

These are the rough notes from the Spring 2017 business meeting of the Minnesota Collegiate Forensics Association meeting, as written by Joe Kennedy (Concordia College). Please feel free to add comments to make sure these are complete and correct.

Saturday (2/18/17) lunch meeting included representation from: Carleton College, St. Olaf College, the University of Minnesota, Minnesota State University - Mankato, Bethel University, Bethany Lutheran College, St. Cloud State University, Southwest Minnesota State University, Concordia College, and Gustavus Adolphus College.

Online discussion space

The MCFA has an online discussion space! To participate, navigate to <http://forensics.cord.edu>. Log in (in the upper right corner), and if you don't have an account already, click on the

Create new account

button. You will need to access your email to complete the registration process. In the category, "Resources for Collegiate Coaches," you'll find an [MCFA State Conversation Space](#). Participate!

Pronouncing Student Names Correctly at Awards

Coaches: please use the pronunciation option in SpeechWire to help award announcers get your students' names correct! It's under Team Roster when you log in; you can click on a student name to enter a pronunciation key.

Location of MCFA State Championship tournaments

It was agreed that the **2018 State Tournament** will be hosted by St. Cloud State University. Thank you, Scott Wells, for agreeing to host. Members please note that there will be sustained and insistent messaging from the Committee to secure a broad and deep judging pool - be ready to contact your alumni!

Thank you to Southwest Minnesota State University, which has volunteered to host the **2019 State Tournament!** Ben Walker and Julie Walker will be discussing judge needs for this tournament at a later date.

Student-run programs are encouraged to volunteer as host sites if they so desire. The Committee will provide assistance, including a timeline of necessary steps.

Events at the MCFA State Championship

It was agreed that Parliamentary Debate and Individual Events should continue to be offered on the **same weekend** as each other. Some comments regarding this:

- Having only one tournament saves money
- Allowing cross-entry is very important
- Consideration of reducing the “gap” between Parli rounds is needed
- Splitting the tournaments would make locating judges harder.

The membership agreed that there will be **no experimental event** next year. Per the By Laws of the Association, this also means there will be no experimental event at the state tournament in 2019, either.

Logistical Considerations of the State Tournament

State Tournament Schedule Publication

It was agreed that the tournament schedule (including registration and other deadlines) shall be **decided upon at the fall meeting of the MCFA** and shall be published in the subsequent week.

- Consideration of the financial burdens imposed by various schedule options is necessary
- A consensus appeared to emerge that the entry deadline for the tournament should be at least 7 days before the tournament, with add/drop fees waived for student-run programs as long as changes were made in a timely manner. This will aid the host school and the Committee in determining the number of hired judges who must be secured.

Banquet and Senior Send-off

Conversations regarding the purpose of the banquet, the logistics and cost of the banquet, and the most appropriate way to recognize graduating students occurred. The following points were discussed / raised:

- The banquet’s purpose is to afford people a chance to gather in community
- The banquet might be better replaced by an opportunity for students to mingle while coaches attend the business meeting
- The banquet reminds us that forensics about more than competition
- The speaker could speak before awards
- Many members felt that the purpose of the banquet could be met with a light food offering where people had a chance to move around the room

Specific scheduling considerations

- Avoiding late nights should be a strong consideration
- A mingle / Committee meeting time could be scheduled on Friday, followed by 2 Parliamentary debate rounds

Parliamentary Debate specific notes

- The MCFA should decide (by September 2017 at the latest) whether or not to allow Internet access during the 15-minute preparation period.
- Lag-pairing could be considered for rounds 3 and 4

Individual Event specific issue: section balancing

Overview: When equally-sized sections cannot be created in an event, students will compete in sections with one fewer or one more competitor than in another section. This has implications on three competitive considerations:

- Competitor advancement to the final round
- Individual Sweepstakes award placement
- Team Sweepstakes award placement

Current practice:

- Speechwire is used to randomly assign students to sections.
- All ranks are adjusted so that no student may receive a ranking lower than the number of competitors in the smallest section(s) of a round.
- Judges may tie speaker points.

Observations:

- Some students wind up competing, in all three rounds, in the smallest-possible section, while other students wind up competing, in all three rounds, in the largest-possible section.
- The impact on a student's advancement to finals is felt to be minimal, but
 - More data is needed to confirm this, and
 - If even one student is disadvantaged for advancement, and the cause of this disadvantage can be corrected, it should (both a moral imperative and a call to action) be corrected.
- The impact on a student's placement in Individual Sweepstakes competition is more than minimal.

Next Steps: The Committee shall gather data and determine what steps can be taken to mitigate the competitive impact of unequal section sizes in preliminary rounds of individual events. Examining z-scores, in particular, is an option to consider.

Issues that MUST be decided by the end of the 2017 tournament

Executive Committee membership

The 2018 Executive Committee shall include Phil Voight (past host) and Scott Wells (current host). **Two other members and an Executive Secretary** must be determined by the membership.

UPDATE from Sunday meeting: Jon Loging shall continue as Executive Secretary, per the Constitution (it's a 2-year term). Julie Walker was nominated and seconded to be on the committee, as was Joe Kennedy. After a long silence, a move was made to close nominations. Thus, next year's executive committee shall consist of:

Executive Secretary: Jon Loging, Bethany Lutheran College

Host: Scott Wells, St. Cloud State University

Phil Voight, Gustavus Adolphus College

Julie Walker, Southwest Minnesota State University

Issues to be discussed and possibly determined Sunday

- Status of the treasury
- Videotape permission forms
- All-state proposal
- Event learning standards
- Member outreach

Sunday (2/19/17) lunch meeting included representation from: Carleton College, the University of Minnesota, Minnesota State University - Mankato, Bethel University, Bethany Lutheran College, St. Cloud State University, Southwest Minnesota State University, Concordia College, and Gustavus Adolphus College.

Status of the treasury

Jon reported that we entered the state tournament with \$740 and estimates we will exit the tournament with \$87.

- We need to look at reducing trophy costs
 - An *ad hoc* committee, headed by Ben Walker and including Brian Kunz, Jon Loging, and Scott Wells, will investigate trophy options and costs and report to the membership at the Fall MCFA meeting (to be held at CTAM in September). *If you have suggestions and/or ideas, please email them to Ben Walker **and** post them to the MCFA Discussion Group.*
- Schools are requested to find volunteer judges for the State tournament. Contact alumni, friends of forensics, professors who want to see great stuff! The committee and host will contact local leaders, especially for OO, to find volunteer judges.
- If schools can afford to donate money to the MCFA, Jon will bill you for an annual membership fee.

Videotape permission forms

MCFA would like to have video records of competition rounds for research and teaching purposes. This would occur only if the host school had a non-labor intensive way to create such records. The committee has been tasked to research legal implications of such recordings, including the length of time for which recordings could be kept, and the appropriate wording of student and judge permission forms.

All-state proposal

There was much discussion concerning the proposal. Questions arose regarding the best way to balance the goal of recognizing students for a holistic greatness involving forensics, the desire to not make this a competitive award, and the financial and logistical issues. A continuing discussion is encouraged, with a vote on the proposal to take place at the Fall MCFA meeting.

Event learning standards

Again, there was much discussion. Continuing discussion is encouraged; the membership shall vote at the Fall MCFA meeting whether or not to adopt learning standards, how to phrase them,

Member outreach