



2020-2021 Proposed Election Slate of Candidates

Chicago Section IFT is pleased to announce the launch of the 2020 Leadership Election. This process includes notifying you of the slate of candidates identified for CSIFT 2020-2021 Officers and the Board of Directors.

IFT runs the election process so CSIFT members will receive the election notification via IFT. Watch for your election ballot to arrive via email. The election opens February 3, 2020 and closes March 2, 2020.

Candidates for Officers

Candidates for Chair Elect



James Nasella, Global Food Safety and Quality Manager, Tate & Lyle

I currently work as the Global Food Safety and Quality Manager for Tate & Lyle located in Hoffman Estates. I have been volunteering with the Chicago Section since I moved to the Chicagoland area in 2016. Last year I won the Chicago Section New Member Award for service.

Prior to volunteering with the Chicago Section, I was an Executive Committee member and the Scholarship Chair for the Philadelphia IFT Section. I currently serve on Executive Committee member for Chicago Section IFT, act as the Sponsorship Chair, and am a member of the Golf Outing Committee.

I believe you get out of life what you put into it, and being the Chair Elect would allow me to further my enjoyment of volunteering and involvement. I want to continue the great work the section has done to promote the food science in the community and provide new and different opportunities for members to grow and build their networks.



Upasana Hariram, Project Leader, Merieux Nutrisciences

Upasana has a M.S. in Food Science from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and is currently the Project Leader at Merieux Nutrisciences. Having previously led shelf life and method validation studies, Upasana now leads microbiological challenge studies. She was honored to receive the 2019, Merieux Nutrisciences Scientist of the Year award for her contribution in research services.

Upasana has been passionate about volunteering for CSIFT throughout her career, beginning as a



volunteer of the membership committee, then co-chair of the committee and now chair. She has served as an industry leader from a technical, professional, and volunteer background; participating at industry speaking engagements and poster presentations, as well as being awarded the first annual New Member Award for outstanding service through the Chicago Section IFT.

For the past two years, Upasana has expanded her volunteership as the Secretary of the CSIFT and the Chicago Foods Science Foundation. She has also been engaged with National IFT in the Emerging Leaders Network program and product development competitions.

Food is a central part of Upasana's life; she loves experimenting with recipes and enjoys fusion cooking. She also enjoys playing board games with her friends and family.

On her nomination for Chair Elect: "I was extremely honored to be nominated for Chair Elect of CSIFT. This position is not only a great leadership opportunity for me, but also a way to give back to IFT as it has played a central part in my career development.

As Chair Elect, my focus would be on planning events that engage the food community by inviting speakers who address visionary topics such as reduction in food waste, plant based food, and next generation sequencing. I hope to bolster membership and engagement within the community by encouraging collaboration with other organizations within the industry and academia."

Candidates for Treasurer: 3-year term



Manoj Shah, Kraft Foods Retiree

I would like to continue to contribute Section as a Treasurer for Capital Appreciation and Conservative Asset Management. I am very active in Chicago Section IFT for over 15 years. Chicago Section IFT Ellery H. Harvey Service Award Recipient.

CAREER SUMMARY: Highly-experienced Research Scientist who has developed and commercialized multiple new products and processes at a Multi-National Food Company. Global Research Sustainability Champion to eliminate landfill and significant water and energy savings. Identified and commercialized new processes through open innovation. Rice and Bread crumb expert. Technology Mentor for R & D. Retired from Kraft as a Research principal after 30 years in 2008.

I have received many awards for my volunteer service: IFT outstanding Volunteer for CSIFT 2013 and 2014, Chicago Section IFT Ellery H. Harvey Service Award 2013, Presidents Award, Alabama A & M



University, Received multiple ABCD (Above and Beyond Call of Duty), Technical Achievement and General Managers' Awards.

I am also a member of several organizations and councils: An emeritus member of International IFT & A.A.C.C., CSIFT EXCOM 2012-2015, House Comm. Chair 2013-2015, CSF (Since-2013), Finance Comm and House Comm Member and IFT Annual mtg Tech Tour Chair for many years. BOG of Mansinhbhai Institute of Dairy and Food Technology (MDIFT), Mehsana, Gujarat India 384002 India since 2010 Past Committee Board Member, Rice Federation Technical Committee. Founder and advisor for industry-sponsored Rice research Program at University of Arkansas, Past Member, Advisory council to Graduate students for Barley Research at Montana State University, Food Science Dept



Michael Gross, President, Clutch Global Logistics

Michael Gross is a serial entrepreneur, executive, and passionate strategist. He currently serves as the President of *Clutch Global Logistics*, a supply chain strategy consultancy, global freight forwarder, and customs compliance company. Since 2013, Michael has founded three companies and acquired one.

