



2024 Election for Board Chair

Candidate: Neil Sarkar

Professional Title & Affiliation

CEO & Associate Professor, Rhode Island Quality Institute & Brown University

Personal Statement / Short Biography

I have been an active member of the AMIA community since 1999, serving in various leadership roles, including as a member of the Board of Directors, SPC Chair for the AMIA Annual Symposium, Chair for the Summit on Translational Bioinformatics, Working Group Chair and Co-Founder of the Regional Informatics Action Working Group, and Chair of the Education Committee. As a former member of the AMIA Board of Directors (2014-2023), I have been a strong advocate for developing and encouraging the next generation of informaticians, regardless of their areas of interest, and I have supported the growth of our organization's educational offerings. In my role as Treasurer, I served on the AMIA Audit Committee, including as its Chair, and on the AMIA Finance and Investment Committee. This experience provided me with a comprehensive understanding of AMIA's financials. Collaborating with the Finance and Audit Committee, alongside Executive Board Members and AMIA Management, I helped navigate the organization to maintain a strong financial position during my tenure, even through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the increased national focus on informatics, including the use of artificial intelligence methodologies, AMIA has a significant opportunity to be a guiding voice in improving healthcare delivery and the health of individuals through our members' activities. As your Board Chair and President, I will work to continue strengthening our foundational contributions across all sectors of healthcare, including academia, non-profit, and for-profit organizations. I also aim to elevate the national profile of AMIA and participate in, and when appropriate, lead national discussions on leveraging past investments to achieve future goals.

Why would you like to serve as AMIA's Board Chair

AMIA is my professional family. I am committed to the mission and values of AMIA, and am proud of AMIA's leadership in enabling informatics to positively impact healthcare delivery and public health. Serving as AMIA's Board Chair and President would be an opportunity further contribute to the organization that has been central to my professional journey since 1999. My experience in various leadership roles within AMIA, including serving on the Board of Directors and my service as Treasurer, provides a foundation of my understanding of organizations strengths and challenges. I firmly believe that AMIA's success is critical to the future of healthcare delivery in our nation and the world, and I believe that I am equipped with the experience and approach to further amplify our organizations impact.

Please share your vision for the AMIA organization

AMIA must retain its position as the leading and unbiased authority in biomedical informatics, health data science, and artificial intelligence. I see AMIA having a major role in advancing the future of healthcare through the integration of advanced informatics methodologies and technologies, which originate in our conferences, workgroup products, and strategic alignments with other organizations. AMIA must continue to enhance its educational offerings to support the continuous professional development of our members (especially the Board-Certified or AMIA-

Certified informaticians) as well as those focused on advancing the science of informatics. AMIA must also continue to be the hub for transdisciplinary collaboration and knowledge exchange for supporting the advancement of the science and application of informatics to improve human health. I will encourage our Board to prioritize initiatives that continue to encourage cross-sector partnerships and make AMIA the go-to resource for the use of data in healthcare contexts. I will also seek to retain AMIA's role as a key player in national discussions on data-driven healthcare reform, data privacy, and the ethical use of artificial intelligence. Finally, I will actively support initiatives that grow the pipeline of informaticians across the country, as well as ensuring that new and existing members find AMIA to be an inclusive community.

Describe your leadership style. Provide one or more brief examples to illustrate your style

My leadership style is defined by collaboration and inclusivity, where we seek to develop a common vision that is achieved through partnerships and accounts for a diversity of perspectives. I am committed to empowering others, fostering open communication, and driving collective success through shared goals and mutual respect. These principles have consistently guided my actions and decisions, enabling me to lead effectively and inspire others to achieve their best. As a leader, I prioritize mentorship and professional development. For instance, during my time on the AMIA Board of Directors, I championed initiatives to support the next generation of informaticians. Additionally, during my tenure as Treasurer, I worked closely with the AMIA Audit Committee, Finance and Investment Committee, Executive Board Members, and AMIA Management to navigate the organization through financial uncertainty during COVID-19. My inclusive approach involves transparent communication and collaborative decision-making, ensuring that we collectively respect all viewpoints and perspectives are aligned with the overall goals for the organization.

A primary example of this leadership philosophy has been my approach to organizing and executing on governance reform efforts on behalf of the AMIA Board of Directors and broader organizational membership. Such changes to and optimization of organizational structure, authority, and decision rights are necessary to ensure a member-driven organization's efficient and effective operations in an increasingly challenging environment. They also generate considerable "friction" related to entrenched interests and perspectives. By engaging in highly inclusive listening tours, town hall meetings, member-to-member engagement campaigns, and communication and outreach initiatives, we were able to achieve shared understanding and successfully submit for member approval a series of changes to the AMIA by-laws that expanded voting rights to include ALL members (including students), simplified the process for bylaw revisions, and implemented a new and streamlined organizational structure. This represents the first comprehensive approach to governance reform at the organizational level in the past several decades, and all such measures passed with overwhelming support from the membership via a transparent and open voting process that can serve as a model for analogous future efforts.

Summarize your key leadership accomplishments within AMIA, focusing on results delivered in each role

As a member of the Board of Directors (2014-2023), I continuously championed the development of the next generation of informaticians through targeted educational programs and mentorship initiatives. My advocacy for expanding our educational offerings led to the year-over-year protection of student costs to attend conferences and be members and creation of programs like the High School Scholars Program. As the founding Editor-in-Chief of JAMIA Open, I led the launch of a new open-access journal to expand the reach and accessibility of research in biomedical informatics.

