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CASC Advisors Planner

Official Newsletter of the Connecticut Association of Student Councils

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CAS-CIAC 30 Realty Drive, Cheshire, CT 06410



Director's Corner

You did it! You made it through the first 4 months of school, and they were an exciting 4 months! Homecoming Dances, Spirit Weeks, service activities, state events, local traditions, if you can name it then you were involved with it. And now we find the new year just weeks away. A new year means new opportunities and a new start. (and 6 months until summer break!) There is something refreshing about the beginning of the year. It is almost as if it is the beginning of a journey. We inevitably succumb to the requisite making of new year resolutions. Promises to ourselves to be better in this new year, to let old things go and tackle challenges with a renewed sense of vigor.

This is one of the longest newsletters we have ever published, but there is much to champion and share! Briefly you will find::

- Applications for CASC Board are open (ctstuco.com),
- applications for CASC awards and recognitions are open (ctstuco.com),
- there is an important update from NatStuCo,
- finally there is some really exciting upcoming activities from the CASC board in their section!

The Executive Board at its last meeting took the following actions::

- Approval of the Host Convention School Report,
- Approval of the proposed amendments to the Associations Bylaws,
- Expansion of the Dale Hawley award to recognize 1 High school and 1 Middle School student.

I hope you have a relaxing few weeks until break, and that you and your families have a relaxing winter break!

Be safe, and as always thank you for your continued support of CASC and its mission of building up student leadership in Connecticut. Remember to stay above the line!

Christopher Tomlin CASC Executive Director

Upcoming State Important Dates::

DECEMBER

December 1-3:: NA4SA (NAWD) Annual National Conference on Student Activities (HS/MS) Check <u>www.nawd.com</u> for more details as we get closer to this event.

JANUARY

January 25-28:: NatStuCo LEAD Conference, Washington D.C.(HS/MS)

Leadership, Experience, And Development for students and advisers—that's what LEAD conferences are all about. The premier national conference for student leaders and the educators who support them, LEAD is a program of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). <u>https://lead.nassp.org/</u>

FEBRUARY

February 15:: NatStuCo Council of Excellence application award deadline. (HS/MS)

February 15:: CASC Student Executive Board applications due. CASC Award applications due. (HS/MS) Council of Excellence, Top Ten Project, Dale Hawley Award, The Ron Nedovich Advisor of the Year Award. <u>https://www.ctstuco.com/recognition</u>

Update from NatStuCo

NatStuCo/NSC is a national network that empowers and equips your students to develop and hone their leadership skills. It provides the framework to transform your students into the next generation of leaders and includes milestones to recognize and celebrate their progress. Recently NatStuCo has been going through a revamp and I am pleased to share the following information that was shared with me from them. If you are not already a member I would highly encourage your SCG to join.

Our Vision:

At NASSP, we are dedicated to cultivating a generation of courageous school and student leaders to reimagine and rebuild an education system that meets every student's needs by providing equitable access and opportunity.

Student councils are vital to this vision as they nurture future leaders at local, state, national, and even international levels. By fostering a dedication to education in today's student council members, we pave the way for increased focus, investment, and support for k-12 education in the generations to come. This forward-thinking vision is our driving force, motivating all our endeavors. That's why we're eager to collaborate with your state association.

To develop a strategy to achieve this vision, we have spent the past year and a half undertaking various initiatives, including:

- 1. Conducting an extensive audit of NASC.
- 2. Forming ambassador groups comprising principals, advisers, and students who served as focus groups.
- 3. Conducting comprehensive NASC member surveys to better understand advisers' and students' needs, preferences, gaps, and opportunities.
- 4. Delving into historical data on conferences, program engagement, membership, and more.

