

February 11, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my distinct pleasure to write this letter of recommendation for Bethany Bohall to be considered for the National Speech and Debate Association High School Administrator of the Year. I have had the pleasure and honor of knowing Bethany for the past 8 years I have been at Saint Mary's Hall and I cannot think of an administrator who has done as much for our activity. As detailed below, I believe you will be hard pressed to find another administrator whose contributions to their community have been as integral as Bethany's.

Bethany Bohall has been the Wanda Wiley Atkinson Endowed Chair of Fine Arts at Saint Mary's Hall for the past 12 years and in that time has overseen the growth of both the middle and upper school speech and debate teams – growing from small programs to teams with NSDA School of Excellence Awards as well as TJSDA and TFA State Championships. Over her tenure, Bethany has been critical in the growth of our program but more than that she has been crucial in growing the San Antonio forensics community and the national community as well. This is exemplified in her efforts to host the National Speech and Debate Association's Middle School National Tournament, twice hosting the National Individual Events Tournament of Champions, and supporting our efforts to host educational opportunities on the Saint Mary's Hall campus. She has been critical in hosting summer prep workshops for NSDA Nationals as well as the inaugural Central Texas Coach Workshop this year. When we went to her and asked if Saint Mary's Hall could host Districts, she supported our district's efforts to save money and defended the opportunity to support the district to other administrators and teachers who balked at the idea of hosting a second tournament annually. This has created an opportunity for our district to consolidate funds and reinvest in initiatives like the Coach Workshop and student scholarships for National qualifiers. Beyond our immediate community, Bethany hosted the largest Fine Arts Festival in the country for the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest (ISAS) and helped bring the arts to thousands of students from across the Southwest.

Bethany has been integral in shaping our identity, our accomplishments, and our legacy as a program that celebrates and fosters creativity, student engagement, and competitive excellence. More than the work she does to support our students in the classroom, Bethany is a rare example of an administrator who has personally invested in the program at Saint Mary's Hall. Bethany often gives up her time to offer work sessions with students, both in the lead up to important tournaments and throughout the regular season. She has traveled to over a dozen tournaments, including the Longhorn Classic, TFA State, and NSDA Nationals as a chaperone, to watch rounds, and support the team. I cannot think of an administrator in Texas who has been to as many tournaments or seen as many students perform as Bethany. She is not just a figure that students are vaguely aware of – she is a staple on our team, a resource for our students, and a champion for our students.

On a personal level, she helped foster the growth of two young coaches just starting their professional careers. She never once questioned what this team could be under our leadership and shared a vision of what this program could one day be capable of. At every step of the process, Bethany has supported our growth – ensured we had access to resources like the annual TSCA Convention and sent me to the NSDA Conference twice. All opportunities and resources that she saw value in and was more than happy to invest in. We wouldn't be the coaches we are today if it wasn't for her.

For all of these reasons and so many more, it is my honor to nominate Bethany Bohall for the Central Texas NSDA Administrator of the Year.

Respectfully Yours,

Colin Malinak

*Saint Mary's Hall
Upper School Debate
TSCA, Immediate Past President
TJSDA, Founder
NSDA, Committee Chair*