



Michigan State University
International Relations Organization

Annual Report
2024-2025 Academic Year

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Introduction

The Michigan State University International Relations Organization (MSUIRO) is a non-profit organization registered in the state of Michigan with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. In addition, MSUIRO maintains status as a registered student organization within Michigan State University. The organization's faculty advisor is Dr. Yael Aronoff, a professor in James Madison College. This report concerns the organization's activities for the 2024-2025 academic year.

Purpose

Michigan State University International Relations Organization is a nationally ranked Model United Nations program that strives to promote the understanding and recognition of global issues, international relations, diplomacy, and the official United Nations organization through debate and discussion. Members role-play as diplomats, corporate board members, cabinet members, and more in simulated sessions of United Nations bodies, regional organizations, corporate boards of directors, and cabinet meetings. Members research a country and/or time period, take on roles as specific diplomats, investigate international issues, debate, deliberate, lobby and ultimately develop solutions to world problems.

Mission Statement

MSU International Relations Organization seeks to educate the next generation of Spartan leaders by providing a venue to discuss, debate, and explore solutions to international issues through teamwork, diplomacy, and collaboration, as well as engaging in competition at intercollegiate Model United Nations conferences.

Michigan State University Model United Nations (MSUMUN)

MSUMUN is MSUIRO's sister organization, a Model United Nations conference for high school students that is staffed by Michigan State students, including many MSUIRO members. MSUMUN was founded in 2000 by students from James Madison College. Hoping to create a conference that was fun, educational, and delegate-friendly, these students watched their dream become a reality at the first conference in 2001. MSUMUN hosted its 24th iteration this year on March 14-16, 2025 at the MSU Union.

Executive Board

The Executive Board oversees executive management and legal status of the organization. The duties of the board include representing the organization to outside entities, maintaining corporate status, raising funds, managing finance, recruiting members, training members, and organizing conference travel and accommodations. Each Vice President may hire up to two (2) Assistant Vice Presidents (AVPs) to assist in the performance of their duties.

Cassidy Lynn

President

Cassidy is a senior studying Social Relations and Policy in James Madison College, with minors in History and Writing. She has been doing Model United Nations since her freshman year of college, and is a crisis chair for MSUMUN. She chaired the TikTok Board of Directors committee last year, and is chairing the President in Crisis Ad Hoc and the Midnight Crisis this year. Cassidy enjoys reading romance fantasy novels or playing video games in her free time.

Max Levanduski

Vice President of Finance and Operations

Max is a junior studying Anthropology in the College of Social Science, with minors in Museum Studies, Digital Cultural Heritage & History, and History. She has been doing Model United Nations since her freshman year of college, and is a chair for MSUMUN. At MSUMUN XXIII she chaired the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire specialized committee and at MSUMUN XXIV she chaired the Wonka Board of Directors alongside VP of ConPrep Josephine Froman. Outside of MUN, Max watches way too much RuPaul's Drag Race and is addicted to Indie games they find on Itch.io.

Assistant Vice Presidents: Kai Baltes

Aldo Mujaj

Vice President of Development

Aldo is a sophomore and second-year IRO member majoring in Computer Science and hopefully minoring in German. He is from Rochester, MI (Metro Detroit represent!) and is also the chair of the Sicilian Vespers committee in MSUMUN and a member of the Albanian-American Student Organization. If he were to choose his favorite committee, it would probably be the UN Security Council where he represented Namibia! He cannot wait to be a part of the fun and lead in IRO!

Assistant Vice Presidents: None

Joyce Peterlin

Vice President of Membership

Joyce is a sophomore studying International Relations and Social Relations & Policy, with minors in Russian and Public Relations. She is also a senior staffer for MSUMUN, being a crisis director for the War of the Sicilian Vespers. When she's not letting MUN consume her life, she's typically running her Dungeons & Dragons campaign (or playing in one), organizing her Pinterest boards, or watching A Song of Ice and Fire lore videos. Her favorite MUN committee so far has been Macy's Board of Directors at ChoMUN.

Assistant Vice Presidents: Anna Palacek

Elliot Cayabyab

Vice President of Conference Preparation

Elliot is a junior studying Comparative Cultures and Politics in James Madison College, with minors in French and Asian Pacific American Studies. They started Model UN in their freshman year of college with IRO and have been highly involved with MSUMUN since then. They chaired the Great Lakes Compact the previous year and are now the Crisis Director of La Liga Filipina. Outside of MUN, Elliot is an advocate and leader in the Asian Pacific American Student Organization and also loves relaxing doing any of the art mediums like music and writing.

