



international debate education
association

IDEA General Assembly 2005

Minutes Day 1 – Tuesday, November 8th

Hotel Reval Central: Tallinn, Estonia.

Taken By:

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Attendance: **IDEA Governing Board** (Katrín Viru, Estonia; Ivailo, Bulgaria; René Brinda, Czech Republic; Chris Baron, Baltimore USA; Noel Selegzi, OSI-NDP). **IDEA Members** (tallied below). **IDEA Staff and Affiliates** (Svetlana Batrak, Marcin Zaleski, Nina Watkins, Patrick Blanchfield, Sharon Porter, and Jurate Motiejunaite).

Katrín Viru (Estonia; IDEA-NL Board Chair) opens the meeting at 9:45 AM. We have been delayed because of late arrivals.

Katrín empowers Ivailo (Bulgaria; IDEA-NL Board) to act as meeting administrator. We count proxies: there is one proxy – Mongolia – which has been delegated to Chris Barron (BUDL USA; IDEA-NL Board).

Ivailo then moves to discuss the agenda.

Bojana (Slovenia) has several questions: how many voting members are present? Is there a quorum?, and Can members be informed of the number of currently active voting members? Bojana also request that the reasons for absences be clarified. Bojana closes her comment by claimin that Board members cannot represent their own nations. Katrín says that this is not the case, and cites the bylaws accordingly

We note that, currently there are 13 voting members present, with one proxy in addition. We anticipate several arrivals tomorrow. In total, there are twenty-seven voting members in IDEA.

Virginija (Lithuania) requests that we defer voting until the arrival of others.

Ivailo indicates that we have a quorum –one third of voting members – and that voting now is thus legitimate.

Katrin says that Ivailo will outline today's rules of order. Ivailo requests that we offer time limits for speaking so as to prevent delays, and to ensure prompt completion of the agenda. Ivailo thus specifically suggests one minute limits to proposals and questions. Likewise, Ivailo indicates that he would like rules of courtesy to be obeyed.

Bojana suggests that we do not have a quorum because of absenteeism. Ivailo cites the bylaws and indicates that we do. Ivailo notes that there are varying reasons for non-attendance, ranging from ill health to visa problems (as in the case of Iulia from Moldova) to scheduling conflicts.

Vedran (Serbia) again asks if we have a quorum.

Katrin re-iterates that we do.

Vedran notes that that IDEA needs to stress attendance to members in the future. He acknowledges, however, that, if we have a legitimate quorum, we must proceed.

Before moving on, Katrin indicates that she has contacted nearly everyone, and then outlines the causes of current absenteeism. According to Katrin, Croatia gave no reason for a lack of attendance. Haiti is not here because of visa problems. Katrin indicates that IDEA needs a new partner in Poland because the JA organization is uninterested; Montenegro has not responded to her emails. Kazakhstan should be coming, but will be coming late due to delays in receiving a visa. Belarus has just arrived and will be here soon. The Mongolian is ill and has sent in a proxy (noted earlier). Kosovo is absent for unknown reasons. Kyrgyzstan is coming late. Australia is absent for unknown reasons. Tajikistan has botched its visa applications. Germany's membership is up for discussion due to a lack of activity; it is a supporting member, but not an active one.

With Katrin's list done, Ivailo moves to discuss the agenda. He notes that we will be discussing member communication and motivating attendance tomorrow. Ivailo notes that the Board has been discussing these issues at length and is eager to discuss them in accord with agenda.

Ivailo opens the agenda to discussion. Chris notes the minor changes (largely in wording) between the paper agenda distributed today and the copy emailed to members earlier in the month.

Ivailo quickly overviews the agenda.

We vote to accept the agenda. The agenda is accepted unanimously; there are no objections.

We move to the next point, the adoption of last year's minutes.

Bojana has a proposal. Bojana feels that adopting the minutes so late is not feasible. She motions that the minutes for upcoming Assemblies be made available online and distributed by email in the weeks immediately after the events. Ivailo notes, in response, that Dutch law mandates that these be approved in a face to face context.

Bojana makes a proposal that the minutes be put online and as streaming audio with a rider that they be open to be approved. Patrick and Noel (IDEA-NL Board; OSI-NDP) indicate that there may be technical difficulties with the audio: there may be sound quality or file size issues. Bojana amends her proposal to the effect that IDEA put the text online and post the audio if it is determined to be technically possible. Sharon (IDEA-USA) and Virginija (Lithuania) second this motion. Noel notes that there may be questions regarding the appropriateness of broadcasting recordings of closed-door General Assembly sessions, which may include material including discussion of candidates or financial motions.

Ivailo summarizes the proposal. It is:

Within one month's time, IDEA will distribute the minutes to members pending comments.

Rene notes that the minutes differ from transcription.

Noel suggest that, a week after distribution, members may suggest changes to the minutes; they have a week to do so.

Ivailo summarizes the revised proposal. It is:

*(Revised) **Within one month's time, the Board will distribute the minutes to members pending comments. Members have one week to make comments; a lack of comments indicates consent. After a week, the minutes will be published online with a disclaimer indicating that they have yet to be approved by the GA.***

We vote on this proposal. It is unanimously affirmed; there are no objections.

We proceed to vote on the adoption of last year's minutes. Thirteen vote for. Slovenia abstains.

We proceed to discussing election procedures. Ivailo outlines the procedure for voting, and notes that on the Board this year there must be a minimum of six people. Ivailo briefly reviews how campaigning has proceeded, and how candidates were made public. This year, there are thirteen candidates for the Board.

Belarus arrives. There is now an additional voting member present. We now have 15 votes in the General Assembly.

Ivailo introduces the Election Committee. It is composed of Bradley (IDEA-NL's lawyer, who is in Armenia at the moment), Marcin (IDEA-NL; OSI-NDP), and Ivailo himself.

