



BOARD MEETING: JAN. 17TH 2010

Presided over by Jared Wigdor. Minutes by Bryan Kam.

MEETING DETAILS

Date: Sunday, Jan. 17th 2010

Time: 2:00 PM

Venue: WLH 205

IN ATTENDANCE:

Jared Wigdor, President

Filip Savatic, Vice President

Sebastian Serra, Treasurer

Bryan Kam, Secretary

Rachel Wolf, MUNTY Head Delegate

Bryce Scanlan, SCSY Secretary General

Dahlia Mignouna, SCSY Secretary General-Elect

Natalie Kotkin, YMUN Secretary General

Jharrett Bryantt, UNCSY Secretary General

Elizabeth Breit, Outreach Chair

Swati Yanamadala, Speakers Committee Chair

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 2:06 PM.

2. APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES

- The previous meeting's minutes were unanimously approved.

3. DEPARTMENT UPDATES

- Jared asked if any member of the Board had a particular update they wished to share with the rest of the Board.
- Bryan pointed out that he'd been working on YIRA's Wikipedia Page over the Winter Break, and that YIRA now had a comprehensive page on Wikipedia.

4. YMUN PREPARATIONS

- Natalie began by explaining that YMUN would occur in the coming week, and that there were to be several important events taking place prior to that.

- She explained that the next major event for all staff would be the Preconference Meeting, which would be mandatory for all staff. She noted that the original time scheduled for the Preconference Meeting clashed with the Haiti Benefit Concert, and said the intention was to change the time of the Preconference Meeting to 9.00 PM so that all staff would be able to make the Concert.
- She said other important events included the Secretariat's First Stuffing Party, taking place that day, and then a further Stuffing Party taking place on Tuesday once all the delegate placards and badges had been completed. She noted that all materials had been stored under lock and key in the Trumbull Basement.
- She explained that other important things taking place before the conference included final communications with dais teams and committees, fleshing out all the crises, especially for the 3 Midnight Crisis committees, and having dais teams communicate with freshmen and sophomore staffers to make sure they were enjoying themselves. She also noted that staff members should be on the Wiki page responding to delegate questions and updating the page with relevant articles.
- Natalie then proceeded to discuss logistics for the conference. She explained that for the Opening Ceremonies, the Secretariat had confirmed Mr. James Jonah, a former U.N. Undersecretary-General, and that there would be an additional talk with Mr. Jonah, co-sponsored by YASA and moderated by Professor Chris Blattman. She further noted that there would be a dinner with Mr. Jonah prior to the Opening Ceremonies.
- She explained that Yale Day would occur in a new, revamped format, with professors having been contacted for students visiting their classes beforehand, and a Yale Day Lunch with Professors. She also said there would be a new Panel on Student Life, and that it would be great to have Board members on hand to staff these events. Dahlia noted that if the Secretariat were missing professors for the Yale Day Lunch, she might be able to ask her professor; Bryan replied that he would get in touch with her after to give her more details on the Lunch.
- Natalie further explained that the Delegate Dance and Movie Night were part of security, and the expectation was that Board members would step up and take on a security shift, especially during the Delegate Dance, as this coincided with the Freshman Screw, and all freshman staffers would only do an earlier shift. She noted, however, that security would be covered in greater detail at the Preconference Meeting.
- Natalie explained that the role of Board members during the conference would essentially be to pick up any gaps, whether or registration or security. Jared said he agreed, and that he believed because YMUN formed such a large part of YIRA's financial income, it was important for Board members to do everything to ensure the conference took place without a hitch. He explained that the conference was very susceptible to reputation, and that any problems occurring would have a negative effect on reputation, and thus income for YIRA. He explained that Board members should therefore be enthusiastic about additional responsibility beyond the normal staffing requirements.
- Natalie noted that several Board members had already been assigned some additional responsibilities; these included:
 - Rachel and Sebastian had been assigned to help conduct New Delegate Training, where they would cover parliamentary procedure. Rachel asked whether there would be ASGs to assist them and let them know what to do. Natalie replied that there would be ASGs, as well as USG Committees, in each of the rooms.
 - Swati would help out at the Master's Tea, as well as with registration. Dahlia and Akanksha (SCSY Director-General) would also help out with registration, working a two-hour shift each.
 - Fil would moderate the Student Panel on Life at Yale, while Fil and Bryce would also play important roles in overseeing delegates leaving for committees from Opening Ceremonies.
 - Lizzie would be helping out significantly during the Delegate Dance.
- Sebastian commented that he thought security was one of the most important aspects, as moving delegates around was one of the most important problems. He asked if the Secretariat had completed plans for security shifts, especially as they related to busing. Natalie replied that for outlying hotels, a single staffer from each of the committees would lead all delegates staying at outlying hotels to a waiting room in LC. She noted that busing would no longer be as great a problem, since there were roughly 150 delegates staying at outlying hotels, and two buses with total capacity for 88, meaning each would only need to do 2 rounds. She also noted there would be refreshments in the waiting room, which was new to busing this year.
- Sebastian asked what the plan for dismissal at Opening Ceremonies was. Natalie explained that Amandla would actually not be able to make Opening Ceremonies, but that Rachel would take her place instead. She explained that the procedure would be similar to last year, where delegates would be dismissed by committee. She also noted that Bryce and Fil would be at the doors to Battell to signal to Rachel when to proceed with the next committee to dismiss.

