Recap and Reinforce

Ariella Cuellar
State President

Bright and early on November 5th, 376 members of SkillsUSA made their way to Lansing to attend the 2018 Fall Leadership Conference. The Fall Leadership Conference was hosted by the State Officers who worked countless hours on breakout sessions, rehearsing opening and closing ceremonies, and setting up the whole conference. The goals of the Fall Leadership Conference include: educating those in attendance about the roles of a local officer of SkillsUSA, encouraging networking between each chapter, strengthening the leadership qualities of each member, introducing your 2018-2019 state officer team, and giving some in attendance their first experience with SkillsUSA.

When I attended the 2017 Fall Leadership Conference, I was one of those members that experienced SkillsUSA for the first time, and it made me realize the impact SkillsUSA has on its members. The Fall Leadership Conference installed a curiosity about SkillsUSA that made me want to dive into the organization. It was at the Fall Leadership Conference where I decided I want to be on stage performing the Emblem Ceremony, I wanted to host the breakout sessions, and I wanted to become a State Officer. I took a lot away from the Fall Leadership Conference and I know that the 376 members in attendance this year, did as well.

The Fall Leadership Conference is a chance for the State Officers to be introduced to their members and they get to communicate openly with these same officers in the breakout sessions. The Fall Leadership Conference is where members also get to create a relationship with their State Officers. The 2018-2019 State officers include Nadia Lawrence, State Secretary; Tamara Motley, State Treasurer; Imoni Dorsey, State Vice President; and myself, Ariella Cuellar, State President. First impressions matter so we really hope that at the Fall Leadership Conference your impression of us was a good one.

So what should you do with the information you learned at the Fall Leadership Conference? That’s an easy question. Give the information to your local chapter. Spread the word that SkillsUSA is an amazing organization where you can grow your leadership in the world of work. SkillsUSA is working endlessly to close the skills gap in America and needs more members like you to make a difference, and become a “SkillsUSA Champion at Work”.

So to wrap things up, I encourage you to ask your local SkillsUSA officers or members what was their favorite part about Fall Leadership Conference. Local officers, please encourage your members to jump into SkillsUSA because the lessons they learn from this organization will be life changing. I hope to see you all at the State Conference. Please come up to the State Officer Team and introduce yourself so we can make a connection with each of our members. Spread the word about SkillsUSA!!

State Leadership & Skills Conference
April 5-7 | Grand Rapids

Mark your calendar!
The 2019 SkillsUSA Michigan State Leadership and Skills Conference will be a highlight of the year for thousands of Michigan members! Join us April 5-7, 2019 in Grand Rapids, as members from across the state come together to compete for a chance to represent Michigan at the National Championships!

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Experiences as a State Officer

Being a state officer is a lot of hard work but it is fun at the same time. Personally, I always wanted to be a part of some organization such as SkillsUSA. I’ve always enjoyed speaking with groups, working with others, creating projects, and traveling. SkillsUSA is a good fit in this category. New state officers are elected in the spring and if you have an interest, then maybe being a state officer is for you.

In December, my career center had a student organization expo. SkillsUSA, HOSA, FFA, BPA, and ProStart are the student organizations that presented at the expo. The expo consisted of all of the classes at my career center sharing important facts about their class and their student organization.

For the Careers in Education class, I was the presenter and I presented a board with pictures and certificates I have earned from SkillsUSA. I also shared some of the class projects we’ve created in my classroom pertaining to education. The students were given a handout where they were asked to state three facts they learned from each presentation.

Being a state officer is so awesome! I was given the opportunity to go to Washington D.C. for the SkillsUSA Washington Leadership Training Institute (WLTI) and by there! My team and I went to Washington D.C. to earn our National Statesman pin and meet with legislators representing Michigan. Each officer had to meet the correct criteria to be awarded the pin. Before the trip, we had to complete and submit three assignments including an essay.

This experience was one of the best, because we were able to speak with Representative Sander Levin and an aide for Senator Gary Peters in their office about our organization, SkillsUSA. My team and I spoke with them individually about our experiences with SkillsUSA and why we appreciate the Carl D. Perkins Act being passed.

