



BOARD MEETING: JAN. 31ST 2010

Presided over by Jared Wigdor. Minutes by Bryan Kam.

MEETING DETAILS

Date: Sunday, Jan. 31st 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

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 explained that each Board member should give a 60 to 90-second update so that the Board would know what they had been doing, and what their goals would be past YMUN. He explained that while it was perceived that the YIRA calendar was over after YMUN in the Spring semester, this was not true, and that the post-YMUN period was a great opportunity to implement many projects and goals.
- Fil explained that he had been working on international trips, which he said he would be discussed later in the meeting. He also said he had been working on the Trip to the U.N., and that because all tours of the U.N. had been booked, Prof. Jean Krasno had suggested going to the United States Mission to the U.N. instead. He explained he had emailed an official request to the Mission, and that if he did not hear from them soon, he would email Prof. Krasno to see if she would be able to get in touch with her contacts there. Fil further said the date of the U.N. trip would likely change from April 2nd to April 9th, as this was the first date when tours would be available.

- Fil further explained that Poker Night had been attended by 5 members, and had been low-key. He commented that this may have been because it was not publicized early enough, as he had not had the finalized date until several days before.
- Fil said he had also met with the Globalist Editor-In-Chief and Executive Director, as well as the President of the ISO. He explained that in both meetings, he had talked about numerous ways the organizations could work together, and had started sending emails back and forth subsequently. He explained the main suggestion from ISO had been the idea of co-hosting a joint “wear-all-white” party, possibly at Elevate Lounge.
- Natalie explained that she had run YMUN in the past week, and that it had been successful. She said she had held a debriefing session with the full Secretariat the night before, and that going forward, applications for Secretary-General would be sent out on Friday, Feb. 5th. She noted that the Post-Conference Social would no longer be taking place at Elevate Lounge, as the manager had mistakenly booked someone else for the date of Saturday, Feb. 6th. She explained the plan was to do something on the Friday instead, or perhaps to have the Social take place after HNMUN. She further noted that the applications for Secretary-General were being sent out a full week earlier than last year, as the experience had been that the selections had taken place too late.
- Jharrett explained he had been thinking about where to take UNCSY in the coming year, and that much of this would be discussed later in the meeting during the presentation of his Independent Initiatives proposal. He explained he had been thinking about what to include in the UNCSY Secretary-General application.
- Rachel explained that MUNTY would be going to HNMUN soon, and that MUNTY’s membership had change by 1 person.
- Sebastian said he had deposited all checks from YMUN, which had amounted to an additional \$100,000 in the bank.
- Bryan explained he had been working largely on technology issues, and that this would be discussed later in the agenda. He noted that YIRA’s Wikipedia page had now been switched to the correct location, and that news of this would be included in the weekly bulletin.
- Dahlia said that the SCSY Secretariat had been on a retreat, and that it had been very productive. She said she had now sent out a doodle to decide Secretariat meeting times. Fil asked if the Secretariat had put together a prospectus for MUNTY to take to Harvard; Dahlia said this was in the process of being made, and was on her “to-do” list.

4. YMUN ATTENDANCE

- Jared explained that consideration of the membership did not usually happen until later in the semester when the Board would vote on membership, but that since YMUN had occurred just the previous week, it made sense to discuss membership issues at the present moment.
- Natalie explained that in order to qualify as having staffed, members needed to have attended the Preconference Meeting, as well as 5 of 6 committee sessions; if they had not attended the Preconference Meeting, they needed to have attended all 6 committee sessions. She noted that on her list, a “0.5” attendance meant a situation where a staff member had showed up late or left early.
- Natalie noted there were several special cases where attendance had fallen below 6 sessions. She noted that where this had been the case, she had spoken with each of the members individually and had given them additional responsibilities during the conference.
- She noted that the goal of using Google Docs to mark attendance needed to be better emphasized; she also said punctuality among staff members needed to be emphasized.
- Bryce asked how many members were on the list of those who had staffed; Natalie replied 103 members, in addition to 21 members of the Secretariat.

5. EVENTS & MEMBER BENEFITS

- Fil explained that he had already discussed some of the various social events, but wanted to further discuss some of the events, including the “wear-all-white” party discussed with ISO. He noted that the ISO had hoped to split costs and revenue 50:50.

