

MINUTES

Fight Directors Canada Annual General Meeting
Thursday, September 19th at 6:35 pm Mountain Standard Time

Digital Meeting on Zoom

Members in Attendance: John Knight, Chris Mott, Nathania Bernabe, Jackie Hanlin, Tammy Everett, Michelle Lewis, Brianna Johnston, Celene Harder, Lana Whittington, Aaron Casselman, Sylvie La Riviere, Mike Kovac, Geoff Malcolm, Kevin Robinson, David Leslie

Graham Banville joined at 6:38 pm MST

Rachel Flesher and Zach Payne joined at 6:54 pm MST

Land acknowledgement from Jackie Hanlin.

1. Approval of Minutes

- a. C. Mott Motions to approve; J. Knight seconds
- b. Motion passes

2. President's Report

From AAC Nathania Bernabe:

Hello everyone! Welcome to the 2024 Annual General Meeting. This is my final AGM, and I am excited to welcome in a new term of leadership, ideas, and vision to Fight Directors Canada.

Over the past three decades, our organization has established a robust and inspiring curriculum that has empowered countless artists to learn the art of stage combat. For me, FDC has always represented a commitment to excellence in training.

During my term, I learned that I have so much more to understand to fulfill the needs of running an effective board, there were many hard conversations and lots of challenges. However, I'm grateful for the experience, as it has given me a much better understanding of the organization at a functional level. I truly appreciated hearing all the needs and voices of our members. I know there are still needs to be met, and I want to thank everyone who has come forward to advocate for the betterment of our organization. I'm sorry that some of you didn't receive the support needed to see some changes that were called for during my term. Please don't lose that passion for change; I urge you to continue pushing for these initiatives. It's essential that our leadership and membership join forces to ensure that active change happens, even if it didn't occur during my time on the board.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to my fellow board members and the executive. Serving on the board for the past four years has been a meaningful experience. My focus during this time has been to advocate for in-person training, especially as we navigated the challenges of COVID. It has been rewarding to prioritize our hands-on learning, ensuring that our members could safely hone their skills together after a pandemic where all we could do was stay 6 feet

apart. Thank you to our Director of Training, Tammy, for organizing another successful national workshop held in Saskatoon.

I want to take a moment to recognize Chris Mott, our Director of Administration. Over my term I could rely on his unwavering dedication to managing the administration and communications to our membership. I can't emphasize enough how appreciative I am for his willingness to assist at any time and helping me navigate being part of the board. He consistently tackles any tasks asked of him, making our work much easier and more effective. Thank you for everything you do Chris.

I have the utmost respect to the dedicated members who have taken initiative in creating positive changes to our curriculum and policies. Some of these members have also volunteered their time to create committees and bring people together to enact change. Their hard work and innovative ideas have paved the way for a more dynamic and inclusive training environment. This year the board voted on adding Adjudicator Certification into our P&P, thank you Tammy for spearheading this new initiative.

Coming on to the board, the call for equity and inclusion were top priority for our organization to focus on. This continues to be vital to the future of our organization. It's crucial that we find more ways to create accessible training opportunities and resources for individuals from underprivileged backgrounds who wish to engage in stage combat training. Unfortunately, the arts often remain a privilege, and we must actively work to change that.

We are still struggling to fill roles of instructors and leaders who represent different walks of life, particularly from BIPOC communities. Historically, these communities have faced significant barriers to access and representation in our field, and addressing this gap is essential for the health of our organization. It's important that these individuals are not just here to serve as symbols of inclusion but to bring their perspectives and contributions to our organization. For individuals from underprivileged communities who aspire to become leaders, we should provide the support and resources they need to thrive and be effective in their roles. We must also give them the room and grace to try new things and learn from their failures, as they often haven't had the opportunity to occupy these roles and hone their skill set.

I also want to extend a big thank you to Kirsten and Daniel from Rapier Wit for their commitment to investing in grants that help bolster these communities. Their efforts are a significant step toward ensuring that all aspiring artists have the opportunity to develop their skills and share their voices within our organization. Look out for the applications for another Leadership Level Training Grant.

As I step away from my role, I'm filled with excitement for the future. I can't wait to see how they will continue to build on these foundations.