Bojan (Macedonia) clarifies that people may vote for *up to nine* candidates. In response to a question from Virginia, we note that multiple candidates may be elected from the same country. Noel clarifies the different classes of Board Members (the IDEA-US reciprocal member, the OSI representative member, etc.).

Ivailo distributes the ballots. It is 10:15.

At 10:30, voting finishes. We move to the next issue in the agenda, the President's Report. Katrin opens the President's Report by noting that the past year has been an exceptional one, and that she is thus eager to answer questions.

Katrin overviews four large developments: the IDEA Consortium Strategy Meeting in Salem, Oregon, USA; job interviews for IDEA-NL; the IDEA-US Board meeting; and meetings with IDEA-NL auditors this Fall.

IDEA is at a crossroads, Katrin begins. It is important to clarify IDEA's composition. IDEA is a consortium of four organizations. Katrin defers to Noel to explain the relationship between the four bodies; an organizational chart handout is distributed. The IDEA 'Consortium' is not a legal entity – it is an organizational concept, a brand name for public consumption. Thus, for the outside world, there is a single 'IDEA'. Noel draws a parallel to the Red Cross – though it is perceived as one entity, it is actually multiple organizations.

Noel begins by describing OSI's Network Debate Program. Though OSI has a Board, the NDP does not. The NDP reports to (1) the OSI Education Board and (2) various regional boards, depending on where the NDP is active. The NDP now reports directly to Laura Silber, who has replaced Liz Lorant. OSI's NDP handles various administrative concerns, IDEA's web presence, etc. Though we will address OSI's ambitions and interests later in the agenda, Noel briefly discusses how they relate to Network Expansion (to new countries).

Noel moves on to discuss IDEA-NL. IDEA-NL's flagship event is the Youth Forum, and IDEA-NL handles European fundraising. IDEA-NL, at the recommendation of the NDP, is looking into new possibilities for work involving US expansion. On another front, we are making IDEA-NL into an organization with a more substantial Dutch legal and personnel present.

Noel address IDEA-USA. IDEA-USA and IDEA-NL are distinct entities, and IDEA-USA is a Non-Profit Corporation registered in a new state. An official charity under Federal US Tax law (supervised by the IRS), IDEA-USA must maintain a board with a majority presence of US citizens. IDEA-NL cannot conduct business in the US. Noel briefly reiterates the relationship between IDEA-USA and IDEA-NL outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding distributed at last year's Istanbul GA. We note which activities – Duino, the IDEA Tournament of Champions, etc. – are IDEA-USA events. Noel also alludes to the development of the new Middle School Debate Program, done as a collaboration between Claremont-McKenna and IDEA-USA. Noel notes the complexities of the IDEA (idebate) Press situation, which have now been rectified.

Noel next discusses the situation of IDEA-at-Willamette. He clarifies that there is no IDEA-at-Willamette Legal entity, but outlines how Willamette University has offered us office space and employee positions. These staff (Patrick and Cheron) work in the interests of the IDEA Consortium. Noel finally notes how the IDEA at Willamette situation offers new capacities and eligibilities for fundraising for IDEA.

Noel closes by noting the common activities the various IDEAs pool their efforts and resources towards. These encompass, Standards, Trainings, Curriculum Development, and more.

Bojana requests that we discuss the relationship between the IDEAs immediately. Katrin says that we will deal with this pursuant to the Agenda (namely, following her report).

Katrin returns to her report. She outlines her attitude at the meeting in Salem, and the problems those present identified. The meeting, she says, was very productive. The meeting also produced a regular conference call, which Katrin feels is a step in the right direction and towards better communication across the group.

Katrin moves on to discuss the new staff hired for IDEA-NL. Those present at the Comenius meeting early in the week informally commend Nancy Claxton, who is the curriculum advisor hired by IDEA-NL. Katrin also describes the background of Baudwijn Beckers, the IDEA-NL's potential development director, who will, obstacles aside, begin work in January 2006. Katrin discloses that Noel will soon be stepping down as IDEA-NL Executive Director, and will be replaced by Jurate Motiejunaite (Lithuania) for a period of one year. Bojana has several questions regarding the new IDEA-NL hires. Katrin clarifies who they are.

Bojana asks why a call for the Executive Director was not made publicly. Noel clarifies that Jurate will temporarily fill the position as an Acting ED, and that he is resigning on short notice due to his OSI responsibilities. In the interim of Jurate's tenure, IDEA-NL will advertise a public and open call for a new, full-time ED. The by-laws are thus not being violated because a full and open search is pending.

Vedran (Serbia) notes the new organizational chart is a positive development. However, he questions whether we are not experiencing mission drift. Vedran suggest that all of our job descriptions be explicitly related to IDEA mission expectations.

Sharon (IDEA-USA) volunteers that the Willamette meeting was not perfect. However, she says that the acquisition of personnel is demanded by the goal of making the organization sustainable.

Katrin concludes her presentation by discussing Remco's (IDEA-NL's contracted auditor) suggestions regarding safeguarding IDEA's legal and financial stability. She also briefly discusses new developments at the IDEA-USA meeting, which involved discussion of *The People Speak* grants.

After an 11:15 coffee break, we reconvene at 11:35.

Ivailo discusses the election winners. Those elected are: (1) Chris Baron, (2) Jurate, (3) Joe Z, (4) Veronicka, (5) Katrin, (6) Rene. We give the new Board Members a round of applause.

We open Katrin's presidential report for questions.

Bojana has several questions. Firstly, she would like to be informed more of the Governing Board's activities during the years, perhaps via a monthly report.

Katrin indicates that the Governing Board will have a secretary, who will regularly update members via the debate-l email listserve.

