PASTA NEWSLETTER
# 49 - August 2006

PASTA is the acronym of the Professional Association of Student Representative Council Teacher/Advisors. Founded in New South Wales, Australia, in February 1995, our Association exists to support in whatever ways possible those who work with and support programs of student participation, representation and leadership.

SEE OUR MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION AND APPLICATION FORM ON THE WEBSITE

PASS THE PASTA

DO YOU ‘DO IT’?

Recoginse/Record/Report
Recognising adviser and student efforts can be done in multiple ways. Amongst other matters in this special 8 page issue we ask for your input on how participation, representation and leadership activities are recorded and reported within your school and / or state. In future issues we aim to explore this important aspect of education in greater depth.

‘Effectively Meet’
This issue also contains another instalment in the Effective Meetings Series. On page 10 we ask for your feedback on approaching topics this way and what future topics to cover.

Renew Memberships
This new financial year issue also reminds everyone that PASTA membership fees are now due. Volunteer associations such as ours can only continue to lobby, to publish, to network and promote activities if individuals, schools and other institutions are willing to put a modest amount of money annually (less than half a single day’s casual relief cost!) into being financial members. See box inside - page 10.

Promote and Publicise
In her Tour Report (see pages 11 to 14), Ella Colley of Fort Street High School, made this comment about one aspect of NASC’s 75th Year Diamond Jubilee Conference: “We found that there were far too many presentations and speeches about NASC.”

While respecting that student view, as we always do, we also recognise the very real need to advertise, communicate and, in effect, self-promote what one does. We warmly congratulate NASC (and its parent organisation, the National Association of Secondary School Principals in the USA) for 75 years of national support in this field.

In Australia we also congratulate Connect on its 27th year and Rising Generations on its recent 3rd National Leadership Camp. Perhaps a national SRC body is still possible?

NSW DET SRC CONFERENCE
We also congratulate the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET), which recently held its 19th annual state SRC Conference for government secondary schools. Begun in 1988 (with its offshoot, the NSW SRC, in 1991-92), it is, to the best of our collective knowledge, the longest sustained state-level school SRC activity in Australia. While, sadly, it has not as yet recognised PASTA, nor our annual overseas SRC Leadership Tours, as activities worth promoting properly in its own schools, it is nevertheless understandable that those NSW government school students representing Australia on our recent tour spoke so enthusiastically about it at the 70th NASC Conference. Such cross-promotion of each other’s valuable initiatives is something all SRC groups and states should attempt. Now more than ever. Repeat: “Do you ‘DO IT’?”

9th OVERSEAS SRC LEADERSHIP TOUR
But ultimately, of course, it comes down to having the honesty and the courage to recognise one’s own. For that, the over 200 Aussie students who have, over the past nine years, benefited from this unique international opportunity, the nearly 20,000 North Americans who have learned more about Australia from them, genuinely and with great gratitude, thank Ken and Sue Page. Without these two generous and persistent SRC Advisers and ‘in loco parentis’ leaders, the organisational obstacles, the creative missed opportunities, and, especially, the thundering silences would have put paid to this project long before. That we have achieved our 9th Tour, moving so amicably with NASC into its remarkable 8th decade of development, is, more than anything else, a tribute to the persistence and generosity of Ken and Sue.

• Thanks ‘Ma’ and ‘Pa’ (and Ellen).
• Thanks to schools that send delegates.
• Thanks NASC, CASAA and host schools.
• Thanks parents, friends and members.
• Thanks to those who still have vision.

Charles Kingston, Vice President
As highlighted in ‘Pass The PASTA’, the need for recognition, recording and reporting of what is done is both essential and courteous. It is needed to sustain motivation and support. It is a means of saying ‘well done’, ‘thank you’ or ‘more could be done’. It is assumed as necessary accountability in all curriculum areas within a school. Why, therefore, is there so much ‘bad practice’, so much inconsistency, so much silence, in relation to this field?

