

MIMSA Transition Report for 2011 Board

Position: President

Name: Dale Kalina

First of all, congratulations on winning the election... you're going to have one busy year ahead of you!

Description of position and responsibilities:

The president of MIMSA largely has two jobs: managing the Board and managing the external relations that MIMSA has.

- a) Managing the Board: We had weekly board meetings that lasted, on average, 2 hours. Weekly agendas were prepared by the General Secretary and meetings were called by myself. I generally was the first person to speak in a meeting and presented weekly updates including problems, successes, goals, etc. For the rest of the meeting, I introduced different topics for discussion as per the agenda. In the event that discussions get 'out of control' it was my duty to remind people not to talk over each other and to be polite. This was sometimes successful, sometimes it took a little more effort... but it is, at the end of the day, the responsibility of the President to keep order in the meetings.

Outside of meetings, the President is the go-to person for anything that is going on in the Board. Especially before an event or if there is some conflict, etc. the President is essentially on-call 24/7. I have generally been quite accessible through my mobile, email (which goes to my phone as well), skype, etc. And I have found that, not surprisingly, if a board member needs something accomplished, they will do everything in their power to contact you, however, if you need to get something done, you must do everything in your power to contact them...

- b) In terms of dealing with everything outside of the MIMSA Board, I have found that the President is usually the primary point of contact for everyone from Helena Melicharova (Officer of International Student Affairs), the Dean and Vice Deans, students and individuals outside of MU. On a regular basis, I am contacted by all of the above and have generally found it best to reply or forward on their request, etc. as soon as I can. It goes without saying that I can usually answer the questions or requests of the individuals- as president you generally know what's going on- however, it's also important to remember to delegate things, otherwise you'll become overworked.

Goals:

My main goals over the past year were to bring more credibility to MIMSA and to increase the sense of community we have here at the international program at LF MU. When I was elected, it was halfway through the academic year and the previous board was comprised of 50% 6th year students, who were busy taking state exams, so those of us who weren't were trying to manage MIMSA, which became a bare-bones sort of organization.

I would say that these two main goals were met over my term as President. The election itself was very helpful in getting people interested in MIMSA. For three weeks, essentially, MIMSA was all anyone was talking about, which really gave us a lot of credibility off the bat and allowed us to get to a running start, and really brought more credibility to MIMSA.

My second goal, of increasing a community atmosphere at LF MU was a longer process, but by having different events that appealed to different individuals, we brought some more individuals together. Before this board, MIMSA was criticized for throwing "just parties," so we tried to counteract it and actually threw no parties in our first semester as a board. The starting of the Pat a Mat program and Orientation Week 2010 was also successful in developing a stronger sense of community, especially for the first year students. It was a struggle at first to get the other student groups and the faculty 100% on board, but I believe after the success that we had with it this year, especially with the first year students' academics, everyone seems to be on board for next year. A full report of the events should be online.

Other:

Also, during my term, we rewrote the constitution so that it described the organization in more detail. We took cues from other student union constitutions form around the world to compile ours. We ratified it with in our general meeting and it became our official constitution. Unfortunately, the constitution that we had registered with the Czech Ministry of the Interior could not be changed outside of 15 days after the GM, about which we were previously unaware. So for the next board, another general meeting will need to be held, to ratify another constitution, and then within 15 days, the new board will have to go back to the lawyers (contact me and I will do this with you, because I know the lawyers personally) and have it fixed with the CZ Government.

Apart from that, we also changed voting this year so that all members of the International Medical Programme can vote for MIMSA pres/vp as opposed to earlier, where it was only Cardholders who were given that right.

A new website was created, which took a lot of effort, especially throughout the summer, however, it is up and running and looks pretty good. One criticism about the website was that we were unable to get a working forum up on the website even though that has been one of the goals throughout the elected term.

Criticisms from past year:

Sometimes it was difficult to keep on top of PR and making sure that advertising was sent out early enough. Some of our events garnered fewer attendees than were expected, or had to be cancelled altogether due to poor attendance.

Additionally, some members of the board were uninterested in their positions after the initial “honeymoon phase” and were difficult to convince to participate in certain events. In the event that this happens in your board as well, I do suggest talking to the person, and to those around him/her and try to give them tasks that interest them, etc. but this was a challenge that I had in my board from time to time.

Advice:

I am a particularly stubborn person, but I have found that it has been a good idea to work on being a little bit more flexible. Having Vasco as my vice president was very helpful because he balanced me out quite a lot... but it is important to pick and choose when to be stubborn and when to find a compromise. A lot of this job really is politics (whether that’s a good or bad thing, I’m not sure), and it takes time to learn the dynamic of your board and of everyone else you have to interact with as president.

If you have any other questions, of course email me or call me....

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Congrats once again, and good luck

Dale