



# Central States Section The Combustion Institute

## Annual Business Meeting

### Minutes

The sixtieth business meeting of the members of the Central States Section (CSS) of The Combustion Institute was held on March 17, 2025 in the America Central Ballroom in the Westin Copley Place Hotel in Boston, Massachusetts, in conjunction with the 14<sup>th</sup> U.S. National Combustion Meeting. Chair-Elect **Ramanan Sankaran**<sup>1</sup> presided. Noting the presence of a quorum of at least 20 members<sup>2</sup>, Sankaran called the meeting to order at 15:54 EDT.

The following agenda items were discussed during the meeting:

**Compositional Identity.** Sankaran listed the states constituting the Central States Section<sup>3</sup> and noted that all members of The Combustion Institute residing in those states were members of the Section.<sup>4</sup>

**Corporate Report.** Sankaran reminded members that the Section is a not-for-profit corporation in the State of Illinois, incorporated in 1969. The CSS has a 501(c)(6) tax-exempt status, with IRS ID 23-7285835.<sup>5</sup> He listed the corporate officers: **Waruna Kulatilaka**<sup>6</sup>, President and Section Chair; **Patrick Lynch**<sup>7</sup>, Treasurer; and **Monique McClain**<sup>8</sup>, Secretary; with **Ramanan Sankaran** as Chair-Elect and **Robert Tranter**<sup>9</sup> as Past Chair. Sankaran reported that the Federal tax-exempt e-postcard and

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<sup>1</sup>Ramanan Sankaran of Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Chair-Elect 2023–5.

<sup>2</sup>*By-Laws of the Central States Section of The Combustion Institute* (2021-05-16), Article II, Section 5.

<sup>3</sup>*By-Laws*, I§2. These states are Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, and Wisconsin.

<sup>4</sup>*By-Laws*, I§2 & II§1.

<sup>5</sup>*By-Laws*, I§1.

<sup>6</sup>Waruna Kulatilaka of Texas A&M University, Chair 2023–5.

<sup>7</sup>Patrick T. Lynch of the University of Illinois at Chicago, Treasurer since 2023.

<sup>8</sup>Monique S. McClain of Purdue University, Secretary since 2023.

<sup>9</sup>Robert S. Tranter of Argonne National Laboratory, Past Chair 2023–5.

the Illinois not for profit annual report were both filed by the Treasurer on 2025-02-01, meeting the requirements specified in the By-Laws<sup>10</sup>. He noted that the Section is required to have an annual meeting of members to conduct Section corporate business.<sup>11</sup>

**Secretary's Report.** Sankaran delivered the Secretary's report in the absence of the Secretary. The following items were reported:

- The Board of Advisors had met twice during the current section year, on 2024-10-20 at Purdue University and 2025-03-16 in Boston, Massachusetts. Both meetings were in person with some members participating online.
- Over the past year, the Section's healthy budget had permitted funding the following activities: student travel awards<sup>12</sup> to the 2024 Spring Technical Meeting<sup>13</sup> in Cleveland, to the International Symposium on Combustion<sup>14</sup> in Milan (student presenters' awards<sup>15</sup> and the James E. Peters Fellowship<sup>16</sup>) and to the U.S. National Combustion Meeting in Boston; the Undergraduate Research Competition and the Combustion Art Competition for the Cleveland meeting; and the Combustion Art Competition at the U.S. National Combustion Meeting in Boston.
- Seven new members<sup>17</sup> to the Board of Advisors began their first six-year term at the beginning of this section year, on 2024-05-14.
- The Board of Advisors has been planning for the 2026 Spring Technical Meeting to be held in West Lafayette, Indiana. Purdue University is hosting, with **Steven Son**<sup>18</sup> chairing the local organizing committee.
- The Section is initiating an early career researcher award, with the selectee to deliver a plenary lecture at the 2026 Spring Technical Meeting in West Lafayette.
- Portions of the Section's archives are being placed online<sup>19</sup> and will be publicly accessible.

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<sup>10</sup> *By-Laws*, III§10.

<sup>11</sup> *By-Laws*, II§3.

