

Leadership

Board of Directors Minutes

March 9, 2020

The NSDA Board of Directors held its March virtual meeting on March 9, 2020. In attendance were President Pam Cady Wycoff, Vice President Dr. Tommie Lindsey, Jr., Byron Arthur, Dr. Mike Edmonds, David Huston, Adam J. Jacobi, Jennifer Jerome, Renee Motter, Tom Rollins, Robert Runcie, Timothy Sheaff, and Monica Silverstein.

President Wycoff called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Moved by Lindsey, seconded by Silverstein:

“Approve the proposed Equity Statement.”

Passed: 13-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Edmonds, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Motter, Rollins, Runcie, Sheaff, Silverstein)

The Board conducted an earlier online vote March 2, 2020, to adopt the NSDA Equity Statement in conjunction with National Speech and Debate Education Day. The Board would like to thank everyone who worked on creating this foundational document for our organization. The complete statement is available on page 13.

MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

Moved by Arthur, seconded by Rollins:

“Approve the revised NSDA mission statement as presented.”

Passed: 10-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Edmonds, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Motter, Rollins, Sheaff)

Moved by Edmonds, seconded by Jacobi:

“Approve the revised NSDA vision statement as presented.”

Passed: 10-0-1

Aye: Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Edmonds, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Motter, Rollins, Silverstein

Abstain: Sheaff

The Board reviewed and discussed proposed revisions to the NSDA Mission and Vision Statements to ensure alignment with the organization's five core values of Equity, Integrity, Respect, Leadership, and Service. The rationale for the current statements was shared in a document along with a survey asking the Board for feedback on potential adjustments that culminated in revisions by Board and staff.

Updated Mission: The National Speech & Debate Association connects, supports, and inspires a diverse community committed to empowering students through speech and debate.

Updated Vision: We envision a world in which every school provides speech and debate programs to foster each student's communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creative skills.

GOVERNANCE

Appointed Board Members

The seat for appointed Board member Wendy Orthman will become vacant on July 31, 2020. The Board is targeting a vote to approve a candidate for the seat at the May Board meeting. The term for the appointed Board seat is August 1, 2020, through July 31, 2022. The Governance Committee reviewed Board needs and agreed that talents and expertise in the area of public relations, marketing, and development ought to remain the priority for this seat. Board members were asked to complete a form recommending potential candidates.

(continued on next page)

During executive session, the Board agreed to offer Robert Runcie a one-year extension of his appointed administrative representative seat, completing a four-year tenure. The Board welcomed Robert Runcie and thanked him for his ongoing and continued service.

Committee Size and Scope Best Practices

Moved by Lindsey, seconded by Huston:

“Approve the Committee Size and Scope Best Practices document as proposed by the Governance Committee.”

Passed: 11-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Edmonds, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Motter, Rollins, Sheaff, Silverstein)

The Governance Committee has further developed best practice guidelines regarding the size and scope of standing committees (Governance, Development, Finance, and Rules Revision and Evaluation) as well as Board roles in conjunction with ad hoc committees and working groups. The proposal was initially presented for review at the December Board meeting, then underwent online feedback and revision by the Governance Committee. The best practices will be fully implemented by fall of 2020.

STRATEGIC PLAN AND EXECUTION

Moved by Jerome, seconded by Motter:

“Approve the second quarter Strategic Plan report as presented by the Executive Director and Assistant Executive Director.”

Passed: 11-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Edmonds, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Motter, Rollins, Sheaff, Silverstein)

Assistant Executive Director Amy Seidelman presented an overview of second quarter updates and answered questions from the Board. The Strategic Plan goals include five priorities: 1) Reach More Students; 2) Support More Schools; 3) Drive Inclusive Participation; 4) Earn Loyalty; and 5) Strive for Stability.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Moved by Rollins, seconded by Arthur:

“Accept the second quarter Financial Report as presented by the Executive Director and Director of Business and Finance.”

Passed: 11-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Edmonds, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Motter, Rollins, Sheaff, Silverstein)

Director of Business and Finance Laura Stein presented an overview of second quarter updates and answered questions from the Board. To ensure fiscal responsibility, four target areas are addressed: 1) Keep operating expenses below operating revenues to annually contribute to our reserves for protection against unexpected shortfalls; 2)

Increased development and alumni giving; 3) Establish an economically sustainable model to maintain and develop Tabroom.com as a membership service; 4) Increase demand for and use of NSDA resources by members and partners.

NATIONAL TOURNAMENT UPDATE

Moved by Rollins, seconded by Sheaff:

“Meet Monday, March 30, 2020, at 6:30 p.m. to discuss potential next steps regarding hosting the National Tournament in light of COVID-19 concerns.”

Passed: 12-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Edmonds, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Motter, Rollins, Runcie, Sheaff, Silverstein)

Executive Director Scott Wunn led a preliminary discussion of initial preparations related to potential COVID-19 health crisis management. The NSDA is taking proactive steps to monitor the coronavirus situation, gather additional information, assess key factors involved, and offer recommendations. Members are encouraged to watch our website for additional resources and updates about coronavirus and the National Tournament at www.speechanddebate.org/coronavirus. The NSDA Board made a plan to reconvene online March 30 to receive an update from Executive Director Wunn and further discuss the situation. At that time, next steps will be determined, which could range from requests for additional information, targeted actions, establishing the next meeting to further assess this situation, and/or a final decision about the status of the tournament.

PEDAGOGY COMMITTEE UPDATE

Board committee liaison Renee Motter praised the work of the committee thus far. She highlighted their focus on developing materials centered on the 4 C's (critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity), which are widely accepted in academic circles. Discussions are ongoing and the “living document” being created has tremendous potential for informing, educating, and training new coaches, judges, administrators, and other key stakeholders on the educational benefits of speech and debate events.

