

Notes from Student Advocate Meeting - representatives from 4 teams were present (Granite Bay, Davis, Mira Loma and Ponderosa, Waldorf answered questions later by email)

What do you think worked well this year?

Thanks to Mr. Stinson for the online awards presentations and his backgrounds and applause button - they were a bright spot in all of this. Given the fact that we had to transition to completely online, and we had no idea how long it would last, we did well given the new platforms for competing and the uncertainty

It wasn't as fun as in person, but it was still fun and we got to compete Online is a lower pressure setting, good for introverts, but we aren't sure how that is going to translate to next year for those that were new competitors this year

Some of the more traditional judges adapted to the new judging format Asynchronous made it fair for speech

Disputes were handled well, and it was easier and faster to contact tournament officials than when we were in person

What goals did we not quite meet?

There was talk before the pandemic about really trying to increase the quality of judges this year, and that didn't seem to have happened.

I have friends in other leagues and our judging quality seems to be 'not the best' compared to other leagues

Our judges don't know how to flow

It appears we had even lower quality judges for qualifiers because there were not as many of them

It seems unfair to have poor quality judges

One judge even asked me in LD at this qualifier to 'tell me about this event'. This also happened in Congress.

We really need more robust judge training; we should have something on the web that they can look at before the tournament; we need

training for every school and multiple judge trainings throughout the year (like the one that Mira Loma has).

Speaker points have been problematic with those with higher voices judged less well

What would you like to see the league focus on for next year?

Improving judges

One of my favorite things is meeting people from other schools and this might be a problem when we go back next year.

What can we do to insure gender parity in events? This is tough at the league level, individual schools should try to do this.

Why do boys make it to out rounds in LD even though it's even at the beginning? Why are female voices perceived as angry?

We should have etiquette training for everyone especially regarding facial expressions and body language when a competitor is speaking.

Congress topics should be posted earlier - a few weeks before tournaments so there can be more research and better debate.

Continue to use tabroom even if we go back in person - but wish the judges would make better comments. It seems like it should be easier to make good comments using tabroom. At least some training in how to write an RFD.

Consider having two LD categories - TOC style vs. NSDA style because they are very different. There seems to be a disconnect between what judges want and what students are doing; LD seems to be becoming more Policy-like with more circuit style arguments presented

Could judges follow an email link to evidence?

Would like to have an anonymous form that could be submitted to strike a judge(s) if they made a competitor feel uncomfortable

What is league doing to prevent sexual assault?

What is the single largest/most important issue within your team?

Worried about accessibility for disabled students. We have a student with CP on our team who had to ask for accommodations for extra time each time; how can it be more obvious to judges that this needs to happen? Overall, how can we make our tournaments more accessible to those with disabilities?

There needs to be concrete rules during debate - cameras on, hands up, as teams continue to use tech issues to steal prep time.

We need more time to upload speeches for asynchronous tournaments - some students live where there is bad internet and sometimes there isn't enough time to try to upload a speech a second time if the first time fails

Inclusivity and involvement for Grade 9

Hard for captains to support and help this year

Our team saw students do the bare minimum this year - asynchronous format permitted lack of quality work

What should be added to the website?

I don't think anybody looks at the website, we just look at what our school has.

Notetaker note: one of the students at the meeting looked at the website for the first time during the meeting and was very pleasantly surprised to see all of the judge training information available there. (Perhaps it would be good for coaches to look at the website with their students at the beginning of each year?) Then:

Wow - teams don't use the cvfl website. We have great resources on it, and manuals!

Some discussion - how can smaller schools recruit and retain members; suggested captains share resources and develop more interschool collaboration; it's not fun for the larger schools to always debate the same people so it's in their interest to have wider involvement too

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