

MSDL Board Meeting Minutes

June 1, 2023 at 7:30 pm

ZOOM meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 PM by the president, Amanda Parker

Board Members in attendance

Joyce Albert, Joe Bowden, Josh Cohen, Scott Caron, Lindsay Donovan, Lisa Honeyman, Jim Honeyman, Sheryl Kaczmarek, Janet Novak, Mike Plunkett, Tammie Ruda, Chris Sheldon, PJ Wexler and Peter Zopes. We were joined by Br. Caveat.

1. Welcome to our at-large board members

Amanda welcomed our new board members and began by reminding us that during all meetings we should be conscious of the community standards we voted to adopt at the Annual Meeting last month.

Next year Amanda hopes to have “listening hours” to hear what league coaches (including board members) have on their mind during the season. She wants to be sure we have a way for people to talk about ways we can move the league forward and serve everyone’s needs.

2. New school liaison role

Chris Sheldon has been serving in this role for a long time and is ready to hand it off to one of our new at-large members. The role entails a lot of emails in response to folks who reach out asking for help getting a team launched. He has some templates for information that people often need. After an initial email, he usually follows up with a phone call. If/When they come to a tournament, he makes an effort to find them and have in-person contact. If a debate inclined school contacts Chris, he refers them to Josh, who has also been developing material that might be helpful for new coaches. This role could be held by a few people so that new programs interested in speech and debate will have contacts. Chris is happy to answer questions if people want to explore what it would mean to hold this position.

If someone is interested, they should contact Amanda.

3. Summer work & committees

I. REVISE RULES & REGULATIONS DOCUMENT

(a) Review of Speech Rules - Joyce will head this and Chris offered to help

Look at rules for speech with specific focus on clarity and equity

(b) Review of Debate Rules - Josh will head this and will be assisted by Lindsay

Look at rules for debate with specific focus on clarity and equity

- (c) Joyce, Josh and Joe will then get together to make sure rules and regulations for speech, debate and congress have some consistency. (Joe just re-did the congress rules, so he'll wait until Joyce and Josh are ready to look at everything.)

II. WEBSITE UPDATE

- (a) Once the Rules & Regs document is revised, the website will need to be updated.
- (b) Josh will take a look at debate sections and clean those up
- (c) We should make our new Community Standards statement more central to the website so it is easy to find.
- (d) We need to look at the entire website from an equity perspective and update as needed.
- (e) An overall re-organization may be in order to make things easier to find

Jim reminds us all that Tabroom.com and the MSDL website are not the same thing and new folks may not know that they cannot find MSDL resources and information on Tabroom.

Janet suggested that a note about where to find information (website address) should be on the participation agreement.

- (f) Janet will work on a "quick resource guide" to put on the website.

III. COMMITTEE WORK

- (a) Equity Committee - Scott will lead this committee. Chris will be on this committee and Kaz will help starting at the end of August. Moving into next year we hope to have an equity committee instead of a single MSDL liaison. They will investigate options and brainstorm ideas for how to best support the league as things come up during the year.

Amanda suggests that we send out a google form to all coaches to solicit ideas and ask if anyone is interested in becoming more involved with this committee.

What direction do we want to take in order to provide an equitable/safe space for our students? Do we need to continue with a consultant? Provide training to committee members? If we're going to provide this type of support during tournament time, the committee would work with folks to help in the tournament. In many situations this committee will take on the role of ombudsman with the addition of handling the gray areas that are not defined by the rules. Having a committee in place helps make sure we are handling all situations in a consistent and fair way.

- (b) Impromptu Writing Committee - Amanda has been running it for a while and would love some help.

- (c) Extemp Question Writing Committee - Lisa will continue to head this group and will ask for volunteers to help write questions in the fall.

IV. GRANTS COMMITTEE

The board agreed to make \$1500 available annually in order to fund professional development opportunities for coaches. There will be two application deadlines (a fall and spring cycle) and there are some questions that need to be answered.

- How do we make this known to league coaches?
- What will the application process entail?
- How do we choose which grants get funded?

The initial committee will set the guidelines for how folks apply, how many times they can apply, how much maximum will be allocated to any one grant request, etc. Once the guidelines have been established, a separate committee will need to be formed to evaluate the grant applications and select the recipients.

Jim will start by creating a draft. Tammie will help by proposing some ways to get the word out to coaches. PJ will also help. Scott offered to help if his help is needed. If anyone else would like to help, please contact Jim.

V. ADDITIONAL COMMITTEES

- (a) Chris proposes a committee focused on, "How to improve the student experience." For example, the wheel of names during the awards ceremony was a big hit. Maybe we can brainstorm some more ways to improve the student experience.
- (b) Jim suggests that the participation agreement should be updated. Amanda will work on this.
- (c) Regular Newsletter. Amanda has committed to doing this more frequently in 2023-24. Lindsay & Janet offered to help.
- (d) Debate Paradigm Committee. We encourage all debate judges who are related to MSDL schools make sure that the paradigms that they post online are educational in nature. Kaz will work on creating a document that would give advice to judges about what to/not to put in their paradigms. Josh, Peter & PJ offered to be on that committee, as well. Amanda may also include a note in a fall newsletter asking coaches to review with judges what they are putting into their paradigms (after the committee completes their work.)

4. LD Novice topic

PJ began by filling us in on what happened at the May 25 meeting about LD debate. We have used the "novice" LD topic in the fall. It has been Civil Disobedience in the past, but the NSDA has decided not to use this topic next year.

We need to decide what topic to use at our Novice Festival in October and then encourage other tournaments to use that same topic through November (or perhaps December).

Options include:

- a) The national service topic (if that was the one confirmed by the competition committee.)
- b) Continue with our current novice topic (which predates the NSDA's adoption of it) ,
- c) Go some third way entirely. (Perhaps use the November-December topic for Novices for October tournaments for novices)

After some initial discussion, the board decided to consider these resolutions:

“In the United States voting should be compulsory.” and “Inaction in the face of injustice makes individuals morally culpable.”

After more discussion we decided to survey MSDL LD coaches about which they prefer. The deadline will be June 5 so that coaches have time to meet with their students about the new topic before the school year ends to begin preparing for next fall.

Kaz and PJ will create a brief statement of why each topic would be a good topic to debate to share with coaches before they vote - just in case they have not had time to think about which topic they prefer. Then, Amanda will send a note out to coaches of schools that had LD participants this year and ask them to vote by Monday (June 5) for their preferred topic. (We will accept one vote per school and each school that votes must have had students compete at at least one LD tournament in the 2022-2023 season.)

The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

--Lisa Honeyman

Clerk/Secretary