BCFL Coach Meeting
June 23, 2020, 6 PM
Virtual

28 Attendees:
Steven Sprouse, Aimee Sann, Joe Scheide, Steve Moss, Kelli Midgley, Stan Day, Teresa Needer, Emily Mandile, Michelle Dacey, Peter Susko, Cayman Giordano, Daniel Jacoby, Peter Imhoff, Emily Crews, Teresa Dimka, Jon Bagileo, Charles Donovan, Deborah Hamilton, Michelle Flynn, Hui Jiang, Jody Zepp, Zachary Paradise, Patrick Daniels, Rachel Campbell, Brian Shouse, Patrick Seay, Eloise Valencia, Amber Phelps

1. We began at 6:05 with a welcome from Diocesan Director Steven Sprouse.

2. Assistant Director Reports:

Public Forum—Emily Mandile: This was by far the largest event. There were 72 VPF seeded for Metros, 120 pairs competing at one or more BCFLs, 17 teams in JV.

LD—Cayman Giordano: A smaller event this year. There was a clear delineation of standings. When cums come out coaches may reply privately if errors are suspected. As an aside, the NSDA (not the NCFL) is considering renaming the event.

Policy—Peter Susko: The two tournaments to qualify may have helped bring in more schools. Some out of town tournaments pulled some schools away from BCFL 5 and 6.

Speech—Michelle Dacey: Impromptu was wildly popular and had to be limited due to lack of space at host schools. The two-tournament rule for DUO did not have a huge impact.

Tournament Director—Teresa Needer: Overall the year went well. Host schools filled due to the number of participants.

Student Congress—Joe Scheide: 46 students from 8 schools competed, which was fewer than last year. The rule change was successful in that there was not a scramble to have sufficient legislation. The only issue was that in Saturday sessions, there was much higher participation in the morning session than in the afternoon one.

Treasurer/Secretary—Aimee Sann: The budget was shared with everyone who attended. We had 44 member schools this year. We expect to purchase a much-needed laptop over the summer for Tournament Director Teresa Needer. Budget item adjustments: 1. We expect to utilize free tournament software. 2. Website expense should be entered.

There were several amendments to the By Laws and Constitution approved by vote in the August meeting. These they will be updated, sent by email to all coaches, and posted on our website.

3. Elections: We nominated and then voted to re-elect:

Policy: Peter Susko (2 years)
Student Congress: Joe Scheide (2 years)
Speech: Michelle Dacey (2 years)

Joe pointed out the BCFL Constitution (Article V) states "Each Assistant Director may appoint one or more assistants to facilitate, under his/her supervision, the conduct of his/her respective division." Over the summer, each Assistant Director should consider choosing someone to assist.

4. Tentative Calendar for 2020-2021: There was a discussion about whether it made sense, due to anticipated restrictions and the necessity of going virtual, to choose dates at this meeting. A motion made and approved to table this until the August meeting.

Here are some dates already set by others.
Yale (moved its traditional weekend) October 2
Harvard: February 13
Pennsbury: February 5
Villiger: did not post yet

School districts are leaning towards no field trips until at least December. Long Reach has offered to host on January 23, 2021. We expect that the first in-person tournament will have to have modifications in our logistics (reduce crowded areas).

5. Virtual tournament discussion: There was consensus in the discussion about the necessity of this.

- In virtual tournaments, some events are "live" (debates, Extemp) while some events involve students submitting recordings.
- Charles pointed out, based on his experience at NSDAs this year, that virtual tournaments are developing a different skill set very unlike the face-to-face communications skills that BCFL tournaments develop. Therefore, student achievements in events will vary accordingly.
- Kelli pointed out that virtual tournaments will give students practice and feedback from others. Going virtual will help them progress and accommodate their need to have this activity.
- Jurisdictions may lift limits on competing at different times. The BCFL policy is that competitions occur when all jurisdictions are allowed to compete in them.
- Amber pointed out a challenge in judging "live" rounds when the performer had bad Wi-Fi. Peter modeled her point throughout the meeting by having Wi-Fi issues.
- Judges will need to be prepared for this format. Included in this is the idea of being understanding when differences due to tech set up affects rounds. For examples, Extemp students who may have to remain seated because they are tethered to their tech.
- Patrick reminds us to give everyone a fair chance—to keep equity in mind as we plan.
- Free versions of virtual tournament software must be vetted. NCFL does not have a platform. The NSDA would have a cost. Our member schools do not all have NSDA membership.
- We ought to have an early tournament to get everyone more familiar with how this will work.

