

Leadership

Board of Directors Fall Minutes

September 22-24, 2019
West Des Moines, Iowa

The NSDA Board of Directors held its Fall Board Meeting on September 20-22, 2019. 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, Wendy Orthman (virtually), Tom Rollins, Bob Runcie, Timothy Sheaff, and Monica Silverstein (virtually).

President Wycoff called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

The previously approved minutes from the Spring Board Meeting were officially entered into the historical records by unanimous consent.

OFFICIAL WELCOME AND HONORING

President Wycoff officially welcomed the Board's newest member, Dr. Mike Edmonds, and thanked him for his past and ongoing support of speech and debate activities and the NSDA as an organization. Vice President, Dr. Tommie Lindsey, presented Dr. Edmonds with a plaque from the NSDA, recognizing Dr. Edmond's pivotal role in hosting the NSDA's first ever inclusion and equity workshop in partnership with Colorado College on August 7-8, 2019. The President also thanked the Board, Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director, directors, and staff for their time, expertise, and preparations for the meeting.

MISSION MOMENT

To underscore the intent of our mission, as a driving force for the meeting, the Board viewed an original video prepared by the staff. It included excerpts from the acceptance speech of Dale Hansen, 2019 NSDA

Communicator of the Year, as well as an interview with Dr. Thomas Freeman, 2019 NSDA Lifetime Achievement Award recipient. The Board then discussed their greatest takeaways from the messages as they related to the organization's core mission, vision, and values.

EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Nicole Wanzer-Serrano, Director of Development and team leader for the staff Inclusive Participation Team, provided an overview of the work accomplished by the elected Board members during the special pre-meeting workshop held to follow up on the summer Inclusion Workshop led by Glenn Singleton. This included a 2019-2020 timeline for revision of key governing documents and two immediate recommendations regarding revision of the NSDA's Core Values and creation of an equity statement.

Moved by Arthur, seconded by Huston:

"Approve the 2019-2020 timeline presented to create an equity statement and revise core documents to reflect the organization's commitment to equity."

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

The Board has established a timeline for its work in equity and inclusion. The timeline included actions at the Fall Board Meeting including revision of the NSDA's core values to include respect and equity and formation of a working group to formulate an equity statement. The working group will include representatives from the Board, staff, and membership to draft an initial equity statement. It will then be vetted through additional stakeholders for feedback with the goal of presenting it for approval at the Board's December virtual meeting. By its March virtual meeting, the Board plans to revisit the

organization's mission and vision statements to ensure they reflect the core values of the organization and fulfill the tenets of the equity statement. At its May meeting, the Board will review potential revisions to the strategic plan, Code of Honor, and Coaches' Code of Ethics.

Moved by Jacobi, seconded by Rollins:

"Revise the NSDA Core Values to include the following values: Integrity, Equity, Leadership, Service, and Respect."

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

The Board has selected the terms "equity" and "respect" to complete a list of five core values for the organization. Core values are indicators of the character of the organization. They drive decision and policy making, with the goal of achieving organizational excellence. These two values establish necessary priorities for fulfilling the mission and vision of the organization. They also establish a greater foundation for alignment with other key governing documents.

Moved by Arthur, seconded by Jerome:

"Propose a working committee to draft an initial equity statement."

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

To meet one of its key 2019 equity objectives, the Board will establish a working committee composed of a diverse group of Board members, staff, and representatives from the membership to draft an equity statement for the NSDA. This working group will utilize the perspectives and contributions of additional stakeholders throughout the drafting process.

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND EXECUTION

Moved by Lindsey, seconded by Jacobi:

"Approve the FY19 strategic plan report."

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

Assistant Executive Director Amy Seidelman, with the endorsement and support of the Board Governance Committee, presented the end of year FY19 Strategic Plan Report to the Board. The Executive Director and Assistant Executive Director answered questions about various elements of the report. The Board commended the Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director, and staff for their development and execution of the FY19 plan.

Moved by Rollins, seconded by Sheaff:

"Endorse the FY20 operating plan targeted goals."

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

At its Spring Meeting, the Board approved the preliminary FY20 Strategic Operating Plan. At its Fall Meeting, the Board reaffirmed the goals of the plan in the wake of the FY19 end of year report.

RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY

Staff presented initial results of its spring study on the correlation between achievement in the NSDA and increased likelihood of admission into competitive colleges. In addition, staff updated the Board on its ongoing work with Broward County Schools to utilize its comprehensive speech and debate programming to study the positive effects of co-curricular participation, classroom study, and membership in the NSDA on student outcomes. The Director of Development also presented an overview of our most recent research funding requests, which will overlap with prior foci for research, but would also include a specific vision for establishing the impact of debate activities on heightened civic engagement.

FINANCE

Moved by Lindsey, seconded by Rollins:

"Endorse the Finance Committee targeted goals."

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

The Board Finance Committee presented its committee goals for FY20 and fielded any questions from the rest of the members. Primary goal areas include the following: ensuring financial stability through expense reduction, building the annual reserve, and development of a multi-year operating budget for FY20-FY24; cross committee collaboration with both the Governance and Development committees to provide targeted financial reports; accurate and timely quarterly reporting; annual professional auditing of financials; and continued facilitation of financial training opportunities for Board members.

Moved by Rollins, seconded by Lindsey:

"Approve the FY19 financial report."

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

Director of Business and Finance Laura Stein, with endorsement and support of the Board Finance

Committee, presented a complete end of year FY19 Finance Report. The Executive Director and Director of Business and Finance answered questions about various elements of the report. The Board commended the Executive Director, Director of Business and Finance, Assistant Executive Director, and staff for their work meeting expectations of the FY19 budget and reporting

Moved by Arthur, seconded by Jacobi:

“Approve the FY20 budget proposal.”

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

At its Spring meeting, the Board approved the preliminary FY20 Budget. At its Fall meeting, the Board reaffirmed approval of the FY20 budget with recommended amendments from the Finance Committee, Director of Business and Finance, Executive Director, and Assistant Executive Director in light of the FY19 end of year budget report and finalized FY20 strategic operating goals.

Moved by Huston, seconded by Motter:

“Approve the Operating Reserve Policy, as amended.”

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

At the recommendation of the Director of Business and Finance, the Executive Director, the Assistant Director, and the Finance Committee, the Board has put into place a formal Operating Reserve Policy. This policy provides clear guidelines and procedures for appropriate and acceptable use of the NSDA’s financial reserves.

DEVELOPMENT

Moved by Arthur, seconded by Rollins:

“Endorse the Development Committee targeted goals.”

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

The current Board Development Committee presented its committee goals for FY20 and fielded questions from the rest of the members. Primary goal areas include accurate and timely quarterly reporting, periodic review of current development agreements and relationships, annual assessment of fundraising goals, and ensuring all members of the Board participate in annual fundraising efforts.

Director of Development Nicole Wanzer-Serrano presented a thorough report and assessment of organizational fundraising to the Board and answered questions.

Moved by Jerome, seconded by Jacobi:

“Move into executive session.”

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

The Board entered into executive session to discuss progress on ongoing sponsorship, partnership, and development proposals and for its annual review of the Executive Director.

Moved by Jacobi, seconded by Rollins:

“End our executive session.”

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

Moved by Jacobi, seconded by Rollins:

“Approve the official Executive Director performance review as recommended by the Governance Committee.”

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

Moved by Arthur, seconded by Jerome:

“Approve the 2019-2020 Executive Director Evaluation Timeline as recommended by the Governance Committee.”

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

Annually, the Board of Directors is responsible for executing a performance review of the Executive Director. This review process results in an assessment of execution of the previous year’s strategic plan goals and objectives, as well as the execution of nonprofit administration best practices by the Executive Director. In turn, the next year’s goals and objectives are established.

The Board recessed for the evening at 5:15 p.m. on Friday.

The Board reconvened at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday.

BOARD SELF-EVALUATION

Moved by Jacobi, seconded by Arthur:

“Move into executive session.”

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

The Board entered into executive session for its annual Board self-evaluation discussion.

Moved by Huston, seconded by Lindsey:

“End our executive session.”

