

### Delegate Council Meeting – Fall 2023

October 10, 2023 from 6:30-8:30 pm

~ in-person @ Shelly Ridge and virtual over Zoom ~

**Invited:** GSEP Board of Directors, Girl Advisors to the Board, Board Development Committee Members, Girl Delegates, Service Unit Delegates & Alternates, 2023 NCS Delegation nominees, and Interested Members

### Meeting Opening

Nicole LeVine, Board Chair, opened the meeting by welcoming the attendees to the first Delegate Council Meeting she is presiding over as GSEP's new Board Chair. Girl Scouts from Philadelphia performed the opening flag ceremony. Three Mission Moments were presented: 1) Chloe T., a Top Cookie Seller and new Service Unit Delegate, shared her experiences during the National Council Session/Phenom this past summer; 2) Silver Award Girl Scout Sophia B. explained her project; and 3) GSEP's Top Cookie Seller Diahna S. described how she achieved such remarkable success.

### Introductions

Nicole LeVine then recognized the respective cohorts in attendance (Board, Girl Advisors, Board Development Committee, SU Delegates and Alternates, Girl Delegates, National Council Session Delegates, and Interested Members). She reiterated the decision-influencing role of the Delegate Council and thanked the members for their service. Nicole and CEO Kim E. Fraites-Dow then presented position pins to the new SU Delegates and Girl Delegates. Virtual attendees who have not received pins were asked to submit their names in the chat log; those pins will be mailed to them.

### Board Development Committee (BDC) Report

Debbie O'Brien, Chair of the BDC, reviewed the names of the committee members. She explained that the members come from a variety of professional areas, live in various communities throughout the council, have different racial and ethnic backgrounds, and are wide-ranging in age.

Debbie provided an overview on the work of the BDC, 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.

She also mentioned that several Board members are coming to the end of their respective third terms this year so the BDC will be presenting a slate for the Annual Meeting which has new names and faces on it.

### National Governance News

Board Chair Nicole Levine explained that the main focus of tonight's meeting was the report from the 2023 National Council Session, held in Orlando this past July. She stated that she

was incredibly honored to serve as one of GSEP's NCS Delegates and this experience has renewed her faith in the future due to the positive energy and enthusiasm of the girls participating in the Girl Scout National Convention. She then turned the meeting over to the rest of the NCS Delegation.

First, Bridget Powell and Olga Torres offered a brief description of some of the fun activities that occurred during the week, including a special Gold Award reception, the Council dinner for all GSEP delegates and visitors, and a career panel discussion at EPCOT for all girl members. They also commented on the large number of new people they met and the many, many SWAPs they exchanged with new friends. Angie Manning then provided an overview of the business meeting, which included a "meet the candidates" reception for Delegates and keynote speakers as well as the debate and discussion on the proposals.

The NCS Delegates then presented a detailed report on each of the seven proposals. Chris Reber explained that GSEP's proposal on allowing virtual attendance at a National Council Session passed, after much debate, with a minor amendment that virtual attendance would be allowed only in the case of emergencies or at Special Sessions. Chris had the honor and responsibility of making the formal motion in front of the 1,000+ member audience during the meeting. Sandy Faust shared that the NCS Delegates approved the creation of the National Gold Award Scholarship Fund. She then introduced a short video from the GSEP Gold Award Girl Scout who received the \$10,000 scholarship this year, Tatyana U. from Berks County, who is currently a first-year student at Franklin & Marshall.

Girl member (and NCS Delegate) Stella T. explained the next proposal that was approved, which changed the timing of when councils will learn how many delegates they are entitled to elect (instead of one year before NCS, GSUSA will now send the official number of delegates two years prior to NCS). Stella clarified that this new timeline means that GSEP's next cohort of NCS Delegates will be elected in 2025 for the 2026 NCS.

The final proposal that passed was about adding anti-racism language to the Constitution of GSUSA. Sophia Faust shared that the original motion was amended to include additional proactive language stating that our Movement would remove "systemic barriers to participation" in our programs, activities, events, and the communities we serve.

