

Leadership

Board of Directors Fall Minutes

October 1-2, 2021

The NSDA Board of Directors held its Fall meeting October 1-2, 2021, in St. Paul, Minnesota. Several staff and Board members attended virtually. In attendance were President Pam Cady Wycoff, Vice President Dr. Tommie Lindsey, Jr., Byron Arthur, Dr. Alan Coverstone, Dr. Mike Edmonds, Sara Gibson, David Huston, Adam Jacobi, Jennifer Jerome, Anoop Mishra, Renee Motter, Jay Rye, and Holly Williams.

President Wycoff called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

WELCOME/LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

President Wycoff began by welcoming the Board to Minnesota. This included an acknowledgement of the land as the ancestral home of the Dakota and the contributions of their people and other Indigenous Peoples who have passed through the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. The meeting's proximity to the now historic George Floyd protests, which included many youth voices that pushed forward the fight against racism and injustices in our world, was also acknowledged.

RECORD OF APPROVED MINUTES

The previously approved minutes from the Spring Board meeting and July and September Competition Rules meetings were officially read into the historical records by unanimous consent.

MISSION MOMENT

Board members viewed a brief "mission moment" video prepared by staff to help set the tone for the meeting

and purposefully remind members of our mission, vision, values, and equity goals. Student of the Year candidates spoke about the importance of utilizing their speech and debate skills as advocates within our communities and world.

STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Current procedures call for the review of any standing committee meeting minutes from any meeting that occurred between main Board meetings. The Board had the opportunity to address questions regarding each committee's updates prior to this meeting. No further questions or concerns regarding the minutes were brought forward at the meeting.

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Governance Committee Targeted Goals

Moved by Edmonds, seconded by Coverstone:

"Approve the Governance Committee targeted goals for 2021-2022."

Passed: 12-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Coverstone, Edmonds, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Mishra, Motter, Rye, Williams)

Annually, the Governance Committee, along with all other standing committees, establishes targeted goals for the year. This year's Governance Committee goals focus on five key areas: 1) Equity Advancement, 2) 2021-2022 Strategic Plan Oversight and Evaluation, 3) Annual Assessment of the Executive Director's Performance, 4) Annual Board's Self-Assessment and Development of Board Priorities, and 5) Evaluation, Revision, and Standardization of Board Composition Practices.

Executive Director Annual Review

Moved by Arthur, seconded by Jacobi:

“Move into executive session.”

Passed: 12-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Coverstone, Edmonds, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Mishra, Motter, Rye, Williams)

Moved by Jacobi, seconded by Motter:

“Move into general session.”

Passed: 13-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Coverstone, Edmonds, Gibson, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Mishra, Motter, Rye, Williams)

The Board entered executive session to finalize its annual review of the Executive Director.

After the conclusion of the Executive Session, the Board surprised Executive Director Wunn with the NSDA Milestone Achievement Award. This engraved crystal desk clock commemorates J. Scott Wunn’s extensive tenure of over 18 years at the National Speech & Debate Association. No other Executive Director has surpassed this milestone, with the exception of the Association’s Founder, Bruno E. Jacob, who served for 40 years. The Board commended J. Scott Wunn for achieving this historic milestone and for his outstanding dedication, leadership, and service throughout his tenure with the NSDA.

Board Self-Evaluation and Proposed Priorities

Moved by Rye, seconded by Arthur:

“Move into executive session.”

Passed: 13-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Coverstone, Edmonds, Gibson, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Mishra, Motter, Rye, Williams)

Moved by Coverstone, seconded by Jacobi:

“Move into general session.”

Passed: 13-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Coverstone, Gibson, Edmonds, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Mishra, Motter, Rye, Williams)

Moved by Edmonds, seconded by Jerome:

“Accept the 2021-2022 Board Priorities and Strategies as recommended by the Governance Committee.”

Passed: 13-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Coverstone, Gibson, Edmonds, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Mishra, Motter, Rye, Williams)

After discussion of the evaluation results, this year, the Board will prioritize the following areas.

- 1) **Strategic Planning:** Develop and offer opportunities for the Board to engage in strategic oversight through evaluation, revision, and support of the current five-year plan.