Part of the answer, of course, has been discussed many times in relation to the very issue of ‘curriculum’. We maintain that so long as the common jargon in schools continues to refer to these activities as ‘extra-curricular’ and the common practice is NOT to report them on the same report forms together with more ‘acceptable’ KLA subject fields, student, parents and teaching colleagues will continue to view them as dispensable, therefore less creditable. No matter how vibrant a school’s activities program, without due and regular recording and reporting of such, we will continue to hear the regular complaints that ‘so and so misses too much schoolwork’ or ‘SRC doesn’t DO anything’.

It is of particular current relevance to explore this issue in some depth now. The Australian Commonwealth Government is seriously pursuing the agenda of national reporting standards and practices. Many schools are devoting their Semester 2 Development Days and professional development efforts to analysing their own current practice and ‘rewriting’ report forms.

Significantly and rightly, the draft guidelines from government sources include explicit mention of activities as an area that needs to be considered in looking at reporting issues. In future issues we aim to explore this important aspect of education in greater depth. To do so adequately, we need ‘best practice’ and ‘poor practice’ examples from you. Please email or phone us. Whether you have only anecdotal examples, or a well-documented and effective reporting plan, we want to know about it.

FEEDBACK PLEASE:
The latest instalment in our ‘Effective Meetings’ Series is on pages 15 and 16 of this newsletter. It covers some aspects of Parliamentary Procedure. We would very much like to hear from you with your comments on the usefulness of this material so far. Which details have been most helpful? Which redundant? What are the most effective means you have used within your organisation? How easy or difficult was it to put them into practice? What further matters about ‘effective meetings’ should we deal with?

Similarly, we would like to know if you find this ‘series’ approach to leadership, representation and participation activities the ‘best way to go’. With only four pages for most of our Newsletters, there is naturally a limit to how much we can cover in any one issue. However, with more of you joining us as members, it would be possible to expand and go into greater depth. If you have an alternative topic you would like dealt with in this manner – or by more pages per issue devoted to things like ‘effective representation’ or ‘recording and reporting achievement’ or ‘communications’ or ‘community service’ or ‘motivation’ or ??? – please contact us. As always, we ask for your input on this and other issues.
2006 PASTA
Australia - North American
SRC Leadership Tour

15th June – 20th July

This report is a condensed version of the Tour Report submitted by Australian Delegation Student President Ella Colley at the conclusion of the tour. Ella was assisted in her NASC Conference representative duties by Liz Cooper and, at other times, by the other delegates.

On this, PASTA’s 9th annual Tour to student and advisor Leadership Activities in North America, Australian schools were represented by the following student and advisor delegates from NSW:

• Asquith Girls HS (Libby Brickley, Lucy Footes-Short)
• Fort Street HS (Ella Colley)
• Normanhurst Boys HS (Dominic Woodward)
• Goulburn HS (Liz Cooper)
• Murrumburah HS (Scott Ceeney)
• Bomaderry HS (Ellie Royal)
• James Fallon HS in Albury (Josh Haberfield)
• Advisors on Tour were Ken Page, Sue Page (Narara Valley HS) and Ellen Sheerin (Asquith GHS)

Host Organisation 1: Bordentown Regional HS, New Jersey

We arrived in Philadelphia to be met by the loud and lovely Mike Nolan, Student Council Adviser. ‘Doc’ has to be congratulated for organising our adventures for the week and looking after us as well as he and his student council did... Bordentown was a fantastic place and we all had a great week. Everything was new, and the simplest things excited us: WalMart, fire hydrants, the size of pizza slices. We had discussions that lasted hours comparing words and attempting to copy each other’s accents. People we spent time with were all kind, fun, generous and interesting, and we connected with them in a way we never believed to be possible in such a short time. During the week we attended school, class and graduation nights, toured both the new and the old Bordentown Regional High Schools, ‘hiked’ in the Poconos mountains, visited Ocean and Atlantic Cities, went to New York City and saw the World Trade Centre Site and Phantom of the Opera on
Broadway, and had various social events. Seeing the new school was amazing but frustrating at the same time—both because it’s unfair that the majority of schools aren’t like it but also because so much of it seemed unnecessary... There’s no question we’ve made some lifelong friends in B-town New Jersey.

