



**BOARD MEETING: 31 AUGUST 2009**

President over by Jared Wigdor. Minutes by Bryan Kam.

**MEETING DETAILS**

Date: Monday, 31 August 2009

Time: 7:00 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

Fernando Reyes, UNCSY Co-Secretary-General

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:11 PM.

**2. APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING'S MINUTES**

- Jared asked whether the Board had any suggestions for revisions to the minutes of the previous meeting, which was held on April 25th 2009.
- Several minor errors were pointed out, notably a misspelling of Jared's and Jharrett's names; Bryan said these would be corrected.
- Rachel asked for the removal of "even" from the sentence reading "even if a freshman does not make it onto MUNTY", which implied it was something negative not to be on MUNTY.
- Subject to the above revisions, the minutes were approved unanimously by the Board

**3. DEPARTMENT UPDATES**

- Jared explained that each member of the Board sent updates to him regarding what their department had done the past summer.
- He then asked if there were any questions; seeing as there were no questions, the Board moved onto the next item of the agenda.

#### 4. MASTER CALENDAR

- Filip presented the YIRA master calendar to the Board; he stated that everyone should have had been through the calendar and taken a look; Jared asked that for those who hadn't, to go through the calendars within the next 24 hours.
- Rachel asked if there was a way for the calendar to be shared with personal emails rather than @yira.org emails; Jared said this was possible, and asked for every Board member to write down their personal email.
- Jared described the format of the calendars, explaining there were two calendars: one was a "Master Calendar" which included Board events, while a second was the "Public Calendar" which contained all public events, such as tryouts; the Public Calendar would eventually be put on the website.
- A discussion then proceeded about the dates for UNCSY. Jharrett explained that the date had been moved a week earlier to the 19th Sept. due to the unavailability of rooms. However, it was then realized that Rosh Hashanah would fall on the 19th, so Ferny said that UNCSY would have to occur on the 26th Sept. instead. Several Board members suggested finding a large space, such as in a residential college, where the Opening Ceremonies could be held as an alternative to a room in LC. Jared said that he would have a meeting with the UNCSY Co-Secretaries General to talk through things.
- Several additions were made to the calendars by several Board members:
  - Natalie said YMUN ASG applications would be due on Sept. 23rd.
  - Rachel said that MUNTY would have an evening recruitment event in Swing Space on Sept. 3rd.
- Rachel also mentioned she would add MUNTY practices to the calendar at a future point in time; when asked about the MUNTY retreat, she said she was uncomfortable planning so far ahead, but would likely have it on a Friday.
- Bryce explained that a lot of SCSY events would be coordinated and added closer to the time.
- Natalie wondered why YMUN had not been added to the calendar; Fil explained that the calendar did not go beyond Fall Semester.
- Jared explained that dinners with Fil and Jared had also been added to the calendar, and that Board members would be individually notified closer to the time.
- A discussion followed on the policy on what types of events should be added to the Public Calendar, and how:
  - Jared explained that anything to do with small groups within departments, such as Secretariat or Outreach meetings, generally with 10 – 15 members could be scheduled and added to the calendar by individual department heads; he then explained that meetings or events with 15 – 20 or more members could be added tentatively, but should be approved by the Board as a whole. An exception could be made for regular MUNTY meetings, which would normally have more than 15 – 20 members.
  - Rachel asked why the Board needed to meticulously go through every large event; Jared said larger events tended to be important and should not conflict with other YIRA events, and therefore Board communication was necessary.
  - Sebastian asked whether there was a distinction between what type of events should go on the Master and Public calendars; Jared explained that the rule of thumb should be that all regular meetings were best placed on the Master calendar, while the Public Calendar should contain the meetings and events with 15 – 20 or more people.