At the meeting in San Francisco, we shared five key updates informed by the efforts listed above:

1. Rebrand & Relaunch:

We are thrilled to announce that we are restoring the original name and branding of the National Association of Student Councils (NASC), discontinuing the use of the NatStuCo name and branding. The rebrand and relaunch of NASC will be officially introduced at our January LEAD conference in Washington, D.C., taking place from Jan. 26-28, 2024. We will also be launching digital and mail campaigns to support this transition. Importantly, there will be no changes to existing NatStuCo memberships, which will seamlessly transition into NASC.

2. New NASC Website:

In conjunction with the rebrand, we are excited to launch a brand-new NASC website in January 2024. This website has been meticulously designed based on nearly two years of tracking user data, A/B testing, and member feedback to deliver an optimized user experience. Once launched, we'll continue testing and optimizing to improve the site. Our focus is on providing advisers with key resources from our extensive archive to facilitate the management of their councils. Additionally, the website will showcase the depth and richness of NASC's remarkable history.

3. National Student Council:

NASC is establishing the National Student Council (NSC), a body of elected and appointed student leaders from across the United States. The NSC will represent the perspectives and interests of middle and high school students in national

dialogues. This initiative will give students a voice at the federal level, ensuring that their viewpoints are included in conversations about their education, schools, educators, and futures. We plan to facilitate opportunities for NSC members to engage with the media, including prominent outlets such as CNN and The Washington Post, as well as meetings at the White House, Congress, and the Department of Education. There are two pathways for students to participate in the NSC: either by running for one of the eight officer positions or through nomination by state student council associations as state representatives on the council. Applications for the National Student Council officer positions will open in March 2024, and state associations must submit their nominations for state representatives in September 2024. Please refer to the attached presentation from the NASSCED annual meeting and the National Student Council bylaws for detailed information. (The CASC Executive Board voted at its last board meeting to participate in this program.)

4. NASC Scholarship:

We are delighted to introduce a new scholarship program to recognize exceptional student leaders who have demonstrated remarkable leadership within their council, school, and community. We will award \$100,000 to 80 outstanding students from NASC member schools. Applications for this scholarship will open in the Fall of 2024, with winners selected in early 2025. The top recipients and their advisers will have the opportunity to attend an all-expenses-paid trip to DC for NASSP's National Education Leadership Awards in April 2025, along with awardees of the National Honor Society scholarship, National Principal of the Year, and National Assistant Principal of the Year.

5. NASC National Student Council Conference:

The NASC National Student Council Conference is making its return in early 2025! Extensive NASC member surveys have guided us in establishing a conference that aligns with the needs, desires, and expectations of NASC advisers and students. A strong majority of survey respondents prefer the Jan-March timeframe for the conference, with less than 10% favoring the summer, which has historically been the conference period. We have received valuable feedback from surveys and focus groups about the challenges of hosting the conference during the summer, given competing priorities and advisers' preference for keeping their summer break. We are in the process of refining the conference format through additional surveys and focus groups and aim to announce details as soon as possible in early 2024.

From the Executive Board

Officer Applications now open

Applications are now being accepted for students wanting to serve on the association's Executive Board. Applications must be submitted on our website <u>https://www.ctstuco.com</u> and received on or before midnight, February 15.

Contact the Executive Director with any questions ctomlin@casciac.org

The following positions are open on the board::

- President/Host convention school (1 year position)
- Secretary Treasurer (1 year position)
- Middle School Member at Large (1 year position)
- District
 - North District (2 year school position)
- Southern District (2 year school position) Staff
 - Parliamentarian (1 year position)

- Historian/Archivist (1 year position)
- Student Workshop Coordinator (1 year position)
- Legislative Affairs Coordinator (1 year position)
- Service Coordinator (1 year position)
- Mental Health Affairs Coordinator (1 year position)

State Awards Program

Applications are now being accepted for all CASC Awards. If your Student Council/Government, or a member of it, has shown a commitment to *Citizenship*, *Recognition*, *Inspiration*, *Service*, *Engagement*, *and Spirit*, now is the time to celebrate their accomplishments and hard work by applying for one of CASC's awards.

