

State Degree Check Committee Meeting
Zoom Meeting
August 5, 2020

Attendance:

Area 1: Roger Green

Area 2: Travis Lange, Blake Chudej

Area 3: Vanessa Collier, Becky

Area 4: Dawson Shannon, Josh Sanders

Area 5: Brittany Douglas

Area 6: Brent Kiefer, Stephanie Lynch

Area 7:

Area 8: Michelle Sammon, Monica Patrick

Area 9: Adam Westbrook

Area 10: Jerome Tymrak, Charles Purcell

Area 11: Christy Capps, Liz Treptow

Area 12: James Marcuse, Beverley Schroedter

Staff: Tammy Glascock, Austin Large, Tricia Sullivan

Guests: Clay Ewell (JudgingCard), Roger Hanagriff (AET), John Rayfield (TTU)

Concerns:

Area 1: Liked degree check, positive comments regarding rejected Lone Star Degrees.

Star finalist issues with Zoom interviews.

Would like to change the point value of the star selection process to 50% application and 50% interview.

Expressed concerns with greenhand applicants needing 5 efficiency factors.

Area 2: Went well but would like to be back in person.

Area 3: Get back to in person.

Area 4: Went well, concerns with AET record books (journal entries).

Area 5: No major issues, liked the format but would prefer in person.

Area 6: Can we get plagiarism checks at the district and area levels?

Liked electronic rubrics but would like to get back to an in- person event.

Would like to add instructions for photos and a photo caption box to the picture pages of the John Justin Award application.

Area 7: No comments.

Area 8: Liked the virtual Lone Star Format, but would like to be back in -person and combine the processes.

Area 9: No comments.

Area 10: Liked virtual format especially at the area level. Virtual format allowed more time for judges to review and score.

Liked interviewing the top four-star candidates. Would like to see scoring percentages for determining star winners changed.

Area 11: Liked online format, questions concerning proficiency and star application plagiarism checks. Is it possible for areas and/or district to have access to the program?

Area 11: (Cont.) How is proficiency review and scoring determined?

How were the star finalist questions formulated?

Did the star finalist interview judges have access to the applicants record books?

Do Placement SAEs require journal activities? It is believed that some of the applicants did not have any but were still accepted and allowed to receive the Lone Star Degree.

Why are journal entries required in record books to earn the Lone Star Degree when journal entries are not required in policy?

Area 12: Lone Star review was very efficient. Would like to be back in-person and combine the two formats.

Would like to change the scoring percentages for the selection of star finalist to 50% application and 50% interview.

Discussion Item 1:

Electronic Rubrics for scoring applications.

- American Degree scoring was more thorough.
- Concerns with having to use 3 monitors in order to see app, record books and rubric.
- Meet in person but continue using electronic rubrics.
- AET submission of applications was good especially at the state level.
- Continue submitting applications electronically to cut down the amount of paper used.
- Electronic submission of applications could lead to downloading applications as a reference for future applications.
- Issues of copying applications.

The motion to keep electronic submission and scoring but to meet in-person if permissible was made by Stephanie Lynch. A second was offered by Liz Treptow.

Discussion related to the motion included:

- A virtual process is good for those teachers who have limited days.
- Could we do a combination degree check (virtual and in-person)?

Motion passed and the recommendation will be presented to the Texas FFA Board.

Discussion Item 2:

Star Finalist scoring. Record book/application 50% and interview 50%.

- The committee was informed that current policy was developed and approved based off of the scoring percentages used by National FFA.
- A great deal of effort is spent in making sure record books are correct and that work needs to have a higher value than 25%. An applicant works hard in making sure that their record books and application meet or exceeds the qualifications for a Star Award especially in making it in the final four. Yet, in the final selection process, the record book/application is worth extraordinarily little when comparing to the interview score.
- A polished speaker will always have the advantage in an interview process. Case in point- a fourth place record book score and a first-place interview score will always rank first in the overall

placing. The 50% (record book/app) and 50% (interview) approach given an equal playing field to all applicants.

The motion to change current policy 26.6 (g) in parts “The winner for each category will be determined by using the average State Degree Check application score (25%) and the average Star Interview score (75%) to “The winner for each category will be determined by using the average State Degree Check application score (50%) and the Star Interview score (50%) was presented by Jerome Tymrak. A second was offered by James Marcuse.

Motion passed and the motion to change parts of policy 26.6 (g) to “The winner for each category will be determined by using the average State Degree Check application score (50%) and the Star Interview score (50%) will be recommended to the Texas FFA Board of Directors.

Discussion Item 3:

Journal Entries in record books.

- Why are we checking journal entries and other requirements of the AET record book if those are not required in policy for the degree?
- Paid placement journal hours and not counted?
- If pay and journal hours are both entered in the record book system, is that not double dipping?
- The record book program does not allow for pay and hours to be counted.
- Why does the check sheet for the Lone Star Degree not reflect what is listed in policy? Should they not be the same?
- Policy and check sheets need to match.