Josephine Froman

Vice President of Conference Preparation

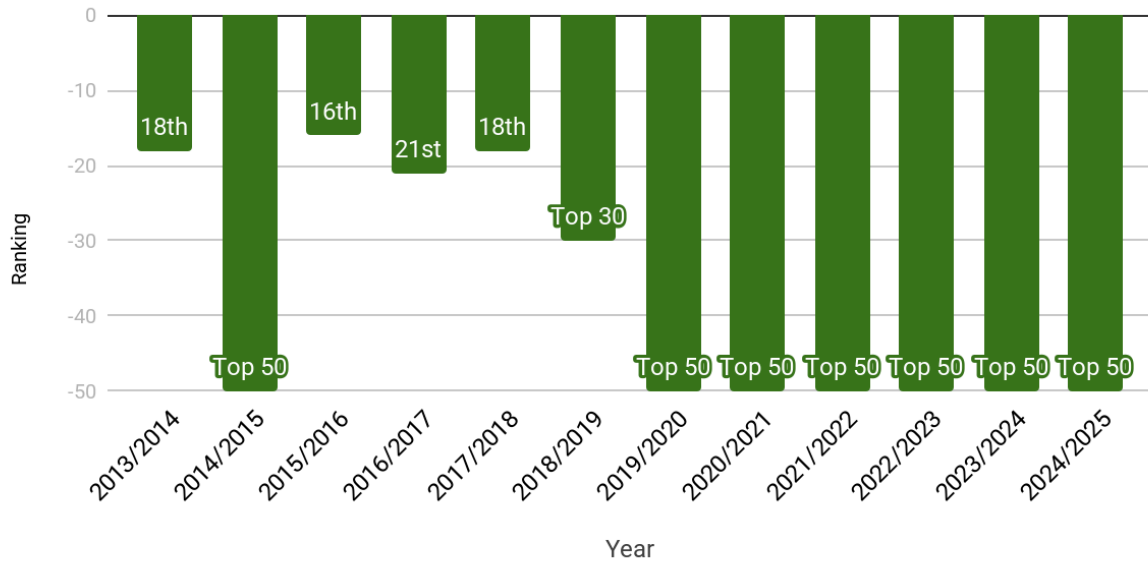
Josephine is a sophomore studying International Relations in James Madison College with minors in Political Economy, European Studies, and French. She is from Northville, MI and is the crisis director for MSUMUN's Willy Wonka Board of Directors committee. Outside of MUN (a rarity), you can usually find her playing music, reading, at an MSU hockey game, or participating in her other student orgs: the Human Rights Lab, JMC Senate, and her research job! Her favorite MUN committee was the UNSC at CHOMUN '24.

Assistant Vice Presidents: Anna Matz & Lyra Opalikhin

Growth

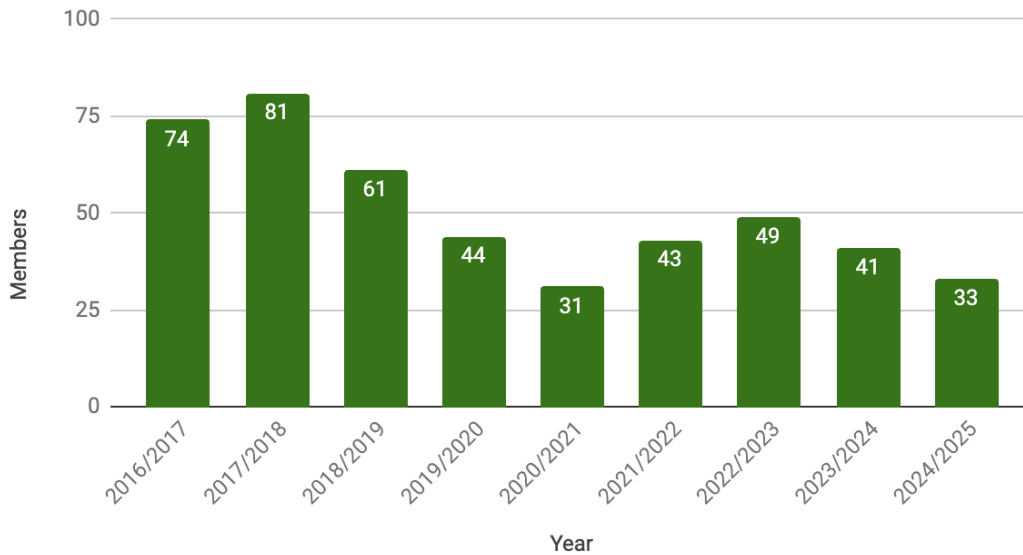
Team Ranking

Best Delegate North American Rankings



Rankings are taken from bestdelegate.com

IRO Membership



Numbers reflect dues-paying members, except for the 2020-2021 year as dues were not assessed due to the pandemic. Members attending 1/5 of meetings were counted for the 2020-2021 year.