As an award recipient, your will receive:

- An official certificate from CASC
- School name announced at Convention, as well as published in the advisors newsletter and on the CASC website.

Applications must be submitted on our website <u>https://www.ctstuco.com/recognition</u> and received on or before February 15.

Contact the Executive Director with any questions ctomlin@casciac.org

Awards for SCG's::

- **CASC Council of Excellence Award.** Has been designated to recognize and reward the achievements of outstanding Student Councils or Student Governments in our state association. This award has been created as a way of providing encouragement and support to SCGs, as well as to provide standards of effective student leadership. To be eligible, your school must provide information related to your SCG operations, fundraising, communications, service learning, etc.
- **Top Projects Award.** Recognize Student Councils/Governments across Connecticut that have established a group project to better themselves, their community, or other communities. If your SCG is selected as a Top 10 Project, your SCG will be invited to present at our Spring Convention and receive recognition for your project. Submissions for this award will include a simple application, description of your project, and a 300 word essay about why your project should be considered for the award.

Awards for Students::

• Dale Hawley Award Individual student leadership contributions at the state level will be recognized this year through the Dale Hawley award. Dale Hawley's life was dedicated to youth, service and the development of student leaders, as a principal and director of the National Association of Student Councils. This award is given based on nominations. If you have a student leader who exemplifies these values be sure to nominate them for this award. Two students are recognized by this award, one to a high school student and one to a middle school student.

Awards for Advisors::

• The Ron Nedovich Advisor of the Year Award This award is given in memory of the former Executive Director of Connecticut Association of Student Councils. Mr. Nedovich recognized the importance of leadership education,

and development for all students. This award is to be given to one outstanding advisor, and will recognize the many contributions that advisors have made all over the state.

State President

Hey, Connecticut!

I have been working closely with this year's convention chair to lead Woodland Regional High School's Student Government in preparing for this year's convention: Leadership Out of This World. We have been planning everything for this experience, which will invite all student councils and governments in Connecticut to take their leadership out of this world on March 8, 2024. Whether it's decorations, workshops, or technology, we are hard at work to ensure that students will walk away with a lot of valuable skills from Convention.

Until then, all students should get involved in our committees, which are a low-commitment opportunity for students to be involved in state-level projects. We have committees for all interests, including Service, Mental Health, Workshops, Legislative Affairs, and Social Media!

If you have any questions or would like to connect, please do not hesitate to reach me at presidentctstuco@gmail.com

Yasmeen Galal '24 Woodland Regional High School

Student Workshop Coordinator

The call for workshop presenters google form for the 2024 CASC Convention will be sent out this month! If you are interested in signing up to present a workshop, be on the lookout for the google form. Additionally, our two training sessions for workshop presenting will be 2/5/24 and 2/24/24. Anyone who wants to present a workshop for CASC must come to these two trainings. Please feel free to reach out with any questions!!

Jenaris Belgrave CIBA

Legislative Affairs Coordinator

Following the success of Mock Legislative Day, the Legislative Affairs Committee is looking into ways to lobby for some of the legislation we passed in the Connecticut General Assembly. Keep a look out for more ways to get involved in state-level legislating, as well as for some exciting events and speakers at Convention and further down the road!

Charli Hughes '24 Woodland Regional High School legaffairscommitteecasc@gmail.com

Service Project Coordinator

The 2023-2024 service project is centered around environmental injustice and climate resolutions. The project aims to promote healthy climate practices and make the younger generation more aware of their impact on the planet and will span from late December to early February. This year's service project, the production of a children's book, will educate many parents, teachers, and students on ways they can directly help reduce fossil fuel usage. Children should want to strive towards a green future.

The overarching goal of the project is to produce a fifteen-page children's book featuring artwork from elementary school students. The project is framed as a state-wide competition amongst various elementary schools. An instruction booklet, created by the service committee, will be given to various Board Of Education offices/educators/student council members.

