

**Agenda for TFA Executive Council Retreat**  
**Houston, Texas**  
**June 26-28, 2015**

- **MINUTES – Taken by incoming Secretary, Wendi Brandenburg (bolded/highlighted)**
- **CALL TO ORDER at 2:15pm on Friday, 6/26/15**
- **EC MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Gay Hollis, President; Perry Beard, Vice President; Yolanda Silva, Region 5 Rep; John Mast, Region 3 Rep; Kirsten Nash, Past President; Debbie Waddell, Region 4 Rep; Wendi Brandenburg, Secretary; (Rhonda Smith, Region 2 Rep - flight arrived later)
- **EC MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE:** Grant Hahn, IQT Coordinator; Robert Shepard, Archivist; Mellessa Denney, Region 1 Rep; Jason Warren, Treasurer (discussion by text as needed)
- **Yellow** highlights = Friday discussion items
- **Blue** = Saturday discussion items
- **CALL TO ORDER at 10:03am on Saturday, 6/27/15**

Items for discussion (in no particular order):

**--State 2016**

- **Hendrickson High School will have a new Principal this year, who is on board.**
- **Thurs/Friday will be half-days (out at 1:00pm)**
- **We might have Friday access all day, as well.**
- **Groups on campus may serve as volunteers**
- **143 rooms on campus, MS has approx. 50 rooms (share the same parking lot)**
- **Access to elementary school only if needed**
- **Speech Booster Club will be there to help, as well**
- **Golf Cart donation is a possibility?**
- **Tim Cook has procured Security for the tournament**
- **Awards will be at the Round Rock Performing Arts Center (they are not charging for rental, staff or security)**
- **Photographers from last year's State to return with plaques**
- **TFA State Champions – group photographs to be taken following awards ceremony**

- PAC has extra room there for Policy Debate to have finals, as well as rooms for other Final Rounds, if needed
- EC will have use of the Dressing Rooms to prepare for awards ceremony
- Joe Uhler – setting up Austin hotel blocks (less than 5.5 miles), but may be a bit more expensive (\$120-150/night).
- **BOOK ROOMS EARLY!!!** Other events taking place in Austin
- Dates are MARCH 10-12, 2015, due to state testing. It will fall during some districts' Spring Breaks, so prepare as needed.
- Shirts are being prepared for sale.
- **Budgeting**
  - Tournament Host expenses
  - This year, use the TFA expense card for expenses since the Host is also an EC member (Kirsten Nash)
  - **Motion that we allocate up to 12,000 for State expenses, Perry seconded, VOTE is 7-0 to approve charges for State.**
  - School districts may opt to pay additional expenses (janitors, donations, etc.) outside of this amount.
- Motion from Jason Warren via phone – to cut the School Fee going to the Host, or the 12,000 allocation for school costs
  - **Second from Gay – VOTE is 0-7 not to accept this motion. Schools will continue to receive 12,000 as well as School Fee amount to be used at the school's discretion.**
  - **Discussion:** This has been inconsistent over the years, some schools have gotten a bonus, some have spent all of it.
  - Amounts have also varied from 10,000-16,000 in costs, schools sometimes have to return to the EC for more, based on more expense, etc. in different areas.
  - The School Fee is a bonus for hosting. Without incentive to host, schools will not step up to host.
  - Wendi – should we change the wording of “School Fee” to include the actual budget, and the Honorarium is separate? EC states not to change this.

**--Committee assignments --**

- Congressional Debate needs a member for Wil Pippin
- Term limitations for Committee Members? Discussion. Currently, President appoints, that is the limit.
  - Right now, Committee Appointments are by each incoming TFA President.

- Historically, Presidents have simply filled in vacancies.
- Perry suggested taking term limit idea to the Body.
- Retiring members – Glenda, Patti
- Which committees meet, how often?
- DECISION – President and EC Region Reps filled in Committee vacancies today, results are posted on the WEBSITE (<http://txfa.weebly.com/committees.html>).
- There are a few open spots to be confirmed ASAP by Region Reps.
- **TOURNAMENT NORMS REVISITED** – discussion on what the next steps are from here.
  - Understanding that these are NORMS, not rules, but some regions/coaches felt they would be pressured to fulfill them, which may be why they didn't pass.
  - Understanding that these are trying to get tournaments more streamlined, and tournaments planning otherwise would post in their JOT invite.
  - Gay – A “Tournament Norms 2.0?”
  - Should the Committee get back together and revise the document with less specifics?
  - Kirsten – should the EC take the document and revise it? Then present it back to the Body in October.
  - **DECISION – this EC will take the document and revise it, to be presented to the Body in October.**
  - Specific Norms – Hiring Judges
    - There is a rule that you must use the Judge Fees you collect on hiring Judges, are people following that?
    - This needs to be enforced more.
    - Some people actually spend more than they take in on Judges.
    - EC Power to review protests – protests must include rules from the TFA constitution the tournament is breaking
    - Tournaments should NOT change their rules originally posted on their JOT invite to meet a protest.
  - **MOTION – to advance the revised Tournament Norms document to be voted upon during Convention in October.**
  - Perry seconded – **VOTE 7-0 to present the Tournament Norms revisions to the Body at Convention.**

