

Key Questions & Answers

Q. What are the benefits of the merger?

Members of both NISO and NFAIS have a significant impact on how society makes use of and benefits from knowledge and information sharing. Combining our efforts enables us to better serve the information community in a variety of ways, including improved programs, events and workflows that will drive efficiencies for our members. Both Boards were unanimous in their belief about the merits of coming together and speaking with one voice. Doing so will enable us to be even more inclusive of the many diverse interests across the information industry community.

Q. What was the process that led to this decision?

Conversations between the leaderships of both organizations began in the summer of 2018. This led to the formation of a joint Exploratory Committee, which undertook a thorough due diligence process that included a review of organizational structures, programmatic, financial and logistical issues. The group determined there is a strong strategic rationale for combining both organizations. The Committee's recommendations were approved unanimously by the Boards of NFAIS and NISO.

Q. Will my dues/subscription costs increase?

We do not anticipate increases in dues for our members, and many, particularly those who are currently members of both organizations, may see decreased dues for the combined organization. Because different types of members pay different amounts, an Implementation Committee has been setup and part of its task is to review the dues schedule and phase-in plan for the combined entity to minimize the impacts of the transition.

Q. Will my membership automatically transfer to the new organization in 2019?

NFAIS members will be sent 2019 dues invoices in the spring as per normal, and membership will transfer to NISO automatically for the upcoming year. Combined membership materials will be distributed later in the year.

Q. What is the process between announcing the combination and it completing?

As is required by the bylaws for NFAIS, a membership vote will be held in February to approve the merger. Upon approval, the Implementation Committee will continue the process to formally merge the two organizations. Although June 30th, 2019 has been set as the effective date for the merger, we anticipate this process taking until the end of 2019 to complete.

Q. How can I learn more about this process?

NISO and NFAIS will host a joint virtual "town hall" meeting on **February 19th at 1:00pm EST (TO BE CONFIRMED)** to further discuss the rationale for this combination and to take community members questions on this process. The meeting, co-hosted by Deanna Marcum, President of the Board of NFAIS and Todd Carpenter, Executive Director of NISO. Members are welcome to join using the following dial-in information: **TO COME**

Q. Is there a financial imperative behind doing this now?

The time is right to do this, and in fact, NISO and NFAIS have been working together toward common goals for some time now. Each organisation has served a community base which is coming ever closer together. Trends in how content is being created and distributed by our members has led to both organisations having similar conversations and a number of overlapping members. That is why now is the right moment. It is driven by strategic reasons as opposed to being financially forced.

Q. Are there many members who subscribe to both organisations?

Yes, there are some from within the 250 plus members who were participants in both. However, that is not the primary motivation behind the combination. This is about maximising the contribution and impact we have, boosting innovation and running excellent programs.

Q. What will be the financial savings for members and the combined entity?

We envision there will be some financial savings for those organizations who are currently members of both associations. Details about a member dues transition will be forthcoming, but it is anticipated that this will be phased in over a two- to three-year period. More importantly, we are more focused on enhancing our combined programming and delivering greater member benefits by combining.

Q. Is this driven by cost cutting pressures?

No. Both organisations have very strong foundations and have managed through multiple economic cycles over many decades. This is more about recognising we are stronger together and focusing on the benefits of combining.

Q. How will staffing be impacted by combining organizations?

Both NISO and NFAIS have always been efficiently run organisations with a small number of full-time colleagues working in each organisation. They are supported by many volunteers. We expect that model to continue.

Q. What is the governance approach to be?

During the spring of 2019, the NISO nominations committee will consider members of the NFAIS board to join a combined board for the 2019/2020 NISO election cycle. This combined board will be expanded from 13-15 members to accommodate more candidates. In this way, leaders from the NFAIS community will have a direct role in shaping the combined entity moving forward.

Q. Who will lead the combined entity?

Todd Carpenter currently serves as Executive Director of NISO and will continue to lead the combined organization.

Q. Will NFAIS annual conference continue?

Yes, the February tradition of the Annual Conference will continue. Planning for a 2020 Annual Conference will begin in earnest in Spring 2019.

Q. Will NISO continue its monthly webinar program benefit?

We are committed to increasing the value of membership in a combined entity. The Implementation Committee is tasked with reviewing the NFAIS and NISO programs to find synergies and opportunities to rationalize the two programs. The expectation is that member benefits and programming will be expanded, not contracted, as an outcome of this merger.

Q. Will the NFAIS Miles Conrad award be retained?

Yes, the Miles Conrad award, which honors excellence and innovation in the information community, will be retained.

Q. Is this a NISO takeover of NFAIS?

No, NISO and NFAIS are combining their resources to better serve the information community. Joining forces will enable us to be even more innovative and have more impact, while finding efficiencies in overhead, marketing, and programming.