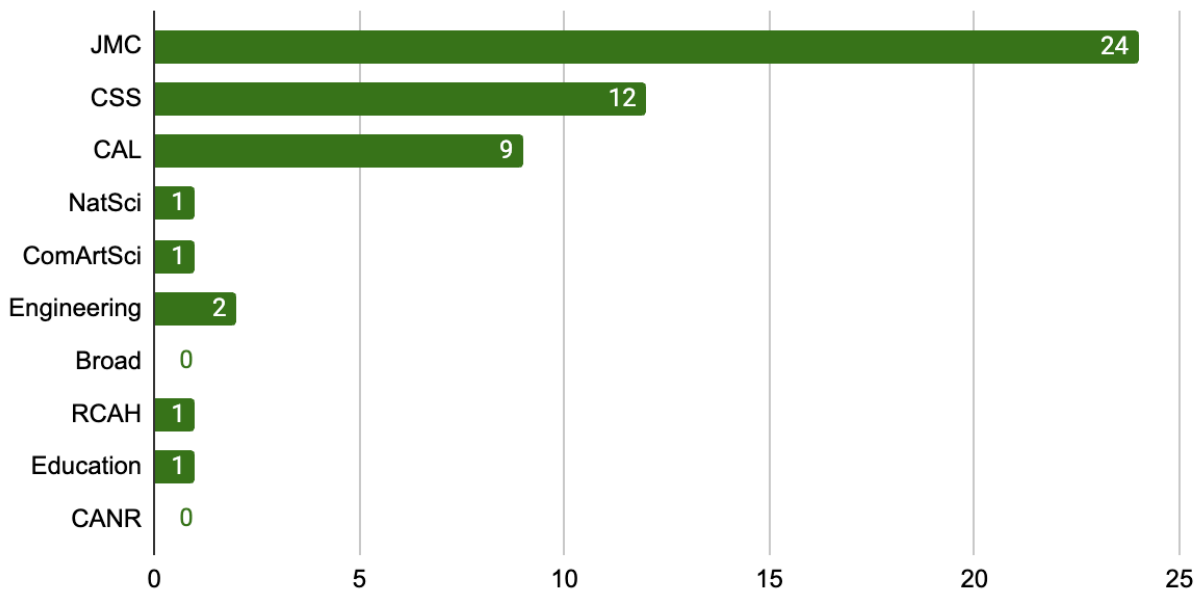
Membership Data

This academic year, MSUIRO had a membership of 33 dues-paying members. IRO's members come from numerous different colleges and residence halls across MSU's campus. 10 of our members were new, and 23 were members returning from previous years. 16 of our dues-paying members were also members of MSUMUN, our sister organization.

Membership by College

Membership by College

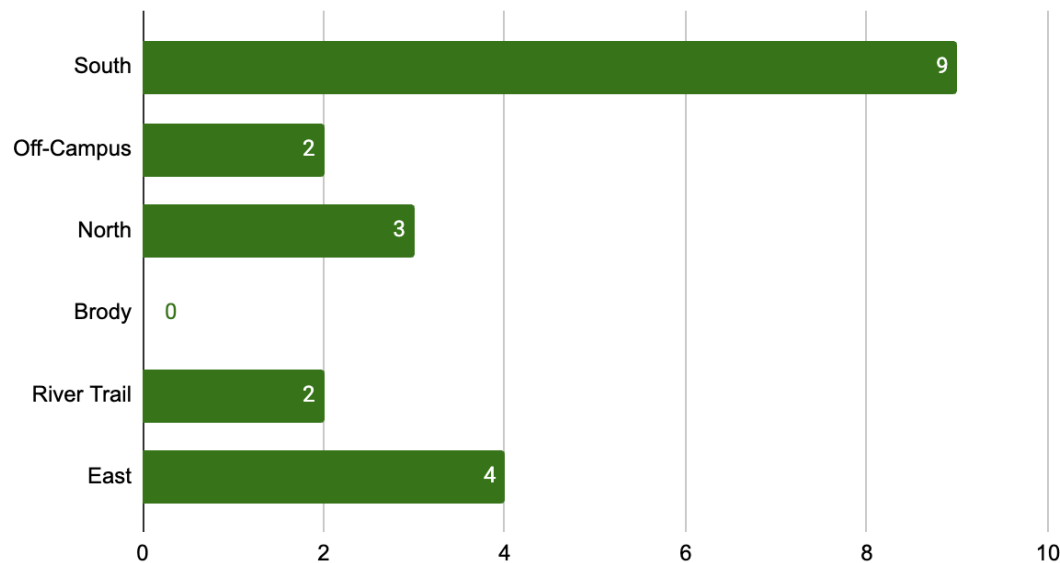
Members holding a major or a minor in each college



Membership by Residence



Membership by Neighborhood



Achievements

This year was very successful for MSUIRO. The 2024-2025 travel season marked an outstanding year for MSUIRO on the Model UN circuit. MSUIRO attended 5 conferences this year, offering 60 roster spots in cities in the United States and Canada and won numerous awards.