<sup>12</sup> Thirty-six awards of \$200 stipends were granted.

<sup>13</sup> The Spring Technical Meeting was held May 12–14, with Ya-Ting T. Liao leading the local organizing committee.

<sup>14</sup> The formal name was "CI's 40th International Symposium", and the event was held July 21–26, 2024.

<sup>15</sup> Five awards of \$500 stipends were granted.

<sup>16</sup> Ashwath Sethu Venkataraman of Texas A&M University; Prof. Elaine Oran, advisor.

<sup>17</sup> **Patton M. Allison** of Michigan State University, **Erik L. Braun** of the Air Force Research Laboratory, **Chong M. Cha** of the Rolls-Royce Corporation, **Daniel R. Guildenbecher** of Purdue University, **Canan Karakaya** of Oak Ridge National Laboratory, **James B. Michael** of Auburn University, and **Pinaki Pal** of Argonne National Laboratory.

<sup>18</sup> Steven F. Son of Purdue University, member of the Board of Advisors 2012–24 and Local Host for 2026.

<sup>19</sup> Wiki is located at [cssci.org/w/](https://cssci.org/w/).

Sankaran presented the minutes from the Annual Business Meeting held 2024-05-13 in Cleveland. **Ya-Ting Liao**<sup>20</sup> moved that those minutes be approved as presented, with **Al Ratner**<sup>21</sup> seconding the motion. The motion carried by show of hands.

**Treasurer's Report.** Treasurer **Patrick Lynch** reported on the state of the Section's finances in the following items:

- The Federal tax-exempt e-postcard and the Illinois not for profit annual report were both filed by him on 2025-02-01; the state filing incurred a fee of \$11.
- The 2024 Spring Technical Meeting realized a net gain of \$11,277.62, which includes costs for the banquet pre-payment made in 2023. This net amount does not include the travel support and other programming<sup>22</sup>. Accounting for the other meeting-related programming expenses yields a gain of \$2977.62 for the 2024 meeting.
- The Section's bank balance on 2025-03-10 is \$90,525.11.

Lynch also displayed a ledger sheet of all transactions of funds spanning the period of 2024-05-09 to 2025-03-10. **Ramanan Sankaran** moved that the treasurer's report be accepted as an accurate accounting, and **Robert Tranter** seconded the motion. The motion carried by show of hands.

**Board of Advisors.** Sankaran listed the current officers and members of the Board of Advisors, including major committee chair roles. He outlined the general structure of the Board and its composition and asked current officers and advisors to stand for recognition and identity.

Sankaran reported that advisor **Kelly Senecal**<sup>23</sup> resigned his position in July 2024, as he was assuming a position on the Board of Directors of The Combustion Institute. Sankaran acknowledged Senecal and thanked him for his service to the Section.

Sankaran noted that there had been an oversight during the 2024 Annual Business Meeting in which the intention had been to confirm **Ya-Ting Liao** to a second six-year term on the Board. Sankaran noted that since Liao had been elected as an advisor in 2018, she had served in the following roles: local host for the 2024 Spring Technical Meeting, chair of Combustion Art Competition, member of the Outreach Committee, and representative on the U.S. Sections Board of Directors<sup>24</sup>. Sankaran stated the intention of the Board that Liao be elected by the membership to a second six-year term on the Board of Advisors and that this confirmation apply retroactively to 2024-05-14.

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<sup>20</sup> Ya-Ting T. Liao of Case-Western Reserve University, member of the Board of Advisors since 2018.

<sup>21</sup> Albert Ratner of the University of Iowa, member of the Board of Advisors 2012–24.

<sup>22</sup> Other programming included prizes for the Combustion Art Competition and support for the Undergraduate Research Competition.

<sup>23</sup> P. Kelly Senecal of Convergent Science, Inc., member of the Board of Advisors 2014–24.

<sup>24</sup> Current representatives from the CSS were: **Waruna Kulatilaka** (*ex officio*, *By-Laws III§12*), **Ramanan Sankaran** (*ex officio*), **Robert S. Tranter** (*ex officio*), **Ya-Ting T. Liao**, and **Steven F. Son**.

