Graduate Women International

Board of Directors Meeting

23 March 2026, 6 am CET

Meeting held on Zoom

Minutes

Meeting called to order 6:03 am CET.

Present: Pat Patton (President), Meera Bondre, Shirley Gillett, Joy Hurst, Lynne Kent, Gisele Scanlon, Ujwala Shinde, Saskia Voortman, Stacy Dry Lara (Executive Director)

Minute taker: Stacy Dry Lara and Pat Patton

1. Agenda: Adopted by consensus with addition of VP Education Report to VP Reports 6c.ii.

2. Conflict of Interest: None declared

3. Minutes: Motion to approve the Minutes of 16 February 2026, Approved by consensus with clarification provided on alleviation of dues for Argentina.

4. Standing Reports:

a. **President Report:** Pat Patton reported on attendance at the UN CSW70 in New York 9-20 March with 22 delegates from GWI including 20 delegates per GWI's ECOSOC status and 2 delegates with annual UN Delegate badges. She noted gratitude to CFUW for accepting two additional GWI applicants to attend with their delegation. A number of NFAs had members attending, some NFAs with ECOSOC status and others without, and it is estimated that 60-70 GWI members were in attendance at CSW70. Key messages during the meetings from UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres were to raise our voices and not be silent, not to give up, to pushback against the pushback and rollback of women's rights. He noted that the UN has reached parity in women in official positions growing from 30% in the past to now 50%. "Keep shaking the foundation of privilege." He encouraged women to push leaders to act when they would rather postpone.
Delegates at CSW70 were somewhat discouraged by the rollback of women's rights in many parts of the world but recognized that it is necessary to unite our voices and act together. GWI has been doing this for many years in its written submissions with sponsorship from other women's organizations and has also leant its sponsorship to the written submissions of women's organizations. NFA leadership in attendance at CSW70

recognized this movement and their intention to do this together with women's organizations in their countries.

She noted the event co-sponsored by GWI and Soroptimist International *From Knowledge to Power: Education as the First Step to Justice for Women and Girls* and sharing the Opening and Closing statements with SI President Renata Trottman and the event conducted with the Presidents of the leading international women's organizations *From Law to Life: How Women's Organizations are Advancing Justice through Community Accountability Mechanisms* - Zonta International, Soroptimist International, International Business and Professional Women's Association and Project 5-0 together with representation from CEDAW. The GWI Young Members Network also presented a virtual parallel event and a number of GWI NFAs conducted events during CSW70.

b. Exec Dir Report: Stacy Dry Lara indicated that since the last Board meeting she had continued the CSW70 preparation, then participated in CSW70. Since then, she has been working to catch up on the many administrative and operational tasks that had been placed on the back burner given the CSW70 preparation. She noted that some NGO leaders thought that the CSW70 priority theme was a bit broad and in their reports/submissions concentrated on their work on women's rights and, where possible, emphasized justice. There is still uncertainty about where CSW71 will be held as the UN Women office is implementing the move of a portion of their technical functions and staff to Nairobi, Kenya and other locations, but no definite information about CSW71 is available at this time.

5. Business Arising:

a. **NFA Annual Meeting**

The Board discussed the date for the NFA Annual Meeting, which is required per the GWI Constitution Article 3, 1c, the purpose of which is:
providing a platform for but not limited to the following: GWI headquarters and Board sharing of information on progress regarding strategic priorities and implementation strategies, NFA sharing of priorities, strategies, challenges and successes, networking within the membership, and new NFA members will be introduced together with updates and progress reports from associate academic institutions and or corporate members.

Consideration was given to the time zone differences of members and the length of time for the meeting.
A planning committee of Stacy Dry Lara, Shirley Gillett, Joy Hurst and Pat Patton was formed to bring a recommendation to the April Board meeting.

b. **Committee Appointments – Approval**
Additional appointees for the Hegg Hoffet, Project Development and Marketing Committee were appointed:
Motion: Lynne Kent; Second: Saskia Voortman
That the additional appointments for the Hegg Hoffet, Project Development and Marketing Committees as presented be appointed.
CARRIED
It was noted that the Membership Committee and Finance Committee still need a young member.

c. **Treasurer Report – Year-end Financial Audit, referred to April Board meeting**

Saskia Voortman reported that the Year-end Audit is in its completion steps and will be submitted for approval at the April Board meeting. It will be included in the Annual Report together with reports from President Pat Patton and Past President Patrice Wellesley-Cole and a joint report from Treasurer Saskia Voortman and Past Treasurer Karoline Dorsch.

d. **VP Legal and Governance**

Conflict of Interest Document
Motion: Joy Hurst; Second: Gisele Scanlon
That the Conflict of Interest document as presented by approved.
CARRIED.

Code of Conduct Document: This document will be prepared for approval at the April Board meeting with clarification in all sections that the Code of Conduct refers to all Board members as well as all Employees and Key Individuals involved with GWI.

6. New Business

a. **Resignation of VP Marketing Nataly Garcia Alvarado**
Resignation due to unforeseen circumstances received 18 February 2026.
A new VP Marketing will be sought and appointed by the Board. A Call for Interest will be distributed 27 March with deadline for application 10 April.

b. **CSW70 General Discussion:** lessons learned, insights
The Board members attending CSW70 discussed the proceedings of the meeting in New York. There was general disappointment in the lack of debate of the Agreed Conclusions. Many Board members made good contacts for follow up for GWI business.

The number of young GWI members in attendance was heartening and there was a new energy among the GWI members. The added Thursday evening debriefing with GWI members was a good opportunity to hear what members were experiencing and how they would take the information back for action with their NFA.

The GWI Policies document that aligns approved policies with the Beijing +30 platform and the SDGs was discussed for redistribution.

The GWI delegates will provide reports on the events/sessions they attended, and a summary will be posted on the GWI website

c. VP Reports

i. VP Advocacy

Motion: Gisele Scanlon; Second: Lynne Kent
That an Ad Hoc Advocacy Committee be formed to assist the VP Advocacy in the planning and implementation of the advocacy components of the 2025-2028 Strategic Plan.
CARRIED

ii. VP Education

Shirley Gillett reported that the Education Committee is quite large but is developing their plans.
The EduComm is considering its priorities for 2025-2028 including a webinar on diversity with each member leading a portion of the session. Additional ideas are under consideration. Digital learning is of particular interest.
For future consideration, that one of the criteria for application for the Convenor of committees is that this be a person who has been on the committee in the past.

7. **Other Business**

There was no other business raised.

8. **Next meeting: Monday 20 April 2026 at 6 pm CEST.**

9. **Meeting adjourned** at 8:47 am CET.

Minutes taken by Stacy Dry Lara and Pat Patton