Our organization as a whole viewed the Lincoln Monument and the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial. Although it was raining during our tour, it still was such a great scene. We had the opportunity to go on a personal tour at the Capitol, we viewed many different museums, and ate at a lot of different places. At the Pentagon Memorial, we were each given a paper talking about a person who died on 9-11. We were given two stones to put on benches at the Pentagon in honor of their lives. We also went to Arlington Cemetery and viewed the Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers. There was a wreath laying ceremony and moment of silence from SkillsUSA members dedicated to the ones who lost their lives during war. I learned a lot from this trip, it was such a great experience as a state officer.

Our organization as a whole is so amazing. At WLTI, I was given the opportunity to meet with other state officers all over the United States. I became good friends with the other members. I met a girl from Rhode Island with an accent, she was so adorable and nice to me. We had different breakout sessions pertaining to some skills we use in SkillsUSA. Each member was given a book to study the SkillsUSA Framework: personal skills, workplace skills, and technical skills grounded in academics. The executive director of the organization, Tim Lawrence, shared with us his journey with SkillsUSA. During his presentation, he shared that he was able to go to Korea and meet with their career readiness program similar to SkillsUSA. He said one thing that stood out to me, “the places you will go with this organization”. This made me value SkillsUSA ten times more and made me even happier to be a state officer.

Early this November, my state officer team and I planned the Fall Leadership Conference in Lansing. The point of the conference was to get other students involved with SkillsUSA. We stayed in Lansing at a hotel the night before and we studied and practiced for the conference the next day. We partnered up with FCCLA and presented our parts on stage. Both organizations held breakout sessions dealing with leadership. New members who were interested in becoming state officers worked with my team and we shared our personal information about SkillsUSA with them.

As a state officer, it is my job to share information with students about SkillsUSA and get students to run for state office. One of my fellow classmates was interested in becoming a state officer, so I was able to share information and facts about SkillsUSA. They told me they were interested and I inspired them to run for state officer.

These are just some of my experiences with SkillsUSA as a state officer. It is part of my job as an officer to inspire students to join our organization. The organization gives you great opportunities to travel, meet new people, and explore. You have to complete the work set out for you but it’s rewarding. SkillsUSA is what you make of it and I enjoy being a member very much. If anyone is thinking about joining SkillsUSA, you definitely should.
Being a member of SkillsUSA is one thing but being a champion is so much more. Practice, practice, and practice some more, yes it takes dedication and work. I remember competing in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies. The competition resided in Grand Rapids and I couldn't wait to compete with my fellow peers. I was a little nervous because this was my first time competing against the whole state of Michigan and I had no idea what to expect.

Plus on top of competing, I was running for state office, which was very nerve wracking. I have always been a shy kid growing up, but I needed to come out of my shell to talk to people. Campaigning helped me, but it was still an adjustment. Thankfully, I had my advisor and my Opening and Closing team to give me support and encouraging words.

I never thought that I would be doing such great things in my life, especially on this level. My experience in competing has taught me so much. I've learned about social networking, how to stand up for what I believe in as well as how to conduct business meetings and portray a professional persona. It was a lot of pressure on me to succeed, not just in running to be a state officer but having my team depend on me as well.

I had to run around (a lot) going to my first interview as an officer candidate to practicing with my peers. In this short time, I learned the importance of time management. Being a champion is so much more than competing and getting a medal, it's about believing in yourself and branching out of your comfort zone. You may not know it but you are a champion at work every day by just trying to learn something new. Being a part of SkillsUSA has helped me realize that and has shaped me into the strong independent person I am today.

State Conference Dress Code

In preparing for your competition, we want to remind everyone of the State Conference Dress Code. How you present yourself is just as important as how your perform! The State Conference Dress Code applies to both students and advisors.

IMPORTANT NOTE: At the Sunday Morning Awards Ceremony at the State Conference, all state contest medalists need to be properly dressed in order to be allowed on stage. Make sure you have the right clothes!

Friday Night General Session and Saturday Delegate Meeting: School-logo attire or SkillsUSA Michigan attire is required. A SkillsUSA blazer, sweater or windbreaker is encouraged but not required. Business attire is NOT allowed.

- **Women:** School-logo collared shirt, dress pants or skirt no shorter than 2” above the knee, skin-tone seamless hose, and close toed dress shoes OR white collared shirt, black pants or skirt no shorter than 2” above the knee, skin-tone seamless hose, and close toed dress shoes.
- **Men:** School-logo collared shirt, dress pants, dress socks, and dress shoes OR white collared shirt, black pants, black socks, and dress shoes.

