



YALE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ASSOCIATION

BOARD MEETING: FEB. 21ST 2010

Presided over by Jared Wigdor. Minutes by Bryan Kam.

MEETING DETAILS

Date: Sunday, Feb. 21st 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

Kevin Hoffman, YMUN Secretary General-Elect

Jharrett Bryantt, UNCSY Secretary General

Elizabeth Breit, Outreach Chair

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 2:05 PM.

2. APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES

- The previous meeting's minutes were unanimously approved.

3. DEPARTMENT UPDATES

- Jared began by reading a statement on behalf of Swati and the Speakers Committee. The statement noted that the Speakers Committee would host the US Ambassador to China on April 15th.
- Fil explained that he had several updates about international trips. He said that members of the Honduras International Trip would host a reception and presentation at the Yale Law School, and encouraged all Board members to be present. He also noted that the final itinerary for the India trip had been set, and that final trip members included Deb Gangopadhyay (trip leader), Sanket Karuri, Anne Van Bruggen, Connie Leong and Jenny Mei. Fil explained that he was to meet with the Middle East trip leaders, and would receive an update from them.
- He noted that YIRA weekly dinners have been well-attended, and that the Mardi Gras Happy Hour had gone smoothly. He said the UN Trip had not received too many RSVPs.

- Natalie explained that she had given a large binder with all conference materials to Kevin, and would soon turn over her email address as well, as soon as she had completed the final expense report. Kevin explained he was in the process of recruiting Directors-General, and asked if it would be necessary to send out the application to all YIRA members. Jared replied that this was not particularly necessary, though if Kevin wished to, it would be alright to do so.
- Jharrett explained that while, constitutionally, UNCSY Secretary-General selections needed to take place, Fil was to propose a constitutional amendment that would be discussed later in the meeting that would affect the UNCSY Secretary-General selection process.
- Rachel said that since the last Board meeting, MUNTY had attended HNMUN, where they had won Outstanding Large Delegation. She noted that MUNTY was not induct its new delegates in the coming week.
- Bryce explained that the large majority of transition work to Dahlia had been completed.

4. UPCOMING EVENTS

- Jared explained that there were several important events left in the semester, and he wished to begin with discussion on the Spring Banquet, which was the largest event the Board had yet to host.
- Sebastian explained that, given potential savings from the international trips, it might be a good idea to spend a more substantial amount than originally budgeted for the Spring Banquet. He noted that the Union League or Scoozi might be good places to hold the Spring Banquet.
- Jared noted it might be important to find a location that was not as stringent on providing drinks, and said that he spoken to JT, who had explained that YIRA had previously held a Seniors Reception at the Union League, while another cocktail had taken place at the Graduate Club. He said something similar might be a good idea for the Banquet this year.
- Natalie suggested potentially hosting the Spring Banquet at Pacifico.
- Rachel remarked that she thought it might not be prudent to spend more on the Spring Banquet simply because the international trips had been under the projected cost. Jared explained that the Spring Banquet last year had cost \$9,000, and this was extremely expensive. Sebastian said he would explore all the potential options.
- Jared said he wished to turn attention to the Model UN leadership conference that was to take place at UPenn. Kevin said he was interested in going as YIMUN Secretary-General, and noted that Dahlia had expressed interest as well. He explained nevertheless that the conference might not be useful in terms of setting conference dates, as these would be set prior to the conference.
- Fil explained that the question was not whether the conference Secretaries-General would attend the conference, but how much YIRA should subsidize the trip. Natalie noted that collaboration was extremely important, given that the Harvard conference had unilaterally altered their dates this year, which had had significant consequences for the other conferences. She explained that it would have been good to have had the opportunity to speak to other conferences, such as Princeton's and NHSMUN, in a formal setting.
- Bryce said he thought that attending the conference was a good idea, since it was a formalized opportunity to share best practices for running conferences, such as how to do registration and marketing.
- Jared said it seemed the Board was decided on having the Secretaries-General attend the conference, and that details on train tickets and housing would be figured out subsequently.
- Fil noted that he had as yet received any update on the potential party with ISO, and asked if Board members were still intent on a party with ISO.
- Bryce explained that it was unlikely YIRA would fill Elevate by itself, and that it might be a good idea to collaborate. Bryan said he agreed, and that the biggest happy hour YIRA had hosted last semester, had been a joint happy hour with ISO. Fil further noted it would be unlikely YIRA would make use of its Elevate discount unless in conjunction with ISO.
- Bryce asked how much cheaper the Elevate discount made the booking. Natalie explained that the deal was to have the booking for \$800.
- Kevin asked whether it might be a better idea to hang onto the discount with Elevate for future purposes, such as SCSY's Club Night in the coming year, or the YIMUN Post-Conference Social thereafter.
- Fil concluded by saying he would explore the options before deciding.