Boston Area Model United Nations (BarMUN)

October 10-13, 2024

Boston, MA, USA

Hosted by the Boston University International Affairs Association, BarMUN prides itself on being a premier crisis conference in downtown Boston. Given that BarMUN is one of the first conferences on the circuit, it provides a fantastic opportunity for growth and skills development that sets the tone for future conference performances. This year, MSUIRO intended to bring a delegation of 12 members. However, days before the conference, we found out that there was a workers strike happening at the Boston Park Plaza hotel. We decided to let each member make their own decision regarding attendance to this conference, with refunds available should they choose not to go. With drops, we took a delegation of 8 members to BarMUN. The delegation was a mix of returners and new members. Additionally, the delegation included members from various grade levels with 2 juniors, 3 sophomores, and 3 freshmen. Our delegation drove from East Lansing to Boston in 2 rented vans, traveling through Canada to shorten the trip, and had a tremendous time visiting the city of Boston and participating in BarMUN XVI.

Line Item	Assets	Expenditures
Dues	\$ 1,650.00	
Vouchers	\$ (25.00)	
School Fee		\$ (95.00)
Delegate Fee		\$ (1,140.00)
Advisor Fee		\$ -
Hotel		\$ (2,504.85)
Team Dinner		\$ (304.31)
Transport		\$ (1,416.60)
Gas		\$ (325.94)
Tolls		\$ (145.68)
Parking		\$ (266.50)
Venmo Fees		\$ (33.00)
Total	\$ 1,625.00	\$ (6,231.88)

BarMUN Financial Information

With 11 delegates paying \$150 in conference dues, IRO generated \$1,650 dollars in assets for BarMUN. \$25 in concessions vouchers were used. The net assets for this conference were -\$4,606. With taking less delegates, the cost to the club dropped from last year. This was because the conference cost for BarMUN was reduced for a second consecutive year. The biggest cost reduction was in hotels, as we paid nearly a thousand less than we did in previous years, due to the number of delegates and lower costs.

Line Item	Assets	Expenditures
Dues	\$ 1,200.00	
Vouchers	\$ (75.00)	
School Fee		\$ (100.00)
Delegate Fee		\$ (800.00)
Advisor Fee		
Hotel		\$ (717.50)
Transport		\$ (385.75)
Gas		\$ (312.88)
Tolls		\$ (46.75)
Parking		\$ (76.46)
Venmo Fees		\$ (24.00)
Total	\$ 1,125.00	\$ (2,463.34)

UNCMUNC Financial Information

With 8 delegates paying \$150 in conference dues, IRO generated \$1200 dollars in assets for UNCMUNC. \$75 dollars in concessions vouchers were used towards UNCMUNC. The net assets for this conference were -\$1,338.34. The loss to the club was significantly less than last year, due to lower roster size as well as utilizing one of our own cars instead of a rental car. With one less hotel room and two less vehicles than last year, the cost was significantly reduced as those are typically our largest expenses.

UNCMUNC Award Winners

Anna Palacek (F., CoE '28)

Best Delegate –Dr. Cara Christ, There’s No Bad Blood Around Here: Theranos, 2015

Anna Matz (F., JMC '28)

Honorable Delegate – 高 Gāo, Silk Road: Song Dynasty Council JCC

McGill Model United Nations (McMUN)

January 30-February 2nd, 2025

Montréal, QC, Canada

Hosted in the heart of downtown Montréal, Quebec and the team’s absolute favorite conference, McMUN is the most prestigious conference in Canada and the third largest in North America. As a conference, McMUN offers a large variety of committees ranging in size, topic, and time period from the large 300-delegate General Assemblies to medium-sized ECOSOC and Specialized committees to intimately small crisis committees. Our delegation of 16 members consisted of 11 returners, 4 new members who had previously attended conferences, and 1 new member for whom it was their first conference. Additionally, the delegation included members from all grade levels with 2 seniors, 3 juniors, 6 sophomores, and 5 freshmen. As always, our members enjoyed the traditional IRO McMUN McFun Bar Crawl, and our use of public transportation, taking the train from Windsor, ON to Montréal. This year, many of us had a blast at the Brat themed McParté!

McMUN Financial Information

Due to increasing cost and a dip in fundraising, we had to increase our conference dues back to \$200, \$50 more than the year previous. This generated \$3,200 in assets for McMUN. \$280 in

concessions vouchers were used for McMUN. The net assets for the conference were \$6,628.

Line Item	Assets	Expenditures
Dues	\$ 3,200.00	
Vouchers	\$ (280.00)	
Registration		\$ (1,769.49)
Advisor Fee		
Hotel		\$ (2,408.72)
Transport		\$ (4,942.95)
Gas		
Tolls		\$ (39.90)
Parking		\$ (102.66)
Venmo Fees		\$ (64.00)
CAD Fees		\$ (220.55)
Total	\$ 2,920.00	\$ (9,548.27)

Just as it has historically been, McMUN was the most expensive conference of the year. For the second time, McMUN imposed an exclusivity fee on delegations not staying in the conference hotel. However, we stayed at the conference hotel as it was cheaper than staying at another hotel in addition to the exclusivity fees. The avoidance of these fees and the lower delegate counts contributed to the lower net loss this year. We suggest that future delegations continue to stay at the conference hotel, unless there is a cheaper alternative.

