

## **Groups, Chairs, and Steering Group Members of IOTA: Policy and Roles**

### **Mission of International Orthodox Theological Association**

The mission of the International Orthodox Theological Association is to provide a forum for the worldwide interdisciplinary scholarly interaction within the context of the Orthodox tradition. IOTA seeks to serve as an instrument of church renewal and conciliarity.

#### **Groups**

IOTA includes two dozen or so groups, corresponding to different fields of Orthodox Christian Studies. Each Group is led by two Chairs and is composed of 4-7 Steering Group members. Steering Group members may be “scholars of other faith traditions with doctorates and research interests in fields pertinent to Eastern Christian studies.” In order to spread responsibilities equally, any qualifying scholar may serve either as a Chair or as a Steering Group member in one Group only. In order to foster cross-disciplinary work, Chairs and Steering Group members are encouraged to present in conference sessions hosted by other Groups and may make themselves available to contribute to projects led by other Groups. New Groups may be added to the current roster of Groups. Proposals for new groups may be sent in writing to the IOTA Board of Directors.

#### **Duties of Groups**

IOTA Groups and their members are expected to promote the mission of IOTA, connect IOTA with resources, people, and organizations that will further IOTA’s mission and conferences, and assist in coordinating activities surrounding IOTA conferences, including arranging conference sessions, and issuing and reviewing calls for papers. The particulars surrounding each IOTA conference will be communicated to the Group by the Board of Directors.

#### **Group Chairs**

The Group Chairs of IOTA are appointed by the Board of Directors, or the Board may sanction a sub-set of Directors to make such appointments. Group Chairs must be “Regular Members” of IOTA, defined as “Orthodox scholars with doctorates or equivalent in the fields pertinent to Orthodox Christian studies.” All Chairs must have a doctorate or equivalent professional experience and must be established scholars with a substantial publication record. Two people will serve as Co-Chairs of each Group. Chairs will coordinate the activities of their groups and will be responsible for adding Steering Group Members to their groups, and when necessary for the best interests of the group, removing Steering Group Members from their group.

Chairs serve five-year terms, staggered as much as possible such that every three years one of the two Co-Chairs is replaced. Chairs may be re-appointed for subsequent terms.

#### **Steering Group Members**

Chairs may select their own Steering Group Members. Steering Group members may be “Regular Members of IOTA, or may be Associate Members, defined as “scholars of other faith traditions with doctorates or the equivalent and research interests in fields pertinent to Eastern Christian studies.” All Steering Group Members must have a doctorate or equivalent professional experience. Each Steering Group must strive for the broadest possible international representation, reflecting IOTA’s worldwide character. The Chairs of a Group must inform the IOTA Board of any changes in the composition of their Group.

Steering Group members serve five year terms staggered as much as possible such that every three years one of the two Co-Chairs is replaced. Steering Group members may be re-nominated for subsequent terms.

### **Removal of a Chair or a Steering Committee Member**

Any Chair may be removed by vote of the Board of Directors whenever, in the Board's judgment, doing so would serve the best interests of IOTA. Steering Group members may be added or removed by the Chairs of Groups, however a Steering Group member may also be removed by vote of the Board of Directors whenever, in the Board's judgment, doing so would serve the best interests of IOTA.

If a Chair, a Steering Group member, or anyone else affiliated with IOTA questions the ability of a Chair or a Steering Group member to serve the best interests of IOTA, they are welcome to send their concerns in writing to the Board of Directors.

### **Formation of New Groups**

IOTA wishes to support Orthodox scholarship across a variety of disciplines. Thus, from time-to-time, it may be desirable to form a new thematic group. To do so, provide in writing proposed co-chairs as well as a brief mission of the envisioned group and how its field(s) is not being adequately represented in the current configuration of groups. Similarly, if two groups wish to merge, please send a new mission statement for the group as well a list of new chairs and group members to the IOTA board, or if a group wishes to change its name or mission statement, send these changes in writing to the IOTA board.