- He then noted that YIRA would have a Movie Night in the coming week, though the day would depend on when MUNTY Inductions were to take place.
- Rachel noted a good idea for the YIRA Movie Night would be to go to the cinema to watch a movie, rather than book Silliflicks and put on a movie. She noted that YIRA members might then pay for themselves, which would make the Movie Night lower cost.

5. DIRECTOR OF TECHNOLOGY / WEBSITE FOLLOW-UP

- Fil explained that he, Bryan and Dahlia had had a meeting with Lorenzo. Bryan explained that Lorenzo would work on the SCSY website and registration this week, and then move onto working to develop a new bulletin the following week.
- Fil noted that, in general, Lorenzo had been a great help, and that he had attended the YIRA Happy Hour.
- Natalie noted that it might be a good idea for Kevin to attend the next meeting with Lorenzo, and it was decided the next meeting would take place the coming Thursday at 7.00 PM.

6. BOARD RESTRUCTURING PROPOSAL

- Fil presented his idea for restructuring the YIRA Board. He explained that his proposal would effectively merge the Speakers Committee and UNCSY into a Member Relations Director, who would also be in charge of social events, as well as the Banquets.
- He noted that envisioned the Member Relations Director would have a staff under him or her, and that this Member Relations Group would be responsible for all internal and on-campus events that YIRA hosts.
- He explained that the Vice President would then be in charge of all external initiatives, such as recruiting trip leaders for the Independent Initiative proposed and discussed last week that would send YIRA members on Model UN conference trips. The Vice President would also retain the responsibility for recruitment.
- He explained why he thought the restructuring proposal would be better. He noted that merging the Speakers Committee and UNCSY roles would increase the legitimacy of the role, and that the new delineation of responsibilities was more logical than previously. The restructuring would give the Vice President the opportunity to take on new responsibilities such as the selection process for the proposed Model UN trips.
- Rachel asked if she could clarify whether the new Member Relations Director would have a Secretariat-like group of staff under them; Fil explained that because the role would include so many responsibilities, it was envisioned that whoever fulfilled the role would have a staff helping him or her.
- Jharrett noted that from his perspective, he wished that UNCSY would remain wholly intact, and so explained that it might be a good idea to constitutionally outline specific events that the Member Relations Director would need to hold, such as UNCSY.
- Bryan said he thought one potential problem was that the amalgamation of UNCSY, the Speakers Committee and social events might place too much responsibility under a single person, given that this new role now had responsibility for three separate areas that had previously been under three separate Board members.
- Kevin noted that while it was easy to have YIRA members apply for positions on the YMUN and SCSY Secretariats, it might be more difficult to attract members to the Member Relations Group, and that it might be a better idea to appoint Co-Member Relations Directors.
- Rachel explained she thought one benefit of having the Member Relations position was that if certain constituent programs were not functioning well, they would naturally disappear; she explained this would allow members to define YIRA's programs, rather than having YIRA's programs define our membership.
- Natalie said her concern was of a different nature. She noted that while she thought the new position was good, she had some doubts as to whether there would be sufficient institutional memory for the role, and that whoever was elected to the position might have difficulty running the programs.
- Sebastian said he thought that this might not be as great a problem, as there was previous institutional memory as to how to run each of these programs.

