

MDTA General Membership Meeting, September 2nd
(Held on Zoom)

Present:

- Cort Sylvester (President)
- Chris McDonald (Past President)
- Des Nieman (President-Elect)
- Zach Prax (Treasurer)
- Katie Scholz (Secretary)
- Erica Baumann
- Peter Gokey
- Claire Sagstuen
- Matthew Davis
- Ron Davis
- "elaverbeck"
- Kathy Dihn
- Raymond
- Tammy Trout McIntyre
- Greg Martinson
- Kendrick Walton
- Becky Chabot
- Shane Stafford
- Thomas McCarthy
- Rachel De Sobrino
- Jake Swede
- Anna Knutson
- Doug Hoverson
- Chyenne Thibodo
- Rachek Baumann
- David Cram Helwich
- Amy Chram Helwich
- Andrew Tichy
- Dan Bordwell
- Hayden Uihlein
- Kathy Martin
- Celisia Stanton
- Nathon Wodarz
- Brian Schilling
- "Casey"
- Andrew Urevig
- DJ Brynteson

Motions made:

1. Proposal to fund Jitsi servers for the season using MDTA funding
PASSED on voice vote – no opposition.

2. Adoption of Novice LD Topic for MDTA Jamboree
PASSED on voice vote – no opposition.
3. Adoption of Novice LD Topic for recommended use at Invitationals
PASSED on voice vote – no opposition
4. Motion to Table “Harassment and Discrimination Policy” until next meeting, form a committee to review / revise statement
PASSED on voice vote – no opposition
5. Proposal for interim Harassment and Discrimination Policy: ***MDTA is committed to adopting a policy against harassment, discrimination, violence and other unjust and anti-inclusive behavior and actions. We, as an organization, are opposed to such behavior and wish to actively eliminate it from ourselves and the debate community.***
PASSED on voice vote – no opposition
6. Mandatory Reporter Training Proposal: ***To support student safety, the MDTA should declare it a best practice for all head and assistant coaches to complete the safe boundaries with students and mandated reporter training offered by the Minnesota Urban Debate League (unless the coach receives training through their school district). A link to this training should be added to the Equity tab on the MDTA website, and the President should send at least two emails to members over the next two months specifically highlighting the training.***
PASSED on voice vote – no opposition
7. Judge Training Proposal: ***To ensure that judges are equitable and empathetic educators, the MDTA will add the following best practice guides for tournament directors to reference and enforce: (a) Best Practices for Judging Debate, a guide for all formats and judges created by the Minnesota Debate Institute based on feedback from student assemblies: (b) LD Judging Guide developed by Rachel de Sobrino. (c) Judge training for Policy Debate***
PASSED on voice vote – no opposition
8. Tech Micro Grant Proposal (edited – make the amount a total of \$3K, limit to \$250-\$500 / school)
PASSED on voice vote – no opposition
9. Proposal to Consider adding to Jamboree
PASSED with recorded opposition
10. Proposal to Consider adding training to JV/N State
PASSED with recorded opposition
11. Proposal to pass Ombuds Proposal

If you are interested in...

1. Helping draft the Harassment and Discrimination Policy – **REACH OUT TO CORT**
2. Helping outline the procedure / job description for the Equity Board Member Position – **REACH OUT TO DES**

Agenda / Discussion

1. Funds Available (Zach)

- \$11K in bank, but will need \$3-4K available for other grants / programs

- (Cort) will assume we will get a distribution next year of ~ \$8500-9200 next February / Mar

2. Policy Novice Case Limits Report (Dave / Jake)

principles: students will have less access to coaches, only ended up about ½ of what it was last year; includes aff that defunds the police. (sorry, I missed the neg list)

rationale: aligned with ongoing controversies – give students the option to avoid volatile discussions

goal is to build novice to open novice to rookie. Should allow students to move through novice quickly

not ready to go yet, need to get it to the 9th grade level. Want it to be ready on Labor Day

3. Local Tournament Calendar – confirm dates

Current copy is in the folder. Classic tournament dates have been added

Currently ALL tournaments scheduled are planned to be online as far as we know.

Sections / State decisions not made yet – if the decision is that they have to be online, we will be asked to make online work. MSHSL will rely heavily on us to make state-level debate happen. Likely on same platform that we do the rest of the season.

4. Online Tournament issues

a. local Jitsi server status

(DJ) NSDA is using Jitsi (open source app) – NSDA planning on charging \$6/room

hope is that **on September 10**, we will run some sort of fake tournament, need to determine the number of rooms that we need to handle. We think we can run the servers for \$100-200/month for ALL tournaments. Using NSDA, it should be \$600/tournament. But we need to make sure that there are enough servers to handle the capacity.

