Columbia International Relations Council and Association

CIRCA E-Board Meeting Minutes
Date: August 18th, 2020
Time: 9-10:30 PM EST
Location: Zoom

I. 2k leftover from budget talks
    A. Voting which option to remove → Option B removed
        1. A. All 2k in a mutual aid fund
        2. B. All 2k into a rainy day fund & if its still there at the end of the year give to CESIMS
        3. C. Split 1k each for mutual aid & rainy day
    B. Voting for our final choice → Option A → 2k will be dispersed in a mutual aid fund to be given out soon
        1. A. All 2k in a mutual aid fund (5 votes)
        2. B. Split 1k each for mutual aid & rainy day (2 votes)
    C. Should we run it on our own or should we partner with @HelpingStudentsCU (https://www.instagram.com/helpingstudentscu/) → As part of the anti-racism task force, Maria and Anna had developed a form for our own mutual aid fund with an application process similar to the CIRCA Award
        1. Alex brought up a concern about HelpingStudentsCU doing something to avoid taxes - did they run this by a lawyer?
        2. Can branches who set money aside for donation matching or mutual aid, can they add money into this mutual aid pot?
        3. Is it right for eboard to be the ones to judge the experiences and situations of our members asking for help? This further reinforces the power structures that we've been trying to dismantle.
        4. Is it possible to do a CIRCA specific fund in partnership with HelpingStudentsCU so that we wouldn't have that responsibility of distributing the money, just supplying the funds?
        5. What is CIRCA's goal as an organization? → We have a responsibility to our members & that may mean the money should stay within CIRCA
        6. How can we ensure, in setting up this process, that Mutual Aid isn't just a one time coronavirus thing - we should establish processes that allow Mutual Aid to be continued in future eboards
        7. Even if we don't work directly *with* HelpingStudentsCU, it's still worth contacting them for advice
        8. What is CIRCA's responsibility to the greater Columbia? Is that not one and the same as our responsibility to CIRCA members, particularly given what a large campus organization we are?

9. How would we define "CIRCA member" - would we be rewarding those who give more to the club and punishing those who don't participate as much, therefore reinforcing those power dynamics?
10. What if we worked with HelpingStudentsCU for this time period and then throughout the rest of the year creating regulations for a more permanent CIRCA mutual aid fund? HSCU has experience that we don't have, but can develop through working with them to create our fund later on. Plus, NYCIRCA is supposed to split from us within 12 months so it may be difficult to establish the longevity of this now?
11. Who will distribute (Us vs. HSCU)? Is the money limited to CIRCA members? When will this be done and what other work can be done throughout the school year?
12. According to Gabe, ¼ undergrads are in CIRCA so if we give it to everyone then we will still be helping lots of CIRCA people and non-CIRCA people.
13. If we work with HelpingStudentsCU, let's make sure we understand their process of vetting so we know how our money would be used and to see if we'd like to adopt it for the future

D. Who do we want to help distribute the money? (Reminder, it is up to the branches if they would like to add their individual mutual aid funds into CIRCA's 2k) → Option B is the winner
1. Option A → Should we make our own internal CIRCA application (0 Votes)
2. Option B → Should we run this through HSCU (Running this just through HSCU for this year while also sitting down with them and creating a process for years going forward)? (Unanimous among those who voted)

E. Talking to HSCU → telling them what we have, asking them what our options are, ask about legal consultations, asking them what they have done with other groups, what advice do they have (this step doesn't have to be immediate - can be in the future when they are less busy), what is their vetting process

F. Who is the money for? → all Columbia students
1. Option A. → Just CIRCA members (0 Votes)
2. Option B. → Open to all Columbia peeps (majority)

G. If a branch decides not to push their mutual aid into the CIRCA pool, they should still share their application/plan with the rest of eboard. If a branch would like to add their money → please inform Silas and Anna by tomorrow (August 19th)

II. Structure of Town Hall
A. Currently have the form out to raise concerns at this Saturday's town hall
B. Maria will create a private Facebook event for it
C. Previously town halls were only for constitutional amendments, but now we are looking to expand them

D. While we are anticipating a lot of discussion about the recent sexual violence statement, the town hall is for anything members want to talk about

E. Have eboard members shared on the responses to the form ahead of time to see what members would like to discuss

F. How will we handle members looking to talk? Take a list? An open mic format with notes taken and then responses written down by eboard and posted afterwards?

G. Eboard introductions, eboard cameras on

H. Make sure we acknowledge what people have said and let them know that we will be responding

I. Can we set up more direct time slots to talk to people further if someone would like? Should this be branch specific?

J. Is there a way to make it more discussion oriented than taking individual points and then moving → sort of a parli pro concept where we talk broad ideas and then move into a moderated caucus → using the zoom break out feature to facilitate small group discussion?

K. Combining open mic & moderated caucus → have someone come up to the mic and then have a response time after each speaker → type your name in the chat to be on the mic list and use the raise hand feature to have a response time

L. Concerns about more structure & procedure inhibiting the ability to express emotion and anger and to feel heard

M. Jamboard to let people add topics of discussion (wowowowowow Maria that is so cool!!) → send the jamboard out beforehand (if there are too many people on it kicks people off)

N. We should be prepared to adapt if CIRCA members come with a different expectation of what we have for the meeting → particularly if someone demands an answer or an explanation, what do we do? → we can help head this off by setting community guidelines at the beginning of the meeting (and in an email before) so that everything we discuss is being done so in a respectful manner → make it clear that this is just a listening session and it's only the beginning of the conversation

O. Since we haven't updated members about our antiracist/sexual violence actions yet, each action committee for antiracism and sexual violence can create a bullet pointed explanation to throw in a doc to communicate before the meeting

P. STRUCTURE OF THE TOWN HALL - eboard introductions & community guidelines (should take about 10 mins), 20-30 mins of open speaker list & jamboard → then we take the jamboard and topics to have open discussion for the next 1.5 hours
   1. Please try to have at least one, if not both, of your branch heads at the meeting (camera on if possible but we understand if its not)

Q. ALSO LOOK AT THE COMMUNITY AGREEMENT THAT KATHERINE AND MWAN WORKED ON BECAUSE WE NEED SGB TO LOOK AT IT SO WE CAN HAVE A QUICK TURN AROUND (the link is in the fb group)

R. Follow up meetings? Possibility of office hours like TT does w/ signing up on a spreadsheet