- Natalie asked if Fil had spoken to any potential members about potentially taking up the position. Fil said he had not, and did not want to gauge interest until the position had more concretely been discussed.
- Jharrett said one good idea might be have a dual Vice-President model, whereby one Vice President would be responsible for on-campus events, while the other would be responsible for all external events. Fil explained that while he had thought of the idea, such a proposal would too greatly resemble the Co-Secretary General constitutional amendment proposal that the Board had previously floated, and which had not received popular support. He also noted that having two Vice Presidents might alter the Board dynamic.
- Sebastian said he thought that, with the current delineation of responsibilities, the positions were in fact switched. He said he thought the responsibilities under the Member Relations Director should be those of the Vice President, while the responsibilities currently under the Vice President should be delineated to a “Trip Manager”.
- Bryce noted he thought the current delineation was good, as the Vice President would be responsible for reading applications and selections for external initiatives, while the Member Relations Director would be physically organizing events.
- Bryan said one important issue might be whether there would be sufficiently great incentive to apply to the position of Member Relations Director. Sebastian said he thought this might not be a big issue, since there had not been many candidates for Speakers Committee in the last elections either.
- Bryce said he thought the Member Relations Director was a good idea, but he didn’t necessarily like the title the position had been given.
- Natalie noted she thought that, under the current delineation of responsibilities, the Member Relations Director resembled more of a Social Chair.
- Kevin said one possible way of delineating the responsibilities might be to have two Vice Presidents, one in charge of campus relations, and the other in charge of member benefits.
- Rachel said she thought that no matter the division of responsibilities, it was unlikely there would be high-quality applicants for the position, and that what might be important is a change of name for the position. She noted that if the wish was to have juniors apply, then the position would likely represent the highest position that person would attain within the organization.
- Jared explained he was against the idea of having two Vice Presidents, as this led to the question of why not to delineate Bryan as Vice President of Communications rather than Secretary, and Sebastian as Vice President of Finance rather than Treasurer.
- Rachel said she thought it would be unlikely the Board would brainstorm a good title during the Board meeting. She noted, however, that it would be important for Fil to approach YIRA members with the idea in order to persuade them of its merits.
- Bryce noted that he had recently had lunch with a YIRA member, and that that particular member had noted that the Board had grown significantly in size, which had reduced its efficiency.
- Lizzie said she thought it seemed there was a lack of distinction between the potential roles of the Vice President and the Member Relations Director. She said she thought one good distinction might be that of responsibilities which required greater “executive” power, such as Independent Initiatives proposals, versus those which were simply organizational.
- Jharrett said he thought one problem might be that, if done well, the Speakers Committee role would take up the time of a role in itself.
- Fil explained that the process from here on would be for him to rewrite the amendment, and for the Board to brainstorm potential titles for the position. The Board would then need to pass the amendment, before it could be considered before YIRA members at a General Membership meeting.

7. INDEPENDENT INITIATIVES PROPOSAL

- Fil explained that there had been another submission for an Independent Initiatives proposal. He explained that George Bogden and Vinny Lindoso had proposed the creation of an “Election Study Monitoring Committee” whose purpose would be to advise the Board on potential elections that YIRA members could monitor. He said he thought the Committee would basically serve the purpose of an advisory committee to the Board.

- Lizzie said she thought this was a great idea, as it would not use any money, while providing a good conduit for enthusiastic YIRA members.
- Jared said he and Fil had discussed the proposal at length, and that while the Committee might not cost YIRA monetarily, there might be the potential expenditure of political capital in having an additional constituent program.
- Sebastian asked whether it might be a better idea to have George and Vinny advise the Board in an informal capacity rather than through the creation of a committee.
- Natalie noted that one big problem that YIRA had had this year was developing high-quality international trips, and that the Committee might potentially solve this problem.
- Rachel said she thought the idea was good in principle, but had some reservations about creating a standing committee to study potential international trips.
- Fil said he would speak to George and Vinny about potentially restructuring their proposal, and further developing their proposal.

8. ACCOUNT REVIEW

- The Board carried out a review of all expenditures that had been charged to the YIRA account.

9. MISCELLANEOUS

- Lizzie explained that her Outreach participants would be attending the UNA-USA conference soon, and that on the day, they would be taking an early train to the City University of New York (CUNY), where the conference was taking place.
- She explained that she currently had 2 chaperones, but needed another, and asked any interested Board members to get in touch with her.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:58 PM.