

IFT Candidate Leadership Guide

The Board of Directors engages in strategic thinking and planning to set the organization's direction, mobilize resources, and provide oversight to ensure IFT's progress in achieving its mission. The Board is responsible for cultivating a professional community committed to connecting global food system communities to promote and advance the science of food and its application. To achieve this, the Board of Directors upholds three impact areas in support of IFT's mission and on behalf of its members and community—support job-related challenges, address global food system challenges, and give visibility to what the future of food might hold.



Board Fiduciary Responsibilities

IFT Board members have a fiduciary responsibility to the organization as required by law. These responsibilities are:

Duty of Loyalty

Board members must put the interests of IFT above other personal or financial interests.

Duty of Care

Board members must act prudently and diligently to protect and enhance the assets of IFT and further its mission.

Duty of Obedience

Board members must obey the law and act in accordance with IFT's bylaws and policies, as legally enforceable documents.

Terms

- Directors serve staggered three-year terms aligned with IFT's fiscal year, September 1 – August 31.
- Those selected as a member of the Office of the President have a three-year commitment.
 - Year one as President-Elect
 - Year two as President
 - Year three as Immediate Past President

Commitment to the Global Food Sciences Community

Individuals interested in applying for the IFT Board of Directors should demonstrate an interest in the global food system landscape, economic and political awareness, and an ability to see trends and new directions.

IFT is committed to ensuring members have the access and opportunity to contribute to their fullest potential. Diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging are key to our mission to connect global food system communities to promote and advance the science of food and its application. Therefore, we believe it is critical to attract and engage a broad population of members and food science professionals to lead IFT through Board service. The Board strives to achieve broad representation of membership demographics and multi-representational factors, including career stage, education, areas of practice type and setting (e.g., academia, government, industry, consultancy), broad global and cultural experience, and a variety of special interests and expertise (e.g., food safety, regulatory, engineering, agriculture, sustainability, etc.).

[Please see IFT's Commitment to Diversity for more information.](#)



Expectations

IFT Board members are expected to collectively work in collaboration with staff to:

- Consider ways to increase member value
- Uphold its fiduciary duty including establishing the fiscal year and approving an annual budget
- Create a welcoming organizational culture where everyone can fully participate and contribute, and their perspectives are valued.
- Be active and positive supporters of IFT
- Come prepared for all meetings and discussions
- Actively and positively support IFT with its time and talent
- Hone expertise in environmental scanning, critical thinking, and resource allocation
- Apply leading-edge approaches to strategic thinking and planning
- Foster leadership development in self and others
- Serve as a communication champion for the organization
- Actively participate as Board liaison to assigned committees or task forces

Time Commitment

Being a member of the IFT Board of Directors requires a commitment of time, talent, and expertise. It is critical that those interested in serving on the Board have support from their employer and colleagues regarding the time and financial commitment required.

By becoming a member of the Board of Directors, you commit to the following:

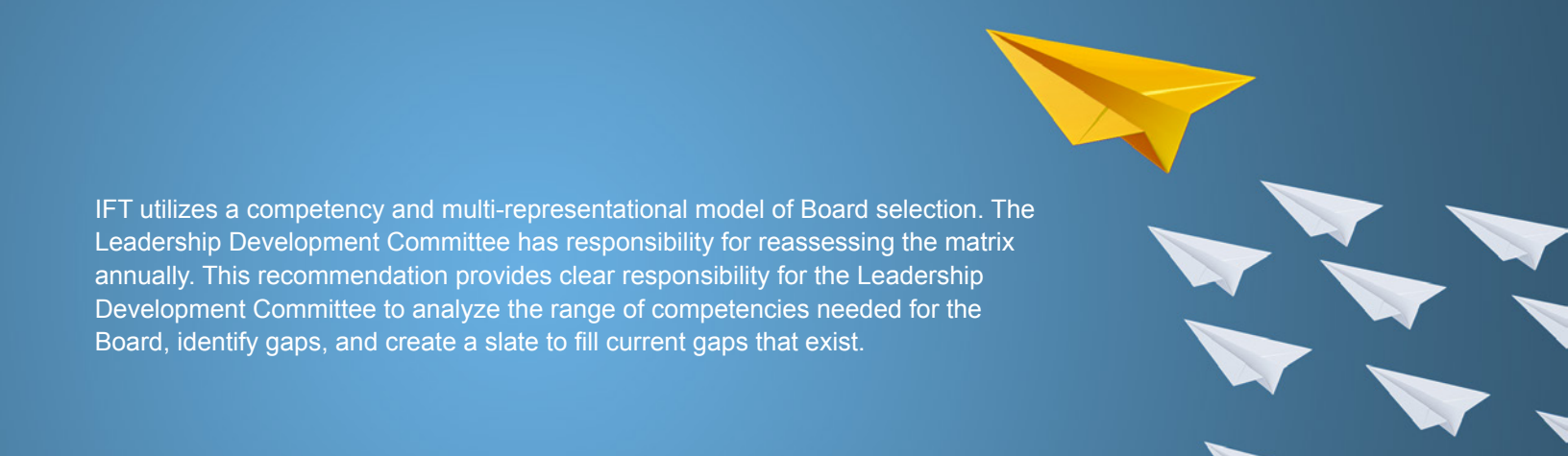
- Prepare for, attend, and actively participate in three Board meetings each year, IFT FIRST: Annual Event and Expo, and regularly scheduled Board calls
 - In-Person Meetings (when able)
 - Board of Directors Fall Meeting – November
 - Board of Directors Spring Meeting – March
 - Board of Directors Summer Meeting – July
 - Virtual Meetings (subject to change)
 - October, January, June, August
 - Additional Board calls may be scheduled as needed
- Attend additionally selected educational programs and/or association activities
- Ability and willingness to serve as a formal or informal mentor within IFT
- Support initiatives and/or campaigns of IFT's fund development program

