



Meeting Minutes of District 106

District Executive Council Meeting August 6, 2022

Call to Order:

District Director Gopu Shrestha, called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM, CDT

Reading of the District Mission:

The mission was read by Administration Manager Dave Degenhardt.

Credentials Report (Administration Manager, Dave Degenhardt):

Roll was called of the DEC members, with the following members present: Gopu Shrestha, Ed Aylward, Dave Degenhardt, Ashok Sunkavalli, Janet Osmundson, Denise Sundquist, Dana Lammanmaki, Nicole Converse, Wulfgar, Burt Hursh, Daniel DeJoode, Helen Grothe, Chengtao Wang, Ralph Hayne, John Barrett, Jason Ruffalo, Brian Rice, George Kane, and Sue Haverberg.

District 106 currently has 9 elected, and 26 appointed members of the District Executive Committee with 35 votes possible. 1/2 or 18 votes, are required for a quorum. We have 19 votes. The District does have a quorum.

Adoption of the District Success Plan (District Director Gopu Shrestha):

The trio drafted a District Success Plan on June 27, 2022 and shared it with the Division Directors to review. A few suggestions were made and incorporated and the plan was uploaded to the District website on July 23, 2022 for the DEC to review. Members were informed on the same day. The district success plan was adopted without any objections, additions, or deletions.

Adoption of the District Budget (District Director Gopu Shrestha):

A budget has been drafted in accordance with Toastmasters International rules, with post-pandemic allowances for in-person events. The budget was posted on the District website on July 23, 2022 and all DEC members were notified via email. The district budget was adopted without any objections, additions, or deletions. The budget will be reviewed by Toastmasters International HQ and presented to the District Council members for approval at the District Council Meeting on September 10, 2022.

Announcement of Fall Contests (Program Quality Director Ed Aylward):

Gopu Shrestha called for a vote from a subset of the District Executive Committee members, comprising all the Area Directors and Division Directors, to decide on in-person vs. virtual speech contests. 71.4% of Area Directors and Division Directors voted for virtual fall speech contests, and 28.6% voted for in-person speech contests. The chair has declared fall speech contests will be virtual. Please check the D106 website calendar and update your contest dates.

Adoption of the Agenda (District Director Gopu Shrestha):

The agenda was adopted without any objections, additions, or deletions.

Approval of Minutes (District Director Gopu Shrestha):

This is the first DEC meeting of 2022-2023, so there are no previous minutes. We will be presenting today's minutes at the next DEC meeting. Administration Manager Dave Degenhardt will email the minutes ahead of our next meeting. Send him any corrections to the meeting minutes.

Meeting Appointments (District Director Gopu Shrestha):

Mel Fiecke was appointed as Timer.

5 Minute Break

Division Director Reports (2-3 minutes):

George Kane - Division E:

In Division E we are enthusiastic about the new Toastmasters year. We are emerging from two years of pandemic-related challenges for the Division and our Clubs. We had gaps in the Area Director staff last year, and I was appointed in January to finish the year as Division Director. It is a great relief that we are starting this year fully staffed.

We expect this to be a year of reemergence for the Division Clubs, but some of them have already built momentum. Saturday Morning Live finished as President's Distinguished, Public Employees was Select Distinguished, and both 3M Verbal Innovators and Free Speech were Distinguished. Mary Torno deserves much of the credit for the success of Free Speech, as she managed to recruit three members on the last day of the year!

In June I held an in-person Division Council Meeting with the Area Directors, where we got to meet each other. The staff is AD41 Mervat Lotfalla, AD42 Sue Haverberg, AD43 Kathy Schakel-Carlson, AD44 Nagaraju Nimmakayala (Nagraj), and AD45 Linda Murphy. We focused on how we will work together, reaching out to each other when any one of us needs help.

Our next Division Council Meeting was online in late June. There we set the dates for our contests. The Area 43 Contest is tentatively scheduled for October 24. Areas 44 & 45 will hold a joint contest on October 11. Areas 41 & 42 will hold a joint contest, originally scheduled for September 18. That date will probably be changed, however, because of pushback from the clubs. The Division E contest will be held on November 3.

With the District Toastmaster reports finally organized for the current alignment, we can get an official outlook of the Division statistics. We have 25 Clubs with a total of 305 members in the Division.

Of particular concern is Mears Park Toastmasters in Area 45, which is a Low Member status Club with only 6 members. Also of concern is Zaj Lus Dragonspeakers in Area 43. They have 9 members, but inform me that they are having difficulty holding meetings. Their club members are staff of the Hmong-American Partnership, and they are encountering problems such as staff turnover, maternal leave and staggered transition back to the office after pandemic restrictions.

