



## BACKGROUND GUIDE

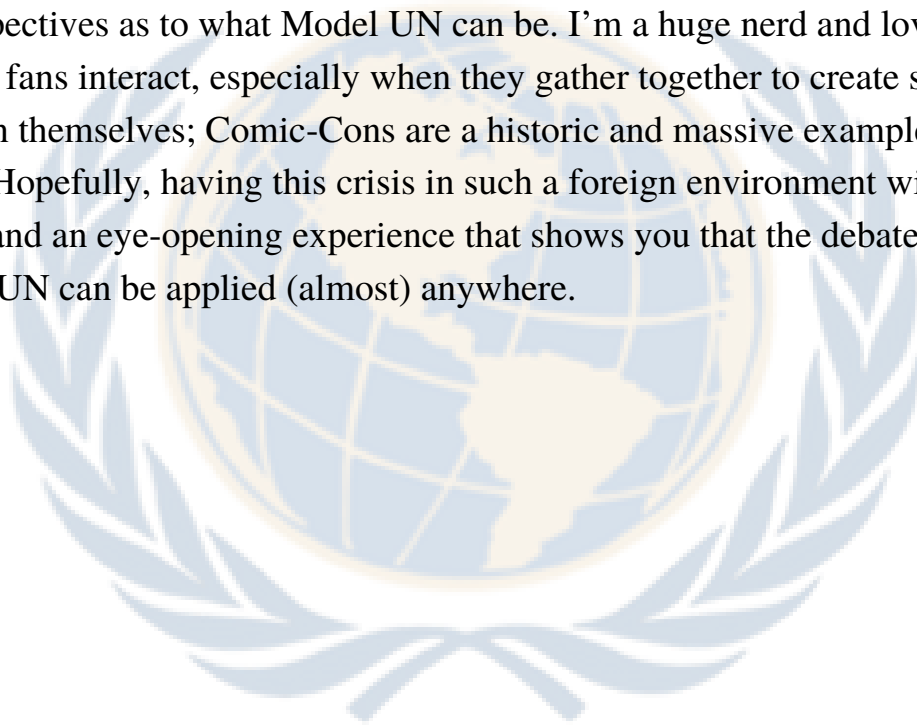
# *WAMUNC XXIV*

Comic-Con International: San Diego  
2022

# *LETTER FROM THE CHAIR*

Hi everyone!

My name is Maximilian Russo, a first-year at the Elliott School of International Affairs, double majoring in International Affairs and Chinese Language and Literature. Having experience in high school Model UN, I am well aware of some of the mind-numbingly complicated/tedious topics you may have covered in the past or will cover in the future, and I hope that this committee will bring you some fresh perspectives as to what Model UN can be. I'm a huge nerd and love learning about how fans interact, especially when they gather together to create something bigger than themselves; Comic-Cons are a historic and massive example of fans' potential. Hopefully, having this crisis in such a foreign environment will be both a lot of fun and an eye-opening experience that shows you that the debate skills you learn in MUN can be applied (almost) anywhere.



# COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

Comic-Con 2022 is a highly anticipated gathering of fandoms that will take place in July in the San Diego Convention Center. This gathering is even more hyped due to the fact that Comic-Con did not take place in 2020 *or* 2021, meaning that this will be the first in-person rendition of it in about 3 years. As members of the Convention committee, you will represent the convention's board of directors, special guests, and industry advisors to help equip SDCC 2022 and future conventions with the necessary tools to provide a safe, fun, and positive experience. You will find sponsors and special guests, organize panels, negotiate with venues, hotels, and artists, and speak with animators and more to make the convention a top-tier event. The timeline of the SDCC committee will start from the actual time we start the first session of committee and end at the day of the event in July 2022; this gives you all about six months to develop your arcs within. Parliamentary procedure will be a standard crisis procedure, with moderated and unmoderated caucuses being periodically interrupted with crisis updates both from the CD and delegates. One more thing: even though this committee *is* focusing on repairing the convention after its COVID hiatus, we would like to keep the main scope of the committee away from COVID policy.