- **FINANCE DISCUSSION**
  - A Treasurer's Report should be available more often, monthly summary of basic activity.
  - Chair of Finance Committee could also have access to it, as well as the TFA Body.
  - Regions Bank – some issues getting Officer name changes to take effect, getting expense cards sent to right people, etc.
  - Should we change banks who communicate better, with lower fees?
- **ELECTIONS IN OCTOBER**
  - Treasurer, President, Regions 2, 4

#### --Calendar changes

- Changes for tournaments must be made by August through Region Reps, otherwise they must go to the Body for approval in October, per the TFA constitution.
- Regular tournaments who do not wish to be sanctioned by the TFA (ex. Practice tournaments) do not have to submit approval.
- EC went through the IQT Calendar to live edit dates changes, coach names, corrections, etc. through Google Sheets.
- New calendar posted on website.

#### --Website

- Brent Hinkle maintains control of the Tournament and IQT page of our Website for JOT compatibility; Wendi cannot make changes to that page.
- Region Reps will update the current Tournament Calendar with Coach names and any date changes that have been submitted.
- Teams/programs are encouraged to send Wendi PHOTOS of charitable work to post on a page on the Website. They can send these photos on an ongoing basis. At the State Tournament during the slide show, photos can also be shown/celebrated.
- Website needs to have a link to an "Officer Duties" manual.
- New TFA State deadlines for 2016 have been updated on the TFA State page of our Website.
- Links have been added for the Donation page, Tournament Norms link will be added after approval.

## --Convention panels

- Proposed panels – Kirsten uploaded to Google Docs for EC Review. There is a good mix of Interp, Debate, as well as beginning and experienced Coaches, and World Schools.
- Discussion about guest speakers/presenters included some ideas for experts in different communication fields.
- Kirsten will be in charge of coordinating guest speakers for this year's Convention in DFW.
- **Motion made & seconded to approve a \$5,000.00 budget for bringing in guests (travel, room and board, meals, etc.). Passes 6-0.**

## --Student Code of Conduct

- Does the EC want to compile a list of expected behavior by students at tournaments? Most feel in agreement this is needed.
- There was an issue at State with sexual harassment charges, without a TFA Code to which to refer.
- There is nothing in the TFA constitution that designates how to handle discipline issues that may come up at tournaments, State, etc.
- Proposal that the Chair of the Professional Relations Committee will serve to oversee enforcement of consequences as a result of Code violations.
- **Discussed more on Saturday**
- Reference – sample from *CFISD Student Code of Conduct, UIL Athletic Code of Conduct*
- Reason for the Code
- General TFA guidelines for behavior
  - Safety
  - Behavior/Conduct at Tournaments
    - Vandalizing
    - Sexual Harassment
    - Bullying/hazing (includes social media cyber-bullying)
    - Social Media
    - Drugs/Alcohol
  - Disciplinary Actions
  - Violations
  - Electronic device usage
  - Grade eligibility (districts mandate “No Pass, No Play”)
  - Ethical use of information
  - Basis for removal from a tournament or program

- How to handle Agreement of the Code? By virtue of membership, also added to JOT auto-pages.
- EC agrees there will be a Code.
- Consequences – suggestions: Tournament Directors will decide based on protests of violations. Can include ejection from a tournament, from the TFA season, or removal of qualification points.
- Refer also to NSDA Code of Ethics, and NDT Code, etc.
- Legal consultation may be needed to handle legality of the document.
- There are several concerns about how much/how little to include in the document.
- Perry moves to refer this to a regionally-balanced Ad Hoc committee, who will meet face-to-face (electronic meeting is fine). 2015 Convention we will propose this committee and take volunteers.
- Document is DUE by the 2016 Convention. VOTE – 7-0 to pass creation of this document by the Ad Hoc Committee for review.