As of the end of July, Club response to Club Officer Training needs improvement. So far, only King Boreas and Public Employees have been credited with the 4 officers required by the DCP goal. I have written to all of the Division Club Officers urging them to attend training this month.

David Rasmussen - Division D:

David began delivering his report, but technical difficulties prevented him from finishing his report. He finished his report later in the meeting. Since the delivered report was hard to hear, the notes below reflect the written report submitted by David.

The Area Directors, Mary Benson, Eric Blomgren, Beth Plamondon and Brian Rice are making great progress at developing relationships, both with clubs, and as a team. There have been quite a few club visits. Initial club visit reports are anticipated soon now that the TI website is updated.

Per TI, we have 21 clubs, though one is a zero member club that does not meet. TCO Speakos is another club which may be close to the point of dissolving. We will likely need two new clubs to stay at 21.

We have 4/4 areas covered with Area Directors, which is great toward having a successful division. We also have at least two Area Directors interested in club coaching, which is a good indicator toward starting new clubs such that the division can be distinguished even if we lose clubs. I am very impressed by Beth, Mary, Eric and Brian.

Officer lists are 20/20, 95% were on-time.

Each area has at least one club with 4 officers trained. There are 5/20 at that level per the latest report. Six clubs have two or three trained. Four clubs show zero trained. Pillsbury shows a Magnificent 7. We have been promoting the TLI, so are hoping for a big finish.

Our third Division D group meeting is scheduled at Brookview Park next Saturday morning, 10:30. The goal of getting together is to develop relationships, plan, and help each other toward success. One thing we will do is start planning contest roles. Anyone here at the DEC meeting may join us Saturday if you like. We are all on the same team.

Bob Dummer - Division C (read by Ralph Hayne, Area 22 Director):

Division C is happy to report that we have all our Area Directors (2 fully trained and the other 3 are finishing up). With the new realignment we were struggling to get all the right info but the new reports coming out of TI reflect our new clubs. We are still working to finalize our Area Speech Contest dates and hope to submit them next week. Our focus will be on encouraging the club officers to get trained and I will be urging attendance at the TLI on August 27th.

Brian – our Area 23 Director has started visiting his clubs and I expect the rest of the team to start their visits soon.

Division C has a great team of Area Directors and I am looking forward to having a fun and awesome year.

Daniel DeJoode - Division B:

Division B has a group of 22 clubs representing nearly 300 members. I have a great group of 5 confident and enthusiastic Area Directors. We all met to discuss club visits and reports, general duties, scheduling contests, and how to assist clubs in achieving Distinguished Club awards. We reviewed last year's goals towards Distinguished Club status by each of the clubs. Officers of some clubs are not aware of the two-step award submission process in both Pathways and Club Central. Some clubs from last year didn't achieve any educational goals for Distinguished Club status even though they had members completing projects in Pathways, so officers need to be educated how to submit awards in Club Central. As a Division Director, my goals for the year are to: assist Area Directors to achieve Distinguished Area status, achieve a Distinguished Division award, visit every club during the year, hold regular Division Council meetings, and prepare a quarterly division newsletter with announcements relevant to clubs in the division.

Denise Sundquist - Division A:

Division A, located in the Northern region of District 106, is a unique blend of Canadians and Minnesotans with clubs 492 kilometers apart and in two different time zones. We consist of four areas and really depend on each other to inspire and energize. We are pleased to announce we have 4 Area Directors this year and they are all in attendance today. We have Dana, Nicole, Wulfgar, and

Burt. During the month of July, we worked to get between 4-7 officers trained in each club and still have several clubs that need officers trained to reach our goal. We have our Area 1 fall speech contest scheduled, as well as 2 other Area contests, and we have 1 additional speech contest to get scheduled. Additionally, we have Excel and PowerPoint documents created to support effective and efficient speech contests. Finally, our area Directors have established communication with their Areas to introduce themselves as well as setting up monthly council meetings. While we only had one club reach President's Distinguished in 2021-2022, we believe with a stronger membership focus, we will have more clubs achieve their goals this year and ultimately our District goals.

Executive Team Reports (1-2 minutes):

Administration Manager, Dave Degenhardt:

I have received the District property from Anna Gaichas, previous Admin Manager. I have taken over the role of list manager for the District Newsletter and will keep the distribution list updated on a monthly basis so the good work being done by our District Newsletter Editor Bob Bazinet will be seen by our new members each month. I have been serving as secretary for the weekly trio meetings. I have prepared and sent invitations and reminders to you all for this DEC meeting and helped with reviewing and editing the agenda and script.