We met some amazing people but didn’t get the chance to become close as we were so busy. Our buses would pick us up at 7am and not drop us home until midnight. All day it was constant workshops, general sessions, activities, chanting... The workshop we Australians did, on ‘Motivation’, was popular. We dealt with motivating self, school and community, our country and global issues. However, the hectic schedule took away from some of the positive things. ... Overall the week was fun and an incredible experience, but not as beneficial to us as student leaders and our school communities as we had anticipated and hoped.

Host Organisation 2
70th NASC Conference:
North Penn HS, Lansdale, PA

Two thousand people (approximately 500 of whom were SRC advisers) from all over the USA, Puerto Rico, Canada and Australia came together for the 70th National Association of Student Council Conference in this, the 75th Jubilee Celebration year of NASC. Host school, North Penn HS, a Year 10-12 school with over 3,500 students, has over 120 different student activity groups. Like the entire state of Pennsylvania, it also has a long tradition of student government. Like all host Conference schools, the North Penn student government association had had to bid years ago for the right to hold this event.

It was a fantastically fun week. Everyone wanted a chance to meet and trade with the “Arrsees”... and some just wanted to ask silly questions: “Australia, is that on the East or the West Coast?”, “Is it true that Australia is so clean you don’t have to wear shoes?”, “Can you speak without your accent?” to name just a few.

Host Organisation 3:
Hagerstown High Schools and the Maryland Association of Student Councils

After the NASC Conference we stayed in Hagerstown Maryland... We went to Washington DC, Cunningham Falls and celebrated 4th July at the Antietam Civil War Battlefield with music from the Maryland Symphony Orchestra, saw a baseball match and spent a day at Hershey Park... the activities planned for us were a good combination of what everyone wanted to do – educational and otherwise. Our host families were lovely, although many of us were staying with teachers rather than students.

It gave us a chance to bond again as a group. At the conference we had no time just to socialise with each other. It would have been nice to have more time just to hang around and get to know the kids better because the best thing about everywhere we went was the people, and we felt there weren’t enough chances to just spend time with them without doing anything else... as with everywhere we went, it was extremely hard to say goodbye.
Host Organisation 4:
Sioux City Iowa Combined High Schools

Up until this point every time we’d told someone that we were going to Iowa we’d received a rather shocked and negative response. It didn’t matter at all to us that Sioux City wasn’t the most exciting place in the world because we had one of the greatest weeks. It was relaxing, fun, real, comforting and completely exceeded all expectations. Every moment was exciting, and we didn’t have to be seeing important monuments or special buildings to experience that.

We spent time at various host family houses, swimming, playing pool and watching videos, we went bowling and of course paint balling, ate at various places around the city, learnt a lot about the Lewis and Clark expedition, attended an SRC meeting, watched a baseball and indoor football game, went to the Wayne Chicken Show, had a day with our host families and spent a day at Riverside Park playing Scattegories, beading and using the Waterslide. All of these activities were extremely laid back and social, we got to sleep in every morning and spend time every day with our families, and the plans were always flexible.

Host Organisation 4:
Mason Leadership Camp Lake Tahoe 2006

This week was definitely a highlight for all of us... The location was beautiful and definitely contributed to the dreamlike atmosphere of the camp. We attended summits about communication, team building and group process, goal setting, organisation, problem solving, and decision-making and honouring diversity. All of these summits provided us with new skills and ideas to take back home and use to benefit our schools and communities. We shared ideas on different event topics in the 'swap shop', got to know someone new personally in the "one on one" activity, and became extremely close to our 'councils', while also bonding well with people outside these groups.

Some of the activities taught us a lot about ourselves and the world. One activity, 'crossing the line', forced us to face up to some things in our past which we don’t like to think about. Although it was extremely personal and potentially intrusive, it was an important experience and we definitely learnt a lot about ourselves.

