

Back-logged, Blundering, Bankrupt: Dunder Mifflin Scranton Branch

Crisis Committee

Crisis Director: Maya Mukherjee

Chair: Aurica Muntean

Dais: Xuan Lan Tran

Letter from the Director

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 8th annual UNISMUNC, and more specifically to Scranton, Pennsylvania! We're so excited to host our first in-person event in three (!!) years and our team has worked hard to bring you the high-quality crisis experience our conference is known for.

Our committee is set in the fictional Dunder-Mifflin paper company of "The Office", which is facing bankruptcy. We will start in the middle of season 6 (right before "Shareholder Meeting", episode 11), but from there, you as delegates have total control over what happens next to the Dunder Mifflin Scranton Branch and its employees.

My name is Maya, and I will be the crisis director. I'm a senior at UNIS and have been involved in MUN since I was a freshman. As a die-hard "Officeonado", I'm so excited to be directing the committee of my dreams this year! Outside of school you can find me cooking and consuming true crime in any form possible (podcasts, shows, books, etc). Can't wait to meet you all!

Our chair will be Aurica. Aurica is a senior at UNIS and has been involved in MUN since she was 12. Aurica loves to spend time playing with her dogs, walking around the streets of New York, or binge watching shows like The Office or Parks and Rec! She is extremely looking forward to watching the world of The Office come to life in this committee, and seeing where this topic will take us!

Our dais will be Xuan. Xuan is currently a junior at UNIS and a student council representative. Outside of Model UN, she enjoys knitting, sewing, and bad romance novels.

A big thank you to our staffers who have also worked hard on this background guide and will bring you a fast-paced, dynamic, and memorable arc!

Finally, please feel free to contact any of us if you have any questions. See you soon.

Thank you,

Maya Mukherjee, Crisis Director

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A Brief Overview of Committee

This committee will simulate the Dunder Mifflin Paper Company from "The Office". It will bring together significant characters from the show, each with their own agendas and personality quirks. Despite their diverging visions and private goals, it is expected that all characters will collaborate to determine the fate of the Dunder Mifflin Scranton branch. Do note that Scranton consistently has the highest sales and brings in the most revenue to the company out of all the other branches.

We will start right before "Shareholder Meeting" (season 6, episode 11), where Dunder Mifflin formally declares bankruptcy and Michael and some plus-ones are asked to speak for the branch with the highest sales. Your first task as delegates will be to decide how you want them to represent you!

Committee Procedure:

Like most crisis committees, the parliamentary procedure will be slightly different from General Assembly (GA) and Specialized Committees. The parliamentary procedure used in this committee is optimized for the relatively few people in our committee, and for the quick responses needed for crises.

Perpetual Moderated Caucus:

Unlike GA or Specialized Committees, Crisis Committees will not have a speakers list, and will operate under a perpetual moderated caucus. A perpetual moderated caucus is a never-ending moderated caucus that runs for the entirety of committee, with no set topic. For this committee, the perpetual moderated caucus will have a 30-second speaking time. This perpetual moderated caucus will be suspended when a delegate proposes a motion. For example, if a motion for a five minute moderated caucus is passed, the perpetual moderated caucus will be suspended, and the committee will enter the five minute moderated caucus. If there are no points or motions on the floor, the chair will revert to the perpetual moderated caucus.

Amendments and Division of the Question:

In this committee, all amendments to papers will be considered unfriendly and will therefore require a two-thirds majority to pass. Similar to amendments, the motion to divide the question requires a two-thirds majority to pass.

A List of Points and Motions:

- Motion to Open Debate
- Motion for a Moderated Caucus
- Motion for an Unmoderated Caucus
- Motion for a Round Table
- Motion to Introduce All Papers on the Dais
- Motion to Introduce an Amendment
- Motion to divide the Question
- Motion to Enter Voting Procedure
- Motion to Adjourn Debate
- Motion for a Vote of No Confidence
- Point of Inquiry
- Point of Information
- Point of Personal Privilege
- Point of Order

Written Papers

Crisis Notes: Crisis notes are notes used in order to take personal action from a delegate, without the need for committee approval. Crisis notes are therefore bound by a character's individual portfolio power. There are a myriad of ways to write Crisis Notes, but ensure to sign your character's name at the end.