Bojana proceeds with several questions about the organizational charts. Bojana says that she 'has no problems with the existence of IDEA-USA'. Bojana says that IDEA-NL is a new creation, and that the IDEA created in Prague was simply IDEA. Bojana says that it takes time to find IDEA members on the website. In response, Nina notes that the website has only been up for four days, and is still a work in progress.

Shahin from Azerbaijan arrives. There are now 16 votes in the GA.

Bojana is curious what this General Assembly decides – what is this body responsible for? Ivailo clarifies that the Assembly involves the operations of members in the Netherlands. Bojana then asks why we will discuss things like the January events. Sharon says that the Standards are important for IDEA-NL; likewise, Marcin notes that cooperation between the IDEAs is essential, and this meeting allows for that kind of cooperation. The General Assembly thus allows for feedback, Marcin says, allows for feedback and work together. Jurate clarifies that, last year, some confusion may have arisen regarding the January event, which, though an IDEA-US event, was discussed by the IDEA-NL General Assembly; the dissemination of this structural chart, however, is a step towards increasing transparency and preventing such mishaps in the future. Svetlana (OSI-NDP) adds that there have been repeated requests for transparency in IDEA-US dealings, and that IDEA full-time staff are striving to respond to these requests.

Bojana says that she does not remember seeing the Memorandum of Understanding. She would thus like the Memorandum to be distributed a second time.

Bojana also has a question regarding where her payment for the GA goes – does it go to IDEA-US? No, Katrin, says, it goes to the organization which organizes the event; namely, IDEA-NL.

Ivailo brings the General Assembly back to the Agenda. The next item on the agenda is the Annual Report.

Katrin quickly overviews the progress of the year (the Annual Report). This is a narrative overview of developments including the accreditation of new trainers, new publications, and a summary of the Forum; members have received a copy of the report in their folders. **We note a typo in the report– the training which occurred**

in Rwanda happened in 2004, not 2005. Katrin indicates that this will be changed immediately.

Jan (Bosnia) has a question – he would like to see issues of member support included in the document. Is this missing in the current report because no such events have occurred, or because this not required by the format? If it is not, it should be.

Likewise, Jan would like to see management issues discussed in the report – what has the Board faced as prominent issues, and what have been their experiences of staff turnovers or other events? Jan, seconded by Bojan, would also like to see a section on membership status added to forthcoming reports, in addition to the management paragraph. ***We vote on amending the report to include these additions and vote on the report tomorrow. The vote passes unanimously.***

We have a new arrival, Ormat from Kyrgyzstan. He does not, however, represent a voting member; there are still 16 votes present in the GA.

We move to the next item on the agenda, the financial reports for 2003 and 2004. Everyone expresses gladness that, thankfully, we have audited copies of these reports!

Chris briefs the General Assembly on the reports. Chris acknowledges that the distribution of the reports has been delayed, but notes that this is substantial progress over last year. Chris also notes that the document has been audited and approved by professional accountants.

Bojana has a question. Bojana demands ‘user-friendly’ accounting reports. **Noel notes that there will soon be a ‘translation’ made available to members, and that this might be easier to read.** Noel says that a new and improved 2005 report system will be made available soon; however, Noel notes that Dutch law requires that these official reports be presented in the form that they currently are.

Virginija requests exhaustive documentation on how much money was fundraised for the Youth Forum and other events, breaking down the individual funders. Noel notes that money fundraised by local partners, or involves OSI payment, cannot be legally included in an IDEA financial report, because these transactions are not IDEA’s. Katrin notes that many of these costs (like the Forum) will be discussed tomorrow.

The Board agrees to provide an informal itemized report detailing the funding and expenditures of each IDEA-NL-organized event; this informal ‘translation’ will be made available by the next year’s General Assembly. We commit to have this distributed a month prior the next General Assembly.

Bojana raises a question regarding the description of Youth Parliament Project funds. Noel notes that money was advanced and frozen per EC requirements for the YPP. Noel notes that this amount is frozen for five years and is, effectively, a liability. Bojana questions how much IDEA’s attorney is paid, and then asks, ‘does IDEA need a lawyer?’

Ivailo says that IDEA’s international status and the intricacies of Dutch law demand a lawyer. Sharon notes that the legal fee is not flat-rate, but rather as-needed; IDEA has thus actually *needed* to use 25,000\$ of legal assistance. As consolation, Noel offers

that, as IDEA increases its Dutch presence, its legal and accounting expenditures will presumably dramatically decrease.

We close the discussion of the Financial Reports. Because they are legal documents certified as audited representations of reality, they are not open to a vote.

We move to discuss Network activities. Noel quickly outlines IDEA-US developments. This encompasses The People Speak, Duino (its growth, both in size and in the creation of the Parliamentary Debate curriculum track), the opening of the IDEA office at Willamette University, the MDG Maps World Bank collaboration and curriculum development possibilities, UNICEF curricula collaboration, and the investigation of for-credit University-level courses. On the OSI front, OSI has moved to new pastures, and wants to move beyond ‘traditional’ (Central and Eastern European) countries. However, IDEA is uniquely well-placed to work in new locales, and strategies have already been approved for the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, and elsewhere; we are already expanding into China and elsewhere in Asia.

We move to the next topic. This is the adoption of next year’s budget. Chris offers an overview of the budget.

Bojana has a question regarding the inclusion of fees from new members. Noel says that it is likely that the new website, and the services it offers – including the shop – may make for new revenue; whatever the case, the estimate in this document is modest. We discuss the question of projected grant revenues – this item is a target only. The Board fields several questions and clarifies how estimates were determined.

We vote to approve the budget for 2005-2006. There are fifteen votes for and one abstention (Dafo).

