

2050: Race to the Arctic

Background Guide

GWCIA XXXI

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Conference Policies

Misconduct Policy

GWCIA acknowledges that collegiate Model UN spaces often echo or perpetuate real-world discrimination towards various historically marginalized communities. As such, GWCIA enforces a zero tolerance policy for harassment or discrimination based on race, color, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual identity, national origin, religion, age, disability, or any other identity-based designation. Additionally, GWCIA practices a zero tolerance policy for sexual misconduct of any kind, including sexual harassment and sexual assault. This includes, but is not limited to, inappropriate 1) content in notes passed or documents created during committee sessions; 2) conversations throughout GWCIA; and 3) conduct at The George Washington University campus or at any GWCIA-sponsored programming. If a delegate experiences any kind of discrimination, social discomfort, or sexual misconduct, they are urged to bring it to the attention of any GWCIA Secretariat member or report the instance via our anonymous misconduct form, which can be found on our Conduct Policies website page and in each committee room. Any potential cases of discrimination or sexual misconduct will warrant immediate investigation and may result in disqualification from awards and/or dismissal from the conference at the sole discretion of the secretary-general.

Technology Policy — Crisis & Historical/Specialized

Using technology is prohibited in GWCIA historical/specialized and crisis committees, unless a delegate has an approved accommodation. GWCIA will provide delegates with one white legal pad and a pen that they may use to write notes if they wish. Delegates are free to bring their own additional notepads, staplers, Post-Its, or other supplies, as these will not be provided.

Plagiarism, Pre-Writing & AI Policy

All pre-written, plagiarized, or AI-generated content, which can include working papers, draft resolutions, directives, or crisis notes, is strictly prohibited at GWCIA. Pre-writing constitutes any language or content that was written outside of unmoderated caucuses in general assemblies and outside of when debate is formally opened in crisis committees. This means that creating content before or after committee sessions or during moderated caucuses in assemblies & specialized committees is pre-writing. Writing during USG feedback or announcements or during guest speakers equally constitutes pre-writing. All dais members and undersecretaries general are specifically instructed to monitor for pre-writing by checking typed and written materials that delegates may have prepared before the conference if potential pre-writing is suspected. By participating in GWCIA, your delegation acknowledges that they understand this policy and the consequences if it is broken. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, verbatim or near-verbatim copying and pasting from academic sources or other websites. Any delegate found guilty of pre-writing, plagiarism, or flagrant AI usage will be immediately disqualified from any award in their committee. The GWCIA Secretariat reserves the right to search computers and laptops, notebooks and binders, USBs, and any form of electronics for Model UN specific documents in response to allegations. They additionally reserve the discretion to run any content through an AI detector. In order to report a case of substantive misconduct, please see the anonymous misconduct form on our Conduct Policies page or contact a member of the Secretariat.

Awards Policy

While GWCIA recognizes that the core value of participating in any Model UN committee is education in international affairs and the development of related skills such as productive collaboration, public speaking, and critical thinking, we also recognize the value of rewarding delegates who are exceptionally prepared and proficient in these skills. At GWCIA, we value delegates who can leverage creativity, diplomacy, substantive knowledge, and critical thinking skills to debate effectively, lead negotiations and blocs, and write comprehensive clauses. We especially look favorably towards delegates who individually develop meaningful solutions to the committee's main issues while keeping in mind the realistic diplomatic dynamics of our world, as well as those delegates who are able to advocate for their solutions and ideas to be adopted. The dais encourages delegates to lead in a manner that uplifts and respects their competitors while also introducing strong, unique solutions that consistently anchor their group's directive or working paper. On the other hand, attempts to undermine the goals of the committee without reason or acting without detailed thought of consequences are discouraged. Any rude, disrespectful, or demeaning conduct towards other delegates' ideas will not be tolerated.

Letter from the Chair & Crisis Director

Honorable Delegates,

Welcome to GWCIA XXXI. My name is Maren Davis and I'm so excited to be your Chair for this committee. I am a sophomore at GWU studying international affairs with a double minor in political science and history. This is my first time staffing a conference and running my own committee; I am so excited to see all the enthusiasm and creativity you will all bring.

The Arctic Ocean Program 2050 is a major ten year long (2026-2036) research initiative launched to study how the Arctic Ocean is transforming from an ice covered region to an open expansion of ocean. It is being led by the Arctic University of Norway and 18 other Norwegian research universities. A melting Arctic opens up new northern sea routes that significantly decrease the shipping distances between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. The melting of this ice is also intensifying interests in untouched natural resources such as oil, natural gas, and fisheries. More Arctic nations are establishing territorial claims as these new resources emerge.

In this committee, I would like to deal with real life problems like navigation through new ocean routes, possible solutions to climate change issues, and how these new resources should be distributed and used. I would also like to see you use some fantasy elements, as this race to the Arctic has just begun. I cannot wait to see how you will approach this new issue!

All the Best,

Maren Davis

m.davis1@gwmail.gwu.edu

Reminder: Delegates must CC their advisor on any email sent to the Chair or Crisis Director.