In addition to his primary position at *Clutch Global*, he also serves on multiple private company and non-profit boards. Beginning his career at *The Boeing Company in Seattle*, Michael held multiple roles as a Finance Analyst and later as a Strategy Consultant.

A Chicago native, he later transitioned from Seattle to Chicago's emerging transportation industry as the Director of Strategic Development for *Clutch Global*, and later, as *Clutch Global's* CFO. Michael holds Bachelors' degrees in both Economics and International Business and a Master's Degree in International Business Administration.

Michael has been a *CSIFT* member since 2014 and has been involved with the Finance Committee and Long Range Planning Committee as well as serving as a sub-committee chair in the Professional Development Committee. His company *Clutch Global Logistics* is also an *CSIFT* Sponsor. Michael is transitioning back into active membership with the *CSIFT* after returning from an overseas work assignment.

When time allows, Michael pursues his interests as an avid foodie, amateur at-home "chef", and hockey player. Along with his supporting wife, Carolina, he takes every opportunity to enjoy the outdoors and to fulfill his urge to see the world.



As a finance professional, I believe that the best opportunity for me to contribute to the CSIFT is to leverage my skillset and support a critical area within the CSIFT, finance. It is my hope that as Treasurer, I can use my professional experience and outside perspective to support the board's efforts to ensure that the appropriate financial controls are in place, that we are allocating funds efficiently, and that we are generating both financial returns and tangible results.

Additionally, as a member of the board, I intend to share my candid opinion on major board considerations and to support current and future strategic initiatives.

Candidates for the Executive Committee

4 positions available for 3-year term.



Nicole Chmielewski, Sales Account Manager, Balchem Corporation

Nicole has a Bachelor's in Nutrition Sciences from Western Illinois University and is currently a Sales Account Manager for Balchem Corporation. Nicole primarily manages the commercial bakery, meat processing and confectionery categories in the food production industry with Balchem's encapsulate technologies and flavor inclusions.

Over the course of the past three and a half years, Nicole has been heavily engaged in the Chicago Section IFT as part of the Membership Committee. In the past several years, Nicole has planned and coordinated countless membership activity events by collaborating with industry partners and local vendors. As time goes by, Nicole continues to bring new ideas and drive progressions in building a successful committee.

In the beginning of 2019, Nicole received a New Member of the Year award for her service to the Chicago section IFT. In 2019, Nicole also became co-chair of the Membership committee and now leads the committee alongside Upasana Hariram. Nicole has also supported the Chicago section IFT's other events as a volunteer for the golf outing, Chicago section IFT supplier night registration and much more.

Nicole is a true blooded Chicago foodie – Nicole has a deep passion for culinary innovation in the Chicagoland restaurants, the ever changing consumer demands for trending new food products, and engaging with the food production industry network that IFT offers. On her spare time, Nicole loves to strength train, run, cook healthy meals, and travel.



Theresa Lei, Food Scientist, Conagra Brands

I have spent 4 years in food labeling and regulation and product development for two large food CPG companies and have also spent more than 4 years in the California food industries on start-up to medium size companies after completing the Food Science Master Program at UC Davis.

I was an active member at the NCIFT and was immediately involved in the CSIFT since I moved to the Chicagoland. Mainly contributed my effort through the Long Range Planning Committee, I have been a member, co-chair and chair of the Long Range Planning Committee for the past four years.

I love to cook and bake at my leisure and spend time with my dog. I enjoy working in the Food Industry as the world is rapidly evolving with new technologies and food trends that create endless opportunities and challenges. Through The Long Range Planning Committee, we support the Section by cultivating long term concepts to help developing programs to bolster member engagement.



Deborah Schodrof, CPA, Crowe LLP

I am a Federal Tax Senior Manager with Crowe LLP and have over 20 years of experience in public accounting, serving a variety of clients in the food industry. I am a member of Crowe's Food and Commodities Industry specialization team dedicated to bringing industry expertise to organizations dealing with all aspects of F&C production, processing, distribution, and sales.

In addition to my professional experience, I have served on the executive board, as treasurer (1 term) and financial secretary (2 terms) of my congregation.

I have participated and volunteered in CSIFT events since 2016. I became a member in 2017 and currently serve as the Audit Committee Chair for the CSIFT and the Chicagoland Food Science Foundation (since 2017).

I am truly honored to be considered for a position on the CSIFT Executive Board. If elected, I believe that my experience in the food industry and experience on other not for profit boards, as well as my accounting expertise would further enhance the management and growth of CSIFT, supporting its mission to continue professional development and growth in the food industry.