Currently, the service committee is working on outreach as well as creating a short video focused on climate resolutions.

Students shall illustrate their ideas of what environmental care looks like based on given sentences, which make up the text of the book. The goal is to ensure that student council volunteers partaking in the project help guide children in the process of their understanding of the environment.

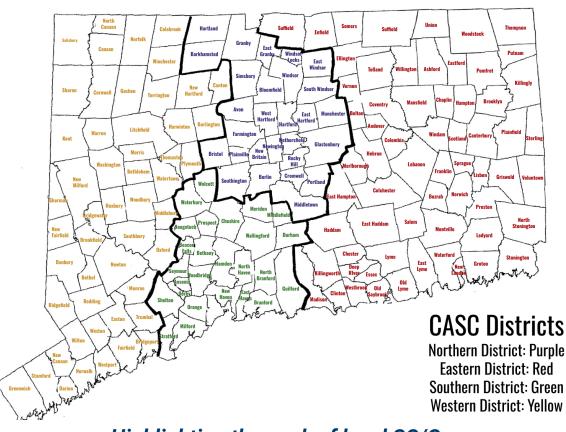
> Suprya Sarkar '25 Sheehan High School <u>servicecasc@gmail.com</u>

Mental Health Affairs Coordinator

The Mental Health Committee will be hosting a virtual Self Care Night, more details will be available soon.

Kaltrina Ameti '25 Woodland Regional High School <u>cascmh@gmail.com</u>

Districts in Action



Highlighting the work of local SC/Gs

Northern District - CIBA

Naya Chae '24, Vice President; Thierry Ofori '25, District Coordinator; Rachel Buck, Advisor

District Members:

Achievement First, Aerospace & Engineering, Avon, Berlin, Bloomfield, Bristol Central, Bristol Eastern, Bulkeley, Cheney Tech, Classical Magnet, Conard, Connecticut IB Academy, Cromwell, East Catholic, East Granby, East Hartford, East Windsor, Farmington, Glastonbury, Goodwin Tech, Granby Memorial, Hall, Hartford Magnet, Trinity College Academy, Hartford Public, Manchester, Mercy, Metropolitan Learning Center, Middletown, New Britain, Newington, Northwest Catholic, Plainville, Portland, Prince Tech, Rocky Hill, Science & Innovation, Simsbury, SMSA, South Windsor, Southington, St. Paul Catholic, University, Vinal Tech, Wethersfield, Windsor, Windsor Locks, Xavier

Eastern District - NFA

Elya Anor, Vice President; Kinnick Campbell, District Coordinator; Lorraine Dooley, Advisor

The student government at Norwich Free Academy held a blood drive on November 1 and collected over 20 pints of blood from students and staff. We also gathered donations for the local food pantry for Thanksgiving.

District Members:

Academy of the Holy Family, Bacon Academy, Bolton, Coventry, Daniel Hand, East Hampton, East Lyme, Ellington, Ellis Tech, Enfield, EO Smith, Griswold, Grosso Tech, Haddam-Killingworth, Killingly, Ledyard, Lyman Memorial, Montville, Morgan, Nathan Hale Ray, New London, NFA, Norwich Tech, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, Parish Hill, Plainfield, Public Safety Academy, Putnam, RHAM, Robert E. Fitch, Rockville, Somers, St. Bernard, Stafford, Stonington, Suffield, Tolland, Tourtellotte Memorial, Valley Regional, Waterford, Westbrook, Wheeler,Windham, Windham Tech, Woodstock Academy

Southern District - Notre Dame High School, West Haven

Mickey Dowd '24, Vice President; Matthew Prato '24, District Coordinator; Casey LaMonaca, Advisor

District Members:

Amity, Ansonia, Branford, Bunnell, Cheshire, Coginchaug, Cooperative Arts And Humanities, Crosby, Derby, East Haven, Eli Whitney Tech, Emmet O'Brien Tech, Engineering and Science University Magnet, Foran, Guilford, Hamden, High School In The Community, Hill Regional Career Magnet, Hillhouse, Holy Cross, John F. Kennedy, Jonathan Law, Kaynor Tech, Lauralton Hall, Lyman Hall, Maloney, Mark T. Sheehan, Metropolitan Business Academy, Naugatuck, New Haven Academy Magnet, North Branford, North Haven, Notre Dame-West Haven, Orville H. Platt, Platt Tech, Riverside Academy, Sacred Heart Academy, Seymour, Shelton, Sound School, Stratford, Waterbury Career, West Haven, Wilbur Cross, Wilby, Wilcox Tech, Wolcott, Woodland Regional

Western District - Thomaston High School

Cierra O'Sullivan '24, Vice President; Emily Morton '25, District Coordinator; Terri Franzi, Advisor

District Members:

Bethel, Bridgeport Central, Brien McMahon, Brookfield, Bullard Havens Tech, Canton, Danbury, Darien, Fairfield College Preparatory School, Fairfield Ludlowe, Fairfield Warde, Gilbert, Greenwich, Henry Abbott Tech, Housatonic Regional, Immaculate, Joel Barlow, Kolbe Cathedral, Lewis Mills, Litchfield, Masuk, New Canaan, New Fairfield, New Milford, Newtown, Nonnewaug, Northwestern Regional, Norwalk, Notre Dame-Fairfield, Oxford, Pomperaug, Ridgefield, Shepaug Valley, St. Joseph's, Stamford, Staples, Terryville, Thomaston, Torrington, Trinity Catholic, Trumbull, Wamogo, Watertown, Westhill, Weston, Wilton, Wolcott Tech

CT RISES:: Ideas for December and January

Remember to be focusing on your **CT**(citizenship), **R**(recognition), **I**(inspiration), **S**(service), **E**(engagement), **S**(spirit). Looking for a new project to run this month in your student council/government? Think about incorporating some of these suggestions into your calendar.

CT RISES:: Ideas for December

CITIZENSHIP

Local Government Visit

Towns that recently elected new mayors or town councils have their inaugurations this month. It is a great opportunity to see your local government in action.

RECOGNITION

Faculty Breakfast

Surprise the Faculty, Staff and Administration with breakfast.

INSPIRATION

Last Meeting of the Year

This is a great opportunity to evaluate your progress as a council. Have you achieved the goals you set out for yourselves in September? Were your goals too ambitious? Not ambitious enough? Is everything working the way it should? Do members need to be moved to new positions? Have you run all of the projects that you set out to run? What do you have planned in the second half of the year?

Be sure to celebrate yourselves as well! At our annual party we play a number of governmental themed holiday games from holding debates over what is the most overrated holiday movie, to who can read the holiday songs in as epic a way as possible, to converting swag into epic holiday attire. All while wearing our ugliest of ugly sweaters!

SERVICE

Week of Giving

Submitted by:: Wells Road Intermediate School Collect items to take care of those in our immediate and extended community Week long collection event with a different theme each day.

- Monday: Students make holiday cards for veterans
- Tuesday: Donate items to CCMC's wish list. Items include Lego kits, infant/toddler toys, action figures and Crayola supplies
- Wednesday: Bring a NEW pair of PJ's to donate to a child in need
- Thursday: Food drive to benefit Granby Food Bank
- Friday: PJ's for a Buck donate \$1 to CCMC and wear your PJ's to school

A fantastic event that allowed people to give how and when they were able. Plus, the cards for vets could be done by everyone.

Cards for Kids

Submitted by:: Woodland Regional High School A tradition at some schools is to make holiday cards for children who will be spending the season in hospitals rather than at home. It is a simple but meaningful way to make an impact in your community. Be careful to monitor what the cards say and to keep them positive. Use phrases such as:: Stay Strong, You are awesome, Never forget how amazing YOU are, You rock!, Be Brave, I hope you have a great day today!, You inspire me, I believe in YOU.