Directives: Like GA and Specialized Committees, Crisis Committees have documents that take committee action with regard to the issue. In Crisis committees, this document

is called a Directive. Directives will require a minimum of three people signing off on the document, with a minimum of one sponsor and one signatory.

Communiqués: Communiqués are committee documents used to communicate with people outside of the committee. For example, Communiqués are used when surrender terms would be sent to the opponent. Similar to Directives, they will require a minimum of three people on the document, with a minimum of one sponsor and one signatory.

Press Releases: As the name says, press releases are committee documents addressed to the public. They can be used to inform or even misinform the public according to the desires of the committee. Similar to Directives and Comuniqués, Press Releases will require a minimum of three people on the document, with one sponsor and one signatory minimum.
Like all committees, collaborating with other delegates is strongly recommended. However, in a Crisis Committee, it is also encouraged that one stays in character, and acts accordingly to their character motivation.

Topic Background

A brief history of Dunder-Mifflin

Dunder Mifflin is an organization specializing in selling paper. Robert Dunder and Robert Mifflin established the business in 1949, first supplying metal brackets. The business eventually began selling paper and has numerous outlets all throughout the Northeastern United States. Notorious for employee use of illegal drugs in the 1980s, Dunder Mifflin has since become a much more quiet and staid middle road paper company.

Synopses of seasons 1-5, plus "Pilot"

Pilot:

The Office starts by introducing Michael Scott, the regional manager of a paper company branch who desperately wants to be liked by his employees. Michael receives word that the branch must downsize from Vice President of Northeast Sales Jan Levinson-Gould. Introduced in the episode are Dwight Schrute, a paper salesman and part-time volunteer sheriff's deputy, Jim Halpert, Dwight's practical-joke playing deskmate, Pam Beesly, the branch's engaged receptionist who Jim has a crush on, and Ryan Howard, a temporary employee confused by Michael's humor.

Season Summaries 1-5:

Season 1: The show begins with a documentary crew touring a Dunder Mifflin paper company branch with manager Michael Scott. Michael receives word that their branch in Scranton may be downsized, leading to anxiety among his employees.

Season 2: Romantic relationships between background and already introduced characters from the pilot, like Kelly and Ryan and Dwight and Angela, begin. Jim transfers to the Stamford branch, depressed that Pam has finalized a date for her wedding, but tells her he loves her before he leaves.

Season 3: Pam calls off her engagement with Roy, but Jim's confession and a new relationship with a Stamford transfer lead to tension between the three. Despite this, Jim and Pam enter a relationship at the end of the season. Michael, Jim, and Karen all interview for a corporate position, which Jim is offered but Ryan ultimately gets.

Season 4: Ryan is fired and arrested for misleading shareholders. Dwight and his girlfriend, Angela, break up, and she begins dating Stamford transfer Andy Bernard, leading Dwight to become depressed. Though Angela accepts Andy's proposal later in the season, she then cheats on him with Dwight in Michael's office.

Season 5: Jim and Pam get engaged, and Angela is single after her affair is revealed. Michael starts his own paper company, The Michael Scott Paper Company, convincing Ryan, who narrowly escaped prison, and Pam to work for him as salespeople. The three return with Pam being promoted to sales and Ryan working as a temp again.

2008 Housing Bubble Burst

For years before 2008, the real estate market was booming and housing prices were steadily on the incline. As more and more Americans wanted to buy homes, mortgage corporations launched programs to make loans accessible to all kinds of prospective clients. Because of these initiatives, and the relaxed requirements that came with them, banks began giving mortgages to potentially irresponsible and unreliable people likely to default on loans (be unable to pay them off).

The increased demand for purchasing houses caused real estate prices to shoot up, leading to the creation of a "bubble" – prices rose beyond what was reasonable or sustainable (Bank Rate). As many began to inevitably default, banks that had already begun investing money they planned on receiving from loantakers went out of business. In addition, those who defaulted on their loans lost their newly purchased houses, and those who did keep their homes saw a sharp decline in their value.

Because of this, real life companies – and the fictional Dunder Mifflin – had less and less demand for their products. This continued the vicious cycle of increased unemployment leading to less demand, leading to more downsizing and shutdowns, and so on.

Post-2000 – a paperless world?