Before we break for lunch at 1:10, Sharon briefly previews what we will do this afternoon in reviewing the Standards. Attendees are encouraged to look over the document during lunch.

Nina also reminds all present to give Nina press clippings regarding their activities.

After lunch, we resume the meeting. It is 2:10.

Kajar replaces Katrin as the EDS’ voting representative.

Boudwijn Beckers is introduced by Katrin. Boudwijn describes his background. After his original work in adult education, and community outreach, Boudwijn also did development work in a family-oriented NGO. Boudwijn has a unique background in expanding NGOs on a large scale. Boudwijn discusses his ambitions for expanding a debate culture in Holland. Boudwijn is also eager to create greater cooperation between European partners, and to expanding our network to include new sources of funding. Boudwijn is eager to share his knowledge of development with members of the Network.

Ivailo opens the floor for questions for Boudwijn. Boudwijn responds to questions from Vedran regarding EC partnerships (in response, Boudwijn says he will help cultivate them), from Jan (regarding his experience in Eastern Europe – Boudwijn has coordinated efforts in some 20 something countries). On the topic of acquiring knowledge of IDEA, Boudwin notes that he will soon be composing a strategy paper which will entail conducting extensive interviews and research, and rapidly getting up to speed – Noel adds that, in the interview process, Boudwijn distinguished himself by his extensive pre-interview research about IDEA.

Patrick Blanchfield is introduced to the Board – he will handle IDEA English language communication out of the IDEA at Willamette University office.

Cheron Calder is introduced. She handles development work for IDEA-USA. Cheron sketches out her background in work with Native Americans, and notes her extensive background experience in debate.

After we thank all the new IDEA team-members, we move to discuss the Standards.

Sharon opens by noting how these Standards are to be reviewed by this group, and, if ratified by them, will be independently approved by IDEA-USA. We discuss the general procedure for approving and amending standards, a discussion that largely repeats discussion undertaken at last year's General Assembly.

Noel notes in passing that the need for Standards has been stressed both by OSI and our auditors, all of whom see them as a necessary form of quality control. Noel again emphasizes that the Standards are voluntary. Noel notes the utility of passing on accreditation to other members.

Marcin notes that other large players in the NGO world are undertaking Accreditation mechanisms. Bojan raises a concern regarding the need for 'long-term control mechanisms' that will ensure the regular evaluation of the Standards.

Bojana asks how much time will be necessary to accredit organizations. Sharon notes that we are still attempting to prepare an answer to this question in Person / Day terms. A question is raised (by Virginija) regarding how the Standards may necessitate internet activity on the part of students; Noel replies that a top down alternative (having organizations enter information on the behalf of their students) led to possibly fraudulent entries. The question of possible expansion to non-wired regions will be dealt with soon; whatever the case, a paper application system will be provided as well.

Bojana expresses concern as to the amount of time it will take to get accredited. Sharon notes that all members will be provisionally accredited for two years.

Ivailo moves to ratify the first seven pages. There are no objections; the first seven pages of the Standards are ratified by unanimous consent.

We proceed to the NGO accreditation process Standards documents. These are ratified by unanimous consent.

We discuss DebateTracker. Chris raises some concerns regarding possible redundancy relative to systems already operative in his own network. In response, we note how DebateTracker usage will have other dividends that make it unique, including medal distribution and the ability to generate certificates.

We continue to discuss DebateTracker In a conversation with Jan, Noel stresses that it is absolutely necessary to have some sort of numerical data in order to gain the notice of funders. Noel stresses that IDEA will strive to include forms of access and alternative modes of entry to those without the benefit of internet access.

After some discussion, we agree that the Board will discuss the possibility of retroactive accreditation for judges and organizations who cannot input past activity into DebateTracker.

We move to discuss the IDEA Tournament of Champions (TOC). **We vote to add a sentence mandating a topic committee with a non-US presence. This passes unanimously.**

In discussing the TOC format, it is proposed that we change allotted prep times to thirty minutes. There are 7 votes for the proposal; there are three against, and six abstentions. The proposal does not pass because it does not win a majority.

Reviewing TOC administrative procedures, Chris proposes to eliminate breaking brackets. Two vote for this change; it does not pass.

After closing our discussion of the Tournament of Champions, we close the meeting.

Minutes Day 2 – Wednesday, November 9th

We start at 9:10 AM. There are 14 voting members present in the Assembly.

We first discuss the LD Standards, which have been distributed by Sharon Porter prior to the beginning of the Assembly. ***The LD Standards are approved by unanimous consent; there are no objections.***

We move to discuss the Middle School Debate Standards, which have been distributed by Sharon Porter prior to the beginning of the Assembly. Bojana (Slovenia) requests more formats for Middle School Debate; she expresses the opinion that name of the format currently included in the Standards ('Middle School Debate') limits the creativity of Middle School teachers to make their own formats. Bojana (Slovenia) demands that the Board issue a public call for different formats for middle school. In response, Noel Selegzi (IDEA-NL Board / OSI NDP) points out that IDEA has already made a commitment to Claremont McKenna College's Kate Shuster, in which this format – her creation – was accepted by IDEA as part of partnership program. ***In light of Noel's contribution, the Middle School Debate Standards are approved by unanimous consent; there are no objections.***

New members, including Georgia, Serbia, and Azerbaijan arrive. There are now 17 voting members present in the Assembly.

Marcin Zaleski (IDEA-NL / OSI NDP) proposes that the Board and Sharon create Standards for creating new Standards. Citing the concern of members that it be easy to submit Standards for new formats of debate, Marcin specifically suggests a template-style document noting information that an activity format Standards proposal should include (for example, time limits for speakers, intended audience, etc.) These new Standards would also specify a deadline for submission of these Standards prior to the next General Assembly. Marcin's proposal passes by unanimous consent; there are no objections.

