**American Forensics Association Business Meeting**

**November 19, 2014, 4:00 – 7:00 pm**

**Crystal, Palmer House Hilton**

**Chicago, IL**

Meeting called to order at 4:02 PM p.m. by Mike Janas.

Mike Janas (MJ): First order of business is to nominate Heidi Hamilton to serve as our parliamentarian.

Is there a second?

Second.

All in favor?

I.

[Motion passed].

MJ: The second piece of the 2013 approval is the approval of the 2013 business meeting minutes. A move to adopt them?

So moved.

Second.

All in favor?

I.

[Motion passed].

MJ: That was better. The first agenda item is the report of officers of National Council. Welcome to Chicago. Thanks for coming to the meeting. We had a great discussion today. We continue to ask: why be a member of AFA? A lot of it seems to center on coming to this particular meeting. There was a time when we had control of the [tournament] calendar, the directory provided names of others in the group, or we provided vital information through the newsletter or the journal . All of these things are shifting in value and control. In a world where we don't monopolize information, what can we do? We had a vibrant conversation about what to do and a few new initiatives were discovered.

I would like to introduce our Vice President, Gordon Stables of University of Southern California He is planning next year’s convention.

We are also joined by Tim Mahoney, Vice President of High School Affairs.

I would like to introduce Jim Pratt to offer a report on the state of the union.

Jim Pratt (JP): If Mike is here to tell you why you should be a member, my job is to make sure that you do become a member. We have had good recruitment efforts. We sent out emails to the people whose memberships expired.

* One blip and that is that our institutional memberships (mostly library memberships) are down by $10,000. So, we are down about $10,000 in institutional agency memberships. It is where we get almost all of our library subscriptions. They usually renew when they receive the last journal of the year by next year it will be back on schedule at this time. It is not lost income, but delayed income. If there is anything to worry about, we can do it next year.
* The other information about income is self-explanatory. We get interest on our income at a small rate. If you have any suggestions [on ways to increase that interest] I am certainly willing to entertain them.
* We have a major income item that does increase, that is, the royalties from EBSCO. It [Royalties] is the big item. An exclusive agreement with EBSCO, guarantees us an income of $3500 a quarter; produces an income of [roughly] $14,000 a year. When we do receive a cancellation, the subscription agency always sends a notice that says this institution has cancelled the membership. It’s not a loss of membership, just a delay. Since we signed the agreement with Ebsco, $3,500 a quarter is a guarantee, Every check I receive has been over the $3500 guarantee. The demand for the publications are increasing and we are showing that.]
* Non-income items consist of the money we take in but not income. We are a clearinghouse for dues for other forensics organizations. We subtract a 3% fee to offset the credit card charges. You will see the distribution of the items on the next page.
* When we passed $50,000, we became a major player in the nonprofit category for tax purposes. There was a major burden with paperwork as a result, so I pay an accountant.
* Corporate fees: We are incorporated in the state of Indiana as a nonprofit educational organization and we have to pay an annual fee. We [now] pay $12.26. That went up – that is a shocking increase.
* The $3600 is for my work.
* The telephone [expense] is going down.
* We cut back on printing [expenses]. The cost was mostly for printing ballots for our election. We are talking about doing it [next election] online to cut back on those charges. There are about 35 members that do not have email addresses. I can send ballots to them but we are exploring this. If you have any objections let me or the finance committee know about that. Otherwise, everything I print is out of my computer.
* The “President’s Office” [expense] is the reception. Last year’s [reception] was the most expensive we ever had. It was $ 5300 for that. This year the bill is about $4800. We have nice receptions, so we are going to investigate and increase the amount that we ask for from the affiliate organizations. Larry Schnoor has promised to have some conversations with people.
* Ballots have dropped drastically. We have a few loyal costumers. Most are Catholic high schools.
* [The amount of] $2500 for the NIET and NDT is a traditional expense.
* Argumentation & Advocacy had 3 journals last year, which cost us $10,000. We budget $5,000 for each issue. We are at that level and below it with the most recently published issue.
* $2,000 is the item for the Alta conference. We allot $1,000 every year for support and pay $2,000 every second year.
* $5600 is the amount we are over. We took the amount out of the life member reserve [line 143], which stands now at $19,000 now. It is comfortable cushion as long as we don’t continue to take it out if it.
* Transfers are outside non-income items. It consists of our accounts and CDs and the accounts that we maintain for other organizations.
* Any questions for me?

What is the difference in Internet fees and website maintenance?

JP: Our website maintenance was completed by Peter Reese, he works in IT at my University and designs the [AFA] online directory. He offered to take on the project, fixing the website at $1500. He did a fine job. That should be a one time fee. We pay a fee for hosting and regular maintenance. These include fees to the hosting company and various changes, etc. It is a variable amount; we pay a fixed sum. What we pay for the hosting charges is about the same as we pay for the directory.

Any other questions?

I would like to make a motion on behalf of the financial committee, of which I am presenting, to approve the financial statement.

Is there a second?