3. Treasurer's Report

From FI/FD John Knight:

FDC's finances continue to be stable. 2023 Fiscal year saw a small growth in Unrestricted Surplus of \$1,877. This put our year-starting bank balance at \$19,502. This is a healthy balance for our operations as it provides for start-up funds for workshops such as Nationals and ensures sufficient funds to cover

staffing honourariums for the year. As we know, Nationals is the primary event for FDC and the income earner to cover our operation expenses.

Final numbers for 2024 Nationals are not yet compiled as there are always a handful of expenses that lag after the close of the event. That being said, expenses for this year's Nationals were lower than previous years. This is attributed largely to the cost efficiencies found in Saskatoon compared to Vancouver; however, the planning expertise of our Director of Training, Tammy Everett, also contributed to significant cost savings. Those lower expenses, coupled with good attendance, mean I am happy to report the recent Nationals was a great financial success.

On a reporting note: all tax return information and necessary updates to the Government of Canada regarding current board and AGM date have been completed. These have been accepted as satisfactory.

4. Director of Training Report

From FI Tammy Everett:

Thank you everyone for an incredible 2024! This year I had two main focuses:

1. Creating the New Adjudicator Position
2. The 2024 Nationals at Saskatoon

The adjudicator position will help ADFC expand, increasing the number of people across both Canada and the United States who can adjudicate. This new position was two years in the making, and I want to thank the Fight Masters, as well as all of the Instructors, and Instructor Candidates who helped make this possible. The Fight Masters spent many hours with me helping to hone two separate proposals; added to FDC's Policies and Procedures: One proposal focussing on creating an adjudicator position, and the other recognizing the work of instructors who had already spent years attending and discussing exams. Please refer to the P&P Section 4 for more detailed information.

We also had a very successful 2024 Nationals at the University of Saskatchewan. We had an incredible array of instructors with unique, and varying experience. We welcomed 26 new actor combatants; Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced, as well as 3 new Instructors (welcome Michelle, Morgan and Zack).

I would also like to announce that our 2025 Nationals will be again held at the University of Saskatchewan. We are hoping to stay for 2 years running in each city, to help create a strong, and stable stage combat presence in varying locations throughout the country (returning every few years to help strengthen our connections). The 2025 nationals will be taking place from July 28th to August 16th. For the second year in a row, people will be able to choose between signing up for just the workshop, or signing up for the workshop and accommodations, to make it easier for those who are coming in from out of town. I will be sending out Facebook posts and posters before the end of October, as well as providing Chris the information for FDC's website, so people should be able to start signing up for the Nationals by October's end. We will have early bird prices to help our students with cost. This is an excellent opportunity to take advantage of.

At the end of our Nationals this year we had the great privilege of presenting two awards:

Danielle Spilchen won the Fournier Award

Marco Fedi won the Paddy Crean Award

I'd like to congratulate both of them, and thank them for their incredible inspiration, and work.

Lastly, I have a large array of resources for any people wanting to run a regional certification. This can be incredibly helpful when starting a certification workshop on your own. Please feel free to contact me for resources, or for support. I would love to see more regionals running across Canada and the United States. Let me know if I can help facilitate these.

This has been an exciting second year as Director of Training. I have a few interesting ideas coming down the pipeline, and am very excited to continue building new relationships within FDC, and with our fellow organizations. Thank you so much for this opportunity.

5. Director of Admin Report

From FI Chris Mott:

Membership Numbers

2023 was the year we saw the full effects of the COVID lockdowns and slowdowns, and I'm sad to say that 2024 has continued the trend. Despite a slight uptick in 2022, we've continued to see an overall decline in new certifications (both new members and recertifications), resulting in a further shrinking of overall membership.

The reasons for this are, I believe, largely the same as in 2023-- loss of certification classes at some post-secondary schools in recent years (George Brown College and the University of Alberta), and the continuing renovation saga at Rapier Wit Studios. Prior to 2020, those three locations would regularly account for 50% or more of our total certifications in a given year. We have seen some new classes popping up (JF Gagnon and Ian Rose in Montreal, and Adriano Gatto at both Niagara University and D'Youville University), but they are all smaller and/or less frequent.

Charts of total membership numbers for 2019 and 2022-2024, as well as new certifications for those years, are below for reference.