We discuss the Public Forum Debate ("Ted Turner") Standards, which have been distributed by Sharon Porter prior to the beginning of the Assembly. ***The Public Forum Debate Standards are approved by unanimous consent; there are no objections.***

We discuss the Cross-Ex Debate Standards, which have been distributed by Sharon Porter prior to the beginning of the Assembly. Bojana (Slovenia) volunteers that she dislikes the Format. After sustaining one or two questions, she says that she feels that the name of the Format be changed to 'Policy Debate'. Chris Baron (IDEA-NL Board / BUDL) argues in response that changing the name of the format might seem to prescribe content by restricted to debating questions of value. ***After some exchange, Bojana's proposal is put to a vote. Six vote for the proposal; two vote against the proposal; there are nine abstentions.*** As the proposal does not receive a majority of votes, it does not pass. There is continued, informal discussion on NDTCEDA's (the American body which is responsible for the format) choice of its name.

Kazakhstan arrives. There are now 18 voting members present in the General Assembly.

We discuss the Conference Standards, which have been distributed by Sharon Porter prior to the beginning of the Assembly. René Brinda (IDEA-NL Board / Czech Republic) discloses that, for the last month, the IDEA-NL Board has been concerned by the upcoming conference. Specifically, the Board has been struck by an apparent lack of enthusiasm on the part of members for the event, and by low registration numbers. René thus opens the floor to a discussion of possible responses to the Board's concerns. To prompt discussion, he suggests the possibility of replacing the Conference Event with some other kind of event, something presumably more attractive to IDEA's members, or of re-scheduling the Conference from the Fall to a time more favorable to full-time teachers.

Ivailo (IDEA-NL Board / Bulgaria) suggests the idea of a Debate Festival, which would replace the Conference after the General Assembly. In Ivailo's vision, this would also allow time for more sharing of best practices and the exchange of ideas between members. For Ivailo, this option would extend the capacity-building function of the General Assembly.

Bojana interjects to state that the Conference should be made less expensive, and that it be moved from hotels to another location. Bojana expands on her argument to claim that locations such as college dorms or high-school classrooms be considered as Conference sites, and that future Conferences be done in the national language of the host country. Virginija (Lithuania) seconds Bojana's suggestion, and urges the Assembly to view the Conference as a pooling of ideas for members, and to no longer be as committed to drawing academic entries from the US. In response, Katrin (IDEA NL-Chair / Estonia) notes how difficult it is to organize such a Conference, and notes the tight schedules demanded in so doing. Svetlana (OSI) notes that the IDEA International Conference is the cheapest of its kind, and insists that proposals for lowering prices need to involve concrete and constructive plans. Svetlana also notes that the efforts of recent Conference organizers have involved, in her opinion, insufficient publicity. Noel adds that, in his opinion, the novelty of the conference has worn off, and, moreover, that recent American academic contributions have been poor. Noel also notes that OSI has been largely paying for the airline tickets of American participants, who are largely the same people year-after-year. Nonetheless, Noel says, US attendance has been dwindling, and there is progressively less and less attendance on the part of international participants as well.

Virginija suggests that IDEA-NL pay for Conference attendance and participants' hotel rooms. Virginija says that the new IDEA-NL Development Director can fundraise for the Conference under these new terms.

Ivailo counters by suggesting that: "Perhaps we should consider the benefits of the Conference, not just the costs?" Jurate (Lithuania) points out that the content of the Conference does not directly engage local host concerns.

Numerous other ideas are suggested regarding possible ways for the conference to generate revenue. Jan (Bosnia) and Chris suggest we re-consider the audience and purpose of the conference. Jan suggests that IDEA expand the General Assembly to include trainings in management and other capacity-building projects. Bojana interjects to ask how many people are interested in doing this – indeed, how many

people coming to this year's conference are currently present at the General Assembly? One hand is raised.

Katrin intervenes to note that, in the months prior to the General Assembly and Conference, no members approached her to discuss less expensive housing options, though she made repeated and public invitations for members to do so.

Noel notes that perceptions of worth alter the amounts people are willing to pay - if people feel the conference is valuable, he continues, more people will come. Veronicka (Slovakia) enters a plea for "less worry about money and more concern for substance". Cheron (IDEA at Willamette) notes that event fundraising is very time intensive, and involves comparatively little payoff; she adds that it would be a more effective and beneficial use of a full-time development officer's time for them to work primarily on funding for large initiatives, rather than for the conference. Noel adds that the EC has not been eager to fund this conference. Bojana interjects that such discussions 'should have occurred before the General Assembly.' Katrin notes that she has been open to discussion and suggestions throughout the year. Noel says that this year's conference was 'a flop', and notes that IDEA-US is strongly against considering a conference for next year. Lidia (Romania) suggests that IDEA-NL perform a 'needs assessment' of the Conference.

In light of the vigorous discussion, Sharon votes to defer consideration of the Conference Standards to the Board. We vote by unanimous consent. Consideration of the Conference Standards will be handled by the Board.

We discuss the Forum Standards, which have been distributed by Sharon Porter prior to the beginning of the Assembly. In particular, we discuss the issue of age minimums for coaches at the Forum. Specifically, Noel alludes to issues involving improper relationships between younger (college-age) coaches and debaters. Bojana states that she does not per se find these relationships exceptional. Noel indicates that some of the events at last year's Forum stand against the Codes of Conduct included in the Standards adopted by the Assembly last year, and that, though there are exceptions to this rule, in principle, an age minimum for Coaches might be a good benchmark for ensuring their maturity.

Conversation turns to the question of ranking judges as 'A, B, C, and D' based upon their judging competence. Bojan (Macedonia) and Jurate note the usefulness of a diagnostic round to evaluate judging ability.

We break for coffee. It is 11:30 AM.

