,
Natalia Cisneros

President

May Anne Then, Canada (Malaysia/Brunei)

Dear IFSA,

As I am writing this, I am feeling a sense of nostalgia having written something similar one year ago when I had to introduced myself and am incredibly humbled to be given this opportunity again. This year, I'm equally excited imagining the different places that this file will be opened and read in (a testament to the global reach of IFSA)!

I was given the Chinese name 美安 by my grandfather, which was translated to May Anne in English. Despite being Malaysian, I spent most of my childhood growing up in Brunei Darussalam. Small remnants of forests had surrounded the house I grew up in and watching long-tailed macaques raid our garden for good, swing tree-to-tree as the sun sets, and play in our drains were big inspirations growing up.

I have recently graduated from the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada with a Bachelor of Science in Forest Sciences, specializing in Disturbance Ecology. I'm planning to take a gap year to explore different career opportunities while focussing on my work for IFSA. In my free time, I enjoy long walks, sharing a meal with friends and reading. Sunsets are always inspirational moments for me.

I have had been thoroughly challenged and have thoroughly enjoyed my first year as president of IFSA during 2014-2015 and I bring with me many lessons learned and more realistic ideas that are ready for action for 2015-2016. Together with the board, my primary goal will be building the strong foundation for the structure, statutes and strategy review process as part of our 'keystone' this year.

I hope to get to meet as many of you in person as possible during my travels this year, and you are always welcome to say share your ideas about IFSA or send me feedback at president@ifsa.net anytime.

Warmly,
May Anne



Vice-President

Natalia Cisneros, Perú

Dear IFSA friends,

Many people think that I am crazy to run for a position in the Board for the 3rd time in a row— but not me! I believe in giving continuity to what we have been doing during the past year. I am terribly excited and thankful to be given this opportunity this new year.

My name is Natalia, although most know me as Taya, and I was born and raised in the wonderful city of Lima, Perú, where I enjoyed the ocean every day that I could. After graduating in December, I recently moved to the Bogor, Indonesia, to start a new adventure with CIFOR's Global Landscapes Forum team.

I have been inspired by nature and forests for a very long time now. I was always the wild child who would climb all of the trees and be amazed by all that they could provide us with: shelter, sometimes food, and beauty, amongst others. I definitely feel that by being a forester I am working towards somehow giving the Earth back what it has provided me with.

Some of the things that drive me are travelling and exploring different cultures (which I can also experience by reading good books) practicing various sports (especially windsurfing, waterskiing, hockey, swimming... I could go on and on!), eating good food (CHOCOLATE!), the ocean, and an overwhelming admiration for nature. I also adore music and playing my flute.

I would like to invite you all to embark yourselves on the IFSA adventure— it's not one that you will forget nor one that you will regret. The opportunities are all out there, it's up to you to make the most out of them.

Wishing you all a fulfilling and rewarding IFSA year :)

Warmly,

Taya



Executive Secretary

Jonas Geschke, Germany

Hi everybody,

My name is Jonas, I am your new Executive Secretary for the IFSA year 2015/2016.

I am member of the IFSA LC Freiburg, where our headquarter is located, since my first Bachelor semester in 2011. However, due to lots of student assistance work, I got more involved in IFSA from winter semester 2014/15 on only. The IFSS 2015 also was my first big IFSA meeting.

After finishing my studies in "International Forestry and Environment", I widened my perspective a bit and do study a Master in "Environmental Sciences" now, with the elective track "Wildlife, Vegetation and Biodiversity". I do mainly focus on wildlife ecology and management, viewing at forests as one main habitat type. One of my personal main interests is the whole ecology of dry habitats, especially the Kalahari desert, as the lifeforms in such regions have to be even more adapted to the harsh site conditions that in the tropics.

Next to my studies and my work for IFSA, I have a job within bat research until end of September this year. Afterwards, I carry on with tutoring jobs at our university – and spreading the IFSA spirit within the new first semester Bachelor students ;-)

Further, I like doing sports (such as playing soccer and sailing), playing music (trombone and guitar), cooking and traveling. I also like watching some TV series and, of course, German soccer (our Bundesliga).

For the coming IFSA year, my main goal is to strengthen the IFSA in its whole as well as our LC. Youth is one of the most important voices in our world's society, as we are already here and will be here for a longer time than today's top policy makers. Although they might not see that yet... that is why we, IFSA, have to be the youth's voice!

I look very forward to the next year, which will be a very exciting one, and to working with this incredible IFSA board.

Best greetings from Freiburg,

Jonas



Treasurer

Dana Marie Mejia, The Philippines

Mabuhay Dear IFSA people!

I am Dana, 20 years of age and from the Philippines. I am grateful to announce that I will serve as the treasurer for IFSA year 2015/2016.

I finished my Bachelor's degree in Forestry specialized in Environmental Sciences last July from the University of the Philippines Los Baños. One month after, I took and passed the Forestry Licensure Examination and now an officially registered Forester!

