

Delegate Council Meeting Overview

Delegate Council Meeting – Fall 2021

September 28, 2021 from 7-9 pm

~ virtual ~

Invited: GSEP Board of Directors, Board Development Committee Members, GSEP Girl Advisors & Girl Delegates, Service Unit Delegates & Alternates, National Council Session (NCS) Delegates, and Interested Members

Meeting Opening

Debbie Hassan, Board Chair, opened the Delegate meeting by welcoming the 150+ attendees to our third virtual Delegate Council Meeting. She then invited the Girl Advisors to the Board – Lizzy Q., Christian R., and Devyn S. - to lead the group in saying the Pledge of Allegiance, Girl Scout Promise and Girl Scout Law.

Mission Moments

First, Girl Advisor and NCS Delegate Christian R. shared her unique experience from this past summer of meeting Congresswoman Susan Wild at Camp Mountain House. Christian explained that after Representative Wild talked with her and 10 other Girl Scout Ambassadors about her job in Congress, she then actively listened to the girls share their concerns about the world today. The group discussed issues ranging from climate change to teenagers' mental health. Christian expressed her gratitude for being involved with governance at GSEP, which has given her some extraordinary experiences.

Then, Debbie Hassan announced to the attendees that one of GSEP's Girl Delegates, Cydney Brown (who is also Philadelphia's Youth Poet Laureate) made national news this past weekend by being one of 20 youth featured in the *New York Times*. Cydney is one of more than 5,500 teenagers who submitted their creative work last year for the Times' "Coming of Age" Contest, and the video of her reciting her original poem "Do You Ever Wonder?" is being used to promote this year's contest. We are very proud of our sister in GSEP Governance, Cydney!

Introductions

Board Chair, Debbie Hassan then recognized the respective cohorts in attendance (Board, Board Development Committee, National Council Session Delegates, SU Delegates, and Girl Delegates). She reiterated the decision-influencing role of the Delegate Council and thanked the members for their service.

Board Development Committee Report

Debbie O'Brien, the new chair of the BDC, reviewed the names of the committee members, including the newest member of the Board Development Committee, Kathy Killian, who was elected at the Annual Meeting in May. Kathy is the Vice President of Administration of the Philadelphia Phillies.

Debbie O. provided an overview on the work of the Board Development Committee, which focuses on identifying, cultivating, and recruiting candidates to become members of the Board of Directors and the BDC itself. The BDC is responsible for reviewing the applications for the Girl Delegates and Girl Advisors to the Board to create the slate for the Delegate Council to elect. The BDC is also responsible for Board engagement and development opportunities.

Service Unit Delegate and Girl Delegate Pinning

Board Chair, Debbie Hassan asked CEO, Kim E. Fraites-Dow to join her for the pinning ceremony. Kim explained that all new Girl Delegates had received their pins in the mail following the Annual Meeting in May. And, new Service Unit Delegates will be mailed their pins after this meeting.

National Governance News from GSUSA

First, Debbie Hassan shared the current status of the search for the National CEO of GSUSA. Debbie herself is one of two Council Board Chairs on the search committee; the other five people are members of the National Board. The search committee is now in the "quiet phase" and is currently interviewing candidates.

Debbie then told the attendees about information shared during the recent conference call for Council Board Chairs with the new National Board Chair, Karen Layng, and the Interim National CEO, Judith Batty. GSUSA provided an update that the national pension plan (part of a multi-employer plan) is no longer subject to IRS minimum payments, which is financially beneficial to the Movement. Also, GSUSA has hired an external firm (Symphonic Strategies) to consult with them on DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) work. For the first time, GSUSA will be producing an annual stewardship report, which will be available to all members, followed by an explanatory webinar. Finally, on the conference call, a guest speaker shared her expertise in formal strategies in succession planning for both Girl Scout Board Chairs and CEOs.

