

*ISWP Advisory Board  
Responsibilities and Governance*

**About ISWP**

The International Society of Wheelchair Professionals (ISWP) was launched in January 2015 with a mission to ensure that wheelchair users worldwide are provided the best technology with the best service.

The organization was formed in light of the fact that nearly 70 million people worldwide require wheelchairs for mobility and function, yet most lack access to appropriate wheelchairs or services to repair them. Based on global data, ISWP estimates that 23 million wheelchairs are needed annually, assuming a wheelchair has a three-year useful life. Currently, about 3 million wheelchairs are produced each year, resulting in a 20 million per year deficit.

ISWP has five objectives:

1. Expand and professionalize the wheelchair sector.
2. Develop international wheelchair standards and collect and share wheelchair provision data.
3. Promote coordination within the wheelchair sector and among related professional associations and bodies.
4. Improve and facilitate the supply of wheelchairs worldwide, particularly in less-resourced countries.
5. Advocate for recognition and resources for appropriate wheelchair services.

The organization is led by a group of wheelchair experts at the University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA, with strategic partnerships with USAID and WHO. ISWP director is University of Pittsburgh's [School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences](#) (SHRS) Assistant Professor [Jon Pearlman, Ph.D.](#), Associate Director of engineering at the [Human Engineering Research Laboratories](#) (HERL). [Rory Cooper, Ph.D., HERL](#) founding Director and Distinguished Professor of Rehabilitation Science and Technology (RST), is Co-Director.

An Advisory Board consisting of an experienced cross-section of wheelchair clinicians, research scientists, humanitarian organizations and manufacturers provides direction and counsel for ISWP's programs. Working Groups of representatives from the international wheelchair community meet regularly to develop and implement action plans related to the objectives.

The organization currently is funded through a two-year grant with USAID, which works to spread the mission of the United States internationally. Long-term, ISWP's goal is to be a self-sustaining, stand-alone organization.



**Advisory Board Responsibilities**

The ISWP Advisory Board provides direction and counsel for ISWP programs. Overall responsibilities are:

- Guiding how to move the Society forward in areas including ISWP brand and recognition, core resources, training, outreach/advocacy and evidence-based practice.
- Planning for a sustainable future for ISWP as it grows and changes according to the needs of wheelchair users, clinicians, designers and caregivers.

ISWP Advisory Board members are asked to:

- Make a two-year volunteer commitment to actively participate in phone calls (~ every two months), emails (~bi-monthly) and an in-person meeting.
- Help develop the ISWP network worldwide through their contacts and colleagues.
- Help develop annual work plan.
- Help build a long-term sustainability plan for ISWP.

**Governance**

The following governance will apply during the two-year work plan period. The approach is based on a review of three wheelchair/assistive technology industry organizations and one organization outside of the industry.

<i><b>Governance</b></i>	<i><b>Description</b></i>
Number of members: Voting	Between 17 and 21
Number of members: Ex-officio	4, including USAID and WHO representatives.
ISWP staff	Ex-officio. Until Board chair is selected: Prepare meeting agenda, coordinate and lead meetings and distribute meeting recaps. Following Board chair selection: Advise on meeting agenda, prepare and send meeting announcements and materials. Prepare and distribute meeting recaps.
Member selection	Initial – appointed; Vacancy – see below.
Term	2 years with option for 1 additional year
Participation: <i>Minimum # of meetings</i>	One-half of meetings held during year.
<i>Compensation</i>	None
<i>Expense reimbursement</i>	As possible based on funding source(s)

<b><i>Governance</i></b>	<b><i>Description</i></b>
Meeting frequency	At least 6 per year
Special meetings	Called with 15 days notice
Conduct of meetings:	
<i>Meeting notice</i>	At least 10 days
<i>Materials sent</i>	At least 5 days
<i>Quorum</i>	51% of Advisory Board voting members
<i>Meeting in person/by phone</i>	Both permitted
<i>Voting</i>	For budget requests – 2/3 majority. For all other matters – simple majority, 51%. In person – voice vote. Web conference – could be done using poll. Advisory Board members who participate on a Working Group or Subcommittee that submits a funding proposal will be exempt from voting on the proposal.
<i>Action without a meeting</i>	Matter to be voted on would be e-mailed to Advisory Board, allowing 5 days for comments. Comments will be shared with full Advisory Board. Board will be asked to vote by poll on sixth day. 51% majority required to pass.
Vacancies	Nomination from Board with input from ISWP staff. Simple majority to approve.
Removal from Board	2/3 majority of Board. 30 days notice given to individual being removed.
Committees – Working Groups:	Identified by Board and ISWP staff in keeping with work plan objectives. 51% vote to establish WG.
<i>Chair</i>	Board members can recommend WG chair.
<i>Members</i>	Appointed by WG Chair, with consideration to Board and ISWP staff recommendations.
<i>Meetings</i>	At discretion of WG chair/co-chair. Could be as often as biweekly.
<i>Voting</i>	For budget requests – 2/3 majority. For all other matters – simple majority, 51%.
Elections: Nominations and Process	Suggest this be addressed in subsequent years.
Officers: Election, Terms, Voting	Suggest this be addressed in subsequent years.