After a half-hour break, we return. Chris re-opens the Forum discussion by thanking everyone for their participation.

The first issue addressed is how to make Standards for debate topics for the Forum. Jurate suggests that this could be done by making Standards for (1) the topic committee (2) and the topic selection. Chris and Jurate have concerns, however, about we can ensure that the topics selected will be innovative and make debaters learn new skills. Last year, for example, a topic was selected that had debaters both consider the importance of drug abuse and which had them learn a new skill; namely, debating

comparative propositions of policy; how can we make sure, Chris and Jurate ask, that future topics are selected with similar concerns in mind. **A word change is suggested to respond to this, and Sharon agrees to implement it.**

Comment [n1]: See Standards
ChangeLog

We continue discussing Forum-related issues. In response to a question from Bojana, we note that it is important for there to be administrative approval for the Forum slogan and t-shirt. However, we note that the full General Assembly need not consider these issues, but instead should defer them to the Forum Committee. **Sharon agrees to implement this change.**

Bojana floats the creation of judge training sessions at the Forum. We discuss the quality of judging at the Forum. Jurate suggests that future Forums include a judging training in which IDEA's Judging Standards (approved at the 2004 General Assembly) be presented. ***We vote on this on this suggestion. It passes unanimously; there are no objections. Sharon agrees to implement this addition to the Standards.***

Virginija suggests that Forum administrators be obliged to reveal the rankings of judges to those judges if they request them. Jurate and Noel point out that this might lead to much controversy and dissatisfaction; in light of considerable agreement with this position, Virginija's suggestion is not proposed for voting.

We clarify language regarding removing judges who do not meet minimum standards: we note that these judges should still participate as 'shadow judges' so that they may improve their skills. ***We vote on this on this suggestion. It passes unanimously; there are no objections. Sharon agrees to implement this addition to the Standards.***

Another issue is raised: what about the quality of *debaters* sent to the Forum? Jurate notes that a certain minimum English-language ability is necessary for meaningful participation; Noel alludes to an incident involving the Kazakh representatives in Macedonia. However, Noel notes that there can be more than one Forum per year – members are free (and encouraged) to hold their own Forums, in whatever languages they choose, and to adopt these Standards as a whole or in part as event guidelines.

We move to discussing the question of how to enhance a 'spirit of leadership' among Forum participants; this is a topic that the Board has devoted much attention to. In particular, the Board – and many members – left last year's Forum perplexed by what to do with graduating high-school seniors who come to the Karl Popper Championships, excel, and then feel little motivation to contribute in classes and in the Mixed Teams event. Several examples are offered in which such youth have been a disciplinary problem and are 'hard to teach.' Several options are floated to deal with this problem: what about making this kids coaches after the Championship, Jurate suggest? Andero (Estonia) objects to this suggestion – he feels that these youth can make, and often do make, valuable contributions in the Mixed Teams event. Debate continues, and centers around a stretch of prose in the Standards stating that these youth *must* be made Coaches. We vote on changing this to '*may*' and leaving the issue to the discretion of Forum administrators. 10 vote for this move; **Sharon agrees to strike the text in question.**

Bojana brings up the question of disclosing losing records after the Karl Popper Championship; specifically, she wants to make the full records of all debaters (or, at least the top 90%) available online immediately after the tournament. Noel strenuously objects, and argues that this would embarrass youth coming from varied backgrounds and of different levels of ability. ***We vote on the proposition; there are only to votes for it (Bojana and Vedran). It does not pass.***

We vote on approving the Forum Standards. There is one objection (Bojana); the remaining members vote to approve them. The Forum Standards are approved.

We move to the next item in the agenda, a review of the Youth Forum in Macedonia in 2005. Bojan distributes a handout detailing the successes of the event. Bojan indicates that a slideshow of event highlights will be made available online. Marjan Stonev, also of the YFM 2005 teams, notes how the forum included newer internet and IT facilities to respond to a growing usage of the internet for research by participants. Marjan notes that implementing a sign-up schedule for computer access was discovered to be a need. Marjan closes by noting that there is a real need for high-capacity copiers, and that Standards need to be clear as to who can copy what and when; he also notes that future sites need, as a matter of course, to be vetted for proper connectivity. Bojan stresses the successes of the Forum in gaining the participation of members of the Macedonian Parliament, including the Speaker. This was a high-profile coup, and we all congratulate him. Bojan moves on to his concluding mark. He is glad about the development of Forum Standard, as he feels 'they will really help Forum organizers'. Bojan notes that a challenge to consider in the future would be separating the World Championship from the remainder of the Forum. The departure of nearly thirty World Championship debaters from the Forum after the Championship ended was, he says, an unfortunate development. After Bojan closes, the Assembly recognizes his organization's success.

We move to discuss the developments of the Romanian Forum next year. Lidia Stoichichi outlines the various potential sites – there are three, one near the airport and a water-park, another in the mountains and with extensive conference facilities, and yet another some four hours from Bucharest.

We break for lunch and suspend the discussion for an hour.

At 2:00 PM, we return to discuss Forum costs. This year's Forum looks to be more expensive – Noel notes that the price has regularly increased over time. Bojana lodges a complaint regarding participation fees; Noel notes how the Forum can be a source of revenue for members, and that fees and grant opportunities should make everyone happy, rather than negative, about the Forum. We review the proposed budget a second time before voting a site. We weigh questions of (1) distance from Bucharest, (2) the possibility of independent travel, and (3) safety. We vote on the options. The second option takes 14. The first takes 2. The third takes no votes. Bulgaria abstains. The Assembly thus recommends the second option, in the mountains; ARDOR sustains the Assembly's recommendation.