The Camp theme, 'the Sound of Leadership' provided us with some very good base material for many of the activities and workshops. Everything we did was fun and practical, and there was never a dull moment.
Without this camp we would not have benefited nearly as much from the trip as we all learnt so much about leadership and got so many new practical ideas to implement within our schools. We all had a different experience because we were put in different councils and this again had a positive impact because we had more to share once we were together again as a group... By this stage we should have been used to parting but it definitely didn’t get any easier, especially because we had shared so much with this group of people.

Host City:  
**San Francisco California**

The few days in San Francisco were extremely necessary to complete the trip. Without it we would never have had a chance to catch up as a group and reflect on the trip before going home. This was essential. We didn’t plan too much and that was good. We got the chance to do our own things as well as enjoy time together as a group. The only thing that was planned, our trip to Alcatraz, was an amazing and educational experience that we all enjoyed, despite the cold.

The trip as a whole changed each of us in different ways. Even the experience of being away for that long and learning to look after oneself had a significant impact. We learnt a great deal about ourselves and becoming the people we wanted to be and the importance of communication and compromise in a group circumstance. We were taught many valuable lessons in leadership, especially the importance of involving everyone and working as a team.

We have become more than great friends. We are like family now and we will never forget the things we’ve shared and the ways in which we’ve touched each other. Even the bad food, strange toilets and near constant airline stuff-ups contributed to the overall, unforgettable, amazing, life changing experience. Thanks to everyone who contributed and made this trip what it was.

Ella Colley  
*Fort Street High School*


**Contact the PASTA Secretary.**

The *PASTA Newsletter* is edited by Ken Page and distributed bi-monthly as a supplement to *Connect* magazine.

http://www.hsc.csu.edu.au/pta/pasta/
In the February 2006 issue we provided some general principles, hints on planning and effectiveness, and a checklist of details not to be overlooked. In April and June’s second and third segments we listed some responsibilities of officers and some alternatives to formal parliamentary procedures.

So far this series has deliberately avoided discussing parliamentary procedure. The reason for that is simple. Students find it complex. (So, by the way, do most adults!)

Yet, in a democracy, it is essential that citizens have a least a modicum of understanding as to how group decisions are meant to be formally reached by the governments they elect. And the best way to do that, as educators keep saying but don’t always practice, is practice. As representative leaders, at the very pinnacle of that practice should be the SRC, and other designated ‘leadership teams’, within not just the local school, but in district, state, national and international bodies as well.

The gradual growth of children into, if given half the chance, the potentially productive active citizens they can be during their teenage years should include practice in how to formally put forward suggestions in a group (‘moving motions’); ways of wording ideas to reflect what is really intended as well as what is practically possible (‘putting forward amendments’); and making intelligent, considered judgments about a group’s course of action (‘voting on the question’). Plus at least some of the rest of what is so often perceived by the unpracticed as the ‘complex jargon’ and ‘complicated steps’ involved in running meetings according to Roberts Rules of Order.

In this fourth instalment on Effective Meetings, we begin to address the sometimes ‘vexed’ issue of educating students – and their advisers - to become familiar and comfortable using parliamentary procedures. It is ‘vexed’ when it bogs down. Let’s make a start at unblocking the bog.

**It is one of the best ways of keeping your meeting on track**

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**Important Advantages of Parliamentary Procedure**
- Justice and courtesy are extended to each person.
- Only one item of business is considered at a time.
- The majority opinion is maintained.
- The rights of the minority are respected.
- This is the oldest and best known technique for conducting business.
- There is an established/standardised procedure for dealing with all facets of a meeting.

**Some Potential Disadvantages of Parliamentary Procedure**
- It may become so complicated that it obstructs, restrains, or hinders group discussion or action.
- It is not universally known or understood.
- It may not be the best technique for securing ideas and suggestions in regard to the problems involved.
- It does not encourage creativity.

**PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE:**
**Meeting responsibilities**
SRC Officers and members have specific tasks for parliamentary procedure.