Technological innovations were coming at a rapid and industry-altering pace in the early 2000s. As personal computers and portable cell phones became affordable for middle-class Americans, paper went obsolete. It was more clunky and inconvenient, and gradually also more expensive than using technology instead. Dunder Mifflin therefore has to adapt to a world where paper is the media of yesteryear.

Diversity in corporate leadership

Diversity in the modern corporate workplace includes a variety of different cultures, gender, ages, races, sexual orientations, and more. Diversity in leadership is extremely beneficial to the workplace. It helps establish trust with employees of various backgrounds, brings various depths of knowledge, experience, and perspectives to the table, and allows for better understanding in the workplace that nurtures a strong and seamless workplace. Diverse leadership allows for better awareness of problems and opportunities, as well as more inclusive decision making. In Dunder Mifflin, diversity amongst leadership as well as equity and inclusion in the workplace becomes a pressing issue heading into the late 2000s. While there have been attempts to be more inclusive and bring more diversity and education to the office, they have often failed and been seen as offensive by the workers. The HQ of Dunder Mifflin often has to make amends for wrongful and harmful actions done by managerial positions, and have usually been extremely willing to follow certain demands of victims of discrimination in the office in order to avoid lawsuits. Office workers who fit in the “minority” positions may make use of this to their hand, while those in managerial positions must watch out or try to use diversity to their advantage when maneuvering workplace dynamics.

Current Status

Timeline of financial problems leading up to "Shareholder Meeting"

Since 2005, the company had begun to have financial problems, leading Michael to face issues such as downsizing and choosing cheaper healthcare plans. In 2006, things got worse as whole branches such as the Stamford branch got shut down. Eventually, when Ryan Howard, then vice president of the Northeast Region and Director of New Media, tries to revamp the company through a new website, Dunder Mifflin Infinity, and it ultimately fails, the company ends in an even tighter position with the shareholders. Oddly enough, Scranton's branch seems to be doing better during this period than the other branches, which prompts HQ to send Michael around to give advice to the other branches. Ultimately, as more branches are forced to close, Scranton's branch seems to be the only one with profits; this is what leads Michael (with the addition of some possible plus-ones) to being invited to the Shareholder meeting to discuss the future of the company.

Questions to consider

1. What are viable ways for Dunder Mifflin to adapt to a changing business environment?
2. Is it more advantageous for Dunder Mifflin Scranton to stay with the company or break off? Should it have to suffer even though it contributes most of the company's sales?
3. Who gets to be in charge? Is now the time for the experienced to lead or for fresh new faces to take the reins?
4. Is the small, local business going extinct? How can the Scranton branch save itself from obliteration by its big box competitors?
5. Is Dunder Mifflin operating in a level playing field? Do chain suppliers like Staples have an unfair advantage compared to small companies? How can that be addressed?
6. How can worker efficiency be improved? Is optimal efficiency the ultimate goal?

7. Should the office work with the shareholders or decide to make their own decisions with their branch?
8. How can each worker contribute to Michael's participation in the shareholder meeting? Who will get to go with him?

Character List

Michael Scott

Michael is the regional manager of the Dunder Mifflin Scranton branch, and thus the most high-ranking employee on this crisis committee. He has access to all employee salaries, reviews, and sales history. He is the primary decision-maker, but often avoids making hard choices (like firing employees) because he finds it emotionally taxing. Despite having the highest position in the firm, he is rather dimwitted and often attempts to become better-liked by his employees through antics that they only find obnoxious.

Dwight Schrute

Though Michael's shenanigans often do little but annoy the employees, he is loyally supported by Dwight Schrute, an awkward yet power-hungry paper salesman who hopes to be promoted to Assistant Regional Manager, though Michael frequently asserts that he is only "Assistant to the Regional Manager". Dwight is consistently the top salesman at Scranton, and is known for his infamous "diabolical plots" to rise in the ranks of the company. Ironically, Michael seems to like Dwight the least of his employees.

Jim Halpert

Bored at his job as a paper salesman, Jim resorts to playing pranks on Dwight Schrute, much to that latter's annoyance. Jim is a competent employee, having been offered a corporate promotion, but he dismisses these opportunities due to his feelings for receptionist Pam Beesly.

