**NABS Notes July 2015**

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Convention Wrap-Up

The National Association of Blind Students (NABS) had an exceedingly successful National Convention! We took home the PAC Mule, having the largest number of PAC sign-ups and increases of all divisions and affiliates. Our goal was 25 students, we more than doubled that with 56 additions to our monthly PAC Plan contributions! Now, the students are faced with another challenge. Since we exceeded the 25 mark, we now are gearing up to raise $3,750 for students to attend Washington Seminar. If we do this, the National Federation of the Blind will match our funds, providing us with an additional $3,750 to allocate to those interested in advocating for our efforts! Have you been wanting to attend Washington Seminar, yet financial burdens hold you back? Look no further; come help our Fund-Raising Committee meet that goal, so we can support several students speak up for equal access to education and fair treatment in the workplace.

Our Exhibit Hall table not only brought in personal testimonies regarding equal access to education, but also a wad of cash. Bringing in nearly $2,000 from our first-ever Penny Wars fund-raiser, the well-deserving merchants took home $996.45 while our very own student division held on to the second half of the total. We proudly donated $1,500 to our National headquarters, bringing us to a final balance of $5,096.54 as of July 18, 2015!

Almost 250 blind students registered for our Annual Business Meeting, which offered a plethora of intriguing topics and motivational speakers. At this meeting, our members elected both new and experienced leaders onto the Board. Below, you will find a brief bio from each Board Member.

**MEET THE 2015 NABS BOARD**

President: Sean Whalen

(608) 332-4147

Nabs.president@gmail.com

Greetings NABS! My name is Sean Whalen, and I currently serve as President of the National Association of Blind Students. Born and raised in the great state of Wisconsin, I graduated in May with my Master in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. In September of 2016, I will be returning to Cambridge to matriculate at Harvard Law School. Over the coming year, in addition to working to strengthen NABS and the NFB, I will be engaged in various projects focused on empowering blind youth both here in the United States and in Latin America. Ultimately I intend to practice law and realize my passion for public service. Outside of academic and professional pursuits, I enjoy reading, traveling, writing music, and playing the guitar. I am also a political junky and avid Green Bay Packers fan. I very much look forward to working with my friends and colleagues in NABS and the Federation to make meaningful change in the lives of blind students across America. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, or if you would simply like to chat, please do not hesitate to be in touch. I look forward to hearing from you.

1st Vice President: Candice Chapman

(601) 201-1602

Chapman.candicel@gmail.com

Howdy! Candice Chapman, here! Thanks for reading and getting to know the Board a little better! In the fall, I will begin my second year as a graduate student at the University of Minnesota studying counseling psychology with a focus in school counseling. Although I live and attend school in Minneapolis, MN, I’m southern born. I’m originally from Mississippi and came to Minneapolis for training at BLIND, Inc. When I’m not busy volunteering out what little time grad school leaves me, I enjoy reading, writing short fiction and free verse poetry, and discovering all the eclectic things that the Twin Cities have to offer.

2nd Vice President: Bre Brown

(304) 203-3832

Bre.brown24@gmail.com

Greetings! I am Bre Brown, and I currently live in Texas. I am pursuing a degree in special education at Texas State University. I am excited to be serving as the second vice president of our student division. I am also currently serving as the secretary of the Texas Association of Blind Students. I am a proud NFB member, and I love working to continue changing what it means to be blind. In my spare time I enjoy reading, traveling, spending time with friends, and listening to music. I am looking forward to another great year in NABS. Please feel free to contact me with questions or ideas.

Secretary: Kathryn Webster

(203) 273-8463

Kathrynwebster.nfb@gmail.com

Hey everyone! My name is Kathryn Webster, and I am a junior at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. I was born in south Florida, raised in Connecticut, and now find myself somewhere in between the two. I am pursuing a double major in Business & Enterprise Management and Computer Science, while attaining a minor in Statistics. My career aspirations include Actuarial science and motivational speaking. I love to volunteer, travel, learn, hang out with friends, and watch Netflix. I have been a part of our Federation family for two years now, and am so proud to be among such driven and extraordinary individuals. I currently serve as President of the North Carolina Association of Blind Students and on the Board of Directors for the National Federation of the Blind of Connecticut. I am passionate about advocacy, policy, and making a difference. With that in mind, please do not hesitate to call, text, or email me with any questions, concerns, or suggestions. The National Association of Blind Students is an organization built off of our membership. I truly look forward to working with you in the coming year!