- 2) **Board Composition/Membership:** Improve the process for nominating, selecting, and securing appointed Board members and develop options to encourage potential candidates for elected membership to better understand the roles, responsibilities, and expectations while considering ways to increase accessibility and meet DEI goals.
- 3) **Programs and Services:** Monitor the quality of programs and services to evaluate their impact on the mission.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

For the past few years, the office of the Executive Director has designed and implemented equity and inclusion commitments. These commitments are presented annually to the public. In addition, a summary of reports and recommendations from the summer Coaches’ Caucuses are annually presented for review. In conjunction with these efforts, the staff offers their suggestions regarding the next year’s priorities. The Board reflected on the work that was done in 2020-2021 on diversity, equity, and inclusion, including discussions of the equity commitments met by the organization, reports submitted by the 2021 Coaches’ Caucuses, and assessment of ways in which the organization handled equity and inclusion issues occurring within the organization, community, and society throughout the year. The Board shared its thoughts on the 2021-2022 equity commitments and priorities established by the Executive Director. These commitments can be found in the 2021 November/December issue of *Rostrum* magazine and online at www.speechanddebate.org/equity-commitments.

Fiscal Year 2021 Strategic Plan End of Year Report

Moved by Arthur, seconded by Coverstone:

“Accept the FY21 Strategic Plan End of Year Report.”

Passed: 13-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Coverstone, Edmonds, Gibson, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Mishra, Motter, Rye, Williams)

Fiscal Year 2022 Strategic Operating Plan

Moved by Coverstone, seconded by Jacobi:

“Accept the FY22 Strategic Operating Plan.”

Passed: 13-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Coverstone, Edmonds, Gibson, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Mishra, Motter, Rye, Williams)

Assistant Executive Director Amy Seidelman prepared a video summary of key highlights for review prior to the meeting and responded to comments related to the 2020-2021 Strategic Plan end of year report and upcoming Operating Plan for 2021-2022. Board members offered feedback on the effectiveness of last year's results as well as comments and suggestions regarding proposed implementation in 2021-2022. The overall thematic goal of the 2021-2022 Strategic Objectives is to "Adopt an advocacy orientation that champions student agency and voice." The strategic operating plan works in conjunction with a strategic objectives framework, approved by the Board last year, which focuses on the following key strategic anchors:

- A relentless focus on generating credibility and stability for speech and debate as a school-based activity and career.
- The ability to leverage recognition and membership to inspire decision-makers to prioritize quality speech and debate programs.
- Commitment to enable meaningful participation in speech and debate for traditionally marginalized and disenfranchised students.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Internal Affairs Committee Targeted Goals

Moved by Motter, seconded by Rye:

"Approve the Internal Affairs Committee targeted goals for 2021-2022."

Passed: 12-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Coverstone, Gibson, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Mishra, Motter, Rye, Williams)

Annually, the Internal Affairs Committee, along with all other standing committees, establishes targeted goals for the year. This year's Internal Affairs Committee goals include seven key areas: 1) Equity Advancement, 2) Financial Stability, 3) Strategic Plan Oversight, 4) Annual Audit Review, 5) Collaboration with the Governance and External Affairs Committees Regarding Financial Information and Assessment, 6) Provision of Financial Literacy Resources for Board Members, As Needed, and 7) Annual Review of Human Resource Services and Materials.

Fiscal Year 2021 End of Year Report

Moved by Arthur, seconded by Rye:

"Accept the FY21 End of Year Report."

Passed: 12-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Coverstone, Gibson, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Mishra, Motter, Rye, Williams)

Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Update

Moved by Rye, seconded by Motter:

"Approve the FY22 Budget as amended."

Passed: 12-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Coverstone, Gibson, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Mishra, Motter, Rye, Williams)

The Internal Affairs Committee is responsible for reviewing and accepting the annual fiscal year report. Additionally, in the fall, they reviewed potential changes in the pre-approved budget recommended in the spring. In conjunction with these responsibilities, Director of Business and Finance Laura Stein provided full fiscal reports along with a video summary prior to the meeting highlighting key information from the end of year report and budget update and fielded questions and comments from the Board. The Board used time during the meeting to address proposed adjustments as well as any remaining questions and/or comments prior to approval.

National Office Building and Grounds Update

Moved by Jerome, seconded by Jacobi:

"Endorse the Executive Director's pursuit of the sale of the current office building in consultation and oversight of the Internal Affairs Committee."

Passed: 12-0 (Wycoff, Lindsey, Arthur, Coverstone, Gibson, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Mishra, Motter, Rye, Williams)

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent shift to remote working has disrupted workforce commuting habits and forced the implementation of electronic communication strategies in ways that had not been previously considered. Adjusting to a forced remote work environment allowed for the creation of new ways for staff to communicate, collaborate, and stay connected. This adjustment to collaborating in an online work environment has allowed the NSDA office to further diversify its workforce via remote hiring.

