



YALE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ASSOCIATION

BOARD MEETING: 25 APRIL 2009

President over by Jared Wigdor. Minutes by Bryan Kam.

MEETING DETAILS

Date: Saturday, 25 April 2009

Time: 1:00 PM

Venue: WLH 205

IN ATTENDANCE:

Jared Wigdor, President

Filip Savatic, Vice President

Sebastian Serra, Treasurer

Bryan Kam, Secretary

Swati Yanamadala, Speaker's Committee Chair

Elizabeth Breit, Outreach Chair

Rachel Wolf, MUNTY Head Delegate

Bryce Scanlan, SCSY Secretary-General

Natalie Kotkin, YMUN Secretary-General

Jharrett Bryantt, UNCSY Co-Secretary-General

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:08 PM.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

The Board members formally introduced themselves.

3. RECRUITMENT

- Rachel pointed out that to the extent of presenting a unified front for YIRA, recruitment done during the Bulldog Days Extracurricular Bazaar was good. She also noted that the sheets containing Board member contacts were good, as some pre-frosh did not want to leave emails, but could still contact Board members if they had questions.
- It was pointed out a discussion of recruitment materials was needed, as there were too many handouts, which was contrary to a "one YIRA" policy. Filip agreed that all recruitment materials needed to be redesigned, and he would do so over the summer. He said that each Board member needed to send him a piece of text describing their department. Liz pointed out that it was best to have as little information on the pamphlets as possible, and for the recruitment material to point to the new website, where freshmen could find out more.
- Bryce pointed out that the Board needed to do more to reduce the competition between each individual department, and to encourage prospective YIRA members to get involved in all departments.

- Filip said a discussion of the “YIRA bazaar” ideas that would take place during Camp Yale, was needed. Natalie said she liked the idea of a YIRA bazaar, and that the format of the YIRA info session during Camp Yale should be to first introduce YIRA as a whole, and then allow freshmen to go off into corners where each department would be located.
- Jharrett mentioned that UNCSY needed to be put up front during Camp Yale, so as many freshmen as possible would attend.
- Rachel then pointed out that although YIRA has many freshmen try out for MUNTY, greater effort needs to be placed on communicating the idea that if a freshman does not make it onto MUNTY, they can still be an integral part of YIRA.
- Jared then proposed that the Board needed to set a timeline for when and what type of Camp Yale events would take place. Filip said that the Board should once again have a YIRA info session and a barbeque.
- Bryce asked what would happen if a freshman missed the info session and the barbeque. He asked what strategies the Board would implement to recruit freshman that had missed these events. Natalie suggested doing a second YIRA meeting later in September, and Bryce proposed the second meeting could be after MUNTY tryouts. Sebastian then proposed that the barbeque should be before the info session rather than after, as this would allow YIRA to capture members who had shown up simply for a barbeque.
- The discussion moved on to recruitment efforts over the summer. Jared pointed out that YIRA had collected 116 emails during the Extracurricular Bazaar. He wondered if YIRA should send personalized emails. Rachel argued this might be somewhat excessive. Filip pointed out the best time to send emails would be one or two weeks before Camp Yale.
- Jared then asked Jharrett whether Sam and Kwaku had suggested good ways to improve recruitment for IMSCSY. Jharrett replied that Sam and Kwaku had pointed to the decentralized Head Delegate system as a fault, and that Jharrett and Ferny would institute a centralized recruitment system, and would try and meet as many freshmen as possible to sign them onto the conference. Jharrett pointed out that Ferny and he were not looking to expand the conference too substantially above the 85 – 90 delegates last year. He mentioned that UNCSY would be a dry run for some SCSY committees, including the Harry Potter JCC.
- Jharrett then said that the decision process for the UNCSY Secretariat was well on its way, and that he had candidates in mind already. Jared asked Jharrett to send around to the Board a list of prospective Secretariat members, and Jared proposed the Board vote their approval by email.
- Rachel said that in relation to recruitment, she would require all freshmen accepted into MUNTY to participate in UNCSY for training purposes, as well as rising sophomores who had been accepted in the spring.

4. SPEAKER’S COMMITTEE / OUTREACH PARTICIPATION

- Jared asked what Liz’s and Swati’s plans were to increase participation in Outreach and the Speaker’s Committee.
- Liz pointed out that the Speaker’s Committee had solid group, but she also wanted her own Outreach social event to reach out to freshmen. She also mentioned she would prepare a good graphic flyer outlining what Outreach would do next year.
- Bryan asked whether Liz had considered registering Outreach as a Dwight Hall organization as a means of increasing recruitment. Liz pointed out this might present problems with the Constitution. Jared asked if Liz could look into this, and present to the Board for the beginning of the fall semester.
- Swati then presented on the Speaker’s Committee. She said that the way George had run the Speaker’s Committee, there was a very fluid membership, and meetings were more like “office hours” rather than full meetings. She said this was good in that it presented opportunities for particular members to bring particular speakers they really wished to, to campus. She, however, also said that the Speaker’s Committee needed to hold regular meetings to develop a core membership that stuck to the Committee from event to event. She mentioned that she intended to keep iWeek and the Speaker Series as a must on the Speaker’s Committee calendar.
- Natalie asked Swati if she had thought of a theme for the year as a way to present the Speaker’s Committee in a more organized way.
- Sebastian proposed the Speaker’s Committee should in the long-term try to become a “go-to” place for all organizations wishing to bring speakers to campus, which might not necessarily have the expertise and resources. Swati said this was what George had informally been doing to some extent.