Treasurer: Derek Manners

(903) 271-6494

derekmanners@gmail.com

I'm a rising 3L at Harvard Law School with aspirations of working at a big law firm in DC upon graduation. I have been involved with the Federation since July, 2014. I'm originally from Texas, receiving my undergraduate degree from UT Austin in economics, government, and business foundations. In addition to my NABS responsibilities I am also the First Vice President of the Massachusetts student division.

Board Member 1: Hindley Williams

(443) 823-0867

Hbwilliams16@gmail.com

Hello all! I am Hindley Williams from Maryland, and I am honored to serve on the NABS Board. I am a senior at Villanova University in Pennsylvania, where I am studying English and Political Science. My passions include legislative work, specifically in the disability arena, and reading literature of many varieties. I also serve as one of Villanova's ambassadors, where I help to introduce prospective students to the university. I am excited to take on my new role with NABS, and hope that you will reach out to me with any questions, concerns, or suggestions that you may have as we move forward together.

Board Member 2: Garret Mooney

(480) 433-8003

gmanmesa@gmail.com

My name is Garret Mooney. I love reading, going to the gym, and hanging out with friends. Serving on the Board of Directors of the National Association of Blind Students is one of the greatest honors that I have been blessed with. I am looking forward to the next year. Let’s go build the Federation!

Board Member 3: Chris Nusbaum

(443) 547-2409

Dotkid.nusbaum@gmail.com

Hey NABS! My name is Chris Nusbaum, and I am a rising senior at Francis Scott Key High School in Carroll County, Maryland. After graduation I plan to attend the Louisiana Center for the Blind’s adult training program before going to college to be a teacher of blind students. I have been actively involved in the National Federation of the Blind since 2011, and have served our movement in many capacities over the years, most importantly as Vice President of the Maryland Association of Blind Students and now as a Board Member of NABS. When I’m not doing school or Federation work, my hobbies include: singing, playing the piano, reading, writing, travelling and hanging out with friends. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or just to say hi. I look forward to getting to know each of you and to working with you as we ensure that all blind students can live the lives we want!

Board Member 4: Michael Ausbun

(775) 432-8789

mausbun@unr.edu

I am a student at the University of Nevada, pursuing a double major in Philosophy and political science, with emphasis in public policy. I live in Reno, Nevada, though I was born in Clarksville, Tennessee. My interests involve reading everything, writing fiction, and debating normative, metaphysical and epistemic questions until the sun comes up. I currently serve as Secretary of the Nevada Association of Blind Students, and am proud to be a Federationist. Please reach out with any questions or concerns.

**NABS Committees: We Need Your Help!**

NABS carries out the work of the Federation through various committees. And these committees don’t function without members! Depending on your interests, available time, and specific skills, we know that there is a place where you can contribute meaningfully to the work of NABS. Please consider giving a little bit of your time, talent, and energy to help us change what it means to be a blind student in America! If you are interested in serving on any of the following committees, please contact the listed chair. And if you have suggestions on other things NABS might do, do not hesitate to be in touch with our President, Sean Whalen. Give us 15 minutes a week. We’d love to have you involved!

Communications: Bre Brown

Bre.Brown24@gmail.com

The Communications Committee keeps our members in tune with all things NFB. Whether it be posting a philosophical article link, sharing our monthly NABS Notes, or spreading our Student Slate (blog) far and wide, this committee is eager to interact with our members. If you like Social Media, enjoy interacting with any and all students, and have a huge imagination with lots of creativity, we need your help!

Fund-Raising: Derek Manners

DManners@jd16.law.harvard.edu

The Fund-Raising Committee is comprised of those members who want to keep NABS going, because we all know without financial support, we wouldn’t be able to propel our movement forward to the best of our ability. If you are one that takes initiative, exemplifies leadership, love outreach, and have a positive attitude, then we want you! The NABS Auction is just under six months away, so let’s start planning!

Legislative: Sean Whalen

NABS.President@gmail.com

Are you an effective self-advocate? Are you passionate about legislation that will allow blind people to live the lives we want? Do you want to see a tangible outcome once hard-work is put forth? If you said yes to any of these questions, then the Legislative Committee is for you! We want strategic thinkers, optimistic enthusiasts, and sincere blind students. So, come on board and let’s make a difference for all!

Membership: Candice Chapman

Chapman.CandiceL@gmail.com

The Membership Committee is comprised of students who love to get people involved. Working from the bottom up, this committee aims to build, strengthen, and refine state student divisions. We recruit, interact, and promote the National Association of Blind Students in order for us to have the necessary resources to succeed.