Intended to be small-size. Congress will test limit (probably need to get to 300 rooms)

a. **proposal to fund (Cort)** – this is EXACTLY what the MDTA is for. Assuming it passes the test, recommend that we fund it. Des moves / Chris seconds

VOICE VOTE: No opposition, this passes.

b. **training, familiarization & documentation**

Will need some guidance / training

intent is to work with DJ to put together training materials.

(Chyenne) – thought to include ‘next week’s coaches’ in the running of ‘this week’s tournament’

(Des) – thoughts about Fees – seeing online fees are really high around the country.

Won’t have concessions to help raise money. Cort will be posting tournament on tabroom soon – intention is to charge no more than \$15/slot for PF/LD/CX, and \$5/slot for Congress. Expenses are limited to awards

(Jill / Chyenne) – what are plans around trophies? What should the community norm be? Cort wants to give a physical award, but distribution is a big question. Budgeting is for physical awards / same awards cost.

(Chris) – for JV/N state, will have nice awards. Team fee will go away, but other fees will stay the same.

(Rachel) – will give awards so that they can be mailed – physical awards are helpful for promoting Debate

(Shane) – certificates are easy.

(Jill) – what if we all purchased general debate medals and coach just distributes.
(Doug) – newer programs benefit from recognition for support. Ron agrees – instant award, everyone gets the same thing, etc.

c. other online issues

(Jill) – would like to put Duluth back on the calendar, but need help with tabbing (Katie volunteers herself, DJ and Ross)

5. MSHSL issues

In short... MSHSL is focused on Fall sports / financial challenges. Thrilled to hear that we can run tournaments

a. State / Section tournament (online / in person)

b. judge selection

planning to have the same selection process based on conversations with Amy about league's needs.

challenges regarding moving to new judge registration platform... will need to work through those issues with Amy

c. debate advisory committee meeting

not been scheduled yet, typically is in mid-late September... may be later than that. rule proposal changes will be discussed.

(any proposals for debate advisory committee? It doesn't NEED to be through MDTA)

6. Communications update

Have been some things added to website

New equity tab

working to update e-mail lists. ***If you haven't been getting Des's e-mails, E-MAIL HER TO GET IT UPDATED!***

7. Novice LD first topic proposals

ad hoc group was formed to adopt alternative Minnesota LD topic.

a. Recommendation (Doug Hoverson)

outcome: instead of waiting for NSDA to change topic, MN would offer an alternative topic. Heritage of 1995 alternative topic

List of 11 potential topics created, narrowed down to 2, "econ dev" and "nukes" – ultimately a clear vote for eliminating nuclear weapons

b. Proposed adoption of Novice LD Topic for MDTA Jamboree

(Chyenne moved / seconded)

A packet is available on MDAT website right now.

Not aware of process

c. Proposed adoption of Novice LD Topic for recommended use at Invitationals

8. Discrimination and Harassment Policy Proposal

Was on Cort's plate to draft this. Several models that were more extensive. This proposal is a shorter statement.

(Becky) first two sentences are not active enough.

(Andrew) second Becky's analysis. (Des agrees in Chat as well)

(Raymond) open up a doc and provide comments / voting on at another item.

(Becky) makes sense to send this to a group for review.

(Chris) Table it to form a group – NEEDS to include Meg / Joe to get legal approval.

(Katie motioned, Des seconded)

Cort will manage – **Anyone interested in providing input should contact Cort**

(Matt) Could adopt an interim resolution expressing commitment to develop policy? It is the policy of the MDTA to eliminate / not tolerate.

(Des – motion to adopt interim, seconded by Pete)

(Anna) 'violence' is a difficult term.

((Katie notes LOTS of good discussion in the chat))

9. **Constitutional Amendment Proposal: create Equity Officer Position**

INFORMATION ITEM ONLY for tonight. It has to be circulated to membership more than TWO WEEKS ahead of the vote. Actual text of amendment was not circulated in time.

Can have this serve as reading of amendment to enable a vote to take place at the spring meeting.

Des proposed: add an Equity Officer Position to the Board. Adds one additional member to focus on Equity. This person would help drive that discussion on the board.

Intent is NOT to remove a board member, but to add one.

Would be an Elected Position – need to ELECT a new president-elect BEFORE 2021 state tournament.

((Can adopt by 2/3 present at a meeting; or by 75% of MEMBERS in an online election))

– can either vote at the SPRING meeting. OR we can vote online in two weeks.

