



Future of the District 35 Conference Committee

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District 35

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District 35 Toastmasters:

Early in this Toastmasters year, District Director Robert asked me to convene a group of past District 35 leaders and lead them through a series of discussions about the future of the District 35 Conference.

The logistics of the current District 35 Conference are complex. It requires substantial volunteer time and, due to rising costs and the smaller size of our District, it has become cost prohibitive and challenging for many members to attend. This has resulted in much smaller conferences compared to years past.

The committee was tasked with taking a pragmatic look at the District 35 Conference—this very event where we are gathered today—and making recommendations to the District about its future. We also prioritized different aspects of the conference to inform potential new formats. As part of this effort, we discussed what traditions we value most and want to ensure are preserved during the upcoming district realignment process.

At its core, the committee recommends a professional, high-quality event that offers strong value for our members' time and money. We suggest simplifying the conference so that District leaders can stay focused on the District mission: building new clubs and supporting all clubs in achieving excellence, rather than spending excessive time and resources planning the conference.

Specifically, the committee recommends shifting to a shorter, one-day event—approximately nine hours in length—focused on club and member recognition through the Hall of Fame, learning opportunities, and the fellowship and camaraderie that come from networking with fellow Toastmasters.

To streamline the event, we encourage the District to consider limiting speech contests to only the required International Speech Contest. This would not only shorten the event but also simplify the contest season's logistics, which is potentially more aligned with our more limited resources.

We also suggest using a single main meeting space and including only one meal—lunch—as part of the registration cost. The day could begin at 9:00 a.m. and conclude with the Hall of Fame ending by 6:00 p.m. This approach would lower overall costs for attendees, as only one meal would be priced at "conference" rates. Additionally, a shorter, one-day format allows many members to travel to the event and return home the same day, eliminating the need for overnight hotel stays and further reducing the financial burden of attending. Several proposed simplified agendas are included in my written report.

An additional benefit of this simplified format is the ability to use more affordable venues—such as restaurant event spaces, community halls, or other non-hotel locations—which may significantly reduce overall costs.

We believe that by reducing both the time and financial commitments required to attend, the conference will become more attractive to a broader range of our members. And ultimately, it's our members and their clubs that this conference—and the District itself—is here to serve.

Teri, this year's conference chair, has already experimented with some of the ideas discussed by testing schedule changes at this year's event. It's encouraging to see these conversations translating into action.

Change is always challenging. I remember attending one of my first District Business Meetings when someone stood here to report on the elimination of the Fall Conference. District 35 adapted then—and we must continue to adapt. Let us keep our focus on the mission of our clubs and District while delivering high value to our members, celebrating each other's accomplishments, and enjoying one of the greatest benefits of in-person events: camaraderie.

I encourage the District to consider these recommendations and help shape the next chapter of the District 35 Conference—one that is high-quality, more affordable, and a bit more streamlined.

I want to thank the other members of the Future of the District 35 Conference Committee—Distinguished Toastmasters all—Past District Governor and Past International Director Dick Hawley; Past District Governors Judy Bauer and Craig Carpenter; Past District Director and Past Region Advisor Cindy Laatsch; and Past District Directors Keith Cumiskey, Kris Pool, and Teri McGregor. I appreciate all their experience, partnership, wisdom, and friendship. We shared many ideas and had some challenging discussions, all with our members' best interests in mind.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Feucht

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Possible 1 Day Conference Agendas

1 Day -- 9 to 6

Start Time	Length	Event
9:00:00 AM	30	Opening
9:30:00 AM	45	Keynote / Learning
10:15:00 AM	15	Break
10:30:00 AM	45	Learning
11:15:00 AM	15	Break
11:30:00 AM	45	Lunch & Recognition
12:15:00 PM	15	Break
12:30:00 PM	120	Business Meeting
2:30:00 PM	30	Break
3:00:00 PM	90	International Speech Contest
4:30:00 PM	30	Break
5:00:00 PM	60	Hall Of Fame
6:00:00 PM		Conference Close

1 Day -- 9 to 4:30

Start Time	Length	Event
9:00:00 AM	30	Opening
9:30:00 AM	45	Keynote / Learning
10:15:00 AM	15	Break
10:30:00 AM	90	International Speech Contest
12:00:00 PM	15	Break
12:15:00 PM	45	Lunch & Recognition
1:00:00 PM	15	Break
1:15:00 PM	120	Business Meeting
3:15:00 PM	15	Break
3:30:00 PM	60	Hall Of Fame
4:30:00 PM		Conference Close

1 Day - 2 Meals

Start Time	Length	Event
9:30:00 AM	30	Opening
10:00:00 AM	45	Keynote / Learning
10:45:00 AM	15	Break
11:00:00 AM	45	Learning
11:45:00 AM	15	Break
12:00:00 PM	45	Lunch & Recognition
12:45:00 PM	15	Break
1:00:00 PM	120	Business Meeting
3:00:00 PM	30	Break
3:30:00 PM	90	International Speech Contest
5:00:00 PM	60	Cocktail Hour
6:00:00 PM	15	Dignitary Line Up
6:15:00 PM	90	Dinner
7:45:00 PM	15	Break
8:00:00 PM	60	Hall Of Fame
9:00:00 PM	60	Socializing / Raffles
10:00:00 PM		Conference Close

Event Prioritization

Required	Business Meeting
Required	International Speech Contest
1	Hall of Fame
2	Learning Sessions / Breakouts
3	Member & Club Recognition
4	Keynote Speaker
5	First Timers
6	Dignitary Entrance
7	Banner Parade
8	Fun Night