**NABS STATE LIAISONS**

NABS state liaisons are here to serve as your first point of contact with the NABS Board. They can answer questions, provide assistance with issues you are having in your state, or simply get you tapped in to the NFB and NABS affiliates in your state. On the assignment of states to board members, we are shifting away from the region-based approach that we have used for the past several years. We have divorced the NABS Rep program from the state liaison function. With this in mind, State Liaisons are entirely different from NABS Representatives. Your State Liaison will be your main point of contact with both NABS and national initiatives. State Liaisons will support their state student divisions by lending a helping hand in any way that we can. It is important for states to build that relationship with their respective liaison. The distribution of State Liaisons is as follows:

• Candice Chapman - AR, FL, MN, MO, MS, OR, WY

• Bre Brown – DE, ND, NJ, LA, NY, TX, WV

• Kathryn Webster – DC, KY, NC, SD, TN, VA

• Derek Manners - CT, IN, MA, ME, MT, NH, VT

• Hindley Williams – AK, GA, KS, NE, PA, WA

• Garret Mooney - AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, NM, UT

• Chris Nusbaum – IA, IL, MD, MI, RI, WI

* Michael Ausbun – AL, NV, OH, OK, PR, SC

**Amazon Bookstore Accessibility: We Need Your Stories!**

Is there an Amazon bookstore on your campus? Do you attend Perdue, University of Massachusetts Amherst, or the University of California, Davis? If so, the NFB Legal Department needs to hear from you. These three schools recently signed agreements to partner with Amazon bookstores. Because Amazon’s print replica textbooks are completely inaccessible, this is a huge threat to blind students. If you attend, or know someone who attends, Perdue, UC Davis, or UMass Amherst, please call Valerie Yingling, NFB Paralegal, at (410) 659-9314, extension 2440.

**State Updates:**

Note: State announcements are printed below as they were received from their senders. No attempt to edit for grammar, content, or clarity has been made on the part of NABS.

Alabama:

Alabama Association of Blind Students (AABS) is pleased to say that our student division is on the way to recovery. After dissolving two years ago, we are pleased to say that we are strategizing to find new dedicated members. This March of 2015, we came together to host a student seminar which was held in conjunction with our state convention. It was successful with about 15 current and perspective students in attendance of which most of those we have been in contact with. We are looking forward to attempting to organize an interest meeting together by this upcoming fall and completely reorganized by March 2016.

California:

The 75th anniversary convention has left us Californians reenergized and ready to take our division in a new direction. We had several young students who were attending convention for the first time, and whose lives were forever changed. We ourselves were able to strengthen old friendships and form new ones. And, on a purely practical note, we were encouraged by the success of our rice crispy treat fund raiser, in which first timers and many timers alike participated.

The California student division is entering a period of transition, as many of us old hands are stepping down from the board to take on other projects within the Federation and make room for a younger group of student leaders. Our goal over the next few months is to help make this transition as smooth as possible, offering our young leaders as much mentoring and information as they need and assisting them in building relationships with student leaders within our region and on the national level.

Our convention will be Halloween weekend, at the Doubletree in Newark, CA. We are strongly considering requesting a NABS rep, and the regional liaison will be heavily involved in the transition, so that when the new board takes over, their relationship with NABS will be a strong one.

Speaking personally, I’ve been involved with CABS for 6 years. As my focus shifts away from student division matters, I am deeply heartened that the young leaders who are coming in will have such a strong support system on the national level. I look forward to working with you over the next few months, so that when the new CABS board takes over in October they can take the division and run with it.

Sincerely,

Angela Fowler (First-Vice-President)

Connecticut:

The Connecticut Association of Blind Students is proud to be preparing for the 44th annual National Federation of the Blind of Connecticut State Convention. It will be held November 6-8, at the Holiday Inn New London. We expect to continue our snack pack fundraiser. We also plan to invite students and non-students from other states to join us for the convention fun, including our annual student seminar on Saturday afternoon!

We are going back to some of our earlier ways of doing things in our division. It has been some time since we have called and emailed the universities to advertise our programming and our state scholarship program. It’s time to do it again! We are also planning to merge our bank account into our affiliate’s treasury to smooth out the red tape that comes with members and leaders being scattered across the country. Lastly, we are shifting back to the model of one membership call and one board meeting per month instead of calling it a philosophy call and a business meeting.

