



# TOASTMASTERS AT PURDUE NEWSLETTER

**November 2020**

**Club #4685166**  
**Toastmasters at Purdue**

## **Executive Committee**

### **President**

Korina Wilbert

### **VP Education**

Zhenhua Zeng

### **VP Membership**

Brian Dineen

### **VP Public Relations**

Jennifer Merzdorf

### **Secretary**

Hillary Merzdorf

### **Treasurer**

Taylor Stayback

### **Sergeant-at-Arms**

Shawn Whitaker

## **Visit our website and Facebook page:**

Toastmasters at Purdue Website  
<http://4685166.toastmastersclubs.org>

Toastmasters at Purdue Facebook:  
<https://www.facebook.com/toastmastersatpurdue/>

## **A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT KORINA WILBERT**

For the third year in a row, Toastmasters at Purdue is a President's Distinguished Club. This is the highest award for achievement that can be bestowed upon a club by Toastmasters International. The fact that we achieved this in the middle of the COVID-19 crisis with an abrupt move to virtual meetings speaks volumes about our club.

The quality of a Toastmasters Club is measured in four areas: education, membership, training of club officers, and administration. Points are earned if members are reaching their goals, club membership level is maintained, officers are being trained, and certain administrative tasks are completed.

Earning President's Distinguished Club status is an indicator of a high-quality club experience. It means that as members we enjoy a professional, supportive environment where we can work on our goals, develop our communication and leadership skills, and have fun.

And this year it means that going virtual hasn't slowed us down one bit.

Our club has a track record of being a high-achieving club. The club sponsors, mentor, and several charter members are still with us, lending a continuity of success for both our club and our members. But the heart of our club is and always has been our membership. We currently have 22 members from all over the world; students, staff, and faculty representing many areas of expertise, diversity of thought, and stages of life. Every single club member distinguishes our club and makes each meeting worthwhile whether we are sitting in the same room in Wang or, as we've experienced lately, on different continents.

We have an exciting year ahead. By making steady progress toward our personal goals, we also keep club meetings consistent, high-quality, and fun!

Please join me in welcoming our new members and members who have achieved educational milestones this year (p 2). I look forward to an exciting contest season and an equally strong second half of our Toastmasters year!



*President Korina Wilbert*

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# TOASTMASTERS AT PURDUE TO HOLD TWO SPEECH CONTESTS

By Korina Wilbert

This year our club is hosting two contests, the Evaluation and International Speech Contests. The **Evaluation Contest will be held November 20**, and the **International Speech Contest will be held January 22**. Both will be virtual and will take place during our regular Friday noon-1:00 club meeting time. Winners of each will advance to the Area Contests.

## Why participate in a speech contest?

It's a fun way to up your game. You will grow and stretch yourself as a speaker and a leader. In turn, you will enrich the club for yourself and your fellow members. Here are some links to get you excited about participating:

[Succeeding in a Speech Contest](#)

[Should You Enter Speech Contests? By all means, YES!](#)

[Contest Life Lessons: You Don't Have to Win to Win](#)

[Meet the 2020 World Champion of Public Speaking](#)

## How can you participate?

Roles to fill for each contest include: contest chair, chief judges, voting and tiebreaking judges, counters, timers, sergeant-at-arms, and, of course contestants.

Sign up on the Contest Google sheet at: <https://bit.ly/TM-Purdue-Contests>

## How can you learn more?

You can learn more about Toastmasters speech contests here: <https://www.toastmasters.org/leadership-central/speech-contests>

## What are the eligibility requirements?

You must be a paid member of Toastmasters at Purdue. In addition, to be eligible to compete in the International Speech Contest, you must have completed six speech projects in the Competent Communication manual from the legacy program or levels one and two in the Toastmasters Pathways learning experience. You can find all the speech contest rulebook here: <https://www.toastmasters.org/-/media/df5b90486396457dade944becca89cf0.ashx>

## TOASTMASTERS AT PURDUE MEMBER AWARDS

Level 1: Zhenhua Zeng, 8/3

Level 1: Shawn Whitaker: 10/16

Level 1: Jorge Luis Chamorro  
Corea

Level 2: Zhenhua Zeng: 8/3

Level 2: Clara Correa-Soto: 8/13

*Congratulations!*



## JOIN US!

Toastmasters at Purdue is open to Purdue staff, students, faculty, retirees, alumni, and family members of these groups.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we are currently meeting virtually.

**Visit our club website**

**<http://4685166.toastmastersclubs.org>**

for more information and be sure to click on "Contact Us" to request the meeting link!

## TOASTMASTERS AT PURDUE NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to the newest members of Toastmasters at Purdue! New members since June 1, 2020:

**Jorge Luis Chamorro Corea - 8/1**

**Parag Subhash Vasekar - 8/1