#### **--Donation/Sponsorship schedule**

- Kirsten posted Donor Contracts and Sponsor Level documents for our review in our Dropbox.
- Issue is that these documents just need to be revised/updated with current information and correct wording.
- Some vendors who have wanted to sponsor us needed forms or levels of sponsorship, so these documents were created.
- \$10,000 state-level sponsorship might be for events, but not for the entire awards ceremony, etc. (similar to NSDA awards)
- “Friend” level of organization is awarded to the sponsor for one year, lifetime “friend” for more donation amounts, etc.
- Kirsten – problem is that these levels have a vote, so do we need to create a “Donor” level membership?
- Plaques will be given as thank you to donors \$1,000 or more. Other items for gifts include t-shirts and tech tags, per the donation form, which will be posted on the Website.
- The Website should include logos of sponsors/donors on their own page.
- Motion to accept the Donor and Sponsor forms as edited, and links to be posted on the Website - accepted 7-0 VOTE.

## --Scholarship format

- Some suggestions came from the Body about changing the format (now it lists “Four Scholarships” for applied scholarships). Suggestion is that the \$500 scholarship is insufficient, so to increase amount, or fewer with more money.
- Parameters need to be set for “financial need” scholarships to be awarded.
- Rhonda – currently, different people look for different things, ex. Financial need, circumstance, participation in TFA, etc. so it is too vague.
- Kirsten – historically, we have not been able to collect tax information, so there needs to be a rubric/criterion for deciding awards. Current ranking form is a good base.
- Treasurer needs to give a report on how much is in the fund before we can decide this.
- Perry moved to **TABLE** this discussion until we receive this report from Jason Warren (not in attendance in person).
- **Report – We gave 15,000 last year (23 individual \$500 (TFA winners), 4 @\$1,000 (those who applied)) .**
- **Gay moves to make no changes to the current report for the coming year, Rhonda seconds. VOTE is 7-0 .**

## --Point schedule changes

- Wendi brought up hosting State at a central, permanent location, like a university, and allowing more students to attend, allow schools to budget, etc. to keep from searching for hosts each year, etc., as well as allowing more students to attend the State Tournament.
- EC Discussion followed: Reducing points, but limiting cross-entries? Leg system?
- John explained a JV/Novice tournament system with a separate State. Idea sounded good, but with UIL having separate weekends, it’s too difficult to find a weekend, find budgeting, etc.
- Leg system, as NIETOC? Won’t reduce tournament size or make much difference from current system.
- Discussion about a Middle School State Tournament? Or MS TOC? To encourage MS programs. Would require too many rooms, more judges, etc. Require separation of students, budgeting for MS, a separate EC, etc.
- What about a separate MS membership (TJFA)?

- Wendi proposed moving points back to 10, if numbers were not making a difference at 12 anyway, making coaches go more often. Discussion was that moving back now would inflate numbers/rooms.
- Proposal to move IEs to 10, keep Debate at 12, but discussion was it is already “easier” to qualify in IEs to bring more to State.
- Kirsten proposed eliminating “Free” events, unless there might be a new member school, low budget schools, etc.
- Discussion – Free events really help small/new schools & coaches come to State in those events. Also a proposal made by Wendi to introduce Extemp Debate as an alternative to Impromptu every other year. Some support for this idea, will submit as amendment.
- EC decides that points are fine at 12, will not move that number for this year. Kirsten moved to accept, Debbie seconded. Vote is 6-0 to remain at 12 points to qualify for TFA State.
- John Mast proposed that we find a way to make the State Tournament smaller, due to difficulty of finding locations large enough to host each year.

#### --POI/Informative at State

- Jason Warren would like to know if we would also want to pilot the new NSDA events, Expository and/or POI, at the State Tournament.
- No one wanted to add rooms, but proposed that these replace Poetry and Impromptu as consolations.
- Will propose as an EC Amendment (Perry Beard to author), to mirror what will be done at NSDA National Tournament that summer. Moved and seconded, 6-0, passed.