Pam Beesly

Pam Beesly starts off as a receptionist and later on transitions into sales and then office administration. As office administrator and former secretary, she has access to faxes and other documents, and often sits in on corporate meetings to take notes for Michael. She is shy, artistic, helpful and very friendly. Michael has somewhat of a soft spot for Pam and tends to treat her as more of a friend than he does other employees.

Ryan Howard

Ryan Howard is a young salesman who starts at the company as an intern. He develops into a lazy worker who becomes Pam's replacement as receptionist. Like Pam, he too has access to faxes and other company documents, but rarely does his work adequately. Because of Michael Scott's admiration for him, he gets multiple free passes for unacceptable behavior. He is often conflicted by his on and off relationship with Kelly Kapoor.

Andrew "Andy" Bernard

Andy Bernard is a salesman who transfers from the Stamford branch when the Stamford and Scranton branch merge. He is a Cornell graduate and has built much of his personality on that. He is ineffective and unsuccessful at his job, and is very insecure due to competition within his family. He prides himself on his strong musical abilities.

Angela Martin

Angela Martin is the head of the accounting department. She has access to employee salaries and all spending of the Scranton branch. Typically, she is blunt, cold, and often rude to others; however, she has a soft spot for cats and is obsessed with anything cat related. She is also the official safety officer and former head of the Party Planning Committee, but was replaced by Phyllis Vance. She was formerly engaged to Andy Bernard and has on and off affairs with Dwight Schrute

Kelly Kapoor

Kelly Kapoor is the Customer Service Representative at Dunder Mifflin Scranton. She is known as a chatty, gossip obsessed, avid shopper who frequently engages and

knows the office's hot gossip. Kelly is often dismissed as ditzy, but she appears competent at her job. Settled in the annex with Toby Flenderson, with whom she regularly has one-sided long conversations. Kelly is also known to have had relations with Ryan Howard, but is currently dating Darryl Phibin.

Toby Flenderson

Toby Flenderson is the HR Representative. This means he often hears employee complaints and works on conflict resolution within the office. Generally soft-spoken, he is made known by Michael as the "ruiner of all things fun" and is often publicly hated on, especially by Michael, for enforcing HR company rules.

Creed Bratton

Creed Bratton is the Quality Assurance Director. Usually a mysterious character who can make confusing and odd statements on a regular basis, Creed is also seen as a forgetful deviant with no real morals whose life out of the office is completely unknown, as he often admits to some sort of criminal activity. Creed is also the oldest worker at Dunder Mifflin, but has no deep ties to any worker.

Darryl Philbin

Darryl Philbin is a former warehouse worker introduced in the first season. He has access to all of Dunder Mifflin's industrial equipment, like trucks, forklifts, shipping schedules etc. Darryl is characterized as competent, organized, and highly ambitious.

Kevin Malone

Kevin Malone is an accountant and works under Angela. He is often viewed as the weak link in the accounting team, and oddly finds necessary skills for his job – like keeping track of spreadsheets – difficult to manage. Despite this, Kevin is generally well-liked in the office, and many enjoy spending time with him and sometimes confide in him.

Meredith Palmer

Meredith Palmer works in purchasing/supplier relations. She is in charge of negotiating the prices of Dunder Mifflin's raw materials and must maintain a good relationship with vendors to keep prices low. She is known for her wild, promiscuous, and sometimes unethical behavior. It is revealed later that Meredith holds a doctorate in School Psychology and is highly competent at her job.

Oscar Martinez

Oscar Martinez is a Mexican-American gay accountant and works under Angela. He is a serious, dedicated and one of the smartest employees in the company. He shown to be cold and introverted, and becomes more confident as the seasons progress.

Phyllis Vance

Phyllis Vance is a sales agent who is relatively average at her job. Phyllis is a reserved yet pleasant individual who likes to chat and gossip with her coworkers. She doesn't hesitate to blackmail her colleagues with private information she discovers about them. Phyllis made the decision to put her child up for adoption when she was a young mother, which continues to haunt her. She has a loving relationship with her husband, Bob Vance.

Stanley Hudson

Stanley Hudson is a divorced father and salesman at Dunder Mifflin. He is shown to be unenthusiastic about work, however he enjoys the company in the office. He loves his daughter and the annual ‘Pretzel day’, in which the office provides free pretzels for all employees.

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