- Natalie explained that that completed the conference logistics, and the only other major event would be the YMJN Post Conference Social, taking place at Elevate Lounge. She asked if any Board members had any further questions or comments.
- Sebastian said that he had spoken to some Chairs of GAs, and that there had been some confusion and upset at the splitting and recombining of committees, and that the Secretariat should make sure it worked out for Chairs to cause minimal stress. Natalie explained that the Secretariat was working on the issue, and would deal with it accordingly.
- Natalie concluded by saying that the expectations for staffing were attendance at the Preconference Meeting as well as attendance at 5 of 6 committee sessions. She explained that there were some dais team members who had conflicts with several committee sessions, but that the Secretariat was working through these issues, and would hear more as the week progressed.

5. CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR SPRING SEMESTER

- Jared explained that the Board would now turn its attention to events for the upcoming semester, and explained Fil would present on social events planned for the semester.
- Fil began by explaining that at the end of the previous semester, the Board had decided to change course regarding Town Hall meetings, which members had not been interested in. Instead, the Board would host social, non-international relations events that would hopefully bring YIRA members together.
- Fil noted that one problem in the previous semester had been the accessibility of Board members, and that it was hoped the events he was proposing would address this.
- Fil explained that he broadly had 6 ideas:
 - **Idea 1: Variety of happy hours.** Fil explained that he intended to vary happy hours more to make them more interesting. Happy hours taking place on January 16th and April 10th would be standard happy hours. The happy hour taking place on February 20th would be Mardi Gras-themed, while the happy hour taking place on March 27th would be “World War III”-themed.
 - Fil explained he was also looking into the idea of hosting a mixer with Theta, ISO or the Globalist.
 - Fil asked the Board what they thought of moving the start time for happy hours to 10.00 PM instead of 9.00 PM, in order to make them precede those going to other events after. Rachel suggested a start time of 9.30 PM instead; the Board agreed on this.
 - Fil said one cool idea was to have a happy hour at Thali Too, since they had given back \$1,250 from an initial \$3,000 paid due to the sound system not working. Bryce explained that despite this, the managers had been excited about repairing the relationship with YIRA, wanted to do future events with YIRA, and potentially might give a good discount.
 - **Idea 2: Weekly YIRA dinners.** Fil explained that these dinners would take place on a weekly basis, on Wednesday at 6.00 PM in the Branford Pit. He noted that these were a low-cost, but potentially effective option for building a sense of YIRA community.
 - He explained that while the dinners would not be popular initially, their popularity might grow over time. He noted that Board members would be highly encouraged to attend to create a large presence at dinner, which would increase their legitimacy in the eyes of the membership.
 - He also noted that the central location of the dinners would likely increase attendance.
 - **Idea 3: Poker Night, Balkan Movie Night, Board Game Night & Soccer Match.** Fil explained that Poker Night would take place on January 29th, while Balkan Movie Night would take place on February 26th, at Silliflicks.
 - He explained that renting Silliflicks for the Movie Night would cost \$50, and that this would include the rental fee, as well as soda, pizza and popcorn.
 - Fil further noted there would be a Board Game Night on Friday, March 5th, and that this would take place either in a buttry or in a YIRA member’s suite. The projected cost of this would be \$50, which would include drinks.
 - Fil explained a final idea was to have a YIRA vs. ISO Soccer Match, which would take place on March 27th, on Old Campus. He explained that this might be followed by a barbeque.
 - **Idea 4: Six Flags Adventure.** Fil explained that the idea was to have a YIRA trip to the Six Flags theme park in Springfield, Massachusetts on Saturday, April 17th. He noted that he had researched prices, and that a group of 15 students could obtain a group deal and pay just \$24.50 each.