#### --Donation for Dallas child hunger

- This year, it was suggested that in lieu of a Texas Party at Nationals, Gay wanted to use the money to donate to local causes.
- Dallas children dealing with food scarcity. TFA would like to look at donating to local causes.
- \$1,000 to “Hunger Busters” in Dallas ISD, for children whose only meals are at school
- \$1,000 North Texas Food Bank
- Kirsten moved, Debbie seconds



- Discussion – John brings up that this might not be the purpose of our organization? Debbie notes that this does help educate our students on how to be charitable. John states that students need to see effects.
- Kirsten – moving forward, we put donations on members, then we can match the amount, allowing members to be more involved. Should be able to have a party and promote charities. Her motion was
- How are charities chosen? Gay researched and wanted to focus on children and hunger. Worthwhile and motivated organizations for children.
  - Parameters: benefits local community, stable organizations, do the most good, most stable, etc.
  - President should send a letter to the organizations explaining why we are donating.
- Rhonda – students/coaches should be more involved in the charity/donations (volunteering, gathering food goods, etc.) than just giving money.
- Kirsten – programs can send photos of their teams donating time, etc.
- **Vote: 4 to 2 to 1 for donation to both organizations.**
- Rhonda – wanted to make the motion to amend the vote, to allow Hunger Buster only, not just North Texas. Previous motion passed, this was not entertained.
- NOTE: How are charities decided upon? EC/President will talk with the local State Host about needs, organizations, plans, etc. and decide based on need, etc. at that time. State Host will also need to know about extra room(s) needed for a project.
- Teams/programs are encouraged to send Wendi PHOTOS of charitable work to post on a page on the Website. They can send these photos on an ongoing basis. At the State Tournament during the slide show, photos can also be shown/celebrated.
- Issue a **“TFA GIVES BACK” challenge** each year – choose from a list on the website of things Teams can do, photos can be posted and celebrated on the Website and at State.
  - Collecting ties/suits
  - Host a Debate-a-thon
  - Project Graduation
  - Collection of goods/educational supplies, etc.
  - Donations to homeless, women’s shelters, other
  - Raise money for scholarships
  - Teens connect with other teens, writing graduation letters
  - Serving local community
  - Other charitable acts....

### --CX topic selection meeting

- Last year we set aside \$1,000 for Gay to travel to S. Dakota, but she did not go. Travel logistics were not worth it.
- It is accessible this year, Gay would like to attend in New Orleans.
- **Motion made, Wendi seconds, it passes 6-0.**

### --SLC Texas Party

- Kirsten – party is more than just spending money on the kids. End of the day, TFA is about celebrating that they qualified for Nationals, bringing us all together as a state, etc.
- Gay – reason to replace the party was poorly attended last time, donation seemed more important, etc.
- Wendi – Social Media should not be used to question and post controversies about EC decisions, etc. Sending professional emails to ask questions is more appropriate. Members are encouraged to wait for EC discussions and votes, and follow with questions at that point.
- General discussion about merits and parameters of a TFA party. Wendi wanted to set clear standards about how parties are decided, how they are planned, etc.
- Communication is the key to be sure parameters and standards are clear to members.
- Wendi suggested that the “new” EC meet regularly between April, when people take office, and when we meet at Nationals in June.
- **Decision – the “new” EC (everyone who takes office as of April 1 each year) will meet in early May to discuss year-end, summer activities (including, but not limited to, Retreat, Texas Party, etc.), IQT Calendar, website updates and goals/plans for coming year (including charitable project for the coming year). Incoming President will decide the logistics of a potential Texas Party at the National Tournament.**
- Kirsten – suggestion to finish editing and publication of the “Officer Manual.” Secretary and Treasurer descriptions are not complete, as well as the newest office of Media/Social/Website office. Also, President and VP needs to be redone, because VP does not automatically become President any longer.

- **State – new President-elect needs to begin shadowing current President right after Convention election in October, since they will not have the experience of working at State with judges, etc. as in the past.**
- **Salt Lake City TFA Party funds to plan for next summer: Gay moved to budget up to \$6,000 for party logistics. Plans will depend on location, limitations, etc. and will be finalized at the newly proposed annual May “new” EC meeting. Kirsten seconded, VOTE: 7-0 in favor of the budget.**

### **--Other business**

- **ADULT SUPERVISION at tournaments – constitution states that competitors MUST be accompanied by an adult sponsor AT ALL TIMES throughout the entirety of the tournament. Adults cannot drop students off at tournaments, this needs to be enforced more often.**
- **PAYPAL – Treasurer should set up a TFA P.O. Box, as well as an official TFA Paypal account by September 1, 2015.**
  - **PAYPAL payments may include tournament application fees, state tournament entry fees, and donations.**
- **INTER-REGIONAL SWING TOURNAMENT – most EC members agree that this is not the intent of the “Swing” tournament.**
  - **Also complicates precedence for the next year.**
  - **Too expensive for travel for some schools**
  - **Swings in general can be unfair for regions, since there is only one location available that weekend.**
  - **Novice events usually don’t exist**
  - **Entries usually have to be capped**
  - **VOTE is NO for Inter-regional tournaments, there may be an amendment from the Body for further discussion.**
  - **Salado was grandfathered in to Region 3 when area codes changed.**
- **LEGISLATIVE & LOBBYING ISSUES**
  - **Debbie – coaches are leaving/losing jobs because we don’t have a Lobbyist for our programs and courses.**
  - **Questions – Cost? Representation goals? Who would represent us?**
  - **Speech & Debate as Fine Arts credit (music is FA and PE credit for band)**

