

MEMORANDUM

13 Sept 2015

Subj: District Reformation (Split) Committee – Brief Summary of Conference Call on 9 Sept 15

Conference Call participants:

Mary Berg, Jill Briscoe, Lorrie Briscoe, Jeanne Cassidy, Dan Cossack, Victoria Dotson, Bob Hudack, Pan Kao, Lee Lance, Ligia Molina, Linda Ulrich

Since not all members of this expanded committee have been able to join in all conference calls, there has been a need revisit some items for the benefit of new members. Discussions included whether we really need to split, trouble maintaining a net growth of clubs, and concern for future leadership of the northern district. Subsequent emails responded to these items. See attachment.

Two action items that came out of the meeting:

1. Propose/develop criteria that will allow us to evaluate the proposals - Jeanne.

Suggested criteria:

1. Keep dividing line simple and straightforward.
 2. Both districts would have a proportionate number of members based on clubs ("Avg size" column in statistical spreadsheet).
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2. Provide the statistics for the Ball Road option – Bob (<https://sites.google.com/site/hudacktm/tm/splitproposalsstats>)

The next conference call is scheduled for:

Thursday, Sep 17, 2015 7:15 PM - 8:45 PM Pacific Daylight Time
United States : +1 (408) 650-3123 ☐ Access Code: 447-891-957

Warm regards,

jc
Jeanne Cassidy, DTM
949-444-9310
Attachment

Attachment

District Reformation (Split) Committee Members –

I accepted the Committee Chair position with the belief that I could assist with moving the District Split proposal forward by soliciting different view points, addressing members' concerns and ensuring we keep the membership informed. By augmenting the number of Committee members, we took one step closer to achieving this objective. Admittedly, it has taken a bit longer than I had expected to hear /address major concerns.

The following is a recap of major concerns to date. Additionally, I took the liberty of using recently written emails from respected Toastmaster leaders who have the background and perspective to address these concerns:

- ❖ Alfred Herzing, DTM, 2001-2002 International President, Toastmasters International.
- ❖ Bob Hudack, DTM, 2008-2009 Past District Governor, Founder's District.
- ❖ Victoria Dotson, DTM, 2012-2013 Past District Governor, Founder's District.

1. What is the purpose of the Founder's District Reformation (split) Committee?

(Victoria) This committee was formed for the express purposes of preparing a reformation [split] proposal, sharing the information with the members and answering questions. The committee last year spent many hours reviewing, researching and preparing the proposal. It was made available to the members via the Founder's District website and each committee member was prepared to answer questions.

2. Do we need to split, really? Will it benefit members?

(Alfred) First and foremost the proposal to split the District came out of a concern for top District officers that the district was getting too big to manage. Think about the business world, how many direct reports can you properly manage? We are up to 8 Divisions - and now looking at 9! That is a lot of people for the District Director and the rest of the District team to work with. Especially for volunteers. Being a District Director is not supposed to be a full time job! Yet the workload is significant due to the number of people that have to be coordinated.

Let's be clear. This is a proposal at the DISTRICT level. There is no benefit to the individual member in their club. One may then say, well why even do it then if it doesn't benefit the member? We should do it because there is also no HARM done to the individual member AND it DOES provide benefits to District leaders. There are then also additional leadership opportunities for District leaders; we could have an additional candidate for International Director, and an additional speech contestant spot to go the World Championship of Public Speaking at the International Convention.

3, Why can't we just leave the District intact?

(Bob)

- a. Large districts are difficult to manage financially, and by that I mean proper recordkeeping, controls, etc. Splitting solves that. There is only one district with 300+ clubs right now worldwide.
 - b. We are having difficulty finding venues large enough to accommodate all those who want to attend LACE.□
 - c. Splitting districts is a natural outcome of growth. Think of cell mitosis. Founder's is ripe for an additional Division next year.
4. If we don't vote to split Founder's district, will the Board of Directors do it for us or is this just a scare tactic?