Sunday Morning Awards Ceremony: SkillsUSA Michigan attire or appropriate National Competition clothing is required. A SkillsUSA blazer, sweater or windbreaker is encouraged but not required. Business attire and school-logo attire are NOT allowed. Please refer to the 2018 Technical Standards for the National competition clothing requirements for your contest.

- **Women:** White collared shirt, black pants or skirt no shorter than 2” above the knee, skin-tone seamless hose, and close toed dress shoes OR appropriate National competition clothing.
- **Men:** White collared shirt, black pants, black socks, and dress shoes OR appropriate National competition clothing.

Social and Free Time: Neat casual clothing is acceptable. Shoes must be worn when in public areas. Items not acceptable include hats, bathing suits (unless at the pool), and suggestive attire. Shirts must have sleeves and no bare midriff. Skirts and shorts must be at least fingertip length.
The month of November opened the holiday season with Thanksgiving. Giving thanks and living in a state of gratitude has been a major enhancement in my life. The holidays are not about presenting that perfect turkey or finding the centerpiece that will tie it all together. What matters most is that we should value and cherish our family and friends around the turkey or even give back to the community.

I’ll be honest, I didn’t start appreciating Thanksgiving as much as I do now until I entered high school and got a job. My mom made me help purchase some items for Thanksgiving and I now realize how difficult it is to purchase and prepare a meal. To be presented with an entire spread of delicious food free of charge? Complete bliss.

And the specific menu for a Thanksgiving meal is incredible. Thanksgiving is the only time a year that I get to have honey glazed ham, cranberry sauce, dressing, baked macaroni, AND pumpkin pie. I adore the fact that Thanksgiving does not include gift-giving. The absence of presents eliminates the pressure and anxiety of shopping. Thanksgiving is simply about enjoying great food and being with the people you love. Material items are unnecessary to having a special day. Thanksgiving is during autumn and winter. As someone who loves fall, I appreciate being able to cuddle up in a sweater and a scarf, but not having to trudge through several feet of snow.

At the Saginaw Career Complex, we held a canned goods drive over Thanksgiving and we actually made a competition out of it, to see what career class collected the most canned goods. This one is a given as food is something that I am INCREDIBLY passionate about (being in the Culinary Arts program). So naturally, I love the holidays.

For Christmas, my school had a giving tree event. The main goal of the event is to give back to people who may not have something. We put up a Christmas tree out in our commons and random people placed anything they want under it. If the next person needed it, he/she went to the tree and took the item.

Let’s keep this season of thanks going all year long! It is not hard to do and others will appreciate your efforts well after the holidays.
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Here are some Qualities and Skills needed to be an effective President:

Sometimes the president takes the dictator approach during the meeting. The president likes to be in complete control of the meeting. A dictator quickly denies it. Pursuing it further they may say the president cannot close debate or cannot call on someone he does not want to. The role of the president is to facilitate the meeting.

Facilitate means to make an action or process easier. Facilitating entails figuring out what the group members want to do. The skill of facilitating a meeting includes focusing on procedure and keeping the meeting moving. The president needs to be an effective, but fair leader. There are several qualities a president should have: fairness, neutrality, judgment, and credibility.

Fairness is making sure your actions are perceived as fair by others. When you are the president you should pay attention to your tone of voice and facial expressions especially when you call on a person to speak and you know they are irritating, but it is important not to display that irritation.

Neutrality means not supporting or helping in either side in a conflict or disagreement. The president stays neutral and should go out of their way to demonstrate being neutral to the members. The president should never enter debate, cannot make motions, but they can suggest motions, or ask “Would you to put that in a form of a motion” if the issue is being discussed and someone suggests a possible solution.

Judgment is an opinion or decision that is based on careful thought. Being an effective president is about making correct calls during voting procedure. If there is any doubt, the vote should be taken. If you make a mistake always correct the issue. Your assembly do not expect for you to be perfect, but they do want you to be honest.

Credibility means the quality of being trusted and believed in. The president must establish their credibility early and increase that credibility often by being honest and fair. Traditionally, modern credibility has two key components: trustworthiness and expertise, which both have objective and subjective components.