McMUN Award Winners

Hiyori Eldred (F., JMC '28)

Verbal Commendation- Kalistat Lund, Northern Nourishment: "Inuit Circumpolar Council's Political Universe"

University of Chicago Model United Nations Conference (ChoMUN)

April 17-20, 2025

Chicago, IL, USA

Hosted by the University of Chicago, ChoMUN prides itself on its inventive and historical crisis committees, spanning across the globe and time periods from modern to ancient. As always, ChoMUN provided a fantastic sendoff to our graduating members and a crisis tune up for returning MSUIRO members before the summer. This year, IRO brought a delegation of 12 to the conference. We gave the option for an expansion to 16, but there was not enough interest. Our delegation was more equally weighted between upper and lowerclassmen, with 2 seniors, 4 juniors, 4 sophomores, and 2 freshmen. We were able to win two awards as a delegation, with 1 Outstanding and 1 honorable. As we did the previous years, the team utilized Amtrak's Blue Water service to travel to Chicago, allowing us to rest during the journey.

Line Item	Assets	Expenditures
Dues	\$ 1,800.00	
Vouchers		
School Fee		\$ (50.00)
Delegate Fee		\$ (1,320.00)
Advisor Fee		
Hotel		\$ (2,361.39)
Transport		\$ (2,112.00)
Gas		
Tolls		
Parking		
Venmo Fees		\$ (36.00)
Total	\$ 1,800.00	\$ (5,879.39)

ChoMUN Financial Information

This year, ChoMUN was a miracle conference as we weren't sure if we would be able to afford it. We charged \$150 in dues, which gave IRO \$1,800 in assets from our 12 delegates. The net assets for this conference were -\$4,007.39. We again utilized Amtrak services to travel to Chicago, which saved us on travel costs, both financially and logistically. Due to

overbooking at the Palmer, we got to stay in the Hilton Majestic Inn at a lower rate and avoid staying directly at the conference hotel.

ChoMUN Award Winners

Anna Matz (F., JMC '28)

Outstanding Delegate- Marcus Verrius Flacus, JCC Enemies to Lovers?: The Second Triumvirate, 32 BC

Josephine Froman (So., JMC '27)

Honorable Mention- Vladimir Chelomey, One Small Step for Man, One Giant Leap for the Proletariat: Soviet Space Program, 1966

Graduating Members

At our last meeting on April 21th, IRO held its annual senior night to recognize our members who are graduating this spring. Congratulations to all of our seniors!

- Ryan Longo (2021-2025)
- Cassidy Lynn (2021-2025)
- Sophie Sanborn (2021-2025)
- Kate VanderWeele(2022-2025)
- Roman Wing (2021-2025)

New Initiatives

Alumni Engagement and Outreach

This academic year, IRO continued a concerted effort to reconnect with our alumni network in a number of ways. We continued the alumni newsletter started last year known as The Crisis Drop. During the fall semester, we also made a concerted push to revamp the Alumni Scholarship Initiative, and turned it into the Alumni Giving Fund. The Alumni Giving Fund allows donors to donate to a general fund to help us pay for conference costs and continue providing these experiences to our members. In the fall semester, E-Board also spoke with one of our alumni, Tom Nally, to generate ideas as to how to connect with alumni, including planning a Alumni networking weekend, as well as the Alumni Giving Fund. IRO hopes to continue to maintain connections with our amazing alumni network well into the future.

Centering Women in MUN

One of the main shifts following the election of this year's Eboard is away from MUN being male-dominated. This year's E-board featured 5 women or feminine presenting people, which is a huge milestone. Model United Nations has been a "boys club" in the past, where men dominate the room and the leadership teams throughout the circuit. While this has changed over time, women are still often bulldozed over in discussions and ignored. Female delegates are also often treated differently or strangely by male delegates. Thus, this year we held a workshop dedicated to women's inclusivity in Model United Nations, and what each of us can do to support and lift up women on the circuit and within our own team.

MUN Boot Camp

A big change we made this year is in how we train prior to the beginner simulation in early fall semester. Many students are coming into MSUIRO with little to no Model United Nations experience. Previously, we had just thrown delegates into the beginner sim, and that was their first exposure to MUN. This year, we held a MUN Boot Camp, where the Conference Preparation team lectured and practiced with new members, so they would be ready heading into the beginner sim. We believe this improved new member education and retention.