#### 5. BUDGET

- Jared asked if everyone had sent their budgets to Sebastian; Liz said she had not, and explained that Edgar (the previous Outreach Director) had lost his computer, and did not have a record of the previous budget. Sebastian said he had used the previous Outreach budget in his calculations.
- The Board moved to item 4c, "discussion of financial security" as Sebastian's computer was being set up with the projector.
- Sebastian explained that YIRA had about \$36,000 dollars in a checking account with Chase that were profits accrued from the previous two years; he also expected YIRA to make an additional \$25,000 this year (however, there were

questions about the budget, and this figure would be revisited in the presentation of the budget at the next Board meeting). He explained that the Board should have a discussion about what to do with that money; a discussion then followed:

- Sebastian said this was a good chance to embark on new projects, such as acquiring office space.
- Jared explained there were many options on the table, which might include starting an endowment, placing the money in a high interest account, or starting new projects that would increase YIRA's on-campus presence.
- Ferny explained that, from his experience with the YPU, a high interest account could give up to 2.5% in interest.
- Bryan asked about the concept of an endowment, and how that would work. Sebastian said this might be ambitious and difficult to manage; Jared explained that Yale organizations could gain access to someone working in the Investments Office, and many organizations simply handed money to David Swensen to manage.
- Ferny explained that the YPU's large endowment was also managed by David Swensen, and that the interest was used to fund all YPU operations. Ferny further explained that the YPU had received an initial donation of \$10,000 in the 1950s, which had been managed through Yale; whenever the organization had a surplus, money would be further put into the endowment.
- Natalie asked whether YIRA's independent status would prevent YIRA from using the Investment Office's services; however, Ferny answered that Yale considers all organizations independent, but connected, whether or not the organization was incorporated, as YIRA is.
- Rachel said she wanted to play devil's advocate; she contended that because YIRA continues to make money every year from the conferences, the model was different from the YPU or the YDN, and that YIRA did not need to survive using its savings. She further said that because of this, it would be wiser to start funding new initiatives now that YIRA members could benefit from, such as Independent Initiatives.
- Liz asked how much money would be locked up in an endowment, and whether it would be possible to reach into the endowment and fund some new projects; Sebastian explained that an endowment would be a long-term project, and the money would be stuck for some time.
- Ferny stated that there was an argument for the long-term line of argument; that while past generations of YIRA had been financially prudent, that may not be so in the future; he explained that an endowment would at least ensure the organization continued.
- Bryce recommended that the money be used for such things as lowering delegate fees, and improving the quality of conferences, as current conference secretariats are sometimes in the situation where the quality of the conferences might be compromised as a result of monetary considerations.
- Natalie agreed and provided an example of where this has been true; she said that the YMUN Secretariat was considering a post-YMUN formal at the Elevate Lounge, which would cost \$3,000. She said that this was not very much in the YIRA scheme of things, but that she continued to hesitate due to the high cost.
- Filip argued there should be a balance, where some money was set aside for rainy days, but some was spent for the present, and that the Board really should figure out where the cutoff point was.
- Jared said this had been a fruitful discussion, but that the Board needed to turn to the budget.
- Sebastian then presented the budget; he explained he had input all the data into Quick Books.
- However, a problem was noted with the budget, as the revenue and profit for YMUN seemed to be heavily overstated. As a result, discussion on the budget, and on member benefits was postponed until the next Board meeting.

## **6. BOARD POLICIES DOCUMENT**

- Jared explained that each member of the Board had written a set of Board policies, as a "what we did" document that would be passed down so future generations might know what YIRA's practices had been.
- He further explained that this had been something discussed at length in the previous Board, but which had not been fully implemented.

