



# Appointment of SLSEAA Officers 2015-2016/2017

"Get involved and get connected"

## Short biographies and manifestos

Marcel Bigger (incumbent) for Secretary General

Jane Royston for Events Officer (replacing Raffaele Petrone mid-term upon his request)

Leyla Baghirzade for Events Officer (replacing Gil Shidlo mid-term upon his request)

### Marcel Bigger (incumbent) for Secretary General

With over 170 alumni events organized, including some pan-European fixtures, alumni relations has, for me, evolved into an excessive past-time pursuit over the years. I do enjoy serving LSE alumnae and alumni in Switzerland but am looking for equally enthusiastic volunteers, who would be willing to take over my responsibilities in the coming years, so that I can finally enjoy retirement.

I'm of Singaporean-Swiss heritage, born in Winterthur in 1968 but holding citizenship in the lovely city of St. Gallen. A former banker at UBS and stockbroker at Okasan, I was a past Resident Advisor to the Polish Ministry of Finance on higher education funding. After a short stint as a Desk Officer of the Swiss Federal Government for selected multilateral financial institutions, I closed out a decade with Swisscanto, the joint corporate group of the Swiss cantonal banks with over CHF 50 billion under management, as their Risk Officer.

I believe that scientific discovery is our ultimate purpose and recognize business enterprise as the practical means to fund the former. Hence, the opportunities to combine business with science have given me great satisfaction. My scientific interests are somewhat wide-ranging. I studied Economics and Political Science, with special emphasis on Transition Economics, at the University of California, Purdue University (BSc 1996) and the LSE (MSc 1997), and Astronomy and Planetary Science at the Open University. I went on a 1-year sabbatical in Africa engaged in paleoanthropological field work and training in the Turkana Basin, a semi-desert region in Northern Kenya near the Ethiopian border recognized as the "Cradle of Humankind", and paleontological research in the laboratories of the National Museums of Kenya, the custodian of the world's most important collection of fossils of human ancestors. Learn more about my work in Africa by visiting my personal Web site at URL: <http://www.bigger.ch/> Currently, I'm building a new venture, a fusion of a social enterprise with a for-profit service provider: VisRules GmbH. My entrepreneurship has been much informed by my professional background in the asset management industry and my recent extended stay in Africa.

Since 1998, I've been the Secretary General of the Swiss LSE Alumni Association and served the School as one of the two Vice Chairmen of the inaugural Executive Committee of the worldwide LSE Alumni Association from 2005-2007.

### Jane Royston for Events Officer (replacing Raffaele Petrone mid-term upon his request)

I would probably be the oldest Events Officers that's ever been elected if you choose me - I graduated in Pure Mathematics from the LSE in 1980!<sup>1</sup>

LSE is a bit of a family thing for the women in our family: my mother graduated with an MSc (Econ) in 1952, me with a BSc (Maths) in 1980, and my daughter is hoping to start her MSc (Management) at LSE this September.

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<sup>1</sup> Editor: Still a long way to go, Jane. The late Ron Wilkens continues to be the most senior LSE alum, who ever held an Events Officership in the history of the Association. He graduated in the 1940.)

I've spent most of my working life in Switzerland and England with a short stint in Paris. I have a bit of a patchwork career - from pure mathematics I went into IT at DuPont in Geneva, moving from junior programmer to head of IT for France. I then became an entrepreneur and started my own IT business which I ran for ten years before selling it and becoming a freelance consultant. Not long after that, I became an academic and held the Chair of Entrepreneurship and Innovation at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne, teaching all over the place, from St. Gallen to Geneva, for some seven years.

Since leaving academia, I am a professional non-executive director, mainly for high tech companies, and a business angel with some 11 investments in Swiss medtech companies. I'm also heavily involved in charity work - I was on the board of the world's biggest Cancer Research Institute in New York, am Vice President of the English Speaking Cancer Association in Geneva, Chairman of PRO, a Geneva-based foundation for handicapped people, and, closest to my heart, am very involved in SED, an NGO that helps educate Dalit Indian girls.

I've been attending Swiss LSE alumni events since I left the school in 1980, though have never held an Officer's position.

**Leyla Baghirzade for Events Officer** (replacing Gil Shidlo mid-term upon his request)

My name is Leyla Baghirzade, and I am a holder of a Bachelor's degree with distinction in Finance from Azerbaijan State Economic University. In 2012, I went to Summer School and attended the "Advanced Corporate Finance" course at LSE. In 2013, I entered the MSc in Banking and Finance program at the University of Lugano in Switzerland. And since 2014, I am studying for a MSc Management in Economics at the same University. To my mind, being young and ambitious, I do not want to stop on my achievements, and applying as an Events Officer of the SLSEAA indicates my earnest desire to enhance my experience and skills obtained during my Master studies.

Furthermore, I would like to highlight that I already have experience in the banking sector for five years. While studying in the undergraduate course, I held the position of leading credit specialist at "VTB Bank" Commercial Bank Closed Joint Stock Company, which is one of the most reputable and well known banks in the world. Thus, it should be highlighted that it would be easy for me to arrange meetings with potential clients, define their needs (wants), to give information about features and advantages of banking products.

It is worth mentioning that I also possess quite valuable experience from studying abroad and attending different conferences and round tables on "innovations in banking" in Europe and "advanced corporate finance" in London.

Additionally, while volunteering for the FRM office in Azerbaijan and after winning the competition on financial risk management among Azerbaijani universities, I participated in many financial risk management events, including FRM summer school in the UK. This experience effectively added to my acquaintance with the work of international organizations, contributed to my abilities to work with people from different social and cultural backgrounds and motivated me to start to teach newcomer students for the FRM.

Currently, I am holding the position of Vice President External Relations in AIESEC in Lugano, which provides me big access to the AIESEC network all around the world in 125 countries. Moreover, I am a Consultant for the Field Project in Knauf – Campo alla Sughera, where I am building a strong marketing strategy. Furthermore, since 2014, I am Marketing Manager and Event Organizer in the Swiss Social Network. On the other hand, I am the authorized person for organizing big projects and

participants from Switzerland in China for China Chongqing International Investment and Global Sourcing Fair.

I am open-minded, I have cross-cultural adaptability and rich geographic experience, and several mastered languages. My entrepreneurial spirit is involvement in several start-ups, promotion of innovative ideas and events. Based on my strong corporate skills, I would like to highlight matrix teams coordination, negotiation, strategy, inorganic growth and operational implementation skills. According to universality, my work background is in small and large, for-profit and non-profit companies, mediation and relationship management between businesses in developed and emerging markets, company representation to governments, partners and direct clients.

Presently, I am member of the SLSEAA and I strongly believe that being an Events Officer of the SLSEAA will definitely add to all of the above mentioned skills that I already possess and will provide me invaluable experience which I will be able to use when pursuing my future career.