(Questions about ensuring that the elected representative is actually representative.)

Do need to have a final wording on position / process 2 weeks before a vote

Two decisions tonight: (1) do we vote on the proposal - is the amendment ready to proceed; (2) what form of vote would it proceed to.

REMOVING FROM VOTE, DES will revisit and Cort will wait for a revised submission. ANYONE with feedback should reach out to Des. Will circulate and decide on the voting format.

10. **Equity Task Force Proposals**

(Andrew) Looking to change the community view / treatment of equity. Want MN debate to address racist / oppressive space. The tournaments are the institution causing the harm. Many have made strides toward Equity, but we still struggle to keep those people in debate. These are the first set of proposals to pro-actively address the concerns driving changing culture / resources. Want to see time / money going to issues of injustice / equity. Want to ensure that we teach everyone how to debate in ways that are ethical / responsible.

a. Mandated Reporter Training

recommending as a best practice

UDL has mandated for years (6-7) – board member has done this as a volunteer. Will be recorded, will go on equity committee tab

((Sorry, Katie missed discussion. Zoom is finicky))

Motion made / seconded

b. Judge Training

recommending as a best practice

ACTION: put these on the website, make them available

(Amy): we have SO MANY online resources available now – we can incorporate a lot of this training through recording.

(Chris) – why is this a tournament responsibility instead of with coaches
(questions about whether this should be a school requirement or a tournament requirement)

(questions about reminding alumni judges to be nice to kiddos)

c. Tech Micro Grants

Pool of funds between \$3-6K for microgrants to teams.

Happy to work this proposal through more to make it easier to the board.

Tech ideas: headsets, wifi hotspots

Chris – each team will have some students that have this need. The proposed funding likely won't cover what is needed by students. We cannot give directly to the students. idea is to give that money to teams that need it.

Chris – might be better to look for a grant from an agency and then provide headsets / hotspots (e.g. go to T-mobile / Sprint to get them)

Becky – have we ever looked for grants to support MDTA?

Cort – that is how our foundation came about.

Des – could we bulk purchase?

Cort – more comfortable giving a grant to a school so they can determine how it's used; don't want to have MDTA responsible for devices

Chris's proposal: We have about 3K in the allocation that we would use for school grants. Provide \$250 grants for schools for hot spots / head sets, allocate for tech (Becky seconds)

(Jill) – there is a LOT of state money going around for hot spots / laptops. Even affluent communities has issues with internet.

Discussion re: amending to \$500

d. Equity / Justice Training Spaces at MDTA Tournaments

cultural / organizational change

(Amy) would like to set aside time at MDTA tournaments (bookends to the season) – start the season with a student / alumni panel talking about mutual respect and understanding / microaggressions in debate / sexism / what are positive things that we want to be talking about during the season. Opportunity to set the tone for the year, get students thinking about the school year / topic area from a place of mutual regard. Devoting time to discussing this as a community thank

JV/N state is the only tournament that everyone attends in the state.

Pete – proposal to vote on each tournament separately.

Cort – would vote to implement for next year.

Jake – wouldn't be too hard to add to Policy. Could add it to first round time period. (Discussion about details and logistics – who will run breakout rooms / who are we paying and for what, etc.)

Split the decision into two votes – vote at Jamboree and at JV/N state separately.

Questions about setting a precedent for future years – how will we ensure that this can logistically happen in the future.

e. Further Training

additional training for coaches / others in our community

Cort decrees that the MDTA will support more proposals in the future!

11. Tournament Ombuds Panel Proposal

Total estimated cost: \$2100-2300

Will be seeing additional BIPOC representation, reaching out to
LOTS of discussion back and forth – still lots of concerns about

12. Other Business

(From Katie in Chat because Zoom hates me): As a note from Congress coaches: many of us do not want to have novices separated out from JV/V students at tournaments. Good congress requires a presiding officer who knows what they are doing to run the session (additionally, my novices won't write speeches once they learn how to PO. Can't tell you why, they just don't). We recommend that, if you want to split your tournament, that you split it N/JV and V instead. My rule for my team, for example, would be that my 2nd year students are in the N/JV pool. Obviously it's up to coaches. But DJ and I are recommending that for the Jamboree, and we would love to see that split.

@ East Ridge, I'm going to recommend that split and give an Emergency Scenario to the Varsity chamber for super session

My thoughts on Ombuds - I was initially super skeptical, but I REALLY like the training that we've been doing so far. It's been eye-opening for me (and I would love, for example, to see the IAT (implicit association test) recommended for all coaches and judges.

13. Adjourn