- Natalie noted that her dilemma for the YMUN Post-Conference Social had been whether to have an event that was sooner and smaller, or later and bigger; she said this was up to discussion, and that \$1,500 had been allocated for an open bar and room rental.
- Bryce said that in addition to these events, he wanted to throw out the idea of a big Happy Hour at Thali Too, as SCSY had received a significant refund from Thali Too after the speakers had not worked during Lounge Night. He said one possibility might be to hold the YMUN Post-Conference Social there instead of Elevate.
- Dahlia said she thought the idea of doing a simple Happy Hour did not seem particularly special; Bryce said the one advantage may be that Thali Too was lenient in terms of serving drinks, although the Secretariat would still need to check against the staffing list for whether or not a member had staffed YMUN.
- Natalie asked if it was possible to put together the event by Saturday; Fil said it would be good to try.
- Bryce suggested holding the party with ISO at Elevate, while having the YMUN Post-Conference Social take place at Thali Too.
- Dahlia said that in order to have more people attend and to increase the size of the party, then the Board needed to rethink how to publicize the event, and to publicize it differently than normal happy hours rather than limit publicity to the YIRA panlist.
- Jared explained that because there was limited time, he wished to move onto a discussion of international trips.
- Fil explained that since the last Board meeting, the trip leader composition had changed somewhat, and that this had led to some changes in the schedule of the trip, such as a greater focus on Calcutta, and less time spent on the Delhi-Bombay portions.
- Fil further explained that one problem was potential wavering interest among some trip members, and that the trip membership now consisted of 6 members.
- Fil explained that there were no updates on the Middle East trip, but that he was to meet with them on Tuesday to do planning. He also explained that the Honduras trip was in the process of organizing the post-trip reception they had planned to have.
- Fil noted the final issue was the issue of stipends, and that because several trip participants had not staffed the conferences, YIRA had an extra \$1,500.
- Fil explained, finally, that he had the results of the Membership Survey that had been sent out in the previous bulletin. He explained that of the 14 responses so far, 6 had been in favor of a trip to Six Flags, while 8 had been against. Rachel said she thought these were the most engaged of YIRA members, and that this therefore indicated relatively low interest.
- Fil noted that interest in the U.N. Trip and weekly YIRA dinner had been high, and that other social events had also received good interest.
- Sebastian commented he thought that discussion of Board-related issues should be limited at weekly dinners, as the previous meeting had turned somewhat into a Board meeting, and that this might have discouraged other members.

6. PRESENTATION ON TECHNOLOGY

- Bryan's presented on the technology issues he had been working on. He explained there were 3 major technology goals: (i) to find a new Director of Technology, (ii) to build and improve YIRA's website, and (iii) to develop a new email bulletin. He explained he had made progress towards working to each of these goals.
- **Director of Technology:** Bryan began by explaining that since the last Board meeting, there was now a candidate for Director of Technology, Lorenzo Ramos-Mucci (BK '12). He explained that Lorenzo was IT Director for the Global21 and had built Global21's South Africa website. He noted that Lorenzo had scored 6 out of 7 on Sam's technology quiz, which Sam had considered "excellent". He explained that he had met with Lorenzo and thought he was great for the job, and that since YIRA had been lacking a Director of Technology for some time, the Board should move to approve Lorenzo. The Board voted unanimously to approve Lorenzo as the new Director of Technology.
- **Build and improve website:** Bryan explained that while YIRA now had a new website, there was still much to improve, including embedding Picasa albums onto the website, allowing new members to sign up to the mailing list directly from the website, constructing a news / announcements section, as well as formatting and aesthetics issues that still needed to be solved. He noted that the solutions included approving the Director of Technology, which the Board had now done. He explained the other solutions he had explored involved researching external web

maintenance and web development companies, for which the prices varied from as low as \$25 / hour to a minimum \$2,000 budget. He noted that Sam's view had been that the market rate was \$50 - \$75 / hour, and that YIRA should aim to spend \$500 - \$1,000 on the website, as well as the same amount for each of the conferences.

- **Develop new email bulletin:** Bryan explained that the major goals of developing a new bulletin included (i) making it more aesthetically-pleasing and more professional, (ii) ensuring information was more usefully conveyed, and (iii) finding a more inexpensive, more user-friendly bulletin program.
- He explained that he had been looking into sample bulletins, and had contacted the organizations responsible for these bulletins to see how they had developed theirs.
- He noted that there were two primary ways to develop a new bulletin. The first was to approve the Director of Technology (which had now been done), as most of the good sample bulletins had been customized, requiring a good knowledge of HTML to code. The second option that he had researched had been to pay a company specialized in creating Constant Contact bulletins; he said that the cost of this from a company named White Light Concepts was roughly \$375 - \$600.
- Bryan noted that regarding the third goal of finding a more inexpensive, more user-friendly email program, he had explored to other options. The first was iContact, which offered a more user-friendly service, where you could paste HTML directly in; the service was roughly the same price. The second was Yale's "Message 2" service, which would likely be free-of-charge to use. He noted, however, that it was still unclear whether or not student organizations were allowed to use the service, and this was being explored.
- **Conclusion:** Bryan concluded that finding a new and approving a new Director of Technology solved many of YIRA's major tech problems. He noted, however, that the results of his research showed that it was possible for YIRA to pay to solve its technology needs, including web maintenance and development (~\$500 - \$1,000) and developing a new email bulletin (~\$375 - \$600).
- Dahlia asked if Lorenzo would be available immediately to work on registration for the SCSY website. Bryan said he and Fil would meet with Lorenzo in the coming week, and this would be discussed.