- He explained that if YIRA covered the cost of transportation to and from Six Flags, there might be good demand for the trip; he estimated transportation might cost roughly \$1,500. Bryan responded that buses for YJUN had cost just \$350 for 3 hours, and it was unlikely transportation would cost \$1,500.
- Rachel asked when Bulldog Days would occur, and whether this would clash with the Six Flags trip. Bulldog days would occur on April 20th, and there would be no clash.
- **Idea 5: Trip to the U.N.** Fil said that Shoshana (former YIRA Vice-President) had previously organized a trip to the United Nations, and had worked with Prof. Jean Krasno, who had put together the meetings that had taken place on the trip. Fil explained he had approached Prof. Krasno to explore the possibility of repeating something similar, and that although she had been initially skeptical, she had now said such a trip could potentially happen.
- Fil explained that the plan would be to have the trip take place on a Friday, with trip participants leaving in the morning. He explained that YIRA would subsidize transportation to and from New York, there would then be meetings and a tour of the United Nations, followed by a lunch break.
- Rachel noted that for the Globalist's trip to New York, trip members had taken the train, and this might be cheaper. Fil explained that Shosh had been against the idea of taking the train, as it was logistically easier to have all trip participants on a bus.
- **Idea 6: YIRA Speech Competition.** Fil explained the goal of a speech competition would be to hold a campus-wide event to increase YIRA's presence on campus. The speech competition would be open to all Yale students. Fil explained that the competition's format could take many forms, including setting a theme which competition participants could then speak about, or potentially as a YPU-style "debate" whereby a Professor opened, and participants would speak after. He explained that professors would likely serve as judges, and that the winner would be picked based on content and delivery style.
- Fil suggested having participation be mandatory for MUNTY members, which would give the competition at least 20 participants.
- Rachel said she thought running the competition would present serious logistical difficulties, and that a better idea might simply be to have YIRA members participate in the Yale Debate Association's Adams Cup. She noted that the "glory would be equal", while the work might be far less. Jared remarked that he thought "glory" was not so much the issue as visibility of YIRA as an organization. Fil said he agreed, and that while YIRA members could participate in the Adams Cup, it was a wholly separate matter. Sebastian noted that there was already a 2009 Yale Undergraduate Speaking Competition, and that the proposal for a speech competition was very similar. Dahlia further noted that she had received many emails regarding speech competitions hosted by various organizations, and that such competitions had been done many times before. She said she thought that if campus visibility was the goal, YIRA should and could come up with a better idea.
- Fil noted it seemed a speech competition was not a good idea, and asked if there were any other good ideas for increasing YIRA's visibility on campus.
- Rachel said she thought that one of the best ways to increase visibility was to ensure that current YIRA members loved the organization, and that this would be the best way to increase YIRA's reputation.
- **Budget discussion for these ideas.** Fil proceeded to present the budgetary considerations for these events. These included: weekly dinners (\$0), Poker Night (\$50), Movie Night (\$50), Board Game Night (\$50), YIRA vs. ISO Soccer Match (\$0), Six Flags trip (\$1,500), trip to the United Nations (\$1,500), and the YIRA Speech Competition (\$500).
- Fil noted that since the speech competition had not been greeted enthusiastically, this would not likely take place, and thus not cost \$500.
- Bryce said he thought the amounts presented were ceiling amounts, since the likelihood of obtaining buses at a cheaper rate was high.
- Rachel said she thought it was important to veto by line item. She noted that the Poker Night, Movie Night and Board Game Night would altogether cost \$150, which was just one-tenth of the cost of the Six Flags trip. She said she thought the trip to the United Nations was important, as it was part of YIRA's core mission, but that spending \$1,500 to go to Six Flags was less so.
- Bryce said he thought one problem with the Six Flags trip was that those attending might split into groups, and disperse to different rides, defeating the objective of having a group bonding experience. He explained that more simple events, such as a picnic at East Rock, or apple-picking might also be good ideas.