Skills means the ability to do something well. The characteristic of a president must have certain skills to be effective at their job. Skills can always be developed. Here are some skills that need to be developed: communication, and organization.

Communication is important because they know the president are listening to them. The verbal part of the communications is helpful to the president by listening, and observing the mood of the assembly. When a member is speaking the president is giving full attention to the member as they speak. Once a member feels heard the members are most likely to listen to others.

Organize means arranging your meetings in systematic way. When you are organized during the meeting it will make your meetings more efficient.

Display these qualities and skills for a better meeting. Confidence is the name of the game. You may not always feel confident when you are presiding.
Michigan Advanced Technician Training

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Page 9

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SkillsUSA Michigan Members on the 2019 WorldSkills Team

SkillsUSA Michigan has former members that will be competing on the 2019 WorldSkills team; Scott Curtiz May, Ryan Meppelink and Anthony Moore. SkillsUSA Michigan also has three advisors serving as industry experts representing the USA at the 2019 WorldSkills competition: Julie Ivan, Linda Ward and Dan Wanink. They are part of the 20 SkillsUSA students representing the USA and competing in Kazan, Russia, during the Global Trade Skills Competition Aug. 22-27, 2019.

Anthony Moore
Age 19
Hometown: Adrian, Michigan
Representing the USA at WorldSkills in Graphic Design

Anthony Moore has always been a creative person. But it was at the LISD Tech Center that Anthony was introduced to graphics and began building the necessary skills to become a graphic designer. “That program opened up the world of graphic design and all the possibilities within. Two teachers, Joel Beutler and Justin Myers, were most influential in my life. They always supported me, opened many doors for me, and gave me the tools I needed to be successful in graphic design.”

In preparing for WorldSkills, Anthony will be training to gain even more experience to meet the demands of a global competition. “WorldSkills is the highest level of competition – it has taken all competitors a lot of time and effort to reach this achievement. The stakes are high, and the rewards are even greater.” Following WorldSkills competition, Anthony hopes to pursue an education and a job within his field. “Graphic design is extremely rewarding because you are able to create amazing pieces to showcase your creativity in a way that helps others and changes the world around you.”

Quotables
On competing in the WorldSkills competition: “This is an opportunity to use my own talents and abilities as a graphic designer to represent my country to the best of my abilities. It is an honor and a privilege to be a part of an amazing team to showcase what our country has to offer.”

Advice for others: “Surround yourself with creative people. Creative minds are always looking for ways to improve, and resources and greater opportunities arise when you are surrounded with people like yourself.”

On SkillsUSA’s role: “In my three years with SkillsUSA, I have been able to be a part of something that has helped to shape who I am and my future. SkillsUSA has provided me with additional skills and training to help further my career and has helped prepare me for a bright career ahead.”

Ryan Meppelink
Age 20
Hometown: Zeeland, Michigan
Representing the USA at WorldSkills in Vehicle Maintenance

When Ryan Meppelink was 15 years old, he –along with his cousin Darin – worked to overhaul Ryan’s father’s pickup truck. After completing that project, Ryan began thinking about a future in vehicle maintenance. Darin, who worked as a technician at an equipment dealership, would soon prove to be a major influence in Ryan’s life.

“When I was 15, I drove to get back to Michigan. I was broken beyond belief, and I knew immediately that my life story was being written. I didn’t want to sit idle in his memory – I wanted one thing, and one thing only. To make Darin proud.”

After the WorldSkills competition, Ryan aims to obtain a management position and, potentially, become a custom fleet consultant. But he also wants to give back to the programs that have helped him succeed by becoming a teacher. Ryan credits his drive to a hunger for knowledge, knowing where he came from, and to those who have always stood behind him. “I enjoy the challenges presented by the different systems I’m faced with, and the countless possibilities for failures. I have always wanted to be the absolute best I can be.”

Quotables
On competing in the WorldSkills competition: “Being able to work through the selection process and ultimately be selected has been a great answer to prayer and diligent work. I am incredibly excited to represent my country on the WorldSkills stage, and I hope to make everyone proud of who we are as a nation.”

Advice for others: “Don’t ever give up – on anything. In the world of mechanics, we all get thrown curve balls, be it a new problem, or an old one disguised. The only way we will learn and better ourselves is to never give up.”