GSEP's CEO, Kim E. Fraites-Dow, then talked about a recent development in GSUSA's three-year lawsuit against the Boy Scouts of America. The judge released a tentative decision in favor of BSA. Kim emphasized that we have a unique opportunity to tell parents, families, and the public who we are. The two organizations remain separate, and Girl Scouts has been serving girls for more than 109 years. Our Movement is fiscally strong and not dealing with the legal and financial challenges plaguing BSA. Kim then asked the Girl Advisors to share why they joined Girl Scouts. Lizzy explained that although she did consider switching to the Boy Scouts, she realized that society today is still not equitable; Girl Scouts is a safe space for girls to learn to face challenges. Devyn said that people may be under the misapprehension that Boy Scouts have more opportunities, but in reality, Girl Scouts has a "ton" of experiences for girls to try a lot of new things. Christian also emphasized that in Girl Scouts,

you can be yourself in a safe space. Kim then reiterated that we will continue to tell OUR story.

NCS Proposals Strategy Café

To offer context before the Strategy Café discussions, the 2020 NCS Delegation gave a brief explanation of the National Council and proposals.

NCS Delegate, Bridget Davis presented an overview of what the National Council is: representatives from every Girl Scout Council in the country and from Girl Scouts Overseas gather every three years to vote on new National Board and BDC members as well as any changes to the Blue Book (the governing document of GSUSA and our Movement). NCS Delegates also discuss topics that are important to the entire Movement, but they do not make direct operational decisions.

NCS Delegate, Sandy Faust shared examples of proposals that have been voted on at past National Council Sessions. For instance, membership dues were raised in 2008 from \$10 to \$12. Other examples include offering discounted Lifetime membership fees for young alums, allowing former National Board presidents to remain ex officio, non-voting members of the National Board, and creating a taskforce to examine the feasibility of offering college scholarships to Gold Award Girl Scouts. Sandy emphasized that not every proposal made at a National Council Session passes; some proposals get amended while others get voted down. Sandy then offered a quick synopsis of the six proposals that were passed at the 2020 NCS. She explained that some proposals are about the wording of the text; others are about a new idea.

Debbie Hassan, also an NCS Delegate, then introduced her sister NCS Delegate, Mikayla Havers. Mikayla is currently a college freshman who is one of two teenagers on the 2023 NCS Advisory Taskforce. Mikayla explained the work of this committee in planning the next National Council Session. One example of the work is that GSUSA has created a new NCS Delegate website, due to feedback from the 2020 NCS Delegates. Mikayla then shared the new timeline (since the NCS is being held 4 months earlier than usual, in July 2023 rather than in the traditional October timeframe). For example, councils must now submit draft proposals or discussion topics to GSUSA by April 14, 2022, and final iterations will be due by June 30, 2022. The 2023 NCS Delegates must now be elected in the year prior to the National Council Session, i.e., in 2022.

GSEP's NCS Delegates then introduced nine possible proposal topics for the attendees to discuss in respective breakout rooms. The small group conversations lasted 15 minutes. Each group was assigned one topic but could discuss others, if time allowed. Then, each breakout group gave a short synopsis of their respective discussion to the large group. Finally, a Zoom poll was launched to have the attendees vote on their top four choices for the NCS Delegates to create actual proposals around.

The four topics that received the most votes were:

- Allowing virtual attendance at a Special Session of the National Council
- Offering free Lifetime membership to Gold Award Girl Scouts
- Offering reduced/slide scale membership for families with multiple members
- Requiring girls to be part of every council's NCS Delegation

Serving girls in Berks, Bucks, Carbon, Chester, Delaware, Lehigh, Montgomery, Northampton and Philadelphia counties

Closing

Board Chair Debbie Hassan thanked everyone for their input. The NCS Delegates will present on these proposal topics at the Spring Delegate Council Meeting. She then announced that all attendees are able to ask for a 10% discount at GSEP's shops until October 30. She also reminded everyone to keep an eye out for the next edition of the Governance Bulletin, being emailed in early December. Girl governance applications will be opened later this fall and the link to apply to be a Delegate to the 2023 National Council Session would be shared in late spring 2022. Debbie asked that all attendees share what we discussed tonight with their Service Units, troops and Girl Scout friends; any additional thoughts or feedback can be sent to governance@gsep.org.

Debbie adjourned the Fall Delegate Council Meeting at 8:48 p.m.

If you would like to suggest a topic for the Spring 2022 Delegate Meeting on March 21st, please email governance@gsep.org