- Liz proposed that perhaps a good approach to Speaker's Committee events might to have more regular, but smaller events, as this might help YIRA's retention efforts. Filip agreed, and said that diversification of the type of events hosted was a good step.
- Natalie then said the Speaker's Committee was a good intra-YIRA resource, and that the Conferences should look to the Speaker's Committee for help recruiting speakers.
- Filip then stated that one way to increase retention in the Speaker's Committee would be to create more positions of responsibility, so that the Speaker's Committee could have a small "secretariat" in the same way that the conferences do.
- Sebastian pointed out that the Board should have an internal number of people that it aspired to for each of the programs.
- Liz then mentioned that the Speaker's Committee and Outreach should work together to combine events.

5. MEMBER RETENTION

- Jared asked the Board what strategies YIRA should adopt to retain members.
- Natalie proposed the idea of a YIRA sweatshirt, and asked for a general discussion about YIRA gear. She said that she always saw Yale Debate sweatshirts, but there was no YIRA equivalent.
- Bryce pointed out that Zharna had once put together a cost-benefit analysis of staffing hours versus benefits, such as food, dinners, Conference gear, and that this had shown both Conferences paid back YIRA staffers roughly for the hours they put in.
- Sebastian pointed out that although YIRA members within the Secretariats, and within MUNTY stay fairly loyal to YIRA, it was much more difficult to retain staffers, who simply staffed a single weekend, and were otherwise not involved. Bryan pointed out that the point of contact for most staffers was their respective chairs, and this would be one good way to retain members, although it relied very heavily on how far individual chairs were willing to engage staffers. He also pointed out that the idea of having a YMUN "reunion" dinner was a good way to keep staffers involved.
- Liz pointed out that the Speaker's Committee and Outreach have the capacity to get YIRA members more invested, and this was especially the case if these took place in small groups, which allowed easier access.
- Filip and Sebastian pointed out that YIRA needed more "year-round" rather than "single-weekend" programs to keep members involved. Bryan suggested a "big sib / little sib" idea similar to other organizations. Liz said this was a good idea in principle, but needed to be executed perfectly in order to work. Filip suggested this could first happen within departments, but Sebastian said this was went against trying to create inter-departmental links. Jared also pointed out the problem of not knowing what list of freshmen to work on, as this was fairly fluid.
- Sebastian then said it was necessary to change the mentality of some staffers, who staffed the conferences simply to obtain funding for YIRA / Reach Out trips. Natalie replied that she thought not that many staffers staffed simply to get funding. Liz also pointed out that most trips actually improved a sense of YIRA cohesion.
- Sebastian pointed that some sort of delineation of members based on past commitment to YIRA might be a good idea to increase retention. Natalie agreed this might be a good idea, as in the case of "varsity letters", many continually strived to obtain a letter.

6. TECHNOLOGY

- Chair of the Tech Committee, Sam Yellen, visited the Board meeting to present on the state of YIRA technology.
- He said all three websites, including the SCSY, YMUN and YIRA websites, were now hosted on the "Slice" server, which cost \$25 a month, with \$20 for hosting, and an additional \$5 for backup. He explained this was slightly more expensive than previously, as YIRA now "owns" a proportion of the server, which should allow for faster speeds and greater flexibility.
- He also pointed out that Google Sites could now be used to post, share and collaborate documents.
- He mentioned that new YIRA emails had been created along the lines of name@yira.org.

- He then pointed out that Sebastian had the “Quickbooks” application for accounting, and that Bryan had “Constant Contact” for emails.
- Sam then pointed out centralization was needed for the YIRA calendars, and Bryan agreed to sort this out.
- Sam was then asked what the future of the Tech Committee would be after graduation, and Sam said he was unsure. Filip suggested the idea of sending out a Yale-wide application, and framing the position in such a way it would become desirable. Natalie pointed out the problem was that a good knowledge of Model UN was necessary to manage Conference websites. Sam also mentioned that the sort of skillset was difficult to find. Bryan was to organize the application process for Tech Committee Chair in a subsequent bulletin.
- Filip asked whether the new website could be unveiled at the Banquet. All agreed this would be a good idea.

7. DEPARTMENT UPDATES

- Jharrett was asked to update the Board on UNCSY. He said that at this point, UNCSY was seeking to secure funding from many sources, including the MacMillan Center, and that he was in the process of sending applications to obtain such funding.
- Jharrett mentioned he was also in the process of sorting out Secretariat applications.
- A discussion then took place about the new name, UNCSY. Jharrett explained that the basis for the name came from wanting to take away the concept of “IM” from the name, and stress a crisis-based simulation. Different variants for the name were thrown out. Jared said that Jharrett should keep the Board informed of the decision-making and brainstorming process, since the name “IMSCSY” is mentioned several times in the Constitution
- Jared gave an update on MUNTY as Rachel had left. He mentioned that a senior team toasting event had taken place at Pacifico and had been a great success.
- Bryce gave a brief report on SCSY, and said topic briefs would be due in 5 days. He said the secretariat was looking for locations for closing ceremonies, club night and bar night.
- Natalie gave an update on YMUN. She said that secondary applications for dais teams were due on May 2, and that the services side of the Conference was at a brainstorming stage.

8. BOARD FUNCTIONS

- It was decided the first Board meeting in the fall would take place in the evening of Sunday, 30 August 2009.
- Jared’s suggestion to have official Board meetings in WLH every other week, and to have more informal Board dinners on off-weeks, was accepted.
- Jared and Filip mentioned that individual meetings with the President and Vice President had taken place under JT and Shoshana, and that these would continue.
- It was decided that meeting times should be mentioned in YIRA bulletins to increase transparency. Liz and Filip pointed out that some Board meetings should have some privacy over others.
- Jared reminded all Board members that the Board sometimes had ad hoc members involved in the selection process for conference Secretary-Generals.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:51 PM.