

Leadership

Board of Directors Spring Minutes

Mesa, AZ
April 28-29, 2023

The NSDA Board of Directors held its spring meeting April 28-29, 2023, in Mesa, AZ. In attendance were President Pam Cady Wycoff, Vice President Dr. Tommie Lindsey, Jr., Byron Arthur, Alan Coverstone, Dr. Mike Edmonds (joined at 10:30 a.m.), 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 9:08 a.m.

WELCOME

President Wycoff welcomed and thanked the Board, Executive Director, and all staff for their preparations for the meeting. She shared that they look forward to what they can and will accomplish together to fulfill the mission, vision, values, and equity statement, on behalf of all they serve. She also highlighted that in the morning Joanna Bai, the 2019 Student of the Year will join the Board meeting. This is the second opportunity to consider student representation at a Board meeting. The Winter 2023 Board Meeting Minutes were approved online prior to publication and are now officially read into the record.

MISSION MOMENT

On day one, the Board watched the NSDA's YouTube video teaser for the 2023 National Tournament. Board members and special guests had an opportunity to share their reactions to the message communicated and engage in a team building activity. Additionally, during meeting sessions, Equity Advocates were assigned and

an Equity Pause was intermittently utilized to reflect on deliberations in light of our organization's ongoing commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

LEGAL MATTERS

Moved by Arthur, seconded by Anoop:

"Move into executive session."

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

Moved by Jacobi, seconded by Coverstone:

"Move out of executive session."

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

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

SPECIAL GUEST

Joanna Bai joined the meeting online from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Jennifer Jerome served as Joanna's Board liaison to facilitate the experience. President Wycoff welcomed Joanna and recalled the honor and excitement of Joanna's special recognition as Student of the Year in 2019. Joanna is a junior at Harvard studying computer science and special education. Through a Harvard pre-professional program, she also works with at a start-up involved in the Special Olympics.

STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES AND Q&A

Prior to the Board meeting, members were asked to submit questions about the prior standing committee minutes so they could be addressed by the appropriate committee chair either before or during the meeting.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Moved by Coverstone, seconded by Lindsey:

“Endorse the FY24 Strategic Plan Working Doc as presented by the Office of the Executive Director.”

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

The Executive Director and Assistant Executive Director submitted potential strategic objectives for the 2023-2024 school year for review. Some objectives from 2023 were recommended for continuation, some for continuation with changes or updates to build upon prior progress, and some were proposed as potential new strategies for the FY24 plan. Each proposed objective has been linked to a Board Standing Committee, with one or more key performance indicators (KPIs), and broad quarterly tactics. These recommendations were reviewed for approval by the Board. The goal was to set in motion the framework for the fiscal year 2024.

The NSDA 2023-2024 strategic anchors reflect a relentless focus on generating credibility and stability for speech and debate as a school-based activity, the ability to leverage recognition and membership to inspire decision-makers to prioritize quality speech and debate programs; and commitment to enable meaningful participation in speech and debate for traditionally marginalized and disenfranchised students. The vision of the NSDA is, “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.” The mission of the organization has expanded beyond running a strong, national tournament and now positions the organization to “connect, support, and inspire a diverse community committed to empowering students through speech and debate.” Because of our work, we expect to see the number of schools providing quality speech and debate programs increasing every year. The leadership team reviewed these strategic anchors to determine whether they continue to be in line with our mission-based

activities and strategic choices to date, as well as where we see the field of education/speech and debate going in the future. The words “and career” were removed from the credibility anchor to make it clear that NSDA supports all types of coaching relationships into which schools may enter. As part of this conversation, the leadership team also briefly discussed the idea of a thematic goal for the year revolving around the Centennial Celebration, which is an ongoing work in progress.

The Board discussed and offered insights on the KPIs to maximize impact on the mission. Additionally, the value of various strategies were considered.

An equity pause led by Anoop Mishra concluded this session.

EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Director of DEI Dr. Paul Porter provided an update on the inaugural Activating Equity Award, along with a progress report on the FY23 Equity Commitments.

The NSDA Equity commitments include:

- The NSDA will work to reinforce opportunities for meaningful engagement and voice of our students and coaches.
- The NSDA will continue to strive for an equitable and representative judging pool at the National Tournament.
- The NSDA will develop a culture of assessment to further measure the effectiveness of our DEI efforts.
- The NSDA will continue to enhance its efforts to prevent harassment and discrimination at the district and national tournaments.
- The NSDA will include belonging alongside diversity, equity, and inclusion as key concepts in our organizational core documents.
- The NSDA will design cultural competence training opportunities to help enhance our district qualifier and national tournaments.
- The NSDA will seek data from its constituents to learn about the cultural climate of our district and national tournaments.