Finance Manager, Janet Osmundson:

Mr. District Director, fellow Toastmasters. I am Janet Osmundson. I will be serving as the District Finance Manager this Toastmasters year. I am tasked with the fiscal oversight and management of the District property. I work closely with the District Director, Program Quality Director, and Club Growth Director to ensure the District is making cost-effective decisions - within policy - that result in effective fiscal management.

I have been working on the budget along with the Trio members. The expense reimbursement guidelines are being reviewed. A training module on the Concur expense reporting system will be provided to you all.

I am looking forward to a great year. Mr. District Director.

Ashok Sunkavalli, Public Relations Manager:

Shared PowerPoint presentation via screen share

PRM goal for this year is to engage Toastmaster members in building D106 Toastmasters brand by providing valuable content to all the club members in the District and help achieve D106 Distinguished status. Also strengthen clubs by attracting new Gen Z members with effective communication using social media platforms and media. Congrats to my PRM team: Webmaster Johnny Harbieh, Newsletter Editor Robert Bazinet, and Social Media Content Creator Dr. Sherri Rafferty. We have one open position for helping create social media posts. Please reach out if you know anyone that is interested. Thank you to my team.

These days it is hard for any organization to communicate to the world without a social media presence. I am thankful to my previous PRM folks who have set up all our social media platforms. One new addition this year is TikTok, on which we will be posting short messages. Encourage all your clubs to join our social media platforms to take our D106 brand to the next level.

We have done several things this year. We started the year great creating a communication plan and have consistently been doing social media posts on a weekly basis. I am looking forward to hearing from you all. Please reach out to us to help take your clubs to the next level.

We are trying to streamline content collection because we are a small team. Johnny is helping me create a webform in D106 so we are consistently communicating to our members in a streamlined fashion. We are here to create content, coordinate, and communicate. Please reach out to district106tm@gmail.com with any questions.

Trio Reports (2-3 minutes):

Club Growth Director's Report– Katy Hursh (read by Dave Degenhardt, Admin Manager):

It is an exciting time as we begin our new Toastmaster year. In July District 106 Chartered our first club North Star Evaluators. This club has members from all over the District including a member from London. Our retention team will be hosting 3 Moments of Truth sessions to equip our clubs with tools they can use to be stronger. This will be led by Stephen Shaner who is past District Director and Regional Advisor. This is also perfect training for Club Coaches. Members wanting to strengthen their club or coach another club this is the perfect place to learn. Michael Carlton who is the Club Coach Chair and Greg Schulz the Retention Chair are ready to assist clubs who need a Club Coach. Anyone serving as a Club Coach can use this service to earn their DTM - Distinguished Toastmaster Award.

As the Club Growth Director team we want to make sure members are aware of the opportunities for personal growth, like being a Club Coach, Sponsor or Mentor to earn your DTM. That leads me to the next phase of building new clubs in District 106. The Club Extension Chair Matt Villella and Sponsor/Mentor Chair, Yves Prevost are also connecting with members who would like the opportunity to serve in mentoring new clubs. It is a rewarding experience and way to pay it forward to new members. With this Extension team we have 4 new clubs in the works that will be scheduled for their first demo meetings in August and September. You will be hearing more about these clubs in the coming weeks.

This year District 106 is in an excellent position to achieve Distinguished District. So far many of the clubs already have their officers trained and are getting on board with Pathways to earn education awards. This is so exciting to see members stepping up in personal confidence as a speaker and in leadership. Together we can continue to build a strong District by taking intentional steps of growth. I look forward to seeing this growth and moving beyond where we have been the last couple of years. You've got this and we are with you. Let's do it!!

Program Quality Director's Report – Ed Aylward

Club officer training continues with 28% of our district officers having completed training. There are five additional club officer training sessions on the District 106 calendar plus the in-person Toastmasters Leadership Institute (yes – it counts for club officer training) on 27 August at the Crowne Plaza in Plymouth, MN. It will take some intentionality, but we can still reach the 85% club officers trained total achieved a year ago.

Do you have a talent for training? Do you know somebody who does? Please contact any member of the current training team or me and we will find a way for you to participate in the second round of Club Officer Training later in this program year. Many hands make light work. Help provide tools and thought-provoking insight to club officers in District 106. Working together we help our members, and their clubs, achieve their goals!

In addition to club officer training, we have just completed seven hours of Division Director and Area Director training. Guest trainers Stephen Shaner, Catherine Secundiak, and past District Director Michael Carlton kept the training material fresh and lively. Web-wizard Johnny Harbieh edited a recording of the second training session and has it posted to YouTube for the benefit of those who were unable to participate that night.

A team, under the guidance of Keith Hardy and Immediate Past District Director Kimberlee Redington, is making preparations for the 27 August Toastmasters Leadership Institute. Our theme is “metamorphosis” as together we begin to emerge from our online rectangles. Registration is open. Sign up today!