*See the April 2006 issue of this PASTA Newsletter for a list of these.*

**SRC SKILLS CURRICULUM:**
**Meeting Skills Activity:**

**“CHOP OFF YOUR HEAD!’ the Chairperson Said”**
This is a role play activity for a medium to large sized group. It is a fun but practical way to teach formal meeting procedures, parliamentary procedures and the formal roles of officers within such meetings ... This original activity was developed in the early 1980s through the NSW Regional Association of Student Government, a precursor to the NSW State Conferences (1988) and the NSW SRC (1991-2). Like all relevant resources, whether acquired in Australia or overseas, it can be adapted according to the current state of practice within your SRC or other leadership group.

*See the April 2004 issue of this PASTA Newsletter for a summary. Or contact our Secretary.*
Parliamentary Procedure Jargon: What the Terms Mean

- **ADDRESS THE CHAIR**: to speak to the presiding officer.
- **ADJOURN**: to dismiss or end a meeting.
- **AGENDA**: a list of items to be discussed or dealt with at a meeting.
- **AMEND**: to change or modify a motion.
- **BALLOT**: to vote by the casting of a written ballot.
- **CHAIR**: the presiding officer of the meeting.
- **EX-OFFICIO**: by virtue of office, as “The president is an ‘ex-officio’ member of that committee.”
- **LAY QUESTION ON THE TABLE**: to put aside a motion for further consideration at another meeting.
- **MAJORITY VOTE**: the votes of more than half the members present voting at the meeting (unless otherwise stated).
- **MEETING**: gathering of the organisation’s members.
- **MINUTES**: the record or report of work of each meeting kept by the secretary.
- **MAKE A MOTION**: to propose a certain project be done by the organisation. Say: "I move that we ...."
- **NEW BUSINESS**: business that has been brought up for the first time.
- **NOMINATION**: suggesting the name of a person for an office to be used at a time of election. Although not a motion it may require a seconder, depending on the organisation’s constitution.
- **OBTAIN THE FLOOR**: to obtain the right to speak, permission and recognition being given by the chairperson. No one may speak unless recognised by the chairperson.
- **POINT OF ORDER**: seeking to clarify or correct procedure or business.
- **PRO-TEM**: for the time being, as “She/he is secretary pro-tem,” acting in place of the secretary who is absent.
- **THE QUESTION or CALL FOR THE QUESTION**: the motion before the assembly. When members wish to close the discussion and put the matter to a vote they may “call the question.”
- **QUORUM**: the number of members necessary to carry on the business. Refer to your organisation’s constitution for number for majority.
- **REFER TO A COMMITTEE**: to put certain work in the hands of a small group of people which is better able to consider the matter than the whole organisation. The committee must report its results at a later meeting.
- **SECOND**: an indication that at least a second person is in favour of discussing a motion. Main motions must be “seconded.”
- **SPECIAL COMMITTEE**: a committee appointed for some particular purpose.
- **STANDING COMMITTEE**: a committee provided for in the constitution, usually appointed for one year.
- **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**: business that has been carried from a previous meeting.
- **WITHDRAW A MOTION**: a motion permitting a previous motion to be withdrawn. It is not debatable, and cannot be amended, but may be reconsidered.

**How it works:**

The following types of motions can be examined, with examples, in more detail in further instalments of this series. In the meantime, if your group is already using these – or useful variations - which actually work well for you - please send on useful anecdotal material which will support the case that student groups can successfully learn and use parliamentary procedures.

1. **The Main Motion**: The major proposal for action; the only way to bring business before the group.

2. **Subsidiary Motions**: Alter or change the main motion; always acted upon before the main motion.

3. **Privileged Motions**: Of such importance or urgency that they outrank all other motions.

4. **Incidental Motions**: Concern matters of procedure arising out of business; must be settled at once.

5. **Unclassified Motions**: Those not classified above; cannot be made if any other matter is pending.

A ‘Chart for Handling Motions’:

This useful summary can also be provided if requested. It covers – in tabled form – the correct formal procedures and responses for these items:

- **TYPES OF MOTIONS**;
- **INTERRUPT SPEAKER**;
- **SECOND REQUIRED**;
- **DEBATABLE**;
- **AMENDABLE**;
- **VOTE NEEDED**;
- **RECONSIDER**;
- **REMARKS**