



going global

the globalist foundation 2005 Y50K winner

by Daniel Weisfield

Not many college students can say that they successfully secured first-round financing for their dorm-room start-up after successfully pitching their business plan to a panel of seasoned venture capitalists. But even fewer can say that they've founded a multinational enterprise with 221 staff members and operations on four continents.

Then again, the three founders of The Globalist Foundation—the 2005 overall winner of the Yale Entrepreneurial Society's \$50,000 business plan competition—are not your typical college students. Rawen Huang, Executive Director, was born in mainland China, grew up in Sydney, Australia, and has developed relationships with some of China's most influential movers and shakers as a Presidential Fellow at the Yale-China University Leadership Program. Editor-in-Chief Eleonora Sharef, a native Colombian educated in Germany and the U.S., speaks five languages and worked most recently for McKinsey & Co. in Bogota. And Dain Lewis, Operations Director, is an experienced entrepreneur and the former president of Mercado Global at Yale—athletic and charismatic, he's a 21st century incarnation of the

classic “Yale man.”

Their objective? To create a global network of high-achieving university students that will directly facilitate future cooperation among disparate countries. Their weapon of choice? Journalism.

The Globalist Foundation is an international network of student-run, student-written foreign affairs magazines at select universities around the world. Based at Yale University, with magazines currently in print at Yale, Peking University, Hebrew University, the University of Toronto, Sydney University, and the University of Cambridge, the Foundation seeks to engage students in dialogue, increase international understanding, and connect the high-achieving students who are most likely to assume leadership roles in their respective fields.

Sound idealistic? Perhaps. But the results speak for themselves. Less than a year after its founding in March 2005, The Globalist Foundation has already attracted a second round of financing that will enable it to hire new staff while expanding into Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and South America. It has drawn the attention of the Australian Ambassador to the United States and the former CEO of Ask Jeeves. *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman compared The Globalist to “a student-run version of *The Economist*.” And in mid-2006, after releasing its first annual compendium issue to policy-makers and the press, the Foundation aims to finalize new chapters in Kenya, India, Mexico and Lebanon.

The Globalist Foundation’s chapters each function semi-autonomously, with their own staff and editorial board, and are charged with producing four original issues per year. Article content ranges from the weighty (“Promises: A Look at Israel’s Disengagement from Gaza,” *The Jerusalem Globalist*, Fall 2005) to the wag-gish (“The Politics of Sunsand Surf,” *The Yale Globalist*, Winter 2005). All told, the Foundation’s six chapters currently produce 420 articles annually, reaching a combined audience of 140,000 in three languages.

Content decisions are made at the chapter level and are driven by local demand. The editors aim to produce a product that is professional, yet edgy. Ideally, The Globalist Foundation hopes to capitalize on its unique network to run articles that *Newsweek* or *Time* couldn’t publish—that is, articles that only young people could write.

“Our original goal during the Y50K competition was to establish fourteen Globalist chapters on six continents by 2010. This would allow us to reach over 245,000 students with content in seven languages. But now I am confident that we don’t need to wait that long,” said Huang, Executive Director, a junior Economics and International Studies major.

If Huang sounds confident, it’s no coincidence. As an up-start project with (literally) global ambitions, The Globalist Foundation’s success depends on its leaders’ ability to think big. While it can be tempting to dismiss these ambitions as pie-in-the-sky—for example,



Huang said he hoped that Visa could be convinced to start producing a Globalist Foundation credit card—Huang’s optimism is in many ways justified: the Foundation has already proven its ability to expand globally, while following through with the support and logistical attention needed to ensure the success of the national chapters. In 2005, for example, in the space of just three months, Foundation staff traveled to China, England, Israel, and Australia to assist student leaders with the logistics of chapter forma-

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tion. Meanwhile, staff in New Haven worked to secure 501(c)(3) tax-exemption status and target donors for a successful second-round fundraising campaign.

Running any multinational enterprise is tricky business, but the obstacles are even more acute when the budget is tight and the executives are full-time students. Lewis, Operations Director, said that e-mail has been “integral” to the management of The Globalist Foundation, but one of the biggest dilemmas he faces is how to generate new ideas and motivate his staff while communicating almost exclusively online. “Rarely can you create the dynamic, high-energy business environment of face-to-face interaction, where you can throw around ideas and feed off of each other’s energy,” Lewis said.

Would-be entrepreneurs should take note of other com-