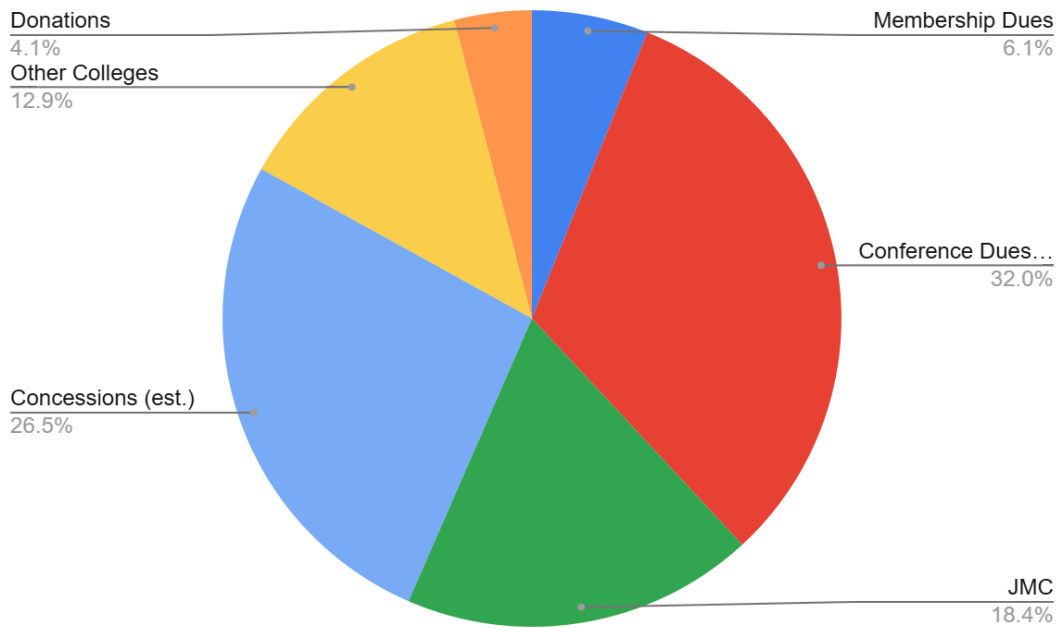
Drop Policy

One of our biggest struggles this year was having people drop the conference, sometimes just days before we were set to leave. While we cannot control people dropping conferences, what we can do is enact penalties for doing so without a valid reason. Thus, E-Board drafted and passed policies that the closer to conference you drop, the less refund you receive. This is in an effort to preserve as much income as we can, especially since the closer we are to conferences, the less likely we will get someone to fill their spot. These policies will serve IRO well in the future, as with these policies in place it mitigates the impacts of dropping delegates.

Financials

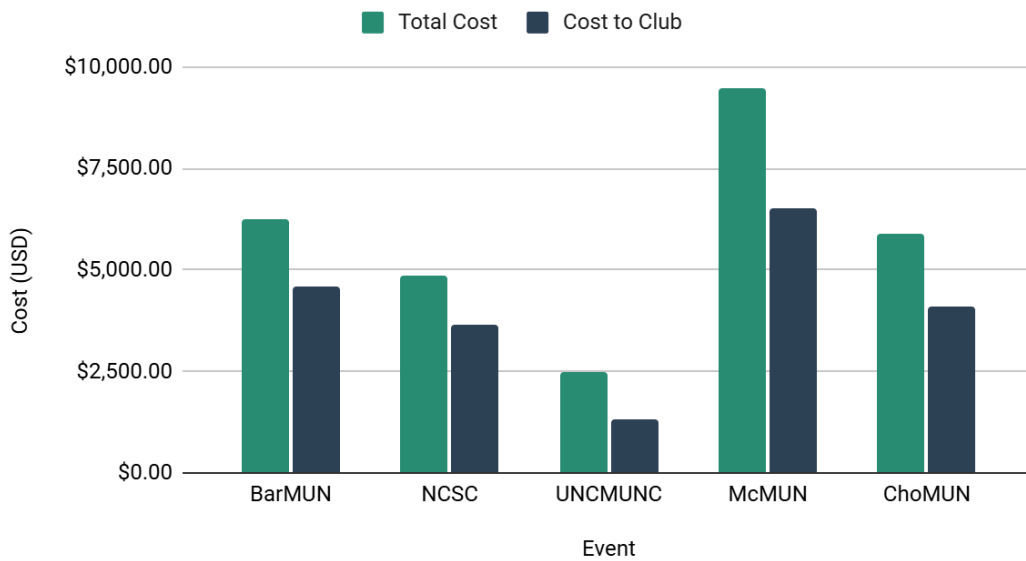
Revenue

It should be noted that Membership Dues and Conference Dues are paid by our club members.



