

SHAWNIGAN LAKE SCHOOL MODEL UNITED NATIONS

Press Corps Background Guide

Press Corps



Introduction

An essential element of modern democracy is the press, which in today's sociopolitical climate contains an immense diversity of perspectives. Worldwide, the press serves as the primary link between the United Nations and the global population, and as a part of ShawMUN's Press Corps, you will be responsible for maintaining this link. Like in reality, it will be essential that the people remain constantly informed about the actions of the committees. As a delegation in this conference's Press Corps, this will be your challenge.

Unlike other traditional MUN committees, the Press Corps does not have a specific agenda. In the bulletins of other committees, the topic would be outlined and an introduction would be given. With the Press Corps, however, there is no topic to outline, for the objective of the Press Corps is to report on the conference as a whole. In the following paragraphs the organization and the aim of the Press Corps will be explained.

Position Papers

Despite its topical differences, position papers will still be a key part of preparing for the Press Corps. As a member of this committee you will act as a representative of either a national or international news agency (see Representation). In preparation for this role, you will be tasked with producing a position paper outlining in three sections:

The history of the news agency;

Its relative bias, especially in regards to major current events; and

The manner in which you, as a representative of the agency, will approach the topics covered in your beat (see Beats).

These components are expected to be addressed in distinct sections, with the possibility of multiple paragraphs in each. Position papers are to be between 800 and 1000 words.

The primary objective of writing these papers is to prepare you for the conference ahead. Delegates will be best served if they come equipped with an understanding of not only their beat, but also their agency's nuanced relationship with it. As a result, it is advised that delegates take the liberty to individualize their position papers, distributing attention amongst topics as they deem fit. In addition to this, there is a secondary, competitive objective in the writing of position papers. The position papers will, like with other committees, be assessed and read, based on the aforementioned criteria, for the award of Best Position Paper (see Awards).

Representation

A key part of this conference's Press Corps will be its diverse representation, regarding both geography and bias. The Press Corps will be comprised of news agencies from different regions, with different histories, and with different biases. The different agencies represented by members of the corps at ShawMUN are as follows:

The National Post

The Globe and Mail

Al Jazeera

Le Monde

CNN

BBC

Xinhua

Amnesty International

WikiLeaks

Beats

The format for this conference's Press Corps will be based on the idea of "beats." In order to ensure equal converge of all stories and locales, journalists today are often assigned particular beats, or in other terms, areas of focus. These areas are not strict and are not intended as borders to journalism; instead, they are intended merely as guides to direct reporters to areas where they will bring expertise or keen insight.

All delegates will be assigned a beat according to their assignment. The beats for this conference will be divided into a Canadian, regional, and international branch. Please see the following table to determine which beat your delegation corresponds with.

DELEGATIONS	BEAT	TOPICS
The National Post The Globe and Mail	Canadian Branch	CEGMA: Northern Gateway Pipeline The Canadian House of Commons: Economic Prosperity
CNN Al Jazeera BBC	International Branch	UNDP: Post-2015 Millennium Development Goals SOCHUM: Drug Trafficking
Le Monde Xinhua WikiLeaks Amnesty International	Regional Branch	SC: Situation in Mali ICJ: Israeli Blockade Chinese Politburo: Special Administrative Regions

Format

The charge of each reporter is to investigate the development of the conference through the production of written content and lines of questioning. During sessions, reporters will be free to move between committees. At this time, delegates will collect information, write content, and submit work to the chair for edits.

The written content can take two primary forms: small news pieces can be released as headlines with factual briefings and larger, more complex stories can be addressed through editorial. Additionally, as certain stories may blend the two together, reporters will be encouraged to individualize and blend these two styles.

The lines of questioning will be prepared for use in both the formal daily press conferences, as well as the within committee conferences. From the information gathered during committee sessions, reporters will create lines of questioning for individual delegations. These lines of questioning will be your tool to get to the root of the story, and you are encouraged to make

some of them unsparing. The creation of these questions will act as a test of your own reporting skills, while the implementation of them will also serve as a test for others.

Tips for Reporting

Make sure to quote delegates word-for-word, and to spell their names and the countries they represent correctly. If you're interviewing them, you can ask them to repeat a phrase in order to write it down.

For factual briefings, it is best to use short sentences and short paragraphs, in order to remain brief and keep the reader's attention. Some paragraphs can even be one or two sentences.

All factual briefings should be written in third person, while editorial pieces can use the first person.

Briefings should be factual and not provide opinions, but you can get quotations from delegates that would express an interesting opinion.

Prepare interview questions ahead of time, and avoid yes-or-no questions, as these are generally produce less information.

Include a one or two sentence introduction to your article. This should provide the reader with a sense of what has happened, or what will be discussed in the article. It should grab the reader's attention, and answer as much of the "who, what, where, when, why" as possible.

Awards

Throughout the conference you will be evaluated by your chairs on your performance as both a reporter and a representative of your agency. In the spirit of the MUN tradition, delegates will be competing with one another within this committee for the equivalent of Best Delegate, the award for Outstanding Journalism. This award will be given to the delegate that best represents the idea of investigative journalism and their news agency. Other factors, such as quantity of written works or utilization of press conferences may also be taken into account, but they are not the primary objectives. In addition to this award there will also be the secondary awards of Best Editorial and Best Position Paper. Best Editorial will be awarded for the strongest single editorial piece, specifically emphasizing the spirit of investigative journalism as well as the situation at hand. Best Position Paper will go to the author of the paper that best reflects the nuances of her agency and its relationship with the conference's topics (see Position Papers).

Final Thoughts

The Press Corps at ShawMUN will be a great venue for you to improve your skills, explore the field of journalism, and take part in a new mode of MUN competition. Your role in this conference will be pivotal in making this Model United Nations effective, realistic, and in general, successful. Reporters are encouraged to ask tough questions, to expose the hidden, and ultimately, pursue the story.

Informal points

A minimum of three pieces is expected to be submitted during ShawMUN. One of these should be an editorial. As well, articles should be roughly 350 words.