# *BACKGROUND GUIDE*

## Historical Background

In 1970, the Golden State Comic Book Convention was created by Shel Dorf, Richard Alf, Ken Krueger, and Mike Towry. It was later called the San Diego Comic Book Convention, shortened to the San Diego Comic-Con. Attendance in recent years has topped over 130,000, and the location of the convention spans the San Diego Convention Center and a network of nearby parks and satellite buildings. Comic-Con is hosted by Comic-Con International, which organizes several other conventions such as the Storytelling Across Media (SAM) conference and WonderCon, an Anaheim-based convention that also focuses on comics. Comic-Con International also hosts several award ceremonies at the SDCC, such as the Inkpot award for people in popular arts. There are also the Will Eisner Awards, which give credit to prominent artists and workers in the comic book industry.

SDCC is known to be the largest comic book convention in the world, with sources such as Forbes claiming it to be the “largest convention of its kind.” This status comes with a great economic effect within San Diego and its metropolitan area; it is estimated that each year the SDCC produces an average of \$140 million of impact per year. In 2014, this economic impact peaked at \$178 million. These numbers point to Comic-Con’s potential for business and marketing, and many of the convention’s attractions are geared towards merchandise, art commissions, and other items for sale. In addition, there have been corporate partnerships with the SDCC from companies like Lego, Mattel, Hasbro, and more to create special-edition products under the label “Comic-Con Exclusive.” With collaborations like these, SDCC allows fans to access a wealth of merchandise from many different fandoms, let alone just comics. Toys, video games, clothing, posters, props, food, and more are sold, almost all of which is uniquely branded with numerous fan media and marked up in price. Though it is labeled as a nonprofit organization, the Comic-Con serves as an open door for many types of economic ventures.

The SDCC has shifted venues quite a few times, ranging from its first location at the U.S. Grant Hotel to the University of California, San Diego. In recent decades, there have been several complaints about overcrowding within the convention despite the convention being housed in the immensely large San Diego Convention Center. There are overlaps in the SDCC location contracts signed by Comic-Con International. SDCC has a binding contract to the San Diego Convention Center until 2022, but, according to a contract signed with the city, it no longer has to stay in San Diego after 2021. As there are already existing deals with satellite buildings to host the convention, there is open space to negotiate other auxiliary buildings to aid in the overcrowding of the convention space. Keep in mind, though, that there are strong sentiments to keep the SDCC in San Diego; Comic-Con's director of marketing and public relations David Glanzer claims that "We've been approached by other cities, [but] I don't think anybody wants to leave San Diego. I certainly don't. It's a perfect fit for us. It's expensive, whether it be paying for the street signs that tell you what streets are closed, or for any police or the hall or any of the myriad things, it's expensive. But it's a great city. There's been some talk of expansion of the center, which we would certainly welcome. Hopefully if everything lines up, we will be here for many more years."

Besides commercial events like the Artist's Alley, there are also a plethora of free and paid social events to attend within the convention. One of the most prominent examples of this is the panels, which host special events (and special guests) designed to be interactive. Q&As, trivia, new premiers of a certain media, and more are commonplace in these panels, and given the legendary status of the convention there is much potential for highly famed guest speakers to be present in these. Besides panels, there are major media companies and movie studios that have exhibitor spaces, individuals who organize film or anime screenings, and dance parties, among others. It is typical for the SDCC to host over a thousand panels per year, and the biggest panels are hosted in Ballroom 20 and Hall H, which both seat around 5,000 people.

Beyond the concrete aspects of sales, location, and attendance, there are also key social aspects of the convention that are paramount to the culture and spirit of the convention. Though the San Diego Comic-Con started as a convention about comic books, its fanbase is changing. In fact, the majority of Comic-Con's focus in panels—about 29%—is now on anime. Comics now only occupy 26% of panels, which means the conversation within the Con is now veering away from its original scope. The dynamics and nature of the convention are changing, both in focus and scale, and they will continue to do so in the future.