7. INDEPENDENT INITIATIVES PROPOSAL (FROM FAIZAAN KISAT & AKANKSHA BAJAJ, AND JHARRETT BRYANTT)

- Jharrett presented his proposal first; he said it was unnecessary to go through his entire presentation again, but that the way he proposed of expanding the role of the UNCSY Secretary-General in the Spring was to have him / her potentially lead a Club Model UN team to conferences that MUNTY did not attend. This would help to improve retention of staffers, for whom there was a lack of mid-level leadership opportunities. It would also give more opportunities to those in YIRA to debate and participate in Model UN, and that it did not require a MUNTY-tiered delegate to perform successfully at a Model UN conference. He said, overall, the opportunity to travel would be a great incentive to YIRA members.
- Akanksha and Faizaan noted that their idea was very similar, but they had not thought of the idea along the lines of UNCSY. They said they had been inspired by the drop in attendance at UNCSY, once MUNTY tryouts had been dropped as a prerequisite for the conference. They noted that what attracted members to join YIRA was the idea of participating in Model UN conferences.
- Faizaan noted that he had spoken to other Head Delegates at SCSY, and that Head Delegates had noted that for their teams, those staffing both conferences were guaranteed to travel. He noted that some of the feedback at SCSY had been for YIRA to let its staffers travel more.
- Faizaan noted that they had a concrete proposal to travel to FCMUN, and that they had chosen this conference primarily because of its lower costs, with the delegation fee being \$30 and the per-delegate fee being \$35. The conference would also provide accommodation in FCMUN dorms.
- Faizaan noted the comparisons with theatre, explaining that while there was a Dramat, which was the major organization putting on plays, there were also other plays put on outside of the Dramat, and that travel to these Model UN conferences would be a similar concept. He noted that this would be a good way to keep YIRA members involved in the organization, and that looking at the non-Dramat theatre productions, it was clear that just because there was an alternate did not mean there would necessarily be a decrease in quality.

- Rachel said she thought a major issue was that, if a Club Model UN team were to be fielded, there needed to be some thought as to how that would be structured, and whether there might be potential discord between the two teams.
- She noted that, on the team that had previously been to FCMUN, where there had been a mix of MUNTY and non-MUNTY members, the experience had been mixed, and that not all had had a positive experience.
- Dahlia said she thought that giving greater opportunities to attend conferences would help to solve the problem of freshman attrition, but that she thought the “two-tier” issue was a major issue, which might cause unnecessary friction.
- Sebastian explained that he thought there were two fundamental issues. He explained the first issue was whether or not YIRA should be more inclusive in terms of letting members attend Model UN conferences, and the second issue was what process should be used to allow them to do so.
- Fil said he thought creating a Club team would create the impression of their being an “A” versus “B” team, which he said he thought would create more problems than it solved.
- Bryan said one potential way of avoiding the impression of having an “A” and “B” team was to run trips to the other conferences in an ad-hoc manner, along the lines that international trips were run. He said this would mean there would not be an alternative “team” as such, but that those who went to conferences would change each time, as would the person leading each of those trips.
- Rachel said she liked the idea of having this function on an “events-based” system rather than having a standing team.
- Bryce noted that there were potential benefits to MUNTY of having this proposal take place, as going to other conferences could be seen as an extensive tryout period. He noted that, though rare, there was often flow between Club and Varsity teams for sports.
- Fil noted that having operating the proposals in an ad-hoc way would require having someone in charge, and this would be akin to having a Head Delegate, which might create the tensions that the Board was concerned about. He said the solution was have different people chosen each time to lead the trips.
- Lizzie explained that this solution would lead to these trips being organized haphazardly.
- Jharrett said he wanted to return to the idea of having a team versus the idea of “ad-hoc” trips to conferences; he explained he felt having a Club team was a better solution because it provided leadership positions that gave incentives to members to go to conferences.
- Faizaan said he disagreed with this, and that the perception needed to be created that even if a member did not make it onto a group traveling to one of the conferences, he or she could nevertheless try out again. This would only be ensured by an ad-hoc process. He noted that it was the ability to try out to go to a conference over and over again that would give members an incentive to staff YMUN and SCSY.
- Fil said he thought the way this was forming in his mind was to select certain conferences, such as one in the Fall, and one in the Spring; a month before the registration deadlines of each conferences, an announcement would be posted in the bulletin, and those wanting to either lead the trip or attend as a delegate, would submit applications that would be considered by the Vice-President.
- Dahlia said she agreed, and thought this proposal captured all the benefits of having a Club team, without the disadvantages of having a tiered system.
- Bryce noted that while this was true, he thought it would be important to continue the discussion on such things as selection criteria, what YIRA was looking for in potential delegates, and the possible structure of the proposal. For instance, considerations of criteria of skills or experience might lead to two very different team compositions. If the purpose was to increase participation and have less consistency in those attending conferences, the structure of the proposal might look somewhat different.
- Sebastian said he thought there were two parts to Model UN, the first being the competitive part, whereby delegates competed in Model UN conferences, and the organizational part, whereby YIRA members organized conferences. He said he thought that within YIRA, there were insufficient opportunities for the competitive part, which led to YIRA losing membership to organizations such as Debate and Mock Trial.
- Lizzie said she thought that, returning to the idea of who should administer leadership positions for the trips, she thought it should not be the Vice President, but rather an elected person who should decide.
- Discussion of the Independent Initiatives proposal was deferred to the next meeting, as it was near the time of adjournment.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:58 PM.