Mark your calendars today and plan to be in Duluth on 12 and 13 May 2023. District 106 annual conference will be in Duluth at the Radisson hotel. Conference co-chairs Sue Scholz and Kim Parmeter are building a team of talented volunteers to help make this event our best conference ever! Say “yes” when they contact you!

I have joined Gopu and Katy for many interviews of candidates for Toastmasters International leadership roles. Our interviews have been wide-ranging and informative. There are many talented individuals offering their leadership to all Toastmasters. We are doing our diligence in an effort to select the best candidates during elections taking place at the Toastmasters International convention in Nashville, TN, 14 through 20 August.

Stephen Shaner is conducting informative sessions regarding Moments of Truth and Club Success Plans. Three identical sessions are scheduled: 29 August; 30 August; and 08 September. Pick a day that works for you and learn how these tools help clubs conduct quality meetings and meet member communication and leadership goals.

Thank you for your active commitment to quality meetings and to our District’s Toastmasters member experience. We are truly a place “Where Leaders are Made!”

District Director’s Report – Gopu Shrestha

We just finished one month of our year, but it seems like we did a lot of work shared by my key executives. As you know, we are targeting Distinguished District this year, which means a quality club experience for all members. If members get happy, they will retain in their club and the club will not only survive, it will thrive! If this happens, we will definitely be a quality District this year.

As your District Director, I am able to place 99% of volunteers like Area Directors and key Chairs. All executives are listed in our District Website. Feel free to contact them.

I was able to develop District Success Plan and budget in coordination with my key team members, trio and my Finance Manager. All reports are shared on the District website.

I was able to conduct a survey in coordination with the PQD, and he just shared his report.

A pilot program called “District Mentoring Program” has been launched. This is a training program for District mentors, and training has been conducted for all the District mentors. Mentors for Division Directors are all Past District Directors and past Division Directors are mentors for Area Directors. All are trained and deployed. All Area Directors and Division Directors who asked for mentors have been assigned.

Now, we are in the process of executing the District Success Plan. We are planning to review half yearly and if possible quarterly to make sure that whatever we promised we will deliver. I am working with my team, having 1:1 meetings biweekly and with Division Directors biweekly to hear their roadblocks.

Again, as your District Director, my vision is 1) Family First, 2) Work in a Team, 3) Always ask for help. This way we will practice a teamwork and serve members better for quality experiences in their club. I am sure we will hit our goal of "Distinguished District Year 2022-2023".

Thank you so much for all your service to District 106. Mr. Admin Manager.

Announcements (District Director Gopu Shrestha):

As our PQD said, all Club Officer Training records have been uploaded to the District website. Area Directors, please check your dashboard and see which club has not fully trained for at least 4 officers. It is one of the key things clubs have to achieve for a Distinguished club. Please work on that.

Our PQD is looking for volunteers and help for special training for club officers.

All Division Directors have their fall speech contest dates and are uploading them to the District website. We need volunteers for the contests. Please check the dates.

Lastly, the International conference. This is a year where we are electing our new International Director and our new International President, and there are a lot of proposals for our Toastmasters International rulebook. I have already sent emails to club Presidents and Secretaries. Ask them to either visit the conference in Nashville, Tennessee or give proxy votes to me for their favorite candidates and proposal changes. Please check with your club President and Secretary.

Appointments (District Director Gopu Shrestha):

Here are the appointees for the District:

Dave Degenhardt - Administration Manager
Janet Osmundson, DTM - Finance Manager
Ashok Sunkavalli - Public Relations Manager
Anna Gaichas, DTM - Logistics Manager
Matt Villella, DTM - Club Extension Chair
Johnny Harbieh - Webmaster
Greg Scholz, DTM - Club Retention Chair
Susan Lau - District Chief Judge
Michael Carlton, DTM, PDD - Club Coach Chair
Robert Bazinet - District Newsletter Editor
Michael Orr, DTM - District Parliamentarian
Jackie Flaherty - TMOY Chair
Keith Hardy, DTM, PDD - TLI Co-Chair
Kimberlee Redington, DTM, IPDD - TLI Co-Chair
David Hoffmann - Training Coordinator
Susan Scholz, DTM - Spring Conference Co-Chair
Kim Parmeter - Spring Conference Co-Chair
Dan Grundtner, DTM - Youth Leadership Chair
Mel Fiecke-Ekensteen - Speechcraft Chair
Diane Windingland, DTM, PDD - Credentials/Proxy Chair
Yves Prevost, DTM, PDD - Club Quality Chair

The meeting adjourned at 10:03 AM, CDT.