

Leadership

Board of Directors Spring Minutes

May 15-16, 2020

The NSDA Board of Directors held its virtual Spring meeting March 15-16, 2020. In attendance were President Pam Cady Wycoff, Vice President Dr. Tommie Lindsey, Jr., Byron Arthur, Dr. Mike Edmonds, David Huston, Adam Jacobi, Jennifer Jerome, Renee Motter, Tom Rollins, and Timothy Sheaff.

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

MISSION MOMENT

To set the tone for the meeting, the Board viewed a “mission moment” video prepared by staff. It consisted of testimonials from student members, past and present, reflecting on their experience in the activity and the positive impact the NSDA has had on their lives, especially during the pandemic. The Board then discussed their greatest takeaways from the messages as they related to the organization’s core mission, vision, and values.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Each Board standing committee provided written end of the year updates. The Board had the opportunity to address questions regarding each committee’s progress on their goals.

GOVERNANCE

Moved by Edmonds, seconded by Lindsey:

“Approve the Committee Restructuring Protocols as recommended by the Governance Committee.”

Passed: 7-1-1

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

No: Rollins

Abstain: Sheaff

This topic was presented as part of the Committee Best Practices Proposal presented at the March Board meeting. The Governance Committee was tasked with researching this topic for consideration. Non-profit organization best practices suggest moving from the traditional standing committee structure of Governance, Finance, and Development to Governance, Internal Affairs, and External Affairs to more specifically describe the broad scope of these committees. Note: The Executive Committee and Rules Revision and Evaluation Committee will continue as separate committees.

Moved by Lindsey, seconded by Edmonds:

“Approve the Board communication protocols as recommended by the Governance Committee.”

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

In conjunction with the 2018-2020 Board Priorities, the Governance Committee developed a series of protocols for Board communications. In the past, this has been referred to as the “spokesperson” role. The Governance Committee’s research centered on that area as well as the broader topic of Board communication protocols. These proposed best practices provide general guidance for all Board members and will be utilized for onboarding new Board members. The new communication protocols can be found in the updated NSDA Board of Directors Handbook, which will be available via the NSDA website after the Fall Board meeting.

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Calendar Planning

In order to best facilitate full attendance for general Board and standing committee meetings in 2020-2021, the format, location, timing, length, and dates were discussed to establish a workable framework. In the past, the Board has utilized an electronic calendar centered as closely as possible with quarterly reporting. Major events such as the beginning of the school year, competitive tournaments, and the National Tournament have also been factored into the selections of dates. The schedules of elected and appointed Board members as well as staffing expectations, quarterly reporting, and expectations for membership and organizational deadlines should be considered. Before establishing a proposed calendar around the status quo, the Board was asked to share suggestions that will help facilitate a level of reasonability and workability for full attendance of all members. The question of an in-person or virtual 2020 Fall Board meeting was also discussed as well as potential location parameters for future Fall/Spring in-person Board meetings.

Moved by Jacobi, seconded by Rollins:

“Adjourn to executive session to discuss and review appointed Board Member recommendations.”

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

Moved by Jacobi, seconded by Rollins:

“Reconvene into general session.”

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

During executive session, the Board agreed to offer Alan Coverstone appointment to the Board. Alan accepted this appointment. This appointment fills the vacant seat previously held by Monica Silverstein. Alan Coverstone will serve a two-year term beginning August 1, 2020. Alan brings a wealth of experience in private and public school education, fundraising and development, and educational administration. He is currently a Senior Program Officer on the K-12 team at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Prior to joining the Foundation he most recently served as the Chair of Education at Belmont University where he led the establishment of a teacher residency in partnership with the local Nashville school district. Prior to that, he served as the Executive Officer of Innovation at the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS). Alan previously served on the Board of Directors of the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA), and also served on the Davidson County school board. Before serving MNPS, Alan was a teacher and debate coach at Montgomery Bell Academy for 14 years, also serving as the Academic Dean of the School. While at MBA, Alan coached several successful competitors, including the 2005 Policy Debate champion and runner-up teams.

DEVELOPMENT

Moved by Arthur, seconded by Sheaff:

“Accept the Quarter 3 Development Report as presented.”

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

Executive Director Scott Wunn and Director of Development and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Nicole Wanzer-Serrano shared highlights and fielded additional questions from the Board concerning the Q3 Development Report and Q4 Development Projections and discussed ongoing development efforts.

Moved by Jacobi, seconded by Rollins:

“Adjourn to executive session to review and discuss a special recognition opportunity.”

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

Moved by Motter, seconded by Rollins:

“Reconvene into general session.”

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

The External Affairs Committee (formerly Development) is charged with initial discussions concerning the naming of specialty awards. Once a recommendation is determined, it is brought to the whole Board for final approval.

STRATEGIC PLANNING REPORT

Moved by Arthur, seconded by Motter:

“Accept the Quarter 3 Strategic Plan Report as presented.”

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

Executive Director Scott Wunn and Assistant Executive Director Amy Seideman shared highlights and fielded additional questions from the Board concerning the Q3 Strategic Plan Report. The Board reviewed the strategies designed to meet our strategic priorities including: 1) Reach More Students; 2) Support More Schools; 3) Earn Loyalty; 4) Drive Inclusive Participation; and 5) Strive for Stability. The thoughts and recommendations from the Membership Working Group were also incorporated into the ongoing operational plan for 2020-2021. These areas included school membership and eligibility requirements, prioritization of membership acquisition and retention strategies, and the role that various membership benefits play as well as potential adjustments regarding homeschool and online access.