The motion to have a State Degree Sub Committee look at and review Lone Star Degree policy with the current Lone Star Degree Check Sheet was made by Liz Treptow. A second was offered by Christy Capps.

Motion passed and a State Degree Check Sub Committee will meet at a date to be determined to look at and review current Lone Star Degree policy with the current Lone Star Degree Check Sheet.

A volunteer from each area will serve on the subcommittee. Subcommittee members by area;

Area 1: Roger Green

Area 2: Wade

Area 3: Vanessa Collier

Area 4: Dawson

Area 5: Brittany Douglas

Area 6: Stephanie Lynch

Area 7:

Area 8: Michelle Sammon

Area 9: Adam Westbrook

Area 10: Charles Purcell

Area 11: Liz Treptow

Area 12: James Marcuse

Discussion Item 4:

Plagiarism.

- What program did we use to check applications for plagiarism?
The program used was a service of AET. Roger and Clay both provided information explaining how the program picked up replicated text within each answer of the entire application.
- Can plagiarism be checked at the district and area levels?
Roger and Clay both stated that it could be looked at.
- Can a student copy their own application?
Yes, they can because it is their work.
- If a student completes an application and the teacher signs off and it is found to be plagiarized, is the teacher liable?
An answer was never reached but it was decided that the teacher should review and compare the application against other chapter applications.
- Can Texas FFA or ATAT notify administration of the chapters that have plagiarized apps?
We have not in the past.
- Policy regarding plagiarism was discussed.
- The severity of academia plagiarism was brought up and discussed. Could we use the programs that are being used in the academic world?
- No. Other programs will not have the data base because our applications are typically not published to the web.
- When teachers call AET with questions, they reference the apps as “my proficiency”. This created a discussion that teachers may be completing the applications and not the students.
- Could plagiarism be more of a teacher issue than a student issue?
- Is there an exact percent of plagiarism that we are looking for?
No. Each answer was checked line by line by state staff members. Applications that had at least one complete plagiarized answer were reviewed and compared to the identified applications with replicated text by the Texas FFA Executive Committee. Upon completion of each review, the committee made the decision if it had been plagiarized.
- The question was asked “is state staff may be on a witch hunt”?
- Austin quickly explained that was not the case. He further explained that the applications disqualified for plagiarism contained verbatim copying. He also discussed past situations at the National level and how plagiarized applications at the National level are a poor reflection of Texas FFA.
- Question was asked if an area could replace a plagiarized application?
No, they can’t because the applications are not checked until after they have been submitted to state.

After much discussion, there were not any recommendations offered for presentation at the September Texas FFA Board meeting. However, Roger and Clay told the group that they would look into the cost of providing a replicated text review to districts and areas.

Discussion Item 6:

Scoring of Proficiency Awards.

- How was the process of scoring proficiency awards determined?
The current process for scoring proficiency awards is the same process used at the National level for summer judging. Applications are scored by a committee of three or four. Once the committee has independently scored the applications, they are ranked 1, 2, 3, etc. based on their average score. A review team selected by the State Degree Check Chair and state staff will review the applications a final time. This final inspection is to make sure that a major issue was overlooked during the scoring process. If there is an issue, it is brought to the attention of the State Degree Check Chair and state staff. The review team cannot overturn the rankings of applications.

No recommendations were presented.

Discussion Item 7:

Star Finalist interview questions.

- How were the questions for the star finalists formulated?
The judges were given the star finalist applications a few days prior to the interviews to formulate questions that corresponded to the scoring rubric for each category. The judges did not have access to record books.
- Is there a way to train finalist on how to answer questions?
Teachers have the star finalist interview rubrics which provide a detailed description of the knowledge level needed to score high, medium or low points. These rubrics are located under the Teacher/State Degree Check tab.
Students should not have to be trained to answer questions. If they are doing the work and entering the information in the record books/apps they should possess the needed knowledge.
- Can we look at creating a training video for judges?
Yes, we have had that discussion and we will look at creating a training video for the review and judging of all applications.

No formal recommendations were presented for Texas FFA Board approval.

Discussion Item 8:

Dates of Golden Horizon and National Chapter applications.

- Can the dates utilized for the Golden Horizon be the same as those used for the National Chapter Award application?
It was explained that the National Chapter Award dates were predetermined by National FFA and that we could not change those at the state level. In addition, it was explained that the Golden Horizon award was strictly a Texas FFA award and that dates utilized were determined by the Texas FFA Board of Directors upon original approval.

- How are the gold, silver and bronze rankings determined for the Golden Horizon Award?
The rankings of gold, silver and bronze are determined as outlined in Texas FFA Policy 26.10 (g)
“All applications shall be ranked in their respective divisions. The top 10% of each division will receive the gold award. The remaining chapters will be silver or bronze—split as evenly as possible or at the point where the natural break occurs.”

There was not a formal recommendation made for Texas FFA Board approval.

Meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.