On his faith: “Through much of my training at the finalist level, I was consistently working 18 hour days between work and my studies. Knowing that I could turn to prayer was a solid rock for me. I have strived to put my faith first in all that I do.”

Scott Curtiz May
Age 19
Hometown: Adrian, Michigan
Representing the USA at WorldSkills in Graphic Design

Scott Curtiz May, Ryan Meppelink and Anthony Moore are all former members of SkillsUSA Michigan who will be competing on the 2019 WorldSkills team; Scott Curtiz May, Ryan Meppelink and Anthony Moore. SkillsUSA Michigan also has three advisors serving as industry experts representing the USA at the 2019 WorldSkills competition: Julie Ivan, Linda Ward and Dan Wanink. They are part of the 20 SkillsUSA students representing the USA and competing in Kazan, Russia, during the Global Trade Skills Competition Aug. 22-27, 2019.

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Julie Ivan is a culinary instructor for the Saginaw Public School System in Michigan. She has also been a bakery expert for the WorldSkills USA team since 2015 and believes the WorldSkills competition instills the ability to work in a diverse world, interacting with people from other countries and forming an “everlasting” network to their profession. To reinforce the value of creating a path for the future, Julie brings former students back into her classes as mentors. One of them, who went on to study at the Culinary Institute of America, now works as an executive chef.

With the knowledge of the baking industry and skills gained through competing, Julie believes Daylan Torres will have what it takes to become part of the next generation of leaders and teachers in the profession. Julie’s expertise has been recognized globally, as she will serve as the WorldSkills competition’s Chief Expert in baking. In this role, she is responsible for planning and managing the technical aspects of the competition.

Linda Ward is the Supervisor of Career and Technical Education Extension Services in the Mecosta Osceola Intermediate School District, where she started as a Cosmetology instructor in 2001. In addition to focusing on her career in education, Linda was the owner of We Care Hair Salon for eight years, where she perfected her hairdressing skills.

Linda believes the WorldSkills competition instills all aspects of a great work ethic and emphasizes lifelong learning – no matter where you are in your career. Linda attributes continuing education and technical expertise as instrumental to success. Linda is looking forward to training Rebekah Hagberg to meet her WorldSkills goals. “Rebekah is focused and determined to bring home a medal for the United States, and she has the drive and talent to make it happen.”

Dan Wanink first started learning about mechanical engineering when he was in high school. Today, he works as a professor of CAD Drafting and Tool Design Technology at Ferris State University. After 25 years in the industry, he’s seen a great number of changes – most notably how advancements in technology have played a major role. “In thinking about the cartoon The Jetsons, we saw some high tech things that we used to think would never exist and many of those things are available today. Just imagine what another 20 years is going to bring!”

Daniel is excited to begin training his competitor, Benjamin Campbell. The one piece of advice he would give Benjamin is to recognize change and continue to “re-invent” himself in order to stay competitive in today’s marketplace. Daniel believes Benjamin will walk away from the WorldSkills competition with increased perseverance, pride and quality workmanship.

Scott Curtiz May
Age 19
Hometown: Port Huron, Michigan
Representing the USA at WorldSkills in CNC Milling

After discovering CNC milling at his local T.E.C. school, Scott fell in love with the trade and, in his words, “it all snowballed from there.” “I love that my skill allows me to create nearly anything one can imagine. The more you perfect your skill in my trade, the more knowledge of things you have to create. That drives me to perfect my talents.”

Scott has been involved with SkillsUSA since he was a junior in high school. Through the rigorous training that goes into competing, he says he’s gained a huge advancement in his soft skills as well as his technical skills. In preparing for the WorldSkills competition, Scott plans on practicing every aspect of his trade in order to have an edge over the competition. He plans to hone in on his mental and physical abilities in order to cope with the demands and, in the end, he hopes to win. “To me, the opportunity to represent the United States at WorldSkills means being able to showcase the strong trade skills our country has to offer.” After WorldSkills, Scott plans on finishing his current apprenticeship and seeing where his career takes him.

**Quotables**

Advice he would give to someone training in CNC milling: “Make sure you stick to it, and always absorb all of the information that you can.”

On representing the U.S. at WorldSkills: “I am so excited for the incredible opportunity to travel and compete against the best of the trade from each country.”
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