

# Leadership

## Board of Directors Fall Minutes

New Orleans, LA  
September 27-28, 2024

**T**he NSDA Board of Directors held its fall meeting September 27-28, 2024, in New Orleans, LA. In attendance were President Byron Arthur, Vice President David Huston, Jamelle Brown, Alan Coverstone, Sara Gibson, Adam Jacobi, Erez Kalir, Anoop Mishra, Renee Motter, Wendy Orthman, Jay Rye, and Holly Williams.

*President Arthur called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.*

### MISSION MOMENT AND PRESIDENTIAL CHARGE

This moment is designed to set the tone for the meeting and purposefully remind all present of our mission, vision, values, and goals as we deliberate and conduct business on behalf of our current and future membership.

### MEMBERSHIP CORRESPONDENCE

In accordance with our goal of increased membership engagement, letters submitted to the Board were included in our meeting materials to inform the Board of ideas, requests, and concerns that have been submitted for consideration. This was an opportunity to briefly highlight, clarify, and frame action items on the docket in light of these submissions.

### STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES AND Q&A

Current procedures call for the inclusion of any committee meeting minutes from any meeting that occurred between main Board meetings. These minutes are housed in the BoardEffect Board of Directors

Library. If Board members have any questions about the minutes, they should directly email the committee chair. After communicating with the chair, if they have any issue with the minutes, they should directly email the President and copy the Executive Director. No requests were submitted prior to the meeting, so no time was allocated for this topic.

### LEGAL/CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

Each Board meeting includes time allotted for relevant updates on any pending legal matters or other business that require discussion in executive session.

### GALLUP STRENGTHSFINDER: STRENGTHS IN LEADERSHIP EXERCISE

As part of the “forming” stage of the newest iteration of the NSDA Board of Directors, Board President Byron Arthur and Executive Director Scott Wunn asked the Board members and staff executive team to take the Gallup StrengthsFinder “Strengths For Leaders” assessment. The results were shared out at the meeting, and the Board and staff participated in an exercise exploring how this information might be utilized moving forward to maximize the strengths of our collective leadership team.

### ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Dr. Paul Porter provided an update on key aspects of the organization’s efforts in the area of DEI. His overview included updates

on phase three of the DEI Audit and the DEI Map, the Coaches' Network, the Community Learning Series, and the Wellness Committee. Dr. Porter also led a conversation on how we continue to embed diversity, equity, and inclusion into the organization's culture and how a holistic approach to DEI helps move us toward building the community we all desire to create.

Additionally, the Board discussed gender equity in high school debate events. The discussion spanned from student participation and success to the number and retention of female identifying judges and coaches. This was a preliminary discussion about what our existing data tells us and what additional data and/or analysis would be helpful as the Board considers this topic.

### FY24 STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVES PRIORITIES REPORT / FY25 STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVES PRIORITIES PLAN

#### **Moved by Kalir, seconded by Mishra:**

"Accept the FY24 Strategic Plan Objectives Priorities Report."

**Passed: 11-0** (Arthur, Huston, Brown, Coverstone, Gibson, Jacobi, Kalir, Mishra, Motter, Orthman, Rye)

#### **Moved by Rye, seconded by Jacobi:**

"Accept the updated FY25 Strategic Plan Objectives Priorities Plan."

**Passed: 12-0** (Arthur, Huston, Brown, Coverstone, Gibson, Jacobi, Kalir, Mishra, Motter, Orthman, Rye, Williams)

Executive Director Scott Wunn and Assistant Executive Director Amy Seidelman reported on the end of year FY24 Strategic Plan Objectives Priorities results. The Board had the opportunity to ask questions of the report. In May, the Board approved the FY25 Strategic Plan Objectives Priorities. The Board had the opportunity to ask questions concerning the proposed key performance indicators and strategies within these agreed upon objective priorities for the year. Individual Board standing committee members (Governance, Internal Affairs, External Affairs) provided additional input on areas discussed during the first standing committee meetings of the year.

### STRATEGIC PLANNING

#### **Moved by Mishra, seconded by Jacobi:**

"Create an Ad Hoc Committee on Strategic Planning charged with the development of a three- to five-year Strategic Plan Proposal."

**Passed: 10-0** (Arthur, Huston, Brown, Gibson, Jacobi, Kalir, Mishra, Motter, Orthman, Rye)

Over the next six months, the NSDA will embark on a strategic planning process to create a new three- to five-year strategic growth plan. At this meeting, Chief Strategy and Growth Officer Steve Stein facilitated a discussion among the Board and staff executive leadership on the process we will use and a discussion of what our goals should be, as well as the main strategies we should consider exploring to achieve those goals.

### DAILY EQUITY PAUSE

In order to be consistent and intentional about incorporating the [NSDA Equity Lens](#), we've added an intentional moment to consider questions from the Equity Lens that may be relevant to the conversation. (*Equity Pause led by Sara Gibson.*)

### RECESS

#### **Moved by Jacobi, seconded by Kalir:**

"Recess for the evening."

**Passed: 12-0** (Arthur, Huston, Brown, Gibson, Jacobi, Kalir, Mishra, Motter, Orthman, Rye)

*The meeting recessed at 4:30 p.m. on Friday.*

*Vice President Huston called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. on Saturday.*

### TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

Director of Technology Aaron Hardy presented an overview of our advancement in technology over the past year, as well as top priorities for the organization in his vision for future development.

### CENTENNIAL COMMEMORATION UPDATE

The Board was provided an update on the organizational plans to commemorate the 100-year anniversary of the National Speech & Debate Association.