### Committee Topics

- The convention has undergone a recent hiatus, and in light of not being able to have a convention for over 2 years, the Convention committee will face many challenges. For one, will our attendance levels remain the same as they were in previous, pre-Covid years? If not, how large will they be? Bigger or smaller? How can we accommodate a volatile, changing base of attendees? On another note, should we intentionally limit our attendance numbers to fit our current space or work towards acquiring more space to have the maximum number of attendees? With the changing of attendee levels, how should we modify our financial allocations to match our new level of income from ticket sales? Should tickets become cheaper or more expensive, and why? What special guests should we invite with our new income, and which ones can be expected to actually attend? How much advertising time should we allow our sponsors to have?
- There are many logistical and security concerns within large conventions that must be addressed before and during their runtime. Concerns for overcrowding, assault and harassment, vehicle traffic, drug use, and counterfeit products are all potential issues for SDCC 2022. What solutions should we implement to make our convention a safe and comfortable experience for everyone? How should these rules apply to each area of the convention experience (i.e. rules for the venue, for hotels, and for public areas like parks)?



- Address the consumer culture within the San Diego Comic-Con. Is it something that should be meddled with? You can use your portfolio powers, backroom, or directives to edit the business aspects of the convention, either by scaling back the amount of products sold and distributed using quotas and rules, or you can enact policy that further opens up the convention to more merchants, corporations, etc.

### Potential Solutions

- Bringing in special guests using the connections you have in your position powers. Think about how special guests can attract certain groups of people, and how they can increase or decrease overall attendance to the convention.
- Advertising for the con using numerous online and IRL platforms.
- Acquiring sponsorship and partnership deals to fund the convention; what can you do with your portfolio powers and backroom arc to attract lucrative investors to the convention? How will you use that money?
- Scale, expand, or edit the venue. Utilize your portfolio powers to make deals with property owners in the San Diego area, or advocate for a smaller convention. What works best for your character and/or arc?
- Set a theme for the convention. Should Comic-Con remain a venue exclusively for traditional comic books, or should the convention embrace its new fanbase of anime/other media?
- Provide effective marketing strategies to attract artists and creators to our Artist's Alley and exhibition area.
- Perhaps you see the SDCC as too broad, and maybe you'd like to see some sort of categorization or splitting up of fandoms. If this sounds appealing, you can potentially move your arc towards banding together a specific fandom and petitioning for separation from the convention. Whether it will be managed by Comic-Con International or not is entirely up to you, and there are multiple other factors to consider. Where will you get funding to create a separate community? How will you get people to agree with you?
- Perhaps you *want* the SDCC to be chaotic or violent. You can use your arc to purposely flood the space with too many guests, invite special guests that can incite some sort of rowdy behavior, etc.

- Character List
  
- Daniel Zisko, Director of Finance
  - Daniel Zisko is the Director of Finance of Comic-Con International. He is educated as a Certified Public Accountant and has experience in working with the entertainment and hospitality industry. He has been working with Comic-Con International for over 6 years now.
  
- Ashley Ayala, HR Generalist
  - Experienced HR Manager with an M.B.A., Ashley has experience working in HR with several different corporations before working for Comic-Con International. She has been with SDCC for almost 2 years.
  
- Colin McGinn, Lead Software Engineer
  - Colin has worked in web development and software engineering since 2007, earning a bachelor's in computer science and political science. He has proficiency in a myriad of coding languages, including Javascript, HTML, databases, and C#.
  
- Courtney Gant, Sr. Director of Advancement at Comic-Con Museum
  - Courtney has been working with the Comic-Con Museum for over three and a half years, and has a plethora of experience working with newer companies and startups. Having founded online fundraising marketplaces on her own, she is well-versed in entrepreneurship.
  