MEMBERSHIP CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence submitted to the Board prior to its meeting was reviewed. Each issue was addressed and targeted to a relevant Board subcommittee for further consideration.

Appointed members left the meeting.

COMPETITION RULES

Allow Appointed Adult Representatives to File Protests

Moved by Huston, seconded by Jerome:

“Accept the proposal to allow appointed adult representatives to file protests at districts and the National Tournament.”

Passed: 7-0-1

Aye: Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Motter

Abstain: Sheaff

Given that the official school advisor may not be on site during the tournament, this allows the school approved appointed coach on site to facilitate protests. The adult representatives of the school must be approved by the school administration.

Clarification of Internet Rules for 2021-2022 Implementation

Moved by Jerome, seconded by Huston:

“Accept the proposal to clarify the pilot internet rules.”

Passed: 8-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Motter, Sheaff)

The Board adopted minor changes to the pilot internet rules that will go into effect for districts using the pilot internet rules and at the 2021 National Tournament. The changes clarify that competitors within a round are permitted to use the internet to communicate. This allows debaters to communicate via email chain to their opponents and judges, including allowance for communication within a Congress chamber.

Increasing the Minimum Points Received in a Speech Round

Moved by Jacobi, seconded by Jerome:

“Postpone the vote on increasing the minimum points received in a speech round until the Spring Board meeting.”

Passed: 8-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Motter, Sheaff)

Traditionally, points are awarded on a graduating scale based on rank. The proposal would change minimum points per competition speech round to three, aligning to points per loss in debate, giving greater validation for speakers’ performances and fostering parity among contestants in different types of events. The Board asked staff to gather additional data on how the proposed changes might affect awarding degrees prior to voting on this item in May.

Changing the Student Service Point System for Modernization and Simplification

Moved by Jacobi, seconded by Motter:

“Accept the proposal to modernize and simplify the student service point system.”

Passed: 8-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Motter, Sheaff)

This change promotes the value of service in the organization and respects the coaches’ integrity to determine the merit of service activities. It allows the coach to have greater autonomy to determine the merit of events, reduces the number of people in a required audience to five, keeps the limit of points per year to 200, and provides an expanded list of options to encourage service opportunities.

Congress Alternates at Districts

Moved by Motter, seconded by Jacobi:

“Accept the proposal to expand the Congress alternates system at districts.”

Passed: 8-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Motter, Sheaff)

In all events, the top 14 students are considered qualifiers or alternates, which includes all finalists and semifinalists. In an event with 25 entries, more than half of the students entered are either qualifiers or alternates. However, in Congress, especially the House, if there are 80 entries, only 17.5% of the entries have the honor of being qualifiers or alternates. Given double entry in events, the previous number of designated alternates may be exhausted. This proposal allows every person in a Congress final round (if held) to be considered for the alternates list. If no final round is held, the top 14 remain qualifiers and alternates. This change will go into effect for the 2020-2021 district tournament series.

Lincoln-Douglas Debate Speaker Awards

Moved by Arthur, seconded by Huston:

“Accept the proposal to add Lincoln-Douglas speaker awards at the National Tournament.”

Passed: 8-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Motter, Sheaff)

Previously, LD speakers have not been recognized because it was an individual event and there was no sponsor to support trophies for such an award. A sponsor has come forward. Although LD is an individual debate event, this is an additional, valuable opportunity to recognize high school students for their skills. In LD, the top 14 debaters based upon preliminary round speaker

points (dropping high and low) will receive speaker awards. The rules parallel the ones used to determine Policy Debate speaker award recipients. This change will take effect at the 2020 National Tournament.

Oral Interp Ad Hoc Committee Update

Board liaison Jennifer Jerome commended the committee for their excellent work thus far on issues regarding publication rules and adaptation of material. The ad hoc committee is compiling a shared document for committee members to offer further feedback and finalize recommendations to be brought forth for review and discussion at the May Board meeting.

Lincoln-Douglas Focus Group

Moved by Huston, seconded by Jerome:

“Affirm the proposed process for implementation of ordinal balloting in LD topic selection.”

Passed: 8-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Motter, Sheaff)

The Board reviewed the committee’s recommendation for an ordinal voting system that also accommodates for resolution priorities during the year. The proposal is an extension of the motion passed last spring and is a clarification of the process recommended by the committee.

The group also held a discussion about the current Affirmative speaker times in LD, potential adjustments, and the perception of negative bias related to current Affirmative speaker time allocations. The group discussed the validity of conducting further analysis of data on this topic, but there was not enough consensus to formally begin further study at this time. The potential for future additional discussions by the community about the event was suggested by some members of the committee. No formal event-specific rule recommendations were proposed.

Unified Manual Working Group Update

Executive Director Scott Wunn updated the Board on progress made thus far, including conversations with Bob Ickes, a professional editor, on strategy and next steps for tackling the overhaul in three primary sections. The group continues to offer valuable feedback via a shared document and will have more to report at the May Board meeting.

Moved by Lindsey, seconded by Arthur:

“Adjourn.”

Passed: 8-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Motter, Sheaff)

The Board adjourned at 9:35 p.m. 

QUESTIONS? CONCERNS? IDEAS?

We want to hear from you! Send your feedback to board@speechanddebate.org.

MISSION

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VISION

We envision a world in which every school provides speech and debate programs to foster each student’s communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creative skills.

CORE VALUES

EQUITY • INTEGRITY • RESPECT • LEADERSHIP • SERVICE