The Third Thing Institute

Strategies for Engaging in Constructive Dialogue

Executive Summary: NSDA

Internal and External Survey
Results 2018

This report includes a summary of survey data collected by the NSDA leadership from both their internal staff and external members of the National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA). Data was collected around the time of the National Tournament in 2018.
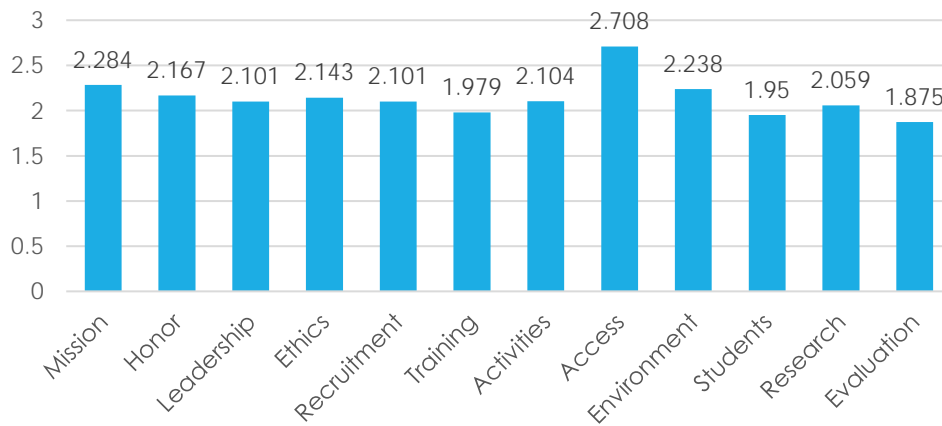
2018 Survey Results: Overview
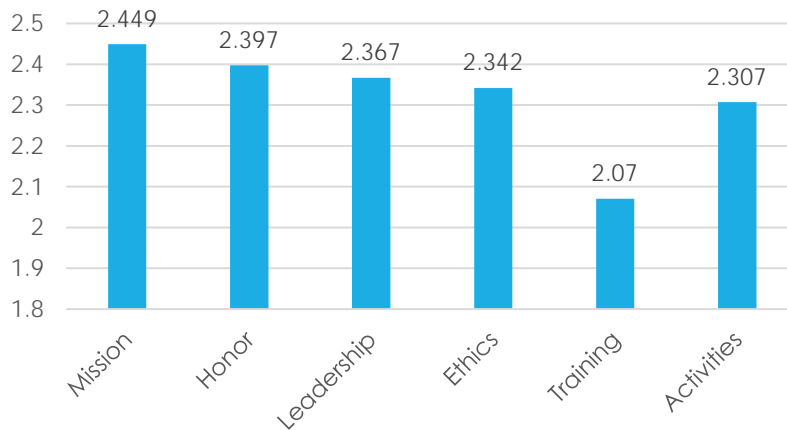
Internal and External Survey Responses

Internal staff members were asked to respond to questions in twelve categories regarding different functional areas of the NSDA. External members responded to six areas. Ranked responses included the following:

- 1 = Unmet
- 2 = In Progress
- 3 = Met

Internal Ratings

Category	Value
Mission	2.284
Honor	2.167
Leadership	2.101
Ethics	2.143
Recruitment	2.101
Training	1.979
Activities	2.104
Access	2.708
Environment	2.238
Students	1.95
Research	2.059
Evaluation	1.875

External Rankings

Category	Value
Mission	2.449
Honor	2.397
Leadership	2.367
Ethics	2.342
Training	2.07
Activities	2.307

Internal Rankings (high met to low unmet)

1. Access
2. Honor
3. Mission
4. Environment
5. Leadership
6. Ethics
7. Activities
8. Recruitment
9. Research
10. **Training**
11. **Students**
12. **Evaluation**

External Rankings (high met to low unmet)

1. Mission
2. Honor
3. Leadership
4. **Ethics**
5. **Activities**
6. **Training**

Areas for Improvement: Training and Leadership

Training and leadership are the two categories that were areas of concern highlighted in both the survey findings from both the internal and external members of the NSDA. The open-ended survey questions prompted descriptive feedback that indicated concerns, hopes, and viable actions.

Training

Members of the NSDA described concerns that training regarding diversity and inclusion needs to be more readily available for all members, including judges and coaches. Members felt that training should resonate with the specific needs and skills of the organization.

External members described a desire for the development of skills and knowledge in regards to diversity and inclusion as defined in the survey. They also wanted more opportunities for dialogue regarding these issues, and a clear rationale for the investment of time and resources towards diversity and inclusion work.

Leadership

External members praised the NSDA for inclusion of women in leadership positions and expressed the need for more racial diversity among leaders. Members noted the need for a dedicated leadership position that is devoted to issues of diversity and inclusion. External members also asked for additional recruitment and support for racially diverse coaches.

Concerns stemming from both of these categories indicated the need for an improved climate for all members, particularly along the lines of low socioeconomic status, disability, and race. These concerns addressed the need for an improved sense of belonging, safety, and inclusion for all members.

Quotes regarding Training and Leadership

"From my perspective, diversity initiatives are only really ever mentioned around the time of the National Tournament, and not throughout the year."

"I wonder what 'inclusion' means to membership and leadership."

"Would love to see more minorities hired by the NSDA as staff members."

"Judge training is a constant challenge. If the National office creates some handouts or clear training manuals that we can share with our coaches and judges on multicultural awareness, this would be great."

"The title "Director of development" does not clearly define the person tasked with serving the needs of diversity enhancement and inclusion."

"I do feel we could use far more visibility of NSDA leaders who represent diverse groups, especially during the first moments when everyone arrives to register."

Recommendations

The Third Thing Institute recommends the following areas for development and growth. These areas are listed in order of priority.

External Training

Develop training materials that address diversity and inclusion as it relates to coaching, recruitment, and activities. These materials should be easily accessed by all members, clearly related to the aims and needs of Speech and Debate, provide clear definitions of what the organization means by diversity and inclusion as well as clarify existing policies.

Leadership

- Consider creating a position that is dedicated to the development and support of diversity and inclusion initiatives.
- Assess the structural diversity of leadership and work to intentionally recruit or promote qualified individuals from underrepresented minority groups, particularly in terms of race. Assess and improve the climate of the NSDA to help support these individuals.

Internal Development

Continue work that increases self-awareness and conceptual complexity of diversity and inclusion issues. These efforts would be aided by grounding in organizational studies of sustained change (listed below).

Suggested Resources:

Bensimon, E. M. (2005). Closing the achievement gap in higher education: An organizational learning perspective. New directions for higher education, 2005(131), 99-111.

- This article describes the difference between different cognitive frames of diversity, deficit, and equity and explains how organizational learning can promote more equitable understanding and outcomes.

Kezar, A., Glenn, W. J., Lester, J., & Nakamoto, J. (2008). Examining organizational contextual features that affect implementation of equity initiatives. The Journal of Higher Education, 79(2), 125-159.

- This study follows in the direction provided by Bensimon, and addresses specific

As requested, we analyzed the data from the survey, assessed the findings, and provided recommendations for areas of focus for the next steps for NSDA based on the top concerns of both the internal and external members.