There are also organizations that can help you distribute the cards nationally if you don't have a local connection to a hospital.

ENGAGEMENT

Universal Human Rights Month

December is a time to honor the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, an international document stating the basic rights and fundamental freedoms to which all human beings are entitled. These rights include freedom from discrimination, the right to equality, and the right to be considered innocent until proven guilty.

Use #UniversalHumanRights, #HumanRights, and #StandUp4HumanRights to post on social media. The Dignity & Respect Campaign says the best way we can celebrate Universal Human Rights Month is by working to find common ground with those around us who may not have the same background as we do. This month, you can also:

- Read a book about the Declaration of Human rights, or about human rights in general
- Spread the word on social media
- Go out of your way to treat everyone with respect, kindness, and equality
- Teach others about why human rights for

everyone are so important

SPIRIT

International Day

Submitted by:: Kennedy High School Celebrate the diversity in our school and community.

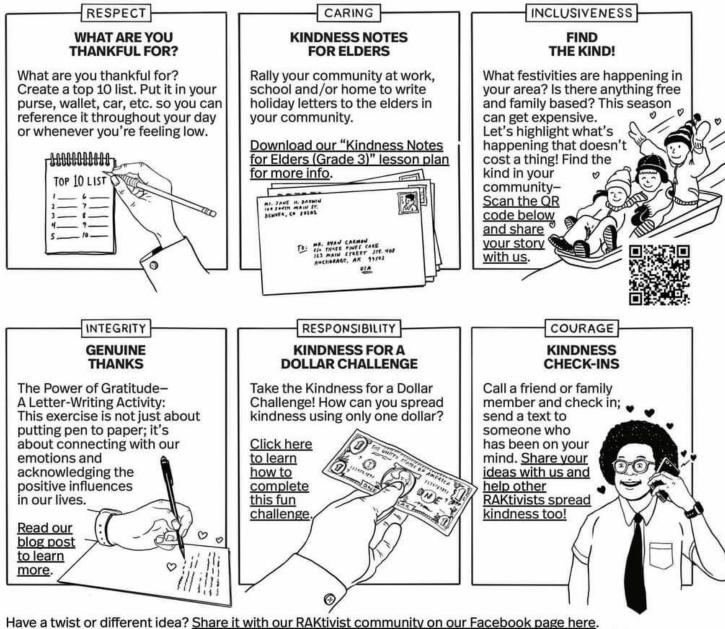
Students in the school work in groups to represent countries all over the world. They make a poster with information and photos about the country, cook food from that country, dress in traditional clothing, and perform dances to music from the country for the whole school to enjoy.

The students look forward to representing their different ethnic backgrounds and learning about others every year.

**We are always looking for new and exciting projects or events to highlight, if your council has a project that you would like to see highlighted in a newsletter please submit it <u>here</u>.



Our Autumn RAKtivist Toolkit closes out with our December theme of FRIENDS AND FAMILY. Every season RAK creates a toolkit to help all of you promote kindness throughout your own communities using our six kindness concepts of RESPECT, CARING, INCLUSIVENESS, INTEGRITY, RESPONSIBILITY, and COURAGE. Below are some ideas to get you started. Don't feel obligated to do all of these activities. The goal is to choose at least one and then stick with it. Kindness is contagious and once you start, others will inevitably join in!



Our RAKtivist community is 50,000+ members strong. Let's use our voices to continue to spread kindness internationally. **LET'S MAKE KINDNESS THE NORM.**

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS

Tips and Tools

Speak up! And Speak out!

Adopted from "FOCUS" November 1986

By this time in the year, most student council/government officers are aware that some members "do all of the talking" and others "never say anything." Fortunately, both of these are exaggerated extremes but the fact remains: we need to facilitate discussions where everyone feels a part of it.