Enquiries regarding training from people outside of FDC seem to be picking up this year, so hopefully we can turn the corner for 2025 and onwards. I've recently been getting several people asking about training in Atlantic Canada, so there may be an opportunity for a regional workshop, thought it would probably need someone on the ground locally to organize it. And to anyone that might be interested in doing so, I'm sure our Director of Training would be happy to provide assistance and materials.

Total Active Membership

	2019	2022	2023	2024	+/-
Associate	50	71	25	23	-2
Youth	15	0	0	0	0
Basic	246	123	114	103	-11
Intermediate	72	48	35	23	-12
Advanced	67	51	46	38	-8
FI	23	22	19	19	0
FD	15	19	18	13	-5
FM (incl Maitre d'Armes)	10	9	8	7	-1

Current Membership	498	343	265	226	-39

Total Certifications (new and recert)

Level	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Youth	0	0	0	0	0	0
Basic	65	5	10	67	27	9
Intermediate	25	11	0	6	8	8
Advanced	9	0	0	9	11	9
FI	4	0	0	0	2	3
FD	1	3	0	0	0	1
FM	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total	105	19	10	82	48	30

6. Old business

a. FDC 30th Anniversary Merch

Merch was awesome! We brought in merch over the last year for our 30th anniversary; folks took advantage of it, and we were able to make a small amount of income (very little, as it was close to at-cost).

We always have t-shirts at Nationals, and use the same company as we did for this anniversary merch. If there is ongoing interest, we could continue to allow merch orders leading up to Nationals moving forward. If you are interested in this, let Tammy know.

b. Curriculum Initiatives

We have been trying to expand on our curriculum and establish an adjudicator position, which we have been able to do (refer to Tammy’s report).

We have also been working on developing learning outcomes that are more in line with our updated curriculum—generalized to not refer to a specific weapon, but rather the skills we want students to gain. Tammy and a group of interested members are working in a Google Doc – if you are interested in being part of this process, please get in touch with Tammy via email.

c. 2024 Nationals

It was awesome! Students were amazing and everything went well. We were able to bring in more Journeys than originally anticipated. We had students from all over the world, including Belgium, and amazing instructors. We are hoping to continue expanding our relationship with our European friends.

d. Upcoming Elections

Michelle has been re-elected into the Membership Rep Position, which was up for election as of last year’s AGM.

Nathania’s term as president is wrapping up. Nominations are currently open until September 26th, and voting will open anonymously through the website on or shortly following that date.

Nomination procedure: The FDC member nominating the candidate will offer a letter of

support explaining why their nominee should be considered for the position. The nominee will submit a letter of intent which must include their platform for the position that covers their goals and ideas for their term.

The Treasurer position will be coming up for election shortly, so please watch your email for information on that.

7. New Business

a. Award Recipients

Two amazing award recipients! Danielle and Marco who are incredible human beings and who we were so fortunate to have at our workshop this year.

Danielle's award is a fellowship and comes with a \$500 credit to a future nationals, which we hope will allow her to continue her studies.

b. Partner Society Discount

Moving into our next Nationals, we are hoping to make it easier for members of other organization to join us. In addition to the early bird discount and the U of S Student discount, we will be offering a 30% discount to any member of one of our sister organizations; Tammy will be negotiating with them to hopefully offer the same to our members in return.

c. FD Rep Position

Jackie's term as Executive Advisor is also coming to a close; we have been discussing the nature of the position, and the focus of the board, and have decided we want to extend the focus of the board to better include our FD membership and will be adding a new position to the board to help facilitate this widening of focus.

d. Website Resource Page

We have been trying to get more teachers to take the initiative to run regionals in their area; to help with this, Tammy will be working on adding resources to the FDC website including templates for waivers, incident reports, letters to schools, planning steps and checklists. This will be rolling out over the next year onto the website, or email Tammy directly before then, and you can have it sent to you directly.

8. Questions from the Floor

G. Banville: I am interested in advocating for bursaries to be created to allow local talent to afford to travel and take advantage of FDC training. There has been a brief conversation with Tammy about creating a proposal for this. Is there movement on creating a plan for this?

T. Everett: Yes – we are working on creating a letter template to send to theatre organizations and schools to help folks advocate for the creation of bursaries and scholarships to help them access training. This will be added as a resource in the package of what we will be adding to the website.

9. K. Robinson motions to adjourn; meeting adjourned at 7:08 pm MST