- David Glanzer, Communications Chief and Strategy Officer
  - Glanzer has an astounding 27 years of experience working with the San Diego Comic-Con and is one of the most experienced members of the Comic-Con staff on committee. He is a communications expert who is adept at working with press on a local, national, and international level.
  
- Sunny Mui, Head of Web Wizardry Editor and Chief
  - Sunny Mui is a seasonal employee of the SDCC, having experience working with frontend web development. He is a Senior UI Developer at Apple, has experience in writing, graphic design, and programming, and has worked as a freelancer in the past.



- Sergio Aragonés, Special Guest and Cartoonist
  - Sergio is known for his contributions to *Mad* Magazine as well as creating the comic book *Groo the Wanderer*. He has connections with Antonio Prohías, creator of *Spy vs. Spy*, and has extensive connections with others within *Mad*. He has worked with DC Comics in the past and has a history of being a guest in large conventions.
- Donny Cates, Comic Book Writer and Artist (Venom, Doctor Strange, etc.)
  - Donny is a comic book writer who started his career in a Marvel internship program. After being caught trying to steal a trophy from Marvel headquarters, he took some time as a freelancer and ended up writing for Dark Horse Comics, in which he was given roles on Venom, Doctor Strange, and Thanos.
- Michael M. Richardson, President of Dark Horse Comics
  - Mike is an Emmy-winning producer, publisher, and writer. He is the founder of Dark Horse Comics, an award winning publishing company based out of Oregon. In addition to comics, Dark Horse also has experience in filmmaking. Mike prides himself on keeping his writers as involved in the development of titles as possible.
- Elvin Lai, CEO and President of the Ocean Park Inn Hotel
  - Elvin Lai has been the CEO and President of the Ocean Park Inn Hotel for over 18 years. Given his hotel's convenient location, he has worked closely with the San Diego Comic-Con for as long as his hospitality career has been active.
- Josh Brolin, Actor (Thanos, Marvel)\ul>- A seasoned Marvel actor, Brolin is most famous for playing the voice of Thanos in the Avengers films. Besides this, he has also held roles in Guardians of the Galaxy, American Gangster, and Sicario. His family has deep connections with the acting and film industry.

- Ryan Meinerding, Head of Visual Development and Character Design for Marvel Studios
  - Ryan Meinerding is the Head of Visual Development and Character Design for Marvel Studios, and he has been with Marvel Studios since the movie Iron Man. He is most known for his extensive work with Captain America's suits, and his versatility in working with a multitude of Marvel movies. He has also worked on several video game titles during his career.
- Wendell Dalit, Art Director for Sony Pictures Animation
  - Dalit has worked with Sony Pictures Animation for almost 8 years now. Starting out by making his own short film, Tamara, Wendell Dalit has moved on to working on projects such as Lin-Manuel Miranda's Vivo and Spider-Man: Into the Spider-verse.
- Grant Morrison, MBE, Writer for DC Comics
  - Grant Morrison is an enigmatic writer for DC comics who is known for his eccentric, philosophical narratives within his comics. He has worked on a number of large projects including Batman, New X-Men, and All-Star Superman. He is a frequent guest at the San Diego Comic-Con.
- Patty Jenkins, Director of Wonder Woman and Wonder Woman 1984
  - Patty Jenkins is best known for being the director of Wonder Woman, but has been active in the film industry since 1995. For a period of time, Wonder Woman was the highest grossing film directed by a woman. She has been honored by the U.N. during the 75th anniversary of Wonder Woman, honoring the character as a "Honorary Ambassador for the Empowerment of Women and Girls".

### Questions to Consider

- How will you use your powers to uniquely enhance the quality of the convention?
- How can this committee ensure an affordable and fun experience for all fans?
- How can we use our convention rulebook to ensure a smooth and safe experience for everyone?
- Who will we bring to the convention and why?
- Where will we get funding and licensing for the convention, and how will our partners benefit us?
- How can we make this convention set the standard for future Comic-Cons or stand out in another way?

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