(Alfred) Last year when I made the presentation at the Fall District Council Meeting at the Fall Conference, I said that I could not envision the Board taking action on it's own and the decision to split or not would remain with the District. A few months ago I learned from a fellow Past International President that the Board HAD now taken action to split a District. (This was after I was no longer on the Board.) It is good that our International Director indicates that there is no current inclination for the Board to take action. But the precedent has been set. And we are clearly on the Board's radar. If you look at the Board minutes, you will see that the Board is reviewing and monitoring our status on splitting the District. Furthermore, we will have an International Officer visit at our Fall Conference. Mike Storkey, DTM - our International President elect will be with us. (He will be our International President next year.) How we handle all of this will be right in the spotlight.

5. I don't want to leave Founder's District, the birthplace of Toastmasters.

(Alfred) There is a natural historic loyalty to Founder's District and it understandable that many of us would miss no longer being a part of Founders. But we shouldn't hold it up for that. And the average member in the average club doesn't know nor care what District they are in. The split changes nothing at the club level for our members and this is the most important level for the organization. The split also changes nothing at the Area level. Some Divisions may be redrawn along the new border - whatever that may be.

6. Shouldn't we fix low membership clubs before considering splitting?

(Alfred) Let me address the "red herring" of low membership clubs. While it is appropriate to ensure that neither district has a disproportionate number of low membership clubs, in my opinion, it is completely inappropriate to require the district to "fix" low membership clubs as a criteria for completing the split. The mission of the District spells it out very clearly (great job by the Board on this refocus) "We build new clubs and support existing clubs to excellence." We build new clubs. That is the first job of the District. Now it is the responsibility of the District to build strong clubs, not paper clubs or weak clubs that will quickly fold. But once the club is launched, it is the CLUB's responsibility to stay strong. Notice again the mission of the District... we support existing clubs to excellence. Excellence of course is Distinguished. The key word there is SUPPORT. The District can not do it for the clubs. Area Directors can be

mentors to their clubs. We can provide club coaches. We can provide training on how to have great meetings and how to build membership (and retain members). But at the end of the day it is the CLUBS that must do it.

We have some PDGs on this committee. You all know from first hand experience that there is little the DISTRICT can do to build membership in the clubs. We are influencers, but we do not control it. In fact, I recall some PDGs that specifically focused on retention and membership during their terms. The result for all of them was that the District was not Distinguished. I spoke to Ted Corcoran, DTM Past International President at the International Convention in Las Vegas on this issue of retention, as I knew it was his hot button when he was an officer. I asked him, "Ted, you were the man in the chair - you had the full control of the organization. What was the solution to the retention issue?" He said there was no solution. And he is right. So let's not get distracted by some thing that we can't control.

7. Shouldn't we focus on becoming a distinguished district first? Potentially monitor district performance over the next three years to ensure we are improving?

(Victoria) After having a lovely conversation with Toastmasters International, it was brought to my attention that NONE - and I repeat - NONE of the current Districts that are going through the reformation process, at this time, have been Distinguished in the past few years. Without doing the research, it was felt that over the past few years, most if not all of the Districts who have split, have NOT been Distinguished prior to the splits. We are currently in the process of checking the data to see how each District has done in the subsequent years after the splits were official. This is one of the reasons most Districts split.

Trying to do a 3 year program will be difficult to manage - you would have to have all of the District leaders for the next three years agree to follow this program; on top of doing their currently expected jobs assigned to them by the District and Toastmasters International. Who will monitor this program? Will this person or people stay with the program for all three years? Who will enforce it? If the past leaders aren't being asked or aren't willing to step up NOW to assist, then how will we get them to help out with this program for the next three years?

8. Do we have leadership to support the new district?

Yes. Given the level of interest and passion for Toastmasters on the expanded committee, there are several strong leaders with the vision, commitment and knowledge of what it takes to be successful. Their sense of pride and excitement to take the reins and build something new is evident.

9. What is the Committee's status?

The Committee is in the process of examining four proposed options and establishing evaluation criteria. By the end of September, we plan to have selected a proposed

option to present to the membership. During the month of October, division representatives and other committee members will be working to clearly communicate the proposal to the membership and answer questions. The vote to split Founder's District is scheduled for 7 Nov.

10. What is the timeline for splitting Founder's District?

The estimated timeline for splitting Founder's District into two fully functioning District would be the 2016 – 2017 and 2017 – 2018 Toastmasters years.