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

Annually, the Board of Directors performs a review of execution of its roles and responsibilities. This process results in an assessment of the Board's proficiency at nonprofit board best practices. The Board will continue to address the priorities established for the two-year plan, while continually improving strategies to achieve these goals. These priority areas include: Public Image and Advocacy, Meetings, Strategy, Finance, and Program Oversight. To support these priorities the Board will foster maintenance of open dialogue with the membership, effectiveness and efficiency of Board and committee meetings, regular tracking of progress toward strategic plan goals, continued financial oversight to ensure the annual budget reflects priorities, and continued measurement of the impact of critical programs and initiatives. The Board also will continue to examine and further develop the NSDA's Board Best Practices document—e.g., role of spokesperson for the organization, committee protocols, etc.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY UPDATE AND VISION

Director of Technology Aaron Hardy presented a thorough report and assessment of organizational tech solutions, offering his thoughts on current and future aspirations for the NSDA. Topic areas discussed included recent data migration and ongoing development of enhanced and user-friendly online services for our members. Additionally, the role that competition rules, procedures, and resulting tech support required play in tech solution development, staffing, and customer satisfaction was discussed. The Director of Technology fielded questions, observations, and suggestions for future consideration.

GOVERNANCE

Moved by Lindsey, seconded by Arthur:

"Endorse the Governance Committee targeted goals."

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

The current Board Governance Committee presented its committee goals for FY20 and fielded questions from the rest of the members. Primary goal areas include accurate and timely quarterly reporting and assessment of the strategic operating plan with purposeful focus on our equity and inclusion goals; continued evaluation of the Executive Director and reporting to the full Board; periodic review and updating of key governing documents; continued evaluation and assessment of the FY20 Board priorities, and appointed Board member recruitment.

Moved by Arthur, seconded by Jacobi:

"Charge the Executive Director to create a working group to audit the constitution and bylaws of the organization to ensure their continuity and compliance with current standards for a nonprofit membership organization."

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

The Board has asked the Executive Director to do a complete audit of key governing documents (Constitution and Bylaws) to add clarity and continuity to policies and procedures.

Moved by Jerome, seconded by Jacobi:

"Change the mandatory hiatus between the second and third terms from four to two years."

Moved by Motter, seconded by Jerome:

"Postpone the mandatory hiatus vote until the December virtual meeting."

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

The Board will vote on the motion concerning the length of the mandatory hiatus for elected members at its December virtual meeting. This will allow for additional deliberation and an opportunity for all 13 members of the Board to be present to vote on the issue.

MEMBERSHIP CORRESPONDENCE UPDATE

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.

COMPETITION RULES

Moved by Jacobi, seconded by Jerome:

"Endorse the Rules Revision and Evaluation Committee targeted goals."

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

The current Board Rules Revision and Evaluation Committee presented its committee goals for FY20 and fielded any questions from the rest of the members. Primary goal areas include creation of a timeline and strategy for the interpretation event ad hoc committee, a pedagogy evaluation ad hoc committee, and a unified manual simplification working group covering both high school and middle school rules and procedures. In addition, goals include the review, assessment, and prioritization of current and future rules suggestions and identification of steps to mitigate embedded racism/privilege in rules and practices.

The following motions reflect the establishment of targeted committees prioritized from rules submissions by the membership and/or identified organizational needs.

Moved by Sheaff, seconded by Huston:

“Establish an ad hoc committee to study pedagogy (how the knowledge and skills that are gained can be imparted in an educational context) within the current NSDA speech and debate events.”

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

Moved by Arthur, seconded by Jerome:

“Charge the Executive Director to streamline the NSDA Unified Manual with support of an Executive Director working committee.”

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

Moved by Jerome, seconded by Huston:

“Establish a focus group to study the LD topic voting process and affirmative speaker times as recommended by the Rules Revision and Evaluation Committee.”

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

This focus group will review the topic voting process to further refine and improve the selection of resolutions offered throughout the year. This group will also offer reactions to membership rule submissions regarding the potential adjustment of affirmative speaker times in Lincoln-Douglas Debate.

TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE AND ACCESS

The Executive Director discussed with the Board important correlations between membership satisfaction and NSDA tournament participation, as established by the 2019 membership survey results. The Executive Director also presented an overview regarding limitations of access to NSDA competition and the impact on overall program participation in the NSDA. Given these factors, the Board and Executive Director will continue to discuss the potential for additional access to NSDA events and activities that could open up access to participation to more member schools.