Second.

All in favor?

I.

[Motion passed].

JP: To move to the last page, the budget for next year. I have made two adjustments to it. I have reduced projected income by $5,000. I cut back on institutional memberships by $3,000 and the Executive Secretary by $2,000 to balance it out based on the savings on postage and printing. Is there a discussion about that [budget] proposal? If not, I’d like to make a motion to approve.

So approved.

Is there a second?
Second.

All in favor, Say I.

I.

[Motion passed].

JP: Thank you

MJ: Our Phi Rho Pi community college 2-year representative is not here but I was asked to announce that the Phi Rho Pi Nationals will be held in Cleveland, Ohio, April 6-11, 2015.

MJ: Educational Development and Practices Committee Report: The committee was contacted about one issue. We were contacted and asked what is the AFA’s and, more specifically the NIET’s, stance on plagiarism is when it comes to how much a coach can contribute. We may need more specific details to better inform them, but we gave them the [current] rules, and they said “thank you” and we haven’t heard since.

Ben Voth: Finance Committee Report: We primarily talked about Jim’s budget. We recommend using the electronic “eballot” for the upcoming election. We talked about the upcoming conference in Las Vegas will mean we’ll get to pay less for next year’s reception.

Professional Development and Support Committee: There is no official business to report. We have been tasked by the AFA to give the AFA’s Distinguished Service Award. This year we thought of someone we thought was given the award but had not yet received it. We reflected on the ways this person was always there, always helping with the organization and not seeking recognition. He founded the Texas Forensic Association and has run two National Tournaments for the American Forensics Association. He was the National Forensics League National Tournament Director and has directed the NDT National tournament. He came up with Forensics tournament software. Many folks in the community still use the programs and they are free. He has written one of the premier textbooks on competitive debate, but this was one of the most interesting facts: He was induced into the National Federation of High Schools “High School Hall of Fame” for contributions to high school speech and debate activities. He was one of four members not affiliated with sports. This year’s award goes to one of our own AFA past president, Dr. Rich Edwards of Baylor University.

MJ: Publications Committee? Is there a representative who wants to speak?

I have nothing to add.

MJ: I can express my enthusiastic support for the Publications Committee and their ideas. We talked about the state of the journal [*Argumentation & Advocacy*], which is good, nearly caught up and has a plan. The longer it stands behind the more money we lose. The Committee wants us to be listed with DOI numbers as an effort to increase the reputation of the journal. We are also considering whether going to other publishers would help us [in becoming an SJR ranked journal]. The cost of the journal is about $22,000-23,000 a year and we have the journal’s royalties, which leave us about $15,000. The other things roughly cost about $18,000. We still have a structural deficit. One easy solution would be to bring in more income from publishing in the journal, to see if other venues would be lucrative.

MJ: Research committee?

Heidi Hamilton [HH]: We are giving awards; he [Jim Dimock] has the [list of] awards.

MJ: Some awards were determined.

MJ: Nominating committee? Adam [Symonds]? It is not unusual to not have them here.

MJ: We have some charter committees, first the NIET. I’d like to invite Peter Pober to talk about his report.

Peter Pober:

* We had a blast at ASU, 1570 slots; the largest tournament yet. Next year will be held at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon. The NIET Committee has selected the 2016 host, the University of Florida, and [we are indebted to] Kelly Roberts who will host the NIET there for the third time in 2016. In 2017 we will go back to Bradley University.
* Professor M’Liss Hindman [of Tyler Junior College] and Professor Clark Olsen [of Arizona State University] were awarded the 2014 Distinguished Service Award.
* We gave out 4 awards [for the 2014 Outstanding New Coaches] – Mike Chouinard, Florida State University; Daren Epping, Kansas State University; Ian Hopkins of Miami University (OH), and Austin McDonald, Louisiana State University.
* In our report, we have named the officers, the district chairs, anyone who has changed. This is the 20th time that Professor Larry Schnoor served as tournament director [for the national tournament].
* For those of you who do not know; there is indeed an archive produced so they can label it and know what it is. We [the NIET] are alive, well & happy to be here.

MJ: Is anyone here from the NDT committee? Someone want to speak for them?

The tournament was at the Indiana University. This year we will head to the University of Iowa. We discussed potential changes to judge placement and first round qualification process. We do not have additional hosts to announce.

It is difficult to find campuses to accommodate room needs on Friday. We are running into trouble. Many state legislatures want you to have to use your classrooms.

MJ: Any old business? Any new business?

ML Sandoz: GSU [Georgia State University] was planning a hire lecturer/Director of Debate, but money is freed up and it is now a tenure track position.

Karen Morris [KM]: This issue is not new business. It is a concern. Thanks to Jim [Pratt] for sending emails, but it is difficult to get information about the AFA. There is information not on website. I can’t find the information that we need. I am the Secretary of the NIET but a lot of the website is not maintained and is difficult to make sure that our constitution matches our bylaws. They [the AFA constitution/bylaws] are not on the website. Regarding the constitution, we want to approve it, but the instructions are not on the website. You asked, why be a member of the AFA? For some it is for the website but is not be used as such.