- **TEKS need to be revised to include Public Forum, Congress, etc. which needs TEA revision.**
- **Superintendents are choosing not to require Prof Comm in their districts, there is a fear that jobs will be lost and programs will suffer without a Lobbyist for our organization.**
- **Contact a Congressman, UIL partnership to advocate, TSCA involvement**
- **DECISION – TABLE as EC discussion here, but send information out to the Body to find a Speech and Debate specific Lobbyist, pay more dues in order to hire a Lobbyist.**
  - **MOTION from Debbie Waddell: Ad Hoc Committee to research/investigate this information (cost, contacts, lobbying services, etc.) to be established at October Convention.**
  - **Perry seconded, VOTE: 7-0 to establish the Ad Hoc committee.**
  
- **MORE TFA INVOLVEMENT**
  - **More positive outlook for TFA**
  - **Giving back program is a good start**
  - **Put extra funds back into our membership to help get new schools on board (Rhonda)**
  - **“Adopt a School”**
  - **Provide judges in exchange for fees**
  - **We could waive tournament fees and/or membership dues for small or under-funded schools**
  - **Work with Urban Debate League schools**
  - **Concerns – how to find schools/coaches who need a Mentor?**
  - **Discussions about being a “vendor” at some conferences for superintendents, principals, TEA, TASSP, SBOE, etc. to promote Speech & Debate, or including links to those sites on our Website to drive traffic to our Website, targeting Middle Schools, etc.**
  - **Advocacy page on the Website for benefits, statistics, etc.**
  - **MOTION by John Mast for a 1-year free school dues (“institutional,” not individual membership that can be transferred if Coach leaves to a more established program) when joining TFA only (TSCA fees not covered). Approach TSCA about waiving their fee later. Renewable up to four year by application each year as reviewed by the TFA EC.**
    - **VOTE – 7-0 in favor of one year free TFA institutional membership dues.**

- **Region Reps could identify new programs, lower income schools, etc.**
  - **Frisco, for example – new school to be “invited” to join TFA for a year to get them in the door? Renewable by application each year by the EC.**
  - **Kirsten called Mellessa Denney, TSCA President, to see if TSCA would also be willing to waive their introductory fees. She will review their by-laws based on our motion.**
  
- **TIME FOR A TFA NAME CHANGE?**
  - **NSDA changed to remove “forensic” from the name and include what we do to be clear to administrators, etc., the TFA Body should have this discussion to consider.**
  - **TSDA?**
  - **Also, when searching for “TFA,” currently the “Teach For America” site pulls up several times.**
  - **Also “TFA” is unclear on t-shirts and other merchandise- not clear that we are a Speech & Debate and communication organization.**
  
- **Wendi: New Superintendent on the Officer Page of the Website? Will remain the same until further notice.**
  
- **Wendi: Monthly meeting times/days for EC**
  - **Continue to use Google Hangouts**
  - **Second Tuesday of each month 8:00pm CST, starting September 8, 2015.**
    - **September 8**
    - **October 13**
    - **November 10**
    - **December 8**
    - **January 12, 2016**
    - **February 9, 2016**
    - **March 8, 2016**
    - **April 12 (new EC takes effect April 1)**
    - **May 10 (this will be the first new EC meeting)**
  - **August 11, 2015 meeting will be email just to verify/finalize the IQT Calendar.**
  
- **Yolanda – semis paneling somehow disappeared from the TFA constitution from some year’s editing, and it needs to be put back in (semis will happen**

unless JOT site specifies ahead of time otherwise). She will write an amendment to put that wording back in.

- **VOTE is 7-0 to return wording of semis judging panels, as well as final round paneling.**
- **FINANCIAL REPORTS – Needed after Retreat for review, Due by Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>. Would like to request that these are available monthly.**

**Perry moved to recess on Friday 6/26/15 at 6:03pm**

**To reconvene at 10:00am on Saturday 6/27/15.**

Thank you to the entire EC for their attendance and contributions in the interest and benefit of our State!

**Kirsten moved to adjourn on Saturday 6/27/15 at 6:49pm**

**EC traveled back home on Sunday 6/28/15. Safe travels!**