

MDTA General Membership Meeting – Minutes  
May 4, 2013

PRESENT: DJ Brynteson - Robbinsdale (President-Elect), Cort Sylvester - Rosemount (Past-President), Zach Prax - Chanhassen (Secretary), Pete Nikolai - St. Paul Central, Pam Wycoff - Apple Valley, Dave Pritschett - Brainerd, Shane Stafford - Blake, Amy Cram-Helwich - UDL, Heather Fairbanks - Maple Grove, Tom Fones - SPA, Joseph Miller - Highland Park, Robyn Madson - Forest Lake, Mike Baxter-Kauf - St. Paul Central, Sheila Peterson - Wayzata.

1. Financial Report – We are doing great financially. Financial statement came in for the first quarter, and we are up \$216,000 – the investment gain for the quarter was bigger than the grant that was paid out. Things are good. Balance is \$12,500 (prior to paying out grants). That amount is up to \$10,500 that we would pay out for grants. We will be sitting up about \$6,000 once NCFL, etc. all gets paid back.

2. MDTA Cup Information. Chris will be getting trophies to schools that have earned the Challenge Cups for the 2012-2013 School Year. LD – STA. Public Forum – Blaine. Policy – Minneapolis South. Classic – Eastview. Heather Fairbanks has “volunteered” to coordinate MDTA Cup results next year. The goal is to keep the MDTA Cup results as current as possible during the next school year. Tournament hosts need to be sure to send results as soon as possible at the conclusion of the tournament to the MDTA.

3. Outreach Efforts. Seven schools applied for the MDTA grant this year. The Executive Board will make decisions regarding grants by May 15<sup>th</sup>. A suggestion was raised to have an MDTA representative speak to middle school parents at the last day of the MDAW. Overall, rather than reaching out to schools, we brainstormed ways that we can reach parents who could then make changes within their schools. It might also be good to find a way to help schools recruit coaches.

NEW ACTION ITEM: the MDTA will contact camps regarding ways to reach “non-debaters” to get them involved in debate. This might be something we pull off for THIS year.

NEW ACTION ITEM: Ross or DJ will email all schools to determine hiring needs of coaches.

4. Sharing resources to help other programs. Is there some way we can communicate on how to lobby school districts in order to provide more resources? Ways we can advocate for debate to get more money/financial support? The NFL has many advocacy articles that coaches can use to support debate. Perhaps we can create a clearinghouse that coaches can post articles that work for standard recruitment, letters, etc that all can be used to increase support of debate. Let’s (1) ask other programs what they are doing for recruitment/advertisements, etc, (2) create some documents for new coaches that explain booster club management, fundraising, etc. Perhaps we could add a password-protected section for the MDTA website to drive this initiative.

5. Tamar Kaplan Student of the Year Award – will continue to be an ongoing award that goes to an outstanding senior each year. Pete Nikolai will continue to head this up. Pete has set up an account with the Associated Bank on Snelling Avenue for people to make donations. In October or November, coaches will nominate an outstanding senior in an MSHSL debate event...looking for a letter that explains competitive success, scholarship, academics, and service they do to the debate community or the community at large. A committee of Maya Hanna, Pete Nikolai, Talon Powers, and a representative from an LD, a PF, and a Policy school will meet to determine the Student of the Year Award. Pete is soliciting nominations for persons wishing to serve on the committee. This is a SEPARATE committee from the MDTA due to changes in tax law; since there is a scholarship attached to the award, MDTA’s status as a 501c3 excludes it from being a scholarship granting body. So, it is being outsourced to a separate group to determine the winner. The MDTA will contribute to the scholarship, but will not, as an organization, be the body determining who receives the money. The MDTA will also continue to purchase the trophy.

6. MSHSL State Tournament Judge Voting Procedure. TIMELINE: we are going to solicit judges to be added to the ballot in August. To nominate, a link to the NFL record must be supplied to ensure that students are three years out from high school competition. Voting would start in the beginning of September, with the list provided to the MSHSL in the third week in September. We are also going to implement a date for Nancy Etter to move ahead in contracting procedures...too much time is spent waiting for people to return contracts, etc. without resolution. We will likely make the contract return date November 1<sup>st</sup>. As we put out the list of names, we will attempt to keep names only of available judges on the list.