MJ: I agree. This is a bit of confusing for who is responsible for what. Who can post things; Gordon and I are committed to err on the side of giving more people permission. You get the newsletter. You can find the by-laws and constitution there but it can be difficult to navigate. And also some updates are way behind. It is not exactly clear who would do it [the postings]. Perhaps it is necessary to increase the responsibility of committee chair, rather than cycling through a central place. I am not sure how to always fix the conundrum. It [job of webmaster] is a rudimentary office. Email me about what information we should have on there. We have sorta a plan in place. But it is a contingent solution if you give permission to many people and there is risk that they don’t start posting.

Gordon Stables [GS]: That is a great question; it is one of the first discussions I had [with the National Council Meeting]. I am in favor of providing more people with permissions, so when information needs announced, individuals can post it. It would be great if when Erika concludes newsletters/minutes, she can post them directly. If I can do anything, I’d like to see it succeed but it will take everyone’s full responsibility. We would not overwhelm any one person.

KM: We are missing some documents/minutes since 2011. Many things are missing since there are gaps. What responsibility can people have to fill in the gaps?

GS: We need whoever has these materials to be responsible, to fill in what they can. Your point is well taken. To have the most current version [of the bylaws/constitution] is most important. Anyone can identify the glitch. Let us know what is missing. It would be nice if we could say in Vegas that every committee has something to add to the website and that there is delegation for posting it. We joke it’s like a restaurant, when it is open and what it has to serve should tell us on the menu. We need to do the same thing.

GS: Couple of notes:

* I want to thank everyone for bearing with me. Thanks to Scott Harris for the smooth transition. I very much appreciate the change to get back into the [leadership of the] AFA.
* [Regarding next year’s NCA in Las Vegas,] hotel rates don’t start with a “2”; also the temperature does not start with a “2.” The costs of room nights are significantly down across the way. We promote attendance from everyone and we will work to coordinate the effort.
* Randy Lake would like me to encourage you to consider submitting to the upcoming Alta Conference [NCA/AFA Conference on Argumentation], [July 30-August 2, 2015]. The theme is “Rediscovering Argument.” The submission deadline is March 2nd, [and you can find more information at] altaconference.org.
* The only other broad item is that I am starting the first charge leading a strategic review of the NDT. I am providing charters in overseeing the NDT the gap between outcomes and stated practices/goals have grown. The NDT is not only [here] to conduct the national championship but to encourage the growth of forensic excellence. Based on the review, I can tell you that this is the greatest moment around the world for debate [education], but there is a steady decline for policy debate: fourteen schools have discontinued policy debat in the last 10 years. At one time, just over 1200 participated in debate. The goal is to come back with input and recommendations on what we should do to go forward and we are happy to have the support of the NIET and to help us work with engaging and expanding forms of debate. If people are wondering whether there is interest in Worlds Debate, it is a resounding yes. By our charter, the AFA has an authority of the NDT. Before we [policy debate] are not a global brand of debate, it is time that we charge the review. We want to collect information from programs, especially from programs that no longer have NDT programs

MJ: Any other new business?

One idea is to think about our [organization’s] educational [value]. We can help create whatever it is that the AFA can bring to forensics practice, [such as] to think about the standards of programs. We should also look into liability [issues], how we drive a van, stuff relevant to people, to define what competent programs look like. [We should try] to get the committees energized and populated. If you went to the meeting feeling lackluster, in the future, [we will work to make sure] this will not be the case.

MJ: Did Jim walk in?

HH: [Research Committee Report] We met this morning. The committee considered the submissions for 3 awards.

* For theOutstanding Dissertation/Thesis Award, there were several fine nominations & I don't have the titles of the dissertations. All 3 were fine examples. which made the discussion difficult. We ultimately decided [to award] Paul Johnson from University of Iowa for his dissertation on conservative tea party rhetoric and the notion of the populace – it was much more complicated than that.
* For The Larry Schnoor Award [for Excellence in Forensics Research], there were several nominations and that award is for forensics pedagogy and research. That award goes to Ben Walker on [his work on] individual events and judge philosophies.
* The third is The Rohrer Award for research. We had a lot of nominations for that award; it seemed like we had quite a few contenders. We had a discussion about the variety of research [conducted] and ultimately that we came to the consensus on the article on presidential debate effects, looking longitudinally at primary/presidential debate and seeking to expand beyond favorability studies and to look at other kinds of research in debate. The authors are asking us to look at primary debates and whether they have greater effects on debate viewer’s evaluations of candidates. The article was written by Mitchell S. McKinney and Benjamin R. Warner and published in *Argumentation & Advocacy*.

MJ: Any other new business?

We have the AFA reception in the Wabash room down the hallway. It is in this building but we need to duck into the building. It is a little sketchy getting there though.

MJ: Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Move to adjourn.

Second.

All in favor?

I.

Meeting adjourned at 4:50 pm.