Moved by Sheaff, seconded by Jacobi:

“Implement previously piloted rules infraction penalty ranges beginning with the 2020 National Tournament for high school and middle school competition.”

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

In 2019, the Board piloted penalty ranges at the National Tournament. These ranges have now been instituted by the Board for future National Tournaments. The range of penalties can be found in the NSDA Unified Manual. These will allow a more measured approach to infractions presented.

Moved by Jacobi, seconded by Jerome:

“Allow districts to use rules infraction penalty ranges during the 2019-2020 school year. Permission shall be granted by the Executive Director on a district-by-district basis after completing an educational webinar about the new policy.”

Passed: 7-1

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

No: Sheaff

The Board has agreed to allow District Committees to utilize penalty infraction ranges during the upcoming NSDA District Tournament series after they have been granted permission by the Executive Director. The Executive Director will grant permission to districts whose leadership either attends a webinar on the new policy or completes the district leader training course on NSDA Learn.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS DEFERRED

Upon recommendation by the Executive Director, discussions regarding homeschool/online participation requirements and the district tournament appeals process were deferred until the December Board Meeting. This will allow additional research to be presented on these topics.

The Board recessed at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday evening.

The Board resumed at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday morning.

BOARD SELF-EVALUATION (CONTINUED)

Moved by Jerome, seconded by Huston:

“Move into executive session.”

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

The Board entered into executive session to conclude discussions from the prior day’s Board self-evaluation

Moved by Jerome, seconded by Jacobi:

“End our executive session.”

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

PUBLIC IMAGE AND ADVOCACY

The Board discussed its role in enhancing the public image of the organization and in building advocacy for speech and debate. Frequently asked membership questions, along with answers of clarification, were reviewed for feedback. The goal is to enhance Board/membership communication on these topics to increase the membership's knowledge about and, in turn, satisfaction with the organization, its operations, and benefits.

ELECTION BEST PRACTICES

The Board discussed the election process and additional steps that could be taken to ensure a fair and unbiased process. Also discussed were ways to best communicate the roles, responsibilities, and commitments of a Board member to potential candidates. Several steps were suggested to the Executive Director for implementation in this upcoming year's process. They are reflected in this issue of *Rostrum* starting on page 15.

FUTURE CONFERENCES

The Board began a discussion to determine the best course of action for future summer conferences. This included weighing advantages and limitations of prior conferences in terms of attendance, timing, length, location, staff time, and financial investment. The membership and organizational benefits of leadership-focused conferences, education-focused conferences, and hybrid approaches were also reviewed. Since the Board decided last year to utilize 2019-2020 to properly assess the future of this event for our organization as well as the mission-based purpose it should serve, no official action was taken at this time.

Moved by Huston, seconded by Arthur:

"Add procedural changes/clarification language to the Board Best Practices document on page 13 under 'A. Establishing a Quorum and Majority Vote' to reflect that fact that members who are recognized by the President (or Presiding Officer at the time) as present, either in-person or virtually, shall be eligible to vote and establish quorum, and under 'Conduct During Board Meetings' to clarify that abstentions are not counted and have no effect on the result of a vote."

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

Prior to the Fall meeting, the Board, by unanimous consent, agreed to formally reaffirm its longstanding practice that its established "quorum" is at least one half of eligible members present and that a "majority vote" on any issue will continue to be when more than half those members officially vote in favor on an issue. Abstentions will continue to reflect a desire to not vote on an issue and will not be counted in determining a majority vote. In addition, the Board agreed to allow its members to attend meetings virtually via the NSDA's online meeting platform and be counted as present in those times when that member feels they have had adequate ability to fully participate in the discussions and deliberations. The intent of virtual voting for in-person meetings is to foster active participation by Board members who have a valid conflict that prohibits travel to a given meeting. This procedural clarification and new practice were officially approved for use at meetings.

Moved by Arthur, seconded by Sheaff:

"Adjourn."

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

The Board adjourned at 11:50 a.m. 

QUESTIONS? CONCERNS? IDEAS?

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

MISSION

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

VISION

We envision a world in which every student has access to membership in the National Speech & Debate Association, providing the educational resources, competitive opportunities, and expertise necessary to foster their communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creative skills.