We should update judge paradigm wiki. And tell people there is a wiki on the MDTA website.

## 7. MSHSL State Tournament Reflection.

A suggestion was made that the “lay judges” we used weren’t “lay judges” – and that perhaps we should not use people who have prior debate experience to judge the tournament. It was discussed whether lay judges should be completely removed from debate, or judges who have SOME prior experience with debate. Ideas were generated about whether lay judges should appear on the strike sheet.

MOTION was made to put PF community judges onto the main strike sheet. Motion PASSES.

ACTION ITEM: We need to make sure we can start earlier with judges that we hire. Us, as a community, need to do a better job to get more judges on the Public Forum list. PF voting was the LEAST voted for out of all other programs.

Discussion was had on conflicts. Agreement was made that spouses should be conflicted against partners’ teams in order to avoid perception of impropriety. This should be any relationship – marriage, domestic partnership, dating, etc. But, this could be a logistical nightmare. We could offer encouragement to ask judges to conflict themselves against potential entries...but if we implement, we must develop a clear brightline standard.

MOTION: We should create a new spouse/domestic partner rule that conflicts spouses from judging affiliated entries. In addition, we will instruct the MSHSL to provide clear instructions to judges to conflict themselves. Passes on 11-1-1.

Also, it should be made a norm that entries appearing in quarterfinals stay for awards presentation after the final round. Exceptions can be made, but there should be announcements that quarterfinalists are expected to stay for the final awards ceremony.

Thoughts were shared regarding disclosure – is a semifinals announcement really necessary? We should have a standard procedure across the board for each division of debate. IE, if one semifinals panel discloses, the other should too. MOTION MADE and MOVED that in POLICY DEBATE results will be disclosed IN THE ROUND at the round’s conclusion instead of at a semifinals presentation. 7-0-4. We will discuss lunch breaks and timing with the MSHSL for next year’s tournament.

8. Novice Case Packets/Evidence Packets. Ideas were shared to make the compilation more organized, and it was agreed that there were too many people that contributed to the project last year that caused the process to be somewhat disorganized. The idea was raised that a \$500 stipend should be created to give to a person who agrees to organize the case limits packet and to provide accountability for the job to be done/establish more consistency. And, perhaps the meeting should continue to be early (perhaps in May) to allow for work to be done during the summer. We should set a date. Shooting for June 1<sup>st</sup>.

## 9. Minnesota Novice LD Topic (putting this in big print because it’s a pretty big deal).

Starting with the 2013-2014 debate season all debate tournaments in September and October will use a MDTA defined topic for Novice LD Debaters:

Resolved: Civil disobedience in a democracy is morally justified.

Varsity and JV debaters will continue to use the NFL September/October topic. This only applies to the Sept/Oct topic. Novice tournaments in November and December will continue to use the Nov/Dec NFL topic.

The intent is that this topic would be used each year for Novice LD students. The MDTA rationale is that a consistent year-to-year topic will allow coaches to better prepare students and to focus on argument development instead of focusing on researching or comprehending a potentially obscure topic selection. This practice has been successfully used in other states with great success. In the months leading up to the topic we will solicit coaches to submit evidence and cases that can be used by the community. Programs would not be limited to using these resources but rather to augment information. Building a deep library of information for all programs to use will help develop Novice debaters.

Additional resources can be found here where this topic/process has previously been used: <http://www.modestnovice.org/>

The Novice LD Proposal was PASSED 11-0-2.

Someone made a sincere non-sarcastic reference about the “explosion of popularity in policy debate”. Cort wanted that mentioned.

10. Calendar discussions. The Jamboree is ON, and will be held at Chanhassen High School once again. Policy will debate all three rounds. JV PF/LD will now also have five rounds of competition, no lecture round 1 anymore. Finally, novices will have the opportunity to debate three rounds. They will be able to watch an observation round, participation in a discussion during round 2, and then debate the last three rounds. Congress will again happen too. Ross will be emailing to fill gaps in the calendar.

11. Spanish debate. Amy is looking to establish policy divisions at a few tournaments that would be conducted in Spanish. This would be CONVERSATIONAL speed...and help is needed to find both competitors and judges interested in using Spanish to debate. Email her if you are interested to help with this endeavor.

Zach Prax  
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Secretary, Minnesota Debate Teachers Association.