Updates included the April 20 launch of the website for the Judge Pool Diversity Initiative: www.speechanddebate.org/nsda-judge-pool-diversity-initiative.

2022-2023 DEI highlights included:

- **Activating Equity Award:** A \$5,000 award to an organization working to further the culture of equity in speech and debate was reviewed. This year there were 27 applicants. The three finalists will give a short pitch to the NSDA Governance Committee on Wednesday, May 3rd.
- **Staff Professional Development:** Professional development opportunity designed for NSDA staff members to increase their multicultural competence by viewing speech and debate through the eyes of different people in this activity and understanding how diverse identities are impacted by this activity. Staff members have participated in 4 sessions focused on the following topics: learning and unlearning; understanding difference; equity vs. equality and allyship; and embracing cultural change. Sessions include a short reading and/or video, asynchronous analysis video, and group discussion.
- **Judge Pool Diversity Initiative:** Effort designed to increase the diversity of elimination round judging at the National Tournament. The NSDA has allotted funding to help incentivize judges who would add to the representational diversity of our judge pool by helping to cover travel, lodging, meals and compensation for approved applicants. Note: These funds will be reserved for judges who are not traveling to the National Tournament to cover the judging obligation of a school.
- **Multicultural Competence Judge Training:** New training video introducing the concept of multicultural competence and its characteristics (knowledge, awareness, and skill) along with practical applications of these characteristics when adjudicating speech and debate rounds. A short quiz has also been written to complete the training. This first iteration is on track to be available for judges at the National Tournament and lays a foundation for future training (e.g., writing culturally competent ballots).

Board members had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the organization's progress.

BUSINESS MODELING

The Executive Director and Assistant Executive Director presented an update of the staff leadership team's work regarding assessment of the organization's current business model, the goals of the project, proposed timeline, and process overview. Potential framework revisions were introduced and discussed.

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION COMMITTEE UPDATE/ LEVERAGING IMPACT OF THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY

As the NSDA nears its 100th anniversary, the staff and Board have begun preparations to not only celebrate this moment in our history, but also lean into the milestone as a way to leverage its impact with the broader communities of speech and debate as well as the educational system as a whole. As a vehicle for achieving our "North Star Goal" of sustainable speech and debate interscholastic programming in every school, we hope that the attention generated can be maximized to drive our mission. The Board discussed the plans generated by the NSDA's marketing department and Centennial Steering Committee, then determined ways in which this event can maximize mission impact.

The Centennial Celebration officially begins at the June 2024 National Tournament and culminates at the National Tournament in June 2025. Both of these tournaments take place in Des Moines, Iowa. We are calling for on-site, in-person volunteers to join us in Iowa. We are also working on satellite celebrations throughout the country. To get involved in the celebration, individuals should sign up at www.speechanddebate.org/centennial-volunteer-form.

The meeting recessed at 7:13 p.m. on Friday.

President Wycoff called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday.

MISSION MOMENT

On day two, the Board watched NSDA's YouTube Video recounting key moments throughout NSDA history. The Board members and special guests had an opportunity to share their reactions and engage in a team building activity. Additionally, during meeting sessions, Equity Advocates

were assigned and an Equity Pause was intermittently utilized to reflect on deliberations in light of our organization's ongoing commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

FINANCE BUSINESS

Moved by Arthur, seconded by Mishra:

"Approve the FY23 Q2 financials as presented."

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

Moved by Mishra, seconded by Motter:

"Approve the FY24 pre-budget as presented."

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

The Board was provided with the Q2 financial report, FY22 990 tax return, and a pre-budget proposal for FY24, which have been reviewed and approved by the Internal Affairs Committee. The pre-budget included both budgetary projections from last year, as well as the current FY23 budget actuals and end of year projections. The Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director, and Director of Business and Finance shared highlights of questions submitted before the meeting and fielded any additional questions on the Q2 report, the 990, and/or the end of year projections. The Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director, and Director of Business and Finance then opened up discussion and fielded questions on the proposed FY24 pre-budget, prior to approval. The Internal Affairs Committee brought forth their recommendation on the budget proposal.