The group then reported on the three proposals which were defeated, starting with a motion to have at least three Council CEOs be members of the National Board. Ellen Iobst explained that the original intention for this concept was to increase and enhance communication and transparency between the National Board and local Councils, and throughout the last triennium, this relationship has improved so this idea was not a necessity.

Girl member (and NCS Delegate) Anika S. shared the next proposal that was not passed, which had to do with changing the ratio to determine the number of NCS Delegates for each Council. The NCS Delegates did not approve this, since the National Board already has the power to change the ratio (which it has done for the last few National Council Sessions).

The final proposal that was defeated centered on removing the words "try" and "do my best" from the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Deb Walters and Katelyn O. explained that NCS Delegates from across the country were very vocal in either supporting or opposing this change in language. This topic generated very passionate arguments on both sides, but

ultimately, this proposal did not pass because the delegates were persuaded that removing the concept of trying was too stressful and did not reflect the safe, supportive environment of discovery and exploration that Girl Scouting creates.

Devyn Stek then reported that a new National Board President (Noorain Khan) was elected, along with new Officers and other Members at-Large. The NCS Delegates also voted on new National Board Development Committee members, including Debbie Hassan, GSEP's former Board Chair.

CEO Kim Fraites-Dow then addressed the anti-racism commitment that is now renewed and strengthened due to the proposal that passed. She stated that GSEP is looking at the processes and procedures in Girl Scouting with a lens toward equitable access. For example, a team of staff and community leaders are working on an initiative to introduce the Silver and Gold Awards as an entry point for new girl members to learn the leadership skills embedded in all Girl Scout programs; the pilot is focused on recruiting girls in the city of Philadelphia. Linda Mills commented that rural girls would benefit as well. Kim explained that this program will benefit girls throughout our entire footprint as it continues to be developed.

### **Strategy Café**

Nicole LeVine introduced the discussion topic of national governance by first sharing information from GSUSA on the responsibilities of the National Board (making strategic decisions for the entire Movement and overseeing management of GSUSA in service to the entire Movement). She also explained how the NCS Advisory Team and National Board prepared the NCS Delegates by offering webinars and surveys in the months leading up to and breakout discussions during the National Council Session. A new Movement Governance Advisory team is being created and is soliciting input from all Councils on how to improve Girl Scout governance processes moving forward.

Small group discussions, facilitated by the 2023 NCS Delegates and other volunteers, were then held and the attendees focused on answering these four questions:

- 1) What do you wish you knew about our Movement governance?
- 2) What national governance issues do you think our National Council delegates should be bringing to the attention of Movement leadership?
- 3) What societal or girl-related issues do you think Girl Scouting needs to address to continue to be relevant and grow?
- 4) What would you like to know more about when it comes to being a National Council delegate from our council?

During the large group report-outs, common themes emerged:

- More education and more communication on governance is needed.
- Anti-racism and inclusivity in general needs to be a priority and be acted on throughout the entire Movement.
- Gender identity issues, including welcoming gender neutral individuals, should be explored and individuals supported (including offering training to volunteers).
- Mental health is a primary concern for girls today.
- Programming for older girls (including education on the Gold Award) should be a priority; this includes training and communications for leaders as well.

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

- GSEP's Delegate Council members want to learn more about the National Council and are eager to hear additional information on how to apply and how to make a proposal for the 2026 NCS.

### **Closing**

Board Chair Nicole LeVine thanked everyone for their input and stated that she was proud of everyone for speaking their truths.

Nicole then 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 will be included in the Governance Bulletin. Nicole 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](mailto:governance@gsep.org).

She reminded the Delegate Council that the next meeting will be on January 22 and will be entirely virtual. This new Winter Delegate Council meeting was added because the Service Unit Delegates and Girl Delegates requested additional meetings and more communications.

Nicole adjourned the Fall Delegate Council Meeting at 8:36 p.m.

*Please email any questions, concerns, or thoughts to [governance@gsep.org](mailto:governance@gsep.org)*