- Rachel agreed that this was something useful, and that she liked having everything on the record; however, she then stated she was worried by the line in the Board document which stated that these policies were binding; she said she saw this line as being contrary to the mission of the document, which she saw as a guiding document rather than binding.
- Bryce said he saw the document differently, and explained that the way the document had been conceived in the previous year was as a foundational document than was more binding than fluid transitional documents, but less so than the constitution; he said that policies could be changed by vote of the Board, but were otherwise binding.
- Natalie said she agreed with what Bryce had said; she said the Board policy document needed to codify certain things, such as interdepartmental relations, but should not contain specific dates; she cited another good example of what she thought should be included: the idea that Outreach should send delegates to YMUN
- Jared said he thought the policy document should be as binding as possible, but easily amendable; he said this would act as a safeguard against future Board members who might be lazy or incompetent, and that those Board members needed to be held against what they were supposed to do.
- Rachel said she had more faith in the Board's successors than Jared, and she didn't really see the need for a policy document that bound them to such things as cleaning up after banquets; Liz said she agreed and saw the document as a sort of "wiki" document than as a codified law
- Filip said he agreed with the idea of the document acting as an "accountability" document rather than a "transition" document, and that the document as it was written needed to be submitted and changed, with sections struck out. Natalie agreed, saying the sections left in the document should be principles or laws that should be binding, and that the document should therefore contain as little as possible.
- Natalie suggested that the Board have three documents: a Constitution, a Policy document, and then a transition wiki that could be more frequently updated; she said the distinction for the Board Policy document should be somewhere along the lines of "the Treasurer should ensure all Board members have a credit card" rather than "the Treasurer should get credit cards by [a certain date]".
- Bryce reaffirmed that the Board Policy document should be an enforcement mechanism, and explained he had written into the document a section setting out criteria for the removal of a Secretary-General. Jared explained that the Constitution also had a section about the impeachment of a Board member if they were not fulfilling their duties, and that the Board Policy document, which would codify what Board members are bound to do, would be the grounds for building a case against such members.
- Sebastian noted that the Secretary-General positions were more important, and policies should be more detailed for their parts of the document; Filip explained he thought this would happen naturally.
- Jared agreed that his initial intention of the Board Policy document had been unclear, and he deferred discussion on it until the next Board meeting; he asked that all Board members revised their sections to fit the "accountability" model that had been discussed. He said these should be sent to him by Sunday night.

## 7. RECRUITMENT REVIEW

- Filip began by saying he was disappointed in general with how recruitment had turned out, and that he had written a list of what had gone wrong, and how things could have been improved.
- He continued by saying that the numbers were not disastrous, but could have been better. Altogether, SCSY had about 20 signups, YMUN had 23 signups, UNCSY had just over 10, Outreach had 15. All in all, YIRA had about 200 freshmen sign up, while this was nearly 400 at the previous year's bazaar.
- Ferny explained that a caveat to that, however, was that almost all the political organizations had far fewer signups than previously; Rachel added that they had noticed fewer students at the Extracurricular Bazaar in general.
- Filip then proceeded to present the expenditures for the Bazaar, stating that a total of \$400 had been spent, which was dramatically less than for last year, when tote bags and water bottles had been made for the occasion.
- Filip then said that in order to bolster signups, the Board would have to continue its recruitment drive. Rachel agreed, and said she feared that the current list of emails the Board had did not contain all potential enthusiastic members, and that she had to think through this issue particularly, because she needed more potential members to try out for MUNTY.
- The following plan was then discussed and agreed on by the Board:

- All Board members would send their personal sign-up lists to Bryan, who would then consolidate all the emails that had been gained from Bulldog Days, the Extracurricular Bazaar and the YIRA Info Session, removing duplicates.
  - An email would then immediately be sent out an email to all new freshmen, with a short explanation of what YIRA is, and letting them know how they could immediately get involved – MUNTY tryouts, UNCSY, and the YIRA townhall.
  - Concurrently, a short email about MUNTY tryouts would be sent to the general membership.
  - A weekly bulletin would then be sent out to all members (i.e. including freshmen) the coming Saturday or Sunday, that would list all opportunities available, and suggest all members attend the townhall.
  - Sebastian also suggested he put together a list of international studies classes, which were most likely to comprise potential members, and that Board members hand out YIRA fliers outside these classes.
  - Rachel's email turning down members for MUNTY would also be worded to funnel members into other YIRA opportunities
- The Board unanimously decided on this plan of action.

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10.08 PM.