- Fil explained that the goal was to ensure that by the time of the Six Flags trip, there would be a tighter-knit group that would attend, as this would potentially be the effect of the other social events.
- Bryan suggested holding a Member Survey to gauge interest for the social events Fil had suggested. Fil said this was a good idea, and he would create one.
- With discussion on social events complete, Jared then presented the new YIRA sweatshirts, which he noted would be on sale beginning the day after at the Preconference Meeting. He explained that each of the sweatshirts had cost \$19 apiece, and discussion should take place on whether to sell them for \$5 or \$10, with YIRA subsidizing the rest.
- Fil asked if it was realistic to expect to sell 75 sweatshirts each for \$10. Members of the Board commented that those who felt strong ties to YIRA would likely pay \$10 for a sweatshirt; it was decided the sweatshirts would sell for \$10.
- Swati then presented Speakers Committee events for the semester. She noted there would be a panel on global warming bringing in people from different perspectives, as well as two previously planned panels, which included a panel on women in politics, and one on US-China relations. She noted that one possibility might also be a potential dinner with Prof. Akhil Amar.
- Sebastian noted that the leading economist on climate change was Prof. William Nordhaus and that he should be included on the panel.

6. MODEL UN INITIATIVES FROM UPENN

- Jared explained that Rachel had previously forwarded an email regarding some interesting initiatives coming from the UPenn International Affairs Society. These included a Model Executive Management program, as well as an Organization of Model UN Associations, intended as a forum for those involved in organizing conferences to discuss and collaborate.
- Rachel said she thought that participating in the Model Executive Management program might deviate from YIRA's mission.
- Fil noted that otherwise, the Organization of Model UN Associations was a great idea, and suggested the Board budget for sending a delegation, including the Secretary-General, to these conferences.

7. UPDATE ON THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNOLOGY

- Bryan updated the Board on the situation regarding the Director of Technology. He explained that while the application had been forward to 3 important technology-related panlists, he had received no responses so far.
- Lizzie said she wanted to emphasize that investing money into hiring an external organization might be important.
- Fil noted that it was difficult to comment on whether this might be feasible because the Board had not looked into the costs of such services. Bryan noted he would solicit quotes from web development companies.

8. ACCOUNT REVIEW

- Jared explained that this was a new tradition he wished to introduce, which was to go through transactions on the YIRA bank account for the preceding period.
- The Board reviewed all the transactions.

9. DATA BACKUP

- Jared explained that data backup had been a subject he had brought up at previous meetings, and that he had purchased a data backup plan from Sugarsync to cover files for all Board members.
- All Board members installed Sugarsync and synced their YIRA files to the Sugarsync system.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:59 PM.