Expenditures by Conference

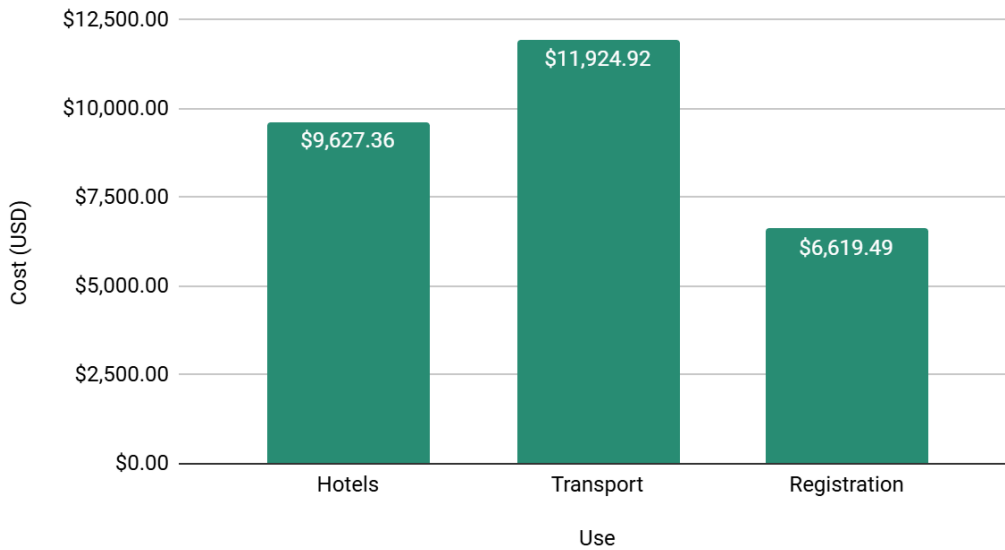
Expenses by Conference



Expenditures by Function

Transport costs include associated costs such as gas, tolls, and parking.

Expenses by Function

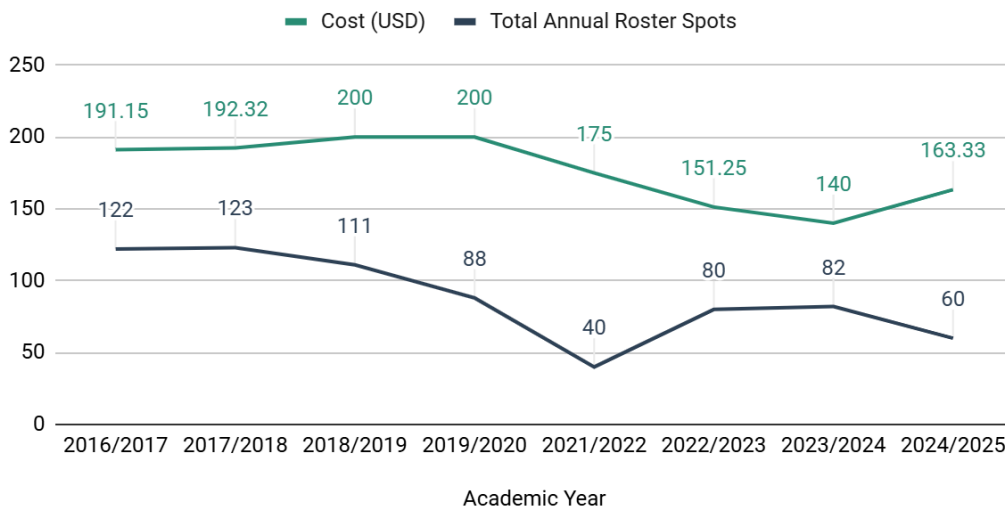


Average Conference Cost to Members

The average conference cost statistic only applies to in-person conferences; therefore, there is no data for the 2020-2021 school year. Additionally, the 2022 New Member Retreat is not included because it was not a conference.

Average Conference Cost to Members

In-Person Conferences Only



Challenges

Finance & Operations

This year had new challenges for the Finance and Operations department, the largest being the high cost of conferences vs the limited interest in attending. We struggled to get a full roster in fall semester leading to unnecessary costs from extra roster placements and hotel rooms. This in addition to the struggles in fundraising led to a very stressful planning of spring conferences. An extra cost we could not have foreseen is damages through Enterprise that led to emergency funds needing to be allocated to paying off the damage. Though despite the challenges we made it through McMUN and was able to set the new Eboard up for ChoMUN.

Development

This past year, the position of Development noticed some unique challenges. Our largest hindrance came from the delay in gathering funding in the fall semester. Due to complications in the Development position, as well as other unexpected circumstances that occurred throughout the fall, funding from RHA and ASMSU wasn't collected and those funds were instead needed to be collected in the spring. Also, due to James Madison College changing their RSO funding process, there were a large number of delays getting their funding transferred to our accounts. This was particularly challenging as JMC is one of our largest supporters. In the spring, we had our greatest challenge when ASMSU approved our funding application, but due to misallocations on their part, the Student Allocations Board unexpectedly voided our funding as they did not have the amount of funds to distribute to RSOs. This happened in tandem with an update in the ownership of MSU concessions, which will have their services be run by a private, third-party company beginning in July. We hope that our funding through concessions will not be impacted through this change, but as of the release of this report, it is still developing. Overall, the position of Development will need to continue to work diligently and close to university sponsors while working to find new ways to diversify MSUIRO's funding portfolio in order to ensure that we can stay in the green for the upcoming year.