DISRUPTORS CONVERSATION

At its winter online meeting, the Board of Directors participated in a think tank discussion to discuss the many ways in which colleges, universities, companies, governments, and organizations operate post the pandemic. As the NSDA positions itself to respond to unfamiliar challenges and to unforeseen opportunities, the NSDA Board continues these important discussions regarding educational trends, technological challenges, and more. The Board participated in a second think tank session to explore the NSDA's growing exposure as a publicly recognized organization, and how the NSDA can ensure that future tournaments utilize locations that meet

our core values, are affordable for attendees, and the need for contingency, make security easy to plan and ensure and a reasonable expectation for staff in preparation for events.

BOARD COMPOSITION

Moved by Arthur, seconded by Jacobi:

"Change the length of terms from two years to three for appointed Board members. This applies to current Board members' second term."

Passed: 8-0-5

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

Abstain: Coverstone, Edmonds, Gibson, Mishra, Williams

As part of its FY23 Board Priorities, the NSDA Board has been considering various changes to the NSDA's Board and overall leadership composition. The process of restructuring NSDA leadership infrastructure began in 2016 with the addition of non-elected Board members who were appointed to serve on the Board to add additional expertise and provide a unique perspective on governing issues regarding 501(c)(3) nonprofit standards. In 2018, new term limits were implemented to ensure appropriate turnover in Board membership. Over the past year, the Board, through the work of its Governance Committee, has been considering potential adjustments and/or additions designed to enhance the overall governance system of the NSDA and, in turn, serve the diverse needs of our membership and the broader spectrum of speech and debate communities. This work led to a series of diverse focus group meetings during the spring to provide instrumental feedback on the Board's initial thoughts and concepts. The Executive Director and Board reviewed the feedback that was received and developed a revised concept for further evaluation and feedback from stakeholders before a final proposal will be considered by the Board at its fall meeting. Additionally, a status report regarding the Governance Committee's ongoing process for securing and reviewing potential appointed Board member nominations and/or renewals under the current system was discussed. Actions needed to facilitate a successful governance transition were also addressed.

CURRENT AND FUTURE NATIONALS OVERVIEW

The Executive Director updated the Board on various logistical aspects regarding the upcoming tournament. These updates reviewed a range of topics including:

- The current entry count status for the middle school and high school tournaments.
- Update on health and safety protocols and procedures, including a discussion on the current standards used for determining future host sites. An opportunity to review those standards and a potential timeline for assessment, additions, or adjustments to standards for future bids were also considered.
- An overview of any challenges faced during this year's qualifying season.
- Anticipated challenges that will be uniquely faced this year.

In addition, the Executive Director provided a brief update on the ongoing plans for the 2023 Nationals and beyond. The Executive Director fielded questions from the Board concerning the updates presented.

HALL OF FAME/LEGENDS COMMITTEE PROCESS ASSESSMENT

Moved by Jerome, seconded by Jacobi:

"Establish an ad hoc committee to explore recognition systems in the organization's selection process to recommend appropriate changes necessary to the system for consistency with the evolution and scope of our organization's mission, vision, and values."

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

Given the expanding size and scope of our organization and the evolution of our mission and vision during its extensive history, an evaluation of the purpose, processes, and standards established for these honors is worth consideration. This discussion determined whether adjustments were needed to update, expand, or adapt the process to meet the needs and priorities of our organization. The Board recommended establishing an

ad hoc committee to explore the current Hall of Fame infrastructure including the Legends selection process to recommend appropriate changes to the system for consistency with the evolution and scope of our organization's mission, vision, and values.

CALENDAR PLANNING

Moved by Coverstone, seconded by Williams:

"Approve the FY23 Board Calendar as presented amended."

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

The Board completed a pre-assessment of a draft FY24 Board Meeting Calendar prior to the meeting. In order to best facilitate full attendance for general Board and Standing Committee meetings in 2023-2024, results including format, location, timeframes, and dates were discussed to establish a workable framework for implementation.

EQUITY PAUSE

The Board used the [NSDA Equity Lens](#) to reflect on the nature of their meeting deliberations and whether their decisions and decision-making processes are transparent, accountable, and reflect the organization's core value of equity.

ADJOURN

Moved by Lindsey, seconded by Arthur:

"Adjourn."

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

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

QUESTIONS? CONCERNS? IDEAS?

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