Overview of Committee Procedure

Crisis Procedure

GWCIA XXXI utilizes a Loose Note crisis system, where students freely submit notes that will serve as a statement of intent and a brief justification for that action. Delegates will have the option to submit a page from their pad to take backroom actions. Rather than utilizing the extensive full page note, with fanciful language and a recipient of the note, students will submit notes at will. This can be done at any time during the course of the committee. The backroom will receive these notes as they come, approve or deny them, and take note of the arcs and actions of each respective delegate. Their actions will be noted in the following crisis update.

Example:
"Using my powers as Commander of the 506th Regime of the 101st Airborne Division, deploy troops in Indiana." Col. Strayer

Introduction to the Committee

The Arctic Watch is made up of a variety of characters holding differing interests, wants, and needs. This committee was formed after the discovery of Black Gold in 2049. Black Gold is a rare mineral that has been proven to be a viable energy source. The discovery of Black Gold caused upheaval and tension among various groups throughout the world. This committee has been tasked with the prevention of escalating tension and preserving peace among various groups. In this committee, you will work with industry experts, government leaders, and activists to find a resolution. However, due to the conflicting interests, finding feasible resolutions is becoming increasingly difficult.

Background

The Arctic Circle is vital to the survival of humanity on Earth. The ice that covers this portion of Earth keeps temperatures on Earth livable by constantly cooling the atmosphere. It also provides roughly 70% of Earth's freshwater. This portion of the world is also home to various forms of wildlife, including species of whales, polar bears, and seals, along with many others.
Currently the Arctic Circle is facing several threats. Climate change has caused roughly 90% of glaciers to erode to some extent, while illegal fishing disrupts the living environment.

Simultaneously, artificial intelligence has become a central part of life since the early 2020s, making it so energy resources are overused and increasingly scarce. Governments and large technology companies have been on the search for a cheap and abundant energy source not only to solve the issue at hand but also to gain significant wealth.

Current Situation

Black Gold could be used, as theorized by scientists in the year 2050, for various technologies, primarily energy to run artificial intelligence centers. But the process to obtain Black Gold is detrimental to the environment.

In order to obtain this mineral, large vessels called “icebreakers" must enter the Arctic Circle, which results in the destruction and further melting of glaciers, effectively raising sea levels and further warming the globe. Additionally, the mineral must be drilled out of the Earth, further diminishing the environment.

The problems caused by the discovery of Black Gold are not limited to extraction. There is also significant fighting over who can and will obtain the rights to the Black Gold. The United States government claims rights to it as government-contracted scientists discovered the material; however, other countries and organizations are working to buy land in the Arctic and fight for ownership of this rare material.

The discovery of black gold has overall led to global tensions increasing, involving both state governments and private corporations. Additionally, the environmental threat that the extraction of the material poses has caused scientists to lobby against black gold and propose alternative solutions to the energy crisis.

This committee has been formed to find a solution that allows all parties to be satisfied and eliminate the threat of a global conflict.

Questions to Consider

1. What are my characters' interests and motives in the Arctic?
2. What are the risks associated with continuing to mine Black Gold? How do they compare to the benefits?
3. What are some viable solutions that appease all parties?

Character List

***Disclaimer:** The characters represented in this list may have been altered or modified from their real-life counterparts, as well as entirely made up. This is to ensure that all delegates have a fun, engaging, and enjoyable experience no matter their position. If you find outside information related to your character that contradicts that of your character description, please use the provided description and the final authority on the character's portfolio.

1. Maria Danschik
    a. Maria leads Anthropic, one of the world's top AI companies, and needs cheap, reliable energy to keep her data centers running. She sees Black Gold as the perfect solution to the energy crisis and wants to secure a steady supply for her company. Maria worries that if she doesn't act fast, competitors will grab the resource first. She's smart, calculating, and always thinking several steps ahead. Above all, she wants to make sure AI development doesn't stall because of an energy shortage.
2. Dale Capitagni
    a. Dale, the president of the United States of America, believes his country has the strongest claim to Black Gold since American scientists discovered it first. He wants to protect this resource for U.S. companies and citizens, and he's not afraid to clash with other nations over it. Dale cares about jobs, national strength, and staying ahead of rival countries. He's under pressure at home to prove the discovery benefits everyday Americans. He's willing to negotiate, but only if the U.S. comes out on top.
3. Risa Shriner

   a. Risa has millions of followers who look to her for opinions on what's cool, what's fair, and what's happening in the world. She's using her platform to spread awareness about the dangers of Arctic drilling and rally young people to care about the issue. Risa isn't a scientist or a politician, but her influence over public opinion is enormous. She wants to be seen as someone who stood up for the planet. She can shift how millions of people feel about this crisis with a single video.