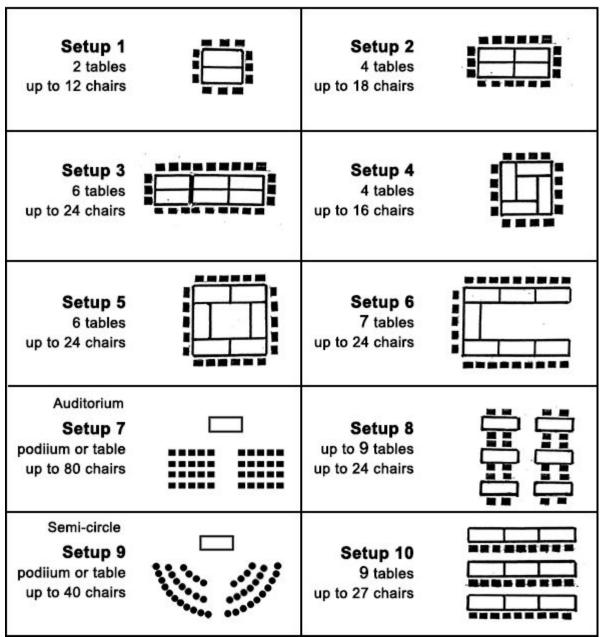
How do you encourage silent members to "speak-up," and talkative ones to "listen more?" Here are some suggestions::

- Seek out the "silent." Work with your President to involve those non speaking students in a situation which will encourage them to speak-up. Ask these "silent" members before the council/government meeting to comment on specific business. Similarly, ask them to prepare an opinion on a topic by polling their homerooms/advisories, clubs or other constituencies.
 - Make sure your President DOESN'T just call on people during the meeting. Give each one a chance to get ready, and then bring them into the discussion.
- Put people on a "low pressure" subcommittee. Bright officers conduct lots of council/government business in small subcommittee meetings. Try putting several of the quiet students into a working situation without dominant, vocal students. Give them a chance! The meeting may be low key for a while, but it is an opportunity for new leadership to develop.
- Suggest encouragement from the vocal students. Ask the students who do most of the

talking to help get the hesitant ones involved. It reminds them that they are intimidating some students and leaving them out. It might be more effective to ask vocal students to serve as observers for several meetings, keeping track of who talks and who doesn't.

- You can also enlist the aid of a communications teacher which will design situations in which discussion is facilitated. Involve the teacher in the agenda for the upcoming meeting and ask for observation. If you ask for specific help, a number of techniques can be developed.
- Experiment with seating. Sometimes members of the SCG are in a rut, sitting in the same place, and letting the same people talk. Try changing the seating arrangement. Break -up rows, and place chairs closer to the presiding officer. Arrange the seating so that people can see each other face-to face. Watch for differences!
- Enforce a strict timeline, or limit each member to speaking no more than twice per topic. Though some members will resist, try using a strict time limit on speakers. Tell them you're doing this to provide more opportunities for more people to speak out.
- Remember individual differences. Don't expect the "silent" students to talk as much as the talkative ones. Some people prefer to listen and remain silent most of the time. This may not be in keeping with your goal of getting everyone to speak up, but it is a satisfactory condition for some students. Try to get people to express their opinions. Make sure they know you want to hear their ideas, but assume they will seek a situation which is comfortable for them.





CASC Calendar

Be sure to check the CASC Website (CTStuco.com) for more information!

DECEMBER

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MARCH

March 8:: CASC Convention (HS/MS) This year being hosted by Woodland Regional High School in Beacon Falls. More details to follow as we get closer.

APRIL

April 17:: CASC's 72nd Birthday

MAY

May TBD - CASC "Adventures in Leadership," (HS/MS)

Ropes course designed to allow your newly elected leaders an opportunity to come together and begin to work as a team, while meeting leaders from across the state. More details to follow.

JUNE

June 21-23 - 2024 VISION National Student Leadership Conference (HS/MS) https://stucovisionconference.org/