My very first IFSS experience was here in the Philippines. I first got involved with IFSA when I participated in CBD COP12 in South Korea in October last year. Since then, I fell in love with the Association, especially on how it connects our world. With IFSA you can have lots of friends whom you only get to talk online and when you finally meet each other it was as if you've known them for a long time.

As a person, I am a bit shy at first but really funny when I become comfortable with someone. My favorite thing to do is to watch horror movies especially the zombie-themed ones together with my family. I also love playing with my dog, Nae-nae or Queenie as my Mom call her.

This is my first position as part of the Direction and I'm very excited for this role. Aside from handling IFSA's finances, I wanted to help in fundraising, as money is important to IFSA. I expect this upcoming year to bring more friends, great experiences, and new challenges. Just send me an email if you have any questions about membership fees, etc.

See you somewhere around! Heart heart! ☺ <3

With love,

Dana Marie Mejia



Council (Head of Council)

Trudy Selebelebele, South Africa

Dearest IFSA friends

I am Mmetja Trudy Sebelebele, a final year Forestry student from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) in South Africa. I'm very excited to be working as one of your councilors for the coming 2015/2016 IFSA year. I'm also thrilled to belong to the IFSA community with its rich history and culturally diverse nature.

Although I grew up in the concrete forest and economic hub of the country, Johannesburg, my soul has always been deeply rooted in nature and that is why I'm a keen advocate for the sustained use of our natural resources. I am also very passionate about the role of youth in our industry and I get proud when IFSA members prove that the youth are not some distant future but rather an active and influential present. Though my position I plan to zealously contribute to attaining the association's goals by serving both officials and board as best I can.

I find pleasure in watching sports, cooking, socialising, reading and travelling. I look forward to meeting and interacting with members from across the world and I'm certain that the experiences will make me a more globally conscientious being. Please feel free to contact me regarding any IFSA concerns. I wish you all a very blessed and happy IFSA year ☺

Kindest regards

Trudy



Council

Gabrielle Schittecatte, Canada

Salut and hello IFSA, from the ancient forests surrounding Angkor!

My name is Gabrielle Schittecatte and I am one of your three councillors on IFSA7 this year. I usually go by Gabbie and my last name can be a bit of a mouthful so here's a helpful hint, it's pronounced skit-a-cat. I'm pretty positive no single member of my family understands our name's origin either... Regardless of my Belgian last name and passport, I originally hail from a

small island off the coast of British Columbia in Canada, but I've spent most of my life in Vancouver. This is where I completed my first degree in conservation in the faculty of forestry, as well as my Masters of Science. UBC is also my home LC, where I've just passed over my Presidency there, but I continue to be involved from afar while living in Brussels.



Currently I'm working as a researcher on the Canadian portion of an international research project called COMPON: comparing climate change policy networks. When I'm not working or teaching volunteer science classes I love to move! I do an assortment of rock climbing, scuba diving, swimming, and yoga in my spare time. A love of these outdoor sports is what really drives my passion for the services our forests and other ecosystems provide. Any remaining time I have I spend in the kitchen; I'm a huge fan of baking and am currently discovering cool ways to blend different herbs with

I'm looking forward to contributing to IFSA7 this year as Councilor for several reasons. First, I love policy! I've worked on several policy research projects related to forestry and climate change, completed my masters research on policy change, and I've been involved in teaching policy courses at my university as well. Therefore, the idea of combing over IFSA's statutes and helping refine them so they are in line with our strategy and structure is thrilling! Second, I'm looking forward to working with the heads of the Forestry Education and International Processes Commissions to further their goals, as well as link the two commissions so that our members who are participating in International processes have the knowledge to do so effectively. Third, I'm excited to work with the Northern America and Northern Africa regions to increase membership and connectivity of their local committees. Finally, I'm excited to work with each and every one of you. Council is here to be the checks and balances to Direction, and to provide guidance to all our IFSA members. I cannot adequately express how much I'm looking forward to working with my fellow councillors in this capacity over the next year.

Sending you all my best,

Gabbie

Council

Jan Joseph Dida, The Philippines

Mabuhay IFSA Friends!

I am Jan Joseph Dida (people call me JJ) and I am from the Philippines. I am currently a University Research Associate and Masters in Natural Resources Conservation student at the University of the Philippines Los Baños. My interests include geomatics applications in forestry and forest resources management.

I have been with IFSA since 2011 when the UPLB CFNR Local Committee was established with the help of supportive IFSA Officials. As part of the Council this IFSA year, I am actually looking forward to continue the efforts of the previous Officials and commit myself to the new tasks and challenges. Working in the advisory committee of the IFSS 2015 Organizing Committee and the Association of Filipino Forestry Students Local Committee is such a wonderful learning experience for me. This coming IFSA year will be a different one as it will definitely bring new learning opportunities, experiences and friendship.

Most of my working hours are spent in front of the computer that is why some of my hobbies include walking around the campus, hanging out, and checking out new food. I do check out Facebook a lot and sometimes share informative and fun stuff. In the coming days, weeks, and months, I am expecting myself to get in touch with the regional representatives and be involved in the new professional development commission.

Have a productive IFSA year everyone and I hope to meet you in the future activities!

JJ

