

## **AFA Proposal: Changing the current process for voting on changes to the bylaws**

**Submitted by Aaron Duncan – University of Nebraska-Lincoln**

**Overview: This proposal would provide member schools the ability to vote directly on proposed changes to the bylaws of the AFA-NST.**

Rationale: One of the central values of the AFA-NST is that everyone deserves a voice and the power to effect change. Previously, direct voting on changes to organizational bylaws and the constitution presented a number of practical and logistical challenges. However, new technology has made it possible for direct voting by member schools in new ways. Other forensics organizations have demonstrated the viability of using SpeechWire to allow schools to vote directly on issues affecting the organization. Allowing schools to directly vote would offer a number of advantages over the current system:

- 1) This process is more democratic than the current representative based process. Schools will all feel like they have a voice in the process.
- 2) District chairs and regional representatives would be relieved of the burden of having to represent the voices of district schools and regions that often have divergent voices and opinions.
- 3) The process is fairer for all schools. Because the sizes of the districts vary greatly, some schools are more represented than others on the AFA-NST Committee. For example, a district with 20 member schools has the same representation on the committee as a district with 5 member schools.
- 4) The process is more transparent and allows all schools to debate and discuss the proposal online and offline.
- 5) The national committee would still retain all of its power and responsibilities related to non-by-law issues such as selecting host for the AFA-NST, oversee various awards, adjudicating rules violations, overseeing the growth of the tournament and activity etc...
- 6) Freeing the national committee of having to consider and vote on all bylaw issues will allow the committee more time to focus on other areas.

Proposal:

Current Bylaw:

XIV. Amendment

The provisions of this document may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the AFA-NST Committee or majority vote at two consecutive meetings of the AFA-NST Committee.

Changed to:

XIV. Amendment

The provisions of this document may be amended by a two-thirds vote of AFA-NST member schools returning ballots and the student vote.

- A. Voting may be done electronically, in person, or by mail. Administration of the vote will be overseen by the Chair of the AFA-NST.
- B. For purposes of voting to changes to the AFA-NST bylaws a “AFA-NST member school” shall be defined as a school that has paid their NST dues prior to the voting deadline.
- C. Each member school shall designate one person to cast their ballot
- D. Any proposal wishing to be placed on the ballot for a member school vote must first be submitted to the AFA-NST Committee for review. The AFA-NST Committee is charged with evaluating the soundness of any proposal.
  - a. For a proposal to be placed on the ballot it must first receive a majority vote of the AFA-NST Committee.
  - b. The AFA-NST Committee’s vote should not be construed as an endorsement for or against the proposal. AFA-NST Committee Members are charged with voting based on if they believe the proposal to be sound enough to be placed on the ballot. Proposals that fail to secure a majority vote shall be provided with feedback and recommendations for improving the soundness of the proposal.
  - c. All proposals provided to the AFA-NST Committee must be voted on by the committee within either one calendar year of the proposal’s submission or two meetings of the AFA-NST Committee, whichever is longer.
- E. AFA-NST schools should have no less than 10 days to vote on all proposals.
- F. In addition to AFA-NST member schools, the two student representatives to the AFA-NST Committee will be allowed one vote each.
- G. In the event of an emergency, the AFA-NST chair may call for a vote by the National Committee to temporarily suspend this voting procedure and allow the committee to make changes to the bylaws. A two-thirds vote by the AFA-NST Committee is required to suspend this voting procedure.
- H. This change to the bylaws shall go into effect on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022.