Membership

There were a few big issues this year, but the two that were the most challenging were retention and POE training. All the resources given to me by past VP of Membership Anna Rehm were virtually unusable thanks to some major and ambiguous changes to the POE scheduling process and it made it a nightmare to schedule for an already busy fall semester. Tackling it again for next semester, but not looking forward to it. Expect like a dozen back and forth emails. Retention was a struggle, especially getting members to come to meetings towards the latter half of the spring semester. We had a major drop off of many members, including new dues paying members, so the plan is to focus on those strategies for the upcoming year. Another challenge is team building, since MSU IRO does not have the same structure that MSUMUN or MSU Mock Trial has, it becomes harder to integrate new members into the team culture and

spirit since meetings are typically in a larger group, which directly inhibits our retention. Also, a minor issue, but there was a bit of a disconnect between getting members on our email list versus getting them to follow us on Instagram or in GroupMe and other such points of communication. This could benefit from being streamlined (which I intend to do for the next recruitment season) and prioritize getting members into the vibe chat, the announcements chat, and on our Instagram to see the fun stuff we do together.

Conference Preparation and Training

Serving as the heads of Conference Preparation for MSUIRO over the past year has been both challenging and incredibly rewarding. From the outset, we focused on cultivating a structured and supportive environment that empowered delegates to sharpen their research, public speaking, and negotiation skills. We've implemented a training schedule that balanced writing workshops, resolution drafting sessions, and mock debates, all tailored to simulate real committee dynamics. After an extremely busy year for ConPrep we've learned to lean into both the fun and ridiculous side, as well as the more serious aspect of Model UN. Finding balance between the two has been hard; the largest challenge we've run into is tailoring meetings to people who want to be competitive on the circuit and people who only want to have fun in MUN. By dividing more serious lessons and practice into MUN Workshops & Pre-Meetings, and allowing some sillier topics for main meetings we've managed to strike a balance that works. Under this ConPrep team's leadership, we emphasized policy depth and diplomatic finesse, which paid off in multiple individual awards and stronger team cohesion. For next year, the new ConPrep team plans on working to revitalize training and teaching new delegates Model UN in a streamlined process.

Vision

This E-Board's term marked the second complete conference schedule since the COVID-19 pandemic, a clear signal that MSUIRO and the MUN circuit had been able to bounce back from this challenge. The club has seen a bit of a stagnation in membership and finances this year, but we have continued to curate a welcoming and positive community that has fostered an incredibly strong freshman class. We focused on inclusivity for all types of delegates, regardless of if they are competitive or just having fun. E-Board has seen some harrowing challenges this year, both personally and professionally, but despite this we have made this organization strong and built a foundation for future growth.

Previous E-Boards have focused on growth of this organization post-COVID, which was necessary to rebuild this club. We attempted to have this same goal, especially with our membership. However, this year, despite record recruitment numbers, we did not see significant growth in our membership this year. Currently, our numbers are around half of our membership size before the pandemic. With lower membership numbers, as well as the knowledge of struggles in roster filling last year, we significantly lowered our roster numbers this year, down 22 spots. Even with this conservative roster count, we had difficulties with delegates dropping

the conferences too close to the conference, thus making it near impossible to fill the spot. We rarely had a waitlist for conferences in the fall. It also seemed as though some returners that would usually apply for conferences did not this year. It is hard to say what the reason is for this issue, and how to remedy it. I think the best path forward is to stagnate or lower roster sizes until membership significantly grows or more members attend conferences.

In addition, we have seen a stagnation and drop in our finances. This is a result of some development initiatives failing, and it made it difficult for FinOps to book our conferences. To counteract this, this E-Board continued previous work with alumni engagement, and expanded on some things. We continued sending out an alumni newsletter, known as The Crisis Drop to our alumni on our mailing list. We also reached out to one of our most involved alumni, Tom Nally, and discussed with him strategies on how to engage alumni. With that conversation, we created the Alumni Giving Fund, which allows donors to give directly to fund conferences.

One of the overarching goals of this E-Board was making clear and effective policies to mitigate crises and prevent issues both on and off conference. For instance, we made policies for Hot Seat, a classic IRO social event on conference in which everyone asks each other questions. This event has gotten out of hand several times before, causing membership drama and conflict. E-Board wrote guidelines on where to draw the line on questions. Another example is the policies we wrote for people dropping conferences, and when refunds are available. This E-Board term was focused on taking issues we were seeing, and writing clear and enforceable policies that we could utilize. These policies allowed us to take action on these issues and prevent further troubles.