Committee Members to Research Virtual Tournament. Contact Patrick if you want to join:

Patrick Daniels (Chair) patrick.daniels@gmail.com
Rachel Campbell
Emily Mandile
Daniel Jacoby
Teresa Dimka
Charles Donovan

6. NDP Proposal: NDP proposed to have a screening process for all volunteers, to ask that all coaches adhere to their school's policies about this, to have principals sign waivers, and have policies about adult/student interactions.

- There is a financial burden on background checks ($80) as well as a time-frame burden.
- There is a burden on already on acquiring judges to meet obligations.
- Principals will not be willing to sign a waiver for judges.
- The open-door policy and not sharing contact information would pose problems specific to some events.

Solutions: Many expressed an agreement that the BCFL needs to address concerns:

- There are no formal complaint protocols.
- There should be a person for a student to approach if there is an issue (ombudsman) and an announcement to all competitors.
- There should be a form that all judges ought to read and sign on the day of the tournament acknowledging rules and practices.
- There can be instruction during judge meetings.
- There needs to be a way to enforce compliance.

Committee to Create Judge Forms (In-person and Virtual) and Compliance measures:

Michelle Dacey (Chair) ellieacd@gmail.com
Andrew Torrez
Kelli Midgley
Aimee Sann
Teresa Dimka
Cayman Giordano
John Bagileo

7. Loyola Proposal: Loyola proposed a format to tournaments that would make all events single flighted, make each tournament is own "stand alone" tournament with elimination rounds, and make a points system to allow for an NCFL Nationals qualifying process. The proposal was for just this year as an answer to the disruptions we expect to face.

- This would reduce down-time for the students and give each more competition time and/or opportunities to watch final rounds
- This would simplify the end of season qualifying process
- This would mitigate crowded spaces
- This would eliminate the need for a Metro Qualifying Tournament
- Other leagues use this model successfully—it should be investigated

Discussion points about areas of concern with the proposal:

- It would curtail opportunities for students—force a choice between speech and debate at each tournament for some competitors.
- There are an insufficient number of rooms in our host schools, and this would greatly increase the number of judges needed schools would need to bring.
- There is insufficient time allotted for "tech" issues and it produces a longer day.
- A question of fairness was raised (because a score of 6 is not six times better than a score of 1, to use Brian's example). It would put lots of weight on slim margins.
- Students who just barely qualify in the current system may get shut out of recognition and opportunities.
- It would be more difficult on new schools.
- It would be more costly to districts that pay for buses.
- Pairings may more often pit school to compete against itself.
- Some coaches would not want to eliminate Metro tournament.

This was a good discussion that brought out the rationale for how we run BCFLs—equity, access, and opportunity—these are especially important for schools in their first few years in the BCFL.

The proposal did not pass: 7 in favor and 13 opposed. This could be modified and revisited at the fall meeting.

8. <u>Reflections on the 2019-20 year:</u>

It was interesting. The trophies, plaques, and certificates were appreciated by the students and offered some consolation for the disruption. Students were glad to know that there will be a 2020-21 tournament season. Many students continued to practice and compete. Students showed resilience. Some students spoke out to their county executive—students are taking the skills they gained with them. Patrick asked that all Policy judges consider the impacts of judging Policy rounds. Much appreciation to all the Directors for their hard work and to the coaches for their time and devotion.

9. The next meeting will be on August 25 at 6 PM in a virtual setting. Note: this means proposals should for consideration should be sent for consideration by July 26th.

Respectfully submitted,

Aimee Sann