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The Executive Director proposed actively pursuing the sale of the existing building and the acquisition of more appropriately sized lease space. He requested endorsement of the Board for this proposal. The final details of any building sale would be subject to oversight and approval by the Internal Affairs Committee. Any choice on lease space is the responsibility of the Executive Director working within the framework of the existing budgetary allocations.

The meeting recessed at 4:35 p.m. Friday.

The meeting reconvened at 9:09 a.m. Saturday.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

External Affairs Committee Targeted Goals

Moved by Coverstone, seconded by Jacobi:

“Approve the External Affairs Committee targeted goals for 2021-2022.”

Passed: 11-0 (Wycoff, Arthur, Coverstone, Gibson, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Mishra, Motter, Rye, Williams)

Annually, the External Affairs Committee establishes targeted goals for the year. This year’s External Affairs Committee goals focus on five key areas: 1) Equity Advancement, 2) Strategic Plan Oversight, 3) Review of Annual Development Goals, 4) Assessment of Quarterly Reports, and 5) Ensuring 100% Board Member Participation in Annual Giving and Donor Prospecting.

Fiscal Year 2021 Development Reports

Moved by Jacobi, seconded by Rye:

“Accept the FY21 Development Reports.”

Passed: 11-0 (Wycoff, Arthur, Coverstone, Gibson, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Mishra, Motter, Rye, Williams)

The External Affairs Committee is responsible for reviewing and accepting the annual fiscal year Development Report. This committee is also responsible for reviewing the efforts of the Marketing and Advocacy department in establishing and meeting objectives related to this area.

Director of Development and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Nicole Wanzer-Serrano updated the Board on the success and ongoing efforts of the long-term vision of the Development Department’s plans to build upon the financial stability of the organization.

Marketing Update

Director of Marketing and Advocacy Angela McMillan presented her proposed vision of the future potential for marketing and advocacy and fielded questions and comments from the Board. The Board expressed excitement and confidence in the outlined direction for the year and welcomed Angela to the staff team.

2021 MEMBERSHIP SURVEY RESULTS

Assistant Executive Director Amy Seidelman provided a comprehensive summary of results from the 2021 Membership Survey. Additional highlights can be found in the 2021 September/October issue of *Rostrum* magazine. The Board offered reactions to the results as well as some additional insights about the data for consideration by the staff as we continue to support the needs of membership and address the trends presented.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

Prior to the meeting, Director of Technology Aaron Hardy provided a written overview of our advancement in technology over the past year as well as the continued vision for tech development over the forthcoming years. This included an update on planning and execution of Tabroom.com 2.0 development and the preliminary NSDA Campus and Tabroom.com use numbers and projections for FY22. Aaron also presented to the Board additional aspects of technology that should be top priorities for the organization in relation to his vision for that development.

NATIONAL TOURNAMENT REVIEW AND FUTURE PLANNING

The Board discussed general takeaways, lessons learned, and areas for further review based on feedback received from the online 2021 National Tournament. Due to time constraints at the meeting, it was determined that the Executive Director should share a confidential status brief with the Board to fully expand upon planning updates for the 2022 National Tournament. These ongoing discussions about online vs. in-person competition will be finalized in February 2022 with the final decision announced in March 2022.

2021 NATIONAL CONFERENCE REPORT

During the summer of 2021, the NSDA hosted a free virtual conference, which offered a forum advocating for more equitable speech and debate communities. Staff provided a summary of the event, including attendee survey results. Due to time constraints at the meeting, the group agreed that the Executive Director should offer additional thoughts on the potential for the future of such events in email communication with the Board following this meeting. This will allow the Board to best consider future plans regarding conferences.

LEGAL MATTERS UPDATE

Moved by Jacobi, seconded by Motter:

“Move into executive session.”

Passed: 12-0 (Wycoff, Arthur, Coverstone, Edmonds, Gibson, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Mishra, Motter, Rye, Williams)

Moved by Rye, seconded by Motter:

“Move into general session.”

Passed: 12-0 (Wycoff, Arthur, Coverstone, Edmonds, Gibson, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Mishra, Motter, Rye, Williams)

At each meeting, the Board sets time to discuss any ongoing legal matters in executive session.

REVIEW MEMBERSHIP CORRESPONDENCE

In accordance with our goal of increased membership engagement, any letters submitted to the Board prior to the meeting were included in meeting materials to inform the Board of ideas, requests, and concerns.

Moved by Jacobi, seconded by Jerome:

“Adjourn.”

Passed: 12-0 (Wycoff, Arthur, Coverstone, Edmonds, Gibson, Huston, Jacobi, Jerome, Mishra, Motter, Rye, Williams)

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m. Saturday. 

QUESTIONS? CONCERNS? IDEAS?

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