IFT President-Elect

In addition to the competencies, experience, and expertise desired for all members of the Board of Directors, candidates for the office of President-Elect should demonstrate their ability in the following areas:

- Facilitate the Board's oversight of the organization's performance, risk management, compliance, and stakeholder relations.
- Promote a culture of openness, trust, and constructive debate among the Board members, encourage their active participation and contribution, and foster a collaborative relationship with the CEO and senior staff.
- Represent the organization and the Board in external events and engagements, and enhance the organization's reputation and profile.
- Demonstrated ability to lead, influence, and collaborate with a variety of stakeholders, both internally and externally.
- Strong strategic thinking and business acumen, with a sound understanding of the organization's vision, mission, values, and goals.
- High level of professionalism, confidence, and credibility, with the ability to inspire trust and respect among the board, membership, and the greater community.

For more insight on the roles and responsibilities of serving as IFT President-Elect, consider reading "[**The Skills Board Chairs Need Now**](#)," an article from the Harvard Business Review (subscription required), for additional insight on serving as a board chair.



IFT utilizes a competency and multi-representational model of Board selection. The Leadership Development Committee has responsibility for reassessing the matrix annually. This recommendation provides clear responsibility for the Leadership Development Committee to analyze the range of competencies needed for the Board, identify gaps, and create a slate to fill current gaps that exist.

2026 Competencies, Experience, and Expertise

Change Management

Responsibility for organizational change and transition

A structured approach to change is critical to help ensure a beneficial transition while mitigating disruption.

Volunteer Leadership

Experience on other boards or with allied/industry/academic organizations at a similar scale to IFT

Volunteer leadership brings together insight, service, and connections across the food system. IFT benefits from leaders who understand how volunteer-driven organizations operate, appreciate the commitment required to serve effectively, and can bring perspectives from across industry, academia, government, and other parts of the science of food community to help advance shared goals.

Translational Connections

Experience working across, or partnering with, colleagues in a sector different from your own (i.e., industry to academia or government and vice versa)

IFT has members across industry, academia, government, and other sectors, and it is increasingly important for IFT to articulate the value of connections across all segments of the science of food community.

Strategy Development

Role in leading strategy development in an organization

IFT has a talented staff that executes with excellence and relies on the partnership with the IFT Board to set strategic direction to ensure IFT's relevance and ability to achieve its mission and vision. The Board will need to continue its efforts to being a more strategic board – this could and should be combined with other competencies.



2025-2026 IFT Board of Directors

Food Systems Thinking

For the IFT Board of Directors, it is critically important that leaders can connect food science to adjacent disciplines and translate complex developments across agriculture, production, health, consumer behavior, and technology into strategic Board-level guidance. This year, the Leadership Development Committee is seeking professionals with expertise in the following specific areas:



Agribusiness

Expertise and insight into market dynamics, supply chain innovation, strategic partnerships, commerce, and technology across the broader food system.

Consumer Insights

Analytical expertise in consumer research, behavioral economics, or consumer decision-making who understands why people choose, purchase, trust, or reject certain foods or food categories.

Digitization & Data

Experience in applying data analytics, digital transformation, and predictive modeling to guide the design and build of digital solutions. Experience ensuring data-driven decision-making, and upholding standards in safety, sustainability, and regulatory compliance, as relates to IoT sensors, AI and machine learning, traceability, and blockchain.

Education & Academics

The future of the science of food community is developed through the expertise of our members who work in education and academia, thus, should be represented at the Board level. Professionals working in extension who bridge growers, producers, food safety, agriculture, and food science are especially encouraged to apply.

Functional Foods

Focus on the science of functional foods, probiotics/prebiotics, gut microbiome regulation, blood glucose, GLP-1-related nutrition needs, or foods that deliver targeted or individualized health benefits.

Primary Production

Knowledge of pre-harvest or pre-slaughter systems and how farming, animal production, crop science, or breeding decisions affect quality, safety, nutrition, flavor, yield, and supply.

Product Formulation

Expertise in reformulation, natural colors, additive reduction, preservative alternatives, toxicology, flavor systems, ingredient functionality, and maintaining affordability, quality, and safety amid changing expectations

Supply chain, Procurement, and Traceability

Expertise in supply chain, procurement, sourcing, supplier management, traceability, or food system logistics with understanding of how data and digital tools affect food safety, resilience, and transparency

Sustainability

Focus on land, water, soil, air, waste stream valorization, resource constraints, industrialized animal farming, or the economic and supply-chain impacts of sustainability pressures.



*Feeding the minds
that feed the world*