Maryland:

We in the Maryland Association of Blind Students are leaving our 75th national convention excited, energized and empowered to ensure that all blind students can live the lives we want. In this spirit, we are planning a fun and informative leadership seminar in partnership with our fellow Federationists in Washington DC and Delaware, to be held July 24-26 at the NFB Jernigan Institute in Baltimore. At this seminar we will learn from experienced Federation leaders how to grow and strengthen our student divisions, how to engage our membership and much more. Food and housing will be provided. If you would like to attend, please contact MDABS President David Bouchard at davidb521@gmail.com or Hindley Williams at hbwilliams16@gmail.com.

We are also gearing up for an exciting state convention, which will be held at the Carousel Hotel in Ocean City November 13-15. As always, MDABS will be sure to have exciting events planned which you will not want to miss. Please join us in Ocean City for what is sure to be a great time!

Massachusetts:

Massachusetts is endeavoring to collect a SMART Act letter from every student contact we have in Massachusetts to let our leaders in the Massachusetts delegation know where blind students stand on this issue.

Nevada:

The Nevada Association of Blind Students would like to make a few announcements:

(1) The Nevada State convention will be taking place the weekend of October 30-November 1 in Las Vegas Nevada. Come, dress up, and have some fun!

(2) This year, the Nevada Association of Blind Students in conjunction with interested affiliates will be hosting the Western Student Seminar. The location will be Reno Nevada, and the date will be late March or early April. Everyone is welcome to come, have fun and learn skills to live the life they want!

We look forward to interacting with everyone!

New Jersey:

The New Jersey Association of Blind Students is getting ready for an enthusiastic State Convention. This year, the National Federation of the Blind of New Jersey State Convention will be held from November 7-9 in Manahawkin, New Jersey. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions, suggestions, or concerns! I am ready for a great year!

Respectfully,

Shafeka Hashash

North Carolina:

The North Carolina Association of Blind Students had a successful outcome selling baked goods at the 75th Anniversary of the National Federation of the Blind National Convention! Next week, many of our leaders and members will be serving as both staff members and participants at the seventh annual Envisioning Youth Empowerment (EYE) Retreat program in Raleigh, North Carolina. Additionally, our very own Treasurer is the teacher of one of our state BELL Programs. Beyond planning for our incredible State Convention on September 18-20 in Wilmington, North Carolina, we are actively collecting equal access to education testimonies. We would like to congratulate the president of NCABS, Kathryn Webster, for recently being elected as Secretary of the National Association of Blind Students. We are looking forward to a great next couple of months!

Ohio:

The Ohio Association of Blind Students enjoyed our National Convention

immensely and was quite visible. President Kaiti Shelton was a

TenBroek Fellow in this year's scholarship class and was also elected

to serve as secretary for the Performing Arts Division. Vice

President Aleeha Dudley worked with the affiliate to coordinate the

hospitality suite. Several members showed off their musicality at the

Showcase of Talent, where Treasurer Emily Pennington took home the

$100 prize. All enjoyed the sessions, catching up with friends while

making new ones, and participating in the world record attempt.

The 75 day-long drawing that OABS was conducting came to a close on

July 15th. OABS would like to thank anyone who bought drawing tickets

in support of the division and Ohio's BELL program. The final tally

was $279, 50% of which will be presented as a check to the Ohio

affiliate for use in the 2016 session of BELL. This was the first

fundraiser that OABS has conducted on a national scale and it has

opened the door for fundraisers with bigger and better incentives in

the future.

OABS president Kaiti Shelton is discussing a possible meet up with

students from surrounding states as well to take place in the spring

or summer of 2016. If this event comes to fruition it will most

likely involve students from the tri-state area of Ohio, Kentucky, and

Indiana, though a few from other semi-nearby states are also

interested. OABS is also considering requesting a NABS rep for the

Ohio Convention, which will be held Nov 19-21 at the Doubletree by

Hilton in Independence Ohio. Independence is a suburb of Cleveland,

and a most fitting place to hold an NFB convention. The affiliate

does not know who our national rep will be at this time. OABS will

continue its streak of being busy at convention with helping in

affiliate projects. Several members also belong to Ohio NAPUB and

will likely be performing in or assisting with this year's radio play

production just as one example. The division also hopes to place for

a second time in the "Gavel Awards." Last year OABS was presented

with the "Division on the Move" award for outstanding improvement.

This year we're shooting for the best overall division within the Ohio

affiliate.

**NABS Meeting Minutes**

With National Convention in July and the election of a new NABS Board, NABS traditionally forgoes a July meeting, conducting the inaugural monthly conference call in August. Stay tuned for meeting minutes next month. As always, please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions, concerns or suggestions. The NABS Board works for you, and we want to know how we’re doing! Thanks for reading, and we’ll be back in August.

Sean Whalen

President, National Association of Blind Students

(608) 332-4147

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