Rene moves to discuss the Forum 2007, which is scheduled in the Czech Republic. Rene's location will, he assures us, be cheaper than those of 2005 and 2006. Specifically, his chosen site is about a hundred kilometers north east of Prague, in a

small village. The price is 10 Euro per night per person, not including food and classroom space. Rene notes a disadvantage- it is a busy site, particularly in the summer; he closes by encouraging members to check the site out on the web; its name is 'Junior Centrum CZ'.

We move to discuss possible locations for Forum 2008. Jan from Bosnia proposes that it will host. Dafo notes that it has been ten years since Bulgaria was host, and offers to host again. Marcin proposes Turkey, noting that OSI-NDP's contact, Sergyen, promised a cheaper site there; though there is not as yet a Turkish member organizations, visas will not be a problem for members, and Turkey is easily accessible from Central Asia. Noel also notes that China is a surprisingly cheap and attractive option.

Bojana interjects to argue that the Forum should occur in local member organizations before going elsewhere. In response to this, Noel notes that prices in EU states have climbed, and states that there is a need to attract new members to IDEA, something that moving the Forum out of, say, the Balkans, would do. Katrin proposes we vote on the issue. Noel notes that there are no actual proposals on the table. Chris Barron notes we that could vote, as we did last year, by ballot. Bojana demands a vote; Noel again notes that not proposals, either substantive or formal, have been made, and that voting now would violate the Standards.

Bojan notes that we must accept the standards – though he supports Bosnia's bid, he wants to follow the Standards. There are strenuous demands, particularly from Jan, that we suspend the Standards and vote on a location for 2008 now. Noel suggests we follow the Standards and wait for formal proposals to be made and considered before voting next year. Bojana demands a vote to now. We vote; four votes support the motion. It does not pass. **We thus agree that members will submit proposals for the 2008 Forum per the Standards, which will be considered next year.**

We move to discuss next year's General Assembly. Bojana says that, given recent discussions about separating the Conference from the Assembly, she is now ambivalent about hosting; in this light, she says she is no longer eager to present her original report on her plans for 2006. Noel requests that she present her plans, so that the Assembly may know what she has in mind. Bojana refuses. Bojana then says, if she 'were' to host the General Assembly, it would feature an expanded Slovenian presence, and that the Conference would emphasize exchanges of best practices.

Noel suggest that Slovenia host the Assembly per the Standards, and that ZIP will run a conference as it sees fit; this conference would, pending approval, be an IDEA-Sanctioned event, but not the same thing as the yearly Conference. ***Bojana agrees to this plan.***

Moving to another topic, Bojana suggests the members no longer pay to attend the General Assembly and Conference. She demands that IDEA pay for members' hotel attendance and meals for both the Assembly and the Conference. In response, Katrin proposes raising the membership fee for the coming year to actually reflect Assembly expenditures; Katrin notes that IDEA membership fees should be re-assessed, as they have remained static for some time.

Ivailo says that, as IDEA is a membership organization, members should expect to pay for things, and that the membership fee should perhaps be seen as representing input for the services members receive rather than as a burden.

Katrin notes that the Standard of living has increased across the board, particularly for member countries, and that members in the EU should not feel over-burdened by yearly fees of 150 Euros.

Bojana again demands that IDEA pay for attendance and meals at the Conference and at the General Assembly.

Ivailo re-iterates Katrin's proposal for a needs-assessment of IDEA-related costs, an analysis of the different payment capacities for different members.

Noel notes that IDEA is a membership organization, and argues that members need to shoulder some cost of expenditures. However, he notes that 150 Euros is a minimal amount, and that, to demonstrate this point, Noel proposes that IDEA raise membership fees to actually reflect the cost of the Assembly.

There are now three proposals on the floor. In light of this confusion, Chris motions that we defer all three of these proposal, and the issue of fees in general, to the Board. We vote on Chris' proposal, and 13 vote for it. **The Board will consider the questions of Assembly cost and membership fees.**

Bojana expresses her dissatisfaction with IDEA's financial policies. Bojana concludes her comments by saying that that, unless 'she is treated nicely' by IDEA she will 'cancel the General Assembly one month before it happens.'

Virginija suggests that the 2007 assembly occur in Lithuania. The Assembly expresses an interest in this option, and Virginija says she will provide IDEA with more details soon.

We break for half an hour for coffee.

When we return, Katrin indicates that Ivailo will speak. He moves to the next item on the agenda, namely a presentation on communication and other issues. First, however, Ivailo announces that a revised copy of the management narrative and member report sections of the Annual Report will soon be distributed. Moving on to the issue of communication directly, Ivailo notes that membership has not been extremely active – people have not returned emails, and the buddy system appears to have failed.

Bojana interrupts to state that she receives inadequate information from other member nations – she expects that she receive such information from the Governing Board, and feels that she has not done so in the past; from her perspective, the IDEA network is not being adequately capitalized on. Bojana cites the examples of Montenegro and Hungary, from where she feels she has received inadequate updates on activities. In reponse, Nina notes that the new website has a substantially revised news section. Nina also draws Bojana's attention to *idebate* and the weekly newsletter. For Nina, communication with members is a two-way street, and in her opinion, membership responses have flagged.

Jan volunteers that this is his first General Assembly; however, his visit has revealed to him an 'inadequate time allocation for capacity building'. Jan feels that it is difficult to describe the network's current state, and that dealing with his own organization (in Bosnia) has given him unique insights. For Jan, individual charismatic leaders are a key to the success of an organization, and these, he implies, are lacking in individual member organizations; Jan also argues that there is insufficient management support.

Sharon interjects – perhaps future General Assembly-type events have panels on topics like economic sustainability and other things? Would this satisfy these concerns, she asks?

Jan demands that members take turns describing their own individual situations. Ludmilla (Belarus) representative responds that her national situation is unique – her organization has moved beyond the point where direct IDEA or EU aid is necessary.