**Robert Tranter** moved to accept the Board's recommendation, and **Tom Robertson**<sup>25</sup> seconded this motion. The motion carried by show of hands.

**Election of Officers.** Sankaran explained that with the biennial rotation of officers<sup>26</sup>, at the end of the current technical meeting, he would become Section Chair and Waruna Kulatilaka would become Past Chair, and that the membership would need to select a Chair-Elect from among current members of the Board of Advisors<sup>27</sup>. He announced that the Board was recommending that **Kalyan Srinivasan**<sup>28</sup> be confirmed as Chair-Elect for the period of 2025–7. Sankaran presented highlights of Srinivasan's professional career and his service to the Section, which included Advisor since 2014, Outreach Committee chair since 2018 — including inaugurating the Undergraduate Research Competition — and Program co-chair since 2022. After opening nominations from the floor and receiving none, **Ramanan Sankaran** moved that Srinivasan be elected as Chair-Elect, and **Waruna Kulatilaka** seconded this motion. The motion carried by show of hands.

**Outgoing Past Chair Acknowledgement.** Sankaran recognized **Robert Tranter** who would transition off the Board of Advisors as the Past Chair at the conclusion of the current technical meeting. He led the members in thanking Tranter for his service to the Section.

**Preceding Local Host Acknowledgement.** Sankaran recognized **Ya-Ting Liao** for her work as Local Host for the 2024 Spring Technical Meeting in Cleveland. **Waruna Kulatilaka** presented her with a plaque of appreciation on behalf of the Section.

**2026 Spring Technical Meeting.** Sankaran announced that the 2026 Spring Technical Meeting will be held May 17–19 in West Lafayette, Indiana, with Purdue University hosting. Members of the local organizing committee are **Steven Son** (chair), **Monique McClain**, and **Daniel Guildenbecher**.

**Early Career Researcher Award.** Sankaran announced the inaugural Early Career Research Award to be granted by the Section. The awardee will present a plenary lecture at the 2026 Spring Technical Meeting and will receive an honorarium of \$1000 and waiver of meeting registration fees. Nominees should, at the nomination deadline, be within the first ten years of a research career following the award of their highest academic degree and be members of the Central States Section of The Combustion Institute. Nominations will be evaluated by a committee drawn from the Board of Advisors. A call will be issued soon with a submission deadline in August 2025. Sankaran thanked **Robert Tranter** for his efforts in developing this award.

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<sup>25</sup> Thomas Robertson of Fives North American Combustion, Inc.

<sup>26</sup> *By-Laws*, III§1.

<sup>27</sup> *By-Laws*, III§5.

<sup>28</sup> Kalyan K. Srinivasan of the University of Alabama, member of the Board of Advisors since 2014.

**Hosting of Future Technical Meetings.** Sankaran informed the members that the Board of Advisors is entertaining proposals to host the 2028 Spring Technical Meeting and the 16<sup>th</sup> U.S. National Combustion Meeting in 2029. He noted that the Board will begin planning for the 2028 meeting at its upcoming fall meeting and asked that anyone interested discuss their intention with any member of the Board.

**All Other Current Business.** Sankaran opened the floor to members to discuss current Section business. Treasurer **Patrick Lynch** announced that he will email student presenters regarding travel stipends for the current U.S. National Combustion Meeting. **Tom Robertson** noted that the Boston meeting had been more expensive than the College Station meeting in 2023 and asked whether travel stipends should be adjusted accordingly. Lynch replied that the stipend had been raised to \$300 from \$200 and that there were more than 30 student presenters at the current meeting.

**Adjournment.** There being no other business before the Section, Sankaran entertained a motion to adjourn. **Robert Tranter** moved to adjourn, and **Kathy Tacina**<sup>29</sup> seconded the motion. Sankaran declared the meeting adjourned at 16:15 EDT.

Recorded by **Charles E.A. Finney**, Archivist, in absence of the Secretary.

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<sup>29</sup> Kathleen M. Tacina of NASA Glenn Research Center, member of the Board of Advisors since 2014 and Secretary 2015–9.