

Council of Forensic Organizations Business Meeting, November 14, 2010, 2:00 p.m.
Parc 55 Hotel, San Francisco

Members Present: David Gaer (Laramie County CC, President), Michael Dreher (Bethel University, Secretary, Novice Nationals), Dan Cronn-Mills (Minnesota State-Mankato, AFA), Renea Gernant (Concordia University, NPDA), David Bailey (Boise State University, PKD), Phil Voight (Gustavus Adolphus College, PKD), Brendan Kelly (University of West Florida, NFA), Jeff Pryzbylo (Harper College, Phi Rho Pi), Larry Schnoor (MSU-Mankato, AFA, NFA, Interstate Oratory)

1. COFO Calendar and Website:

- Dave noted that he had heard good comments about the COFO calendar.
- The question was raised about whether or not COFO should also put up tournament results for each tournament.
 - One suggestion was to have PDFs or online forms
 - Michael mentioned that he'd look into this suggestion in terms of how this could take place.
- Michael also noted that Bethel will no longer be able to host the website the way we've done in the past, so we need to look to an alternative provider.
 - How much? Michael responded that it'd be about \$200/year.
 - The suggestion was made to ask various COFO organizations for donations. After some discussion, it was urged for Michael to solicit the organizations for donations.

2. Discussion about the "uber-debate organization"

- Renea mentioned that there is a move by Gordon Stables of the University of Southern California to develop an overall organization consisting of the various debate organizations. The move comes about because of issues related to ethical standards and eligibility. The organization would be something along the lines of the National Debate Association (AFA-NDA), with an executive director and an organizational structure.
- Dan observed that Gordon has discussed this for several years.
- Renea mentioned that Gordon is actually exerting lots of energy about this.
- Phil asked if this is about competitive standards and rules?
- Dan – Not really. It's not meant to overrule the rules of a given organization, but rather, more of a COFO-like function. The example Gordon uses is the AFA eligibility standards – AFA switched without warning, and debate organizations had no voice in the eligibility changes.
- Dave – The thought is that the AFA-NDA executive director would be paid.

3. Phil Voight mentioned some of the general forensics efforts that PKD is trying to implement, as well as offering some observations:

- Strategic planning and partnering with NFL (National Forensic League) such that NFL becomes the high school brand and PKD becomes the college brand.
- Forensics participation nationwide is at pre-World War II levels.

- No organization is really tasked with doing capacity building. NFL graduates 25,000 per year. The goal is to get 7-14% of those students to join PKD and to have PKD chapters on every college campus. Eventually, the goal is to have about 50,000 undergrad members with high school forensics experience at various colleges.
- The idea is that these chapters would be service chapters – while forensics may be a part of what the chapters could do, it's by no means the end-all. That could eventually include such activities as Mock Trial, Model UN, etc.
- PKD will be creating a national membership director and program development position in the coming year.
- PKD will be working on alumni relations as the next phase of strategic planning.
- An international component would be part of PKD's efforts.
- Phil noted the example of Gustavus: 200 of 700 incoming students do forensics; 30 students at first meeting, 7 on squad. What do we do to keep these students involved in communication activities?
- A point system would be set up for students to enter their work. Setup similar to Lambda Pi Eta in that scholarship, service work would be included, along with work done on behalf of the NFL and perhaps international internships.
- The idea is that PKD could help find donor prospects and help raise money without the institution being involved.
- Cost of the database and personnel was estimated at \$30,000/year (\$15,000 for database and \$15,000 for personnel) and an overall total of \$400,000 for the next decade.
- The first set of donation requests was sent to about 7,000 parents.
- A new constitution will be coming out as well.
- PKD's goal – have a \$12-15 million endowment.
- Renea – Our program is an anomaly – we run an undergrad research symposium as service to the university. We get lots of students who don't necessarily attend forensics tournaments.
- Phil – That's the idea – separate the national tournament from everything else PKD does.
- Dave – The website has improved significantly.
- Phil – There will be blast message and social media capability.
- Dan – Similar to the NDA, there are lots of grants out there, but organizations aren't set up for them. The NFL is set up – they have the organization, foundation, etc. Urban debate leagues are able to provide hard data, which help them get money.
- Phil – Agreed. Corporate sponsors want to see NAB audited forms, which costs about \$3,000, along with annual reports. Part of PKD changes are trying to concentrate on changing governance, finding a development person, and more public relations help.
- Dan – Most forensics organizations rely on out of pocket, volunteer people.
- Phil – For me, this has been a full-time job for the past 8 months. We've learned that we need a full-time staff person to handle development. At GAC, we have 4 buildings on campus named for forensics people, but we're having trouble raising money for our endowment.
- Dan asked about assessment issues.

- Phil – The metric will be different. Talking about tenure/promotion for both solo and combined programs [secretary’s note – some of this is already discussed in the IE tenure/promotion standards]. What should the average size program be? There are no comparative metrics, but we’re trying to get that data.
- The point system will be a numeric metric; students will enter data, and then spot checks will be done on the data.
- Phil observed the history of forensics: forensics has some of its origins in student-run literary debating societies. It might not too far in the future where the activity moves back in that direction again.
- Renea – We change the induction ceremony wording... since most aren’t in forensics.
- Phil - Take a look at the new constitution. Provinces – for example – don’t do as much anymore...
- Renea – Get people who say they’ll do forensics, never do. On campus speaking activity.
- Phil – New system will reward. These documents are on the PKD website. The new constitution will be voted upon up/down as an entirety without floor debate.

The meeting was then adjourned by acclamation.

Minutes taken by: Michael Dreher, Bethel University, Secretary, Council of Forensic Organizations.