4. Bruce Foxx
   a. Bruce is a serious, fact-focused reporter at CNN determined to expose the truth about Black Gold's environmental risks. He's been investigating rumors of secret drilling operations and wants to hold governments and companies accountable. Bruce believes his job is to protect the public by revealing what powerful people would rather keep hidden. He's persistent and not easily intimidated by threats or bribes. His stories can shape how the whole world sees this crisis.
5. Arthur Ray
   a. Arthur, a top journalist at Fox News, focuses his reporting on the economic opportunities Black Gold could bring, especially for American workers and businesses. He's skeptical of activists he thinks are exaggerating the environmental dangers, and he wants to make sure their voices don't drown out the benefits of new energy sources. Arthur values growth, jobs, and national interests in his coverage. He's competitive with Bruce Foxx and often frames stories very differently than CNN does. His articles carry real weight with a large audience, despite their extreme conservative bias.

6. Eunice Greene
    a. Eunice has spent her whole career fighting to protect the environment, and she sees Black Gold extraction as a disaster in the making. She's organized protests and pressured lawmakers to stop icebreakers from entering the Arctic. Eunice is passionate, outspoken, and unwilling to compromise on protecting polar bears, seals, and the ice itself. She distrusts big corporations and government officials who claim they can drill "safely." Her goal is to stop Black Gold extraction before it's too late.
7. Saara Sheikh
    a. Saara comes from a family that built its fortune on oil in Saudi Arabia, and she sees Black Gold as the next great energy resource to invest in. She's wealthy, well-connected, and used to getting what she wants through money and influence. Saara isn't necessarily against environmental protections, but she won't let them get in the way of a profitable opportunity. She's skilled at forming alliances with other powerful figures in the room. Her main goal is to make sure her family's business empire keeps growing.
8. Arjun Patil
    a. Arjun built his vast fortune from nothing, and he never forgets where he came from. He sees Black Gold as a chance to bring affordable energy to millions of people who, like his own family once did, struggle without reliable power. Arjun is ambitious and driven, but he also genuinely cares about using his success to help others. He's wary of Black Gold being hoarded by wealthy nations and

corporations instead of shared fairly. He wants a solution that lifts up developing countries, not just the already powerful.

9. Jeremy Fitzroy
    a. Jeremy represents the UK's interests in the Arctic Circle and wants to make sure his country isn't left behind in the race for Black Gold. He's a practical, diplomatic leader who prefers negotiation over conflict, but he'll defend the UK's claims if pushed. Jeremy is also aware of growing public concern about climate change back home. He's trying to strike a careful balance between economic opportunity and environmental responsibility. He often looks for common ground between rival nations.
10. Adriana Soto
    a. Adriana is a famous Chilean actress turned passionate activist who has used her celebrity status to champion environmental causes for decades. She's charismatic, dramatic, and knows how to capture a room's attention. Adriana strongly opposes Black Gold extraction and believes celebrities and public figures have a responsibility to speak out. She's skilled at building coalitions between activists and everyday citizens. Her fame gives her a powerful voice in this committee, even without political or corporate power.
11. Maia D’Amico
    a. Maia specializes in international environmental law and believes any solution to the Black Gold crisis must be legally binding and enforceable. She's detail-oriented, logical, and skilled at finding loopholes in agreements that could let companies bend the rules. Maia wants to draft protections that hold

governments and corporations accountable if they damage the Arctic. She's less interested in dramatic speeches and more focused on practical, lasting solutions. She often pushes the committee to think about long-term consequences.

12. Samantha Arnold
    a. Samantha studies how wealthy nations have historically exploited resources from developing countries, and she's determined not to let history repeat itself with Black Gold. She's a sharp critical thinker who challenges other delegates to consider fairness and who truly benefits from Arctic resources. Samantha advocates for the rights of nations and communities that have been left out of similar deals in the past. She's not afraid to call out powerful figures in the room. Her goal is a resolution that shares the benefits of Black Gold equitably.
13. Dean Collins
    a. Dean runs OpenAI company and, like Maria Danschik, urgently needs affordable energy to power his growing operations. He's competitive with Maria and often finds himself both negotiating and clashing with her over access to Black Gold. Dean is confident, ambitious, and focused on keeping his company at the cutting edge of technology. He's willing to invest heavily in extraction efforts if it means securing his company's future. He tends to downplay environmental concerns in favor of innovation and progress.
14. Anton Tombeau
    a. Anton is a fiery, determined activist who has organized protests across France against Arctic drilling. He works closely with other environmentalists around the world, but he's especially focused on pressuring European leaders to take a stand.

Anton believes urgent, immediate action is the only way to prevent irreversible damage to the planet. He's passionate, persuasive, and willing to be provocative to get attention for his cause. He sees this committee as a critical turning point for the planet's future.

15. Margot Jeong

    a. Margot creates videos that break down complex issues like the Black Gold crisis for a young, global audience. She's curious, approachable, and good at asking the tough questions that other delegates might avoid. Margot isn't aligned with any particular side -- she's more interested in uncovering the truth and sharing it with her viewers. Her content has the power to shape how millions of young people around the world understand this crisis. She might just be the delegate most likely to expose secret drilling operations before anyone else.

Works Cited

"The Antarctic." *World Wildlife Fund,* https://www.wwf.org.uk/where-we-work/antarctic. Accessed May 2026.

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