My leadership in this role involved setting the strategic direction, assembling a diverse and expert editorial board, and establishing rigorous peer review processes. Under my leadership, JAMIA Open (started in 2017) has become a competitive venue to publish findings, consistently exceeding milestones set by the AMIA Publication Committee, including being indexed in MEDLINE and receiving an Impact Factor (2.5 in 2023). Serving as a Scientific Program Committee (SPC) Chair for the AMIA Annual Symposium and the Summit on Translational Bioinformatics, I increased member engagement (e.g., through developing a self-nomination process to identify SPC members). As AMIA's Treasurer, I was a member of the multi-perspective team to steer AMIA through the financial challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, my leadership roles and associated accomplishments reflect my commitment to AMIA's growth and my ability to deliver substantial outcomes in leadership positions. As Board Chair, I will continue to leverage these experiences to drive AMIA's mission forward and increasing our impact on biomedicine and health care.

Summarize your key leadership accomplishments outside of AMIA, focusing on results delivered in each role

Outside of my contributions to AMIA, I have held several leadership roles that have impacted the biomedical informatics and health care. As an academician, I have developed and led educational programs that have prepared hundreds of students for careers in healthcare technology and informatics. I have developed undergraduate, graduate, and medical student curricula that incorporate hands-on learning with real-world data sets, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. As the Chief Executive Officer of a Regional Health Information Organization, I have led a health information technology organization to support award-winning health information exchange activities for an entire state, which have led to measurable enhanced patient care outcomes by supporting healthcare providers in making more informed clinical decisions with trusted data. I have served as a board member for RI BIO, which aims to catalyze biotechnology growth in Rhode Island. Collectively, my leadership experiences have led to securing funding, fostering interdisciplinary collaborations, and guiding research strategy.

How do AMIA's goals and priorities align with your own? How would you manage conflicts?

Overall, there is strong alignment between my personal and professional goals and priorities with those defined for AMIA. My career has been dedicated to advancing biomedical informatics, enhancing education in the field, and fostering an environment of collaboration and innovation principles that resonate deeply with AMIA's mission. AMIA's commitment to driving the effective use of informatics in improving health care aligns with my professional endeavors as a professor and a leader in health information exchange. My work has consistently focused on leveraging data to enhance health outcomes and inform clinical practice, which mirrors AMIA's strategic priorities to advance informatics through research, education, and policy advocacy. In managing potential conflicts, my approach is rooted in transparency, communication, and consensus-building. I believe that conflicts, when managed effectively, can lead to innovative solutions and stronger decisions. Should conflicts arise, I would engage in open dialogue to understand diverse perspectives and work collaboratively to find solutions that align with AMIA's strategic goals while respecting individual viewpoints, as well as adhere to AMIA's Conflict of Interest policy. By fostering

a culture of respect and inclusion, I aim to ensure that even through conflicts, AMIA continues to thrive as a cohesive and forward-thinking organization.

Share any other unique skills or perspective you bring to this role

My background aligns with and complements AMIA's goals, bringing a blend of academic rigor, policy influence, and practical application to the Board Chair and President role. As an informatics methodologist, I have worked on advancing research across the entire molecules to clinic to populations spectrum. I have worked in research laboratories within non-profit organizations, built and led academic programs in university settings, and served in executive leadership roles to advance health information technology. I regularly interact with state and federal policymakers to advance informatics and health information technology goals. My diverse experiences enable me to lead conversations across technical, educational, and policy aspects of healthcare informatics. I bring a broad understanding of how data and technology interact within different research and healthcare environments, which is crucial for developing strategies that are both effective and adaptable across our membership. The resulting perspectives underpin my leadership style, characterized by strategic thinking and collaborative problem-solving, ensures that diverse viewpoints are considered in decision-making processes, leading to pragmatic, robust, and inclusive solutions.

AMIA Engagement and Participation

AMIA member – More than 20 years

- Editor-In-Chief, JAMIA Open
- Chair, Scientific Program Committee, 2017 AMIA Annual Symposium
- Treasurer, AMIA Board of Directors
- Director, AMIA Board of Directors
- Chair, Audit Committee
- Co-Founder, AMIA High School Scholars Program
- Member, AMIA Audit Committee
- Chair, AMIA Education Committee
- Member, AMIA Meetings Committee
- Member, AMIA Public Policy Committee
- SPC Member, 2012 AMIA Annual Symposium
- Founding Chair, AMIA Regional Informatics Action Working Group
- Founding Track Chair, AMIA Summit on Translational Bioinformatics
- SPC Chair, 2011 AMIA Summit on Translational Bioinformatics
- Regular Participant at AMIA's Hill Day
- Editorial Board Member, JAMIA
- Editorial Board Member, Journal of Biomedical Informatics

Areas of Expertise

Analytics; Big Data; Bioinformatics; Biostatistics; Clinical Decision Support; Data Analysis; Data Mining; Data Science; Disease Surveillance; Education; Electronic Health Records; Genomics; Health Equity; Health Information Exchange; Health Information Technology; Information Retrieval;

Interoperability; Knowledge Discovery; Knowledge Representation; Meaningful Use; Molecular Biology ;Natural Language Processing; Ontologies; Precision Medicine; Public Policy; Public/Population Health; Qualitative Research; Quality Improvement; Research; Standards; Terminologies; Translational Bioinformatics