### FINANCE BUSINESS

#### **Moved by Motter, seconded by Brown:**

"Accept the FY24 End of Year Budget report as presented by the Internal Affairs Committee."

**Passed: 10-0** (Arthur, Huston, Brown, Gibson, Jacobi, Kalir, Mishra, Motter, Orthman, Rye)

**Moved by Mishra, seconded by Motter:**

“Approve the amended FY25 Budget Final Draft as amended and recommended by the Internal Affairs Committee.”

**Passed: 10-0** (Arthur, Huston, Brown, Gibson, Jacobi, Kalir, Mishra, Motter, Orthman, Rye)

Chief Financial Officer Laura Stein, Executive Director Scott Wunn, and related staff leadership answered questions related to the FY24 Budget Report. The Internal Affairs Committee sought acceptance of the FY24 Budget Report. The Chief Financial Officer, Executive Director, and related staff leadership answered questions related to the proposed FY25 Budget. In May, the Board approved a pre-budget. The Internal Affairs Committee, in collaboration with the Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer, proposed appropriate amendments to the pre-budget based on the FY24 EOY budget actuals. The Internal Affairs Committee sought approval on the proposed amended FY25 Budget.

**BOARD FY24 SELF-EVALUATION / BOARD MANUAL REVISIONS APPROVAL**

**Moved by Rye, seconded by Motter:**

“Approve the FY25 Board Priorities as recommended by the Governance Committee and amended by the Board of Directors.”

**Passed: 10-0** (Arthur, Huston, Brown, Gibson, Jacobi, Kalir, Mishra, Motter, Orthman, Rye)

**Moved by Rye, seconded by Mishra:**

“Approve revisions to Board Manual to reflect changes and goals of individual standing committees.”

**Passed: 10-0** (Arthur, Huston, Brown, Gibson, Jacobi, Kalir, Mishra, Motter, Orthman, Rye)

**Moved by Jacobi, seconded by Kalir:**

“The Governance Committee develops a proposal for young representation on the Board.”

**Passed: 10-0** (Arthur, Huston, Brown, Gibson, Jacobi, Kalir, Mishra, Motter, Orthman, Rye)

**Moved by Motter, seconded by Jacobi:**

“Charge the Governance Committee to evaluate and formalize a process for the Board to receive feedback from the membership in the Board evaluation.”

**Passed: 10-0** (Arthur, Huston, Brown, Gibson, Jacobi, Kalir, Mishra, Motter, Orthman, Rye)

The Board reviewed its FY24 self-evaluation and offered observations and feedback. The Governance Committee offered its recommendation of three to four priority goal areas for the Board for this upcoming

year. These recommendations were discussed and the Board made a final determination of the FY25-FY26 two-year Board goals and priorities. In addition, in light of recent governance changes to the Board, as well as the creation of the Competition and Rules Leadership Committee (CRLC), changes to the official Board manual are necessary. This includes updates to the general actions/expectations of Board and Executive Director standing committees (Governance, Internal Affairs, External Affairs, CRLC, wording committees, etc.). Updated language was reviewed, revised (if warranted) and approved. This was also an opportunity for Board members to discuss and clarify lingering questions/concerns on any aspects of the CRLC/Board of Directors Governance structure to ensure transparency and clarity of responsibility/roles. Finally, the Board members had the opportunity to suggest ways in which the Board’s self-evaluation process can be improved in the future.

**BOARD NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE PROPOSAL**

**Moved by Rye, seconded by Mishra:**

“Establish a standing committee using the guidelines established by the Governance Committee charged with nominating new Board members for consideration by the governance for appointment to the Board.”

**Passed: 10-0** (Arthur, Huston, Brown, Gibson, Jacobi, Kalir, Mishra, Motter, Orthman, Rye)

The Board considered a proposal from the Governance Committee to formally establish a standing Nominations Committee of both members of the Board and other members of our NSDA community. The proposed Nominations Committee will be charged with seeking out and nominating potential new appointed members to the Board of Directors. The Governance Committee is ultimately responsible for sending the final recommendation of Board appointees to the entire Board.

**NATIONAL TOURNAMENT REVIEW AND FUTURE PLANNING**

The Executive Director shared some general themes of 2024 National Tournament feedback, as well as the Executive Director’s and staff’s primary takeaways. Additionally, an update on the 2025 National Tournament was provided. The Executive Director also shared his thoughts on the future of the event’s sites and location selection and the role that the newly formed Competition and Rules Leadership Committee can play as an important collaborator in these discussions.

## ADDITIONAL TIME FOR STRATEGIC DISCUSSION

The Board continued its discussions on strategic priorities, answering some key framework questions that will help steer the upcoming work of staff leadership and the newly established strategic planning ad hoc committee.

## DAILY EQUITY PAUSE


In order to be consistent and intentional about incorporating the [NSDA Equity Lens](#), we've added an intentional moment to consider questions from the Equity Lens that may be relevant to the conversation. *(Equity pause led by Jamelle Brown.)*

## ADJOURN

**Moved by Jacobi, seconded by Huston:**

“Adjourn.”

**Passed: 10-0** (Arthur, Brown, Gibson, Huston, Jacobi, Kalir, Mishra, Motter, Orthman, Rye)

*The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m. on Saturday.* 

**QUESTIONS? CONCERNS? IDEAS?**

We want to hear from you! Send your feedback to [board@speechanddebate.org](mailto:board@speechanddebate.org).