Ivailo brings the discussion to order by noting that the agenda has already been ratified, and should be followed. Ivailo notes that his tenure on the Board has allowed him to perceive unique problems, and that he would like to proceed to his presentation which details them. Chris Baron adds that he does not feel that capacity-building type discussions are something that need to be discussed at this particular moment, but should perhaps be best discussed in the context of the festival.

Svetlana acknowledges the legitimacy of Jan's concerns, but notes that most requests from Jan's organization have centered around issues of money and not 'capacity building'. For Svetlana, a prevailing mentality of dependence on handouts has crippled the proactive abilities of many member organizations.

Jan interrupts and continues to advocate for a capacity building to occur immediately. Jan is censured by the chair.

Bojana expresses her displeasure with the agenda. Bojana proposes that members have an opportunity to help draft the agenda before it is drafted. Veronicka interjects – the agenda was available online long before the General Assembly. **Chris Baron offers that that Board will make the agenda available earlier.**

Bojana interjects again. She would like to have a complaint procedure instituted – if she is treated poorly by IDEA employees, how will this be dealt with? Jurate answers this question: the Board has already anticipated this need, and is proposing the creation of an ombudsman (-person) position. Jurate discusses what the ombudsman function would imply. Bojana expresses misgivings: would the Board be informed of investigations? This is discussed briefly, and then we vote on the institution of an official grievance procedure. **Eleven vote for the creation of this procedure and seven members abstain; the motion passes.** It is noted that, in the interim (before the creation of the ombuds-position), complaints could be officially addressed to the Board. We vote on this proposal. The proposal passes unanimously; there are no objections.

Bojana proposes that IDEA draft a Code of Conduct for all members and staff. Ludmilla from Belarus expresses her disappointment that a code of conduct might be necessary; Sharon invites members to contribute their suggestions directly to her. We vote on creating a Code of Conduct. **Ten vote for this proposal, 3 vote against, and 4 abstain. The motion passes.**

Jurate distributes the revised Annual Report (which now includes the requested narrative on management events and membership). This is reviewed by all present. A concern is raised: how long can an invoice for fees be pending before a membership is revoked? **Noel says that he will consult the bylaws on this issue.**

Bojana raises a question regarding when dues are to be paid. Nina notes that, with the adoption of a new calendar, invoices will be distributed simultaneous to Forum invoices. Bojana suggests that a new procedure be implemented for member collaboration on the annual report.

We vote on adopting the new Annual Report. 16 vote to approve it. There are 2 abstentions.

A question is raised regarding the situation of the Montenegrin debate organization – what is its current state? Noel notes that the OSI affiliate in Montenegro has not allowed funds to be allocated to the Montenegrin debate organization. Katrin requests that the Bojana furnish the Board with information the Montenegrin organization.

Ivail returns to his presentation by discussing new developments on the Board. The Board, he says, is acutely aware of IDEA's shortcomings in regard to communication. Ivailo notes that the 'buddy system' be resumed with renewed vigor. Ivailo also notes that each 'buddy' will soon also have a message board made available to it on the new website. The Board will also soon send monthly reports to members, which will be available on the 'Governance' part of the website. *Idebate* magazine will also feature short profiles on all the Board members so as to familiarize network readers with them. Ivailo notes, in response to questioning from Virginija and Bojana, member participation, particularly as regards to maintaining updated contact info, is a must. Chris notes that it is important that members of the network should stay in contact with each other. This would help IDEA keep abreast of new developments, particularly in countries like Germany. Noel notes, finally, that members should broadcast what they learn from IDEA throughout their country.

Bojana interjects to state that she 'expects more work and results from IDEA staff' in the future, as the staff has expanded.

We move, next, to the topic of committee work. Chris opens the topic of committees to discussion. Chris says that the committees are important – they allow for more fluid communication, and empower non-Board member committees. Chris notes that work in the Accreditation Committee has been particularly outstanding, but that work done by other committees, like the Tech Committee, might be better done.

Jurate discusses the new Grant Application policies. Meetings with auditors, Jurate has noted, have led to the creation of new guidelines regarding who IDEA should partner with.

We move to the next issue: the January events and Spring Trainings. We discuss the 2005 spring training event. The spring event this past year was an accreditation event. The question is whether this is worth continuing. Noel notes that there was no minimal interest in teacher trainings; OSI training (accreditation) was good, but free, and this, he feels, explains the high attendance of the one event and not the other.

Jurate notes that we are running short on time, and need to move to another site for the next item on the agenda. Jurate thus proposes deferring consideration of the January events and Spring trainings to the Governing Board. **This proposal is adopted unanimously; there are no objections.**

We leave the conference room to head to a local High School, where we will use the computer lab for the final part of the meeting. It is 5:15 PM.

At 6:00 PM we reconvene in the computer lab. All members are present except for Bojana (there are thus 17 votes present).

We move to the next item in the agenda: the new website and DebateTracker. Though Standards for DebateTracker were approved in Istanbul, we note that it is good to be trained in the program. Nina leads a half-hour long presentation on the website, and walks members through logging into DebateTracker and using its various functions. Nina fields questions, and continues until there is a general expression of confidence in using the system among members.

We then move to the final item on the agenda: Internet Debates. Marjan demonstrates the Internet Debates website, and outlines how to use it. We also discuss the Internet Debate Standards, noting how unique concerns (for example, time zone differences) have played into the drafting. **Vedran suggests several changes to the website which will include references to open-source and alternative operating systems and chat clients. Sharon agrees to implement these changes.** We vote to ratify the Internet Debating Standards. This are approved by unanimous consent by all 17 members present.

We open the floor to any other questions or issue. There are none.

At 7:30 PM, the meeting is closed by Katrin.