FINANCE

Moved by Rollins, seconded by Lindsey:

“Accept the FY2021 preliminary budget as presented.”

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

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. Executive Director Scott Wunn and Director of Business and Finance Laura Stein shared highlights and fielded questions from the Board concerning the Quarter 3 Finance Report, Quarter 4 Finance Projections, and Fiscal Year 2021 preliminary budget's tie to the strategic plan. The budget goes into effect at the end of the fiscal year (July 31, 2020), but may be adjusted with final approval at the Fall Board meeting.

AD HOC AND WORKING GROUPS

The Board and Executive Director established several ad hoc and working groups for the 2019-2020 school year. These groups have met throughout the course of the year.

Equity Committee Update

Motion by Lindsey, seconded by Jacobi:

“The Board thanks the friends of the NSDA from the college community along with our membership coaches who joined to address equity challenges and propose solutions for the 2020 online National Tournament.”

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

This committee was established by the Executive Director in March to focus on equity issues surrounding the 2020 online National Tournament events. The recommendations of the committee were addressed and acted upon as they were presented by the committee.

Constitution and Bylaw Working Group Update

The NSDA is in the process of revising these documents to meet current non-profit standards. The group shared a status update and projected timeline for completion. The plan is to bring forth revised documents for final adoption at the Fall Board meeting.

Centennial Planning Committee Proposal

Moved by Jacobi, seconded by Jerome:

“Approve the creation of a Centennial Planning Committee as presented by the Executive Director.”

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

Executive Director Scott Wunn presented an initial proposal for consideration. The Board is excited to convene a planning committee to prepare for this yearlong celebration that will culminate with the National Tournament hosted in Des Moines in 2025.

The Board recessed for the evening at 3:15 p.m. on Friday.

The Board reconvened at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday.

COMPETITION RULES

Copyright Issues

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) has been working in partnership with the National Speech & Debate Association (NSDA), the Educational Theatre Association (EdTA), and other like-minded organizations on an online course to better inform the community on current copyright laws. The Board was updated on this work and will discuss the next steps that will be taken to ensure future compliance within NSDA activities. The topic of copyright has come to the forefront in several educational extracurricular fine arts activities. This plays a pivotal role in the use of literature in oral interpretation events and video taping of performances. The Board reviewed current copyright laws and expectations in addition to the National Federation's educational training materials and recommendations. The role of performance permission for copyrighted material was addressed. The goal of these discussions is to come to a consensus on our organization's approach regarding copyright compliance and performance permission to provide a backdrop for ad hoc committee discussions on oral interpretation issues. Per the Board's request, the Executive Director will seek further clarification and recommendation from legal counsel prior to the Fall Board meeting.

Future Digital Platform Programming and Opportunities

Executive Director Scott Wunn and Director of Technology Aaron Hardy provided a brief overview of the short-term vision for the NSDA's presence in the digital education space, including an early

conceptualization of NSDA Campus. The Director of Technology gave a presentation on some initial thoughts, ideas, and concepts on how this might be practically applied and executed by the NSDA during the 2020-2021 school year and beyond. The Board was given a chance to ask questions and share their thoughts on the concepts and vision shared. The Board was supportive of pursuing this project. Next steps regarding the need for and use of digital platforms within the speech and debate educational space were considered by the Board.

MEMBERSHIP CORRESPONDENCE

In accordance with the Board's goal of increased membership engagement, letters submitted to the Board were included in meeting materials to inform the Board of ideas, requests, and concerns that have been submitted for consideration.

2020 ONLINE NATIONAL TOURNAMENT UPDATE

The Executive Director updated the Board on various logistical aspects of the online tournament. Content addressed included an overview of current entry numbers, implementation of equity protocols, tournament schedules and competition procedures, and Board member tournament responsibilities including adjudication panel, ombudsperson, and auditing protocols and procedures.

Appointed Board members left the meeting.

RULES REVISION AND EVALUATION

Oral Interpretation Committee Report

The Oral Interpretation Ad Hoc Committee met several times throughout the year. Their work will be extended into 2020-2021 in order finalized recommendations for consideration. Board liaison Jennifer Jerome shared a status update and projected timeline for completion.

Pedagogy Committee Report

Board liaisons Renee Motter and Adam Jacobi provided a recap of the committee's work. This committee has completed their charge to determine the pedagogy of debate, public speaking, and oral interpretation. They formalized the core skills that students have the potential

to learn and demonstrate in each event. Their work will serve as foundational support for the development of judge training, curriculum development, and educational advocacy.

Moved by Huston, seconded by Jacobi:

"Establish a judge training program rooted in equity and pedagogical standards for full completion within two years."

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

The Board will use the standards developed by the Pedagogy Ad Hoc Committee to develop judge training for each event over the next two years. The Executive Director has also established a working group to ensure that the development of judge training and any future accreditation systems are rooted in equity and uphold all of the organization's core values.

Manual Revision Working Group Report

This working group has offered feedback regarding initial potential revisions. Executive Director Scott Wunn shared a status update and projected timeline for completion. Once this phase is completed, the process will continue with the Middle School Unified Manual.

Public Forum Debate Pilot Rules

Moved by Huston, seconded by Motter:

"Implement the Public Forum rules as piloted in 2019-2020."

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

The Board has agreed to fully implement the Public Forum rules changes that were piloted in 2019-2020.

BOARD MEMBER RECOGNITION

Timothy Sheaff was recognized for his 12 years of service on the Board from 2006-2014 and 2016-2020.

Moved by Sheaff, seconded by Huston:

"Adjourn."

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

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m. on Saturday. 

QUESTIONS? CONCERNS? IDEAS?

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