

Anti-Racist Additions to the Committee Proposal and Selection Process

A. Reforms to the Application Process

CIRCA conferences require that every proposer address the questions in their committee applications that force them to reflect on how their committee and its topics fit into an anti-racist conference framework. Furthermore, these questions must require the proposer to identify their committee's potential to provoke harmful statements, actions, and behavior based in racism, xenophobia, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and/or identity-informed categories.

Potential questions Secretariat members should consider using on their committee proposal applications include:

- How does your committee fit within the broader conference framework in regards to anti-racist action? What perspectives can it offer that broaden the diversity and scope of what topics are typically discussed in Model UN?
- Does your committee have any elements that you consider problematic or may be considered problematic? How do you plan to minimize, and, if possible, eliminate these elements from the way your committee functions?
- Do you foresee your committee's content facilitating any problematic statements or behavior on the part of delegates and/or staff? How do you plan to prevent such incidents? How do you plan to respond to them if they arise?

In evaluating responses, Secretariat members should look for honest recognitions of potential harm and sincere, actionable commitments to preventing harm in their committees, whether it be through recognizing and confronting these issues in the background guide, having an honest conversation with delegates at the beginning of committee warning them against problematic comments and actions, or providing a potential crisis narrative or arc that intentionally and strategically steers the committee away from problematic elements. Warning signs to look for include a refusal to acknowledge the potential problematic elements of the committee, a non-preventative outlook, and an "I'll figure out what to do if it comes up" attitude that shows the proposer has not thought honestly and complexly about the questions.

B. Reforms to the Selection Process

1. Interview Questions

When evaluating committee proposers, members of Secretariat must flag all propositions for potential problematic elements of the committee that may arise and incorporate these discussions into their selection process. (For example, a committee on Algerian Revolutionaries in 1954 could be flagged for potential invocations of islamophobia and torture, among others.)

These flags should be clearly demarcated and recognized in the information-gathering system used by the Secretariat to compile committee information when preparing for interviews and internal discussions.

If any potential problems or flags are noted, Secretariat is expected to discuss them during the committee interview process and ask for the proposer's strategy to handle these issues if they arise in committee. Potential interview questions include:

- Do you see any potential for delegates to make problematic comments, write problematic notes, or behave in a manner that is problematic because of the subject and topics of your committee? If so, how do you plan to minimize and, if possible, eradicate these potential instances?
- If a delegate were to make a problematic statement or behave in a problematic manner in committee that you witnessed, how would you respond?
- If a delegate reported to you that another delegate in the committee behaved in a problematic manner, how would you respond?

Again, answers should be evaluated based on the proposer's capacity to honestly evaluate and admit to potential issues that may arise in the committee, commitment to facilitating anti-racist and safe environment for the delegates, the complexity and quality of their proposed preventative measures and responses, and their capacity for genuine learning and growth.

2. Committee Evaluation and Approval Process

When finalizing which committee proposals are to be accepted and incorporated into the final conference framework, the following considerations must be kept in mind by Secretariat members:

- Secretariat members must use their discretion and personal knowledge to determine whether or not they are confident that a proposer is capable of running a simulation in a mature and effective manner that upholds the principles of anti-racism and maintaining a safe space for committee participants. All applicants Secretariat suspects of being unable to do this should not be offered positions as Chairs or Crisis Directors.
- When selecting committees, Secretariat should veto all ideas that they deem as having significant potential to facilitate and encourage racist, problematic behavior. In such cases where the Secretariat is still interested in having the proposer run a committee, they should work with the proposer to restructure the committee so it conforms to anti-racist principles or to propose a new committee altogether.

3. Conference-Wide Committee Selection Initiatives

Secretariat members should aim for a diverse and balanced selection of committees, both geographically and temporally. All regions of the world — including Africa, East and South Asia

and Latin America — should be adequately represented with at least one or two committees apiece. If, after an initial proposal solicitation process, adequate diversity does not exist among proposed committees, Secretariat should make an effort to solicit more diverse committee proposals from different proposers or to ask proposers to submit different committees for consideration.

It is important to acknowledge that the inclusion of these committees should not be tokenistic; proposers shall display genuine interest and care for their committee topics and an understanding of the various dimensions and intersections of oppression that inform their committee discussions. Effort should be made by the Secretariat to ensure that “diverse” committees are run by people with the maturity and knowledge to run them properly.

To facilitate this, Secretariat should recruit proposers with diverse and unique perspectives that are not often represented in Model UN. Secretariat may reiterate that Model UN specific knowledge is not necessary to run a simulation or write a background guide. Furthermore, Secretariat must provide Model UN and Crisis Directing-specific resources to new proposers and participants in Model UN. Conference Secretariats must operate under the principles of inclusion and equity, in which all are given the resources and attention to be successful in their roles, and this needs to be carried over into the staff and committee selection process.