Graduate Women International

Board of Directors Meeting

27 January 2026, 6 a.m. CET

Meeting held on Zoom

Minutes

Meeting called to order 6:17 a.m. CET.

Present: Pat Patton, Gisele Scanlon, Saskia, Voortman, Shirley Gillett, Lynne Kent, Joy Hurst, Meera Bondre, Stacy Dry Lara.

Regrets: Ujwala Shinde

Absent: Nataly Garcia

Minute taker: Stacy Dry Lara

1. Agenda: Adopted by consensus

2. Conflict of Interest: None declared

3. Minutes: Motion to approve the minutes of 8 December 2025, carried by consensus with the addition of a note that a discussion on Governance be added to the Board Orientation.

4. Standing Reports:

a. President Report: written report was distributed; all asked to refer to it; no questions.

b. Exec Dir Report: referred all to written report; highlighted that the World Economic Forum in Davos was interesting and that leaders are focused on prosperity and the well-being of their nations and companies with much discussion on the productive use of AI and removing bias; informed that the Kathy Horvat legacy project is complete; she received all cheques from the custodial bank and the money has been deposited in the bank.

5. Business Arising:

a. CSW70 Update:

Discussion about CSW70 and overview of the upcoming delegate training on 19 February 2026, 5pm CET. Further discussion about the finalized delegate list at 22 GWI delegates including two who have annual UN badges, the Senegal delegates and one Swiss applicant joining the Canadian delegation, in order to accommodate as many applicants as possible, and adjustments due to visa restrictions.

Thanks were expressed to CFUW for assistance in including as many delegates as possible. It was clarified that annual UN badges will grant access to all necessary areas; secondary badges are not always required. It is anticipated that some NFAs will also have delegations attending with the final information still being collected. The Board discussed logistical challenges, including visa concerns for delegates. An online report template will be provided to all delegates to submit their reports after attendance and a summary report will be written.

The Board discussed accommodation arrangements and that in the past some delegates have been able to join the CFUW room block. This will be followed up with CFUW. It was confirmed that all NFA members attending can participate in GWI events and activities. The suggestion was made to have a special opportunity for GWI delegates to meet together casually in the UN, recognizing that the meeting day begins early for many delegates and some may not be able to attend based on where they are located at the time of the get-together. This will be further explored and shared with GWI delegates if space is available at no charge. Breakfast briefings and social dinner were confirmed, all GWI NFA delegates are welcome to attend.

b. GWI-NL/VVAO request-Update

An update on the Ad hoc Committee on the GWI-NL/VVAO request was given; work regarding a request from GWI Netherlands and VVAO for a renewed membership in which all members do not pay GWI dues is underway, with emphasis on the need to protect GWI's membership interests and integrity. The complexities of integrating GWI-NL, a smaller organization, with VVAO, a much larger one, were discussed, emphasizing the need for clear membership and financial structures. The Ad Hoc Committee is developing requirements for NFA agreements, including financial transparency and leadership roles, and plans to meet with GWI-NL and VVAO to discuss these. GWI Constitutional revisions may be needed.

c. Planning for regional NFA meetings-Update

An update for planning for the regional NFA meetings was provided with the key purpose being to share information about GWI strategic plans and learn from NFAs about their current activities and advocacy, to learn from one another and strengthen communication and relationships. The meetings will be planned for late-March and early to mid-April and will include an update on CSW70 attendance.

6. New Business

a. Treasurer's Report

A written report was provided and Board members were referred to this report for details. A small decline in GWI membership numbers was reported but noted growth in some regions. It was noted that the sharp decline in New Zealand was mainly due to one branch having to close. Over 50% of NFAs have paid dues by January and follow up letters will go to all others. Most Triennial GA and conference invoices had been paid, with results expected by the end of the month. The Year-End financial results are in the process of being compiled and a full financial report is planned for the next Board meeting.

The Board discussed the financial outcomes of the Triennial Conference, with the final result being breaking even. The Board agreed to conduct a more thorough financial analysis for future conferences to identify efficiencies and financial controls.

It was reported that the 2026 Independent Member renewal letter had been distributed to 78 members from 38 countries with deadline of 15 February; one has renewed and there have been three new Independent Members.

b. Committee Appointments

The Board discussed applications and appointment of new committee members as reviewed and recommended by VPs and the list distributed in advance; this included members nominated for appointment by the Board from the General Assembly elections in Zambia, and those who expressed interest in joining a committee with the Call for Interest in November 2025. It was noted that the primary need is for a young member on each committee per the new Constitutional requirement approved at the Triennial GA and one or two committees that could benefit from an additional member. A young member will still be needed for the Fundraising, Membership and Finance Committees and Board members committed to assist these VPs identify potential candidates. The Board agreed that committee members should have relevant experience and skills to contribute effectively.

MOTION: Lynne Kent; Second: Gisele Scanlon: To appoint all members as presented with addition of Dr. Vasanti Patwardhan to the Hegg Hoffet Committee.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

The Hegg Hoffet round of applications process was reviewed, noting that application rounds are open two times per year.

c. Triennial GA Minutes
The Draft Triennial GA Minutes were reviewed for accuracy and two corrections were noted including thanks to the EduComm members and correction to the Credentials Committee information.

d. VP Legal & Governance Report
i. The Board reviewed the Code of Conduct for Board members, which outlines expectations for Board Officers, employees and individuals who have a substantive influence on the operation of GWI regarding ethics, integrity, and confidentiality; privacy and the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) issues were raised and noted for compliance. The Code of Conduct will be finalized for approval at the next Board meeting. These and similar documents will be added to a Board handbook.

ii. Constitution revisions
The revisions to the Constitution as approved at the Triennial General Assembly were provided for review. No action necessary. The revised Constitution will be posted on the website and provided to all Board members.

iii. Other reports
VP Education – the VP Education report was submitted in writing and distributed in advance. No action required.

The Board agreed to table all other Agenda items to the next meeting due to the lateness of the hour.

MOTION: Lynne Kent; Second: Shirley Gillett: To move to an *in camera* session. CARRIED
MOTION: Lynne Kent; Second: Shirley Gillett: To move out of the *in camera* session. CARRIED

7. **Other Business**:

The Board discussed scheduling changes for future meetings, agreeing to move them to Mondays CET with each Board member to adjust for her own time zone; the new schedule will be distributed. They also confirmed a Board Orientation session for 2 February at 6 AM CET and a Strategic Planning session for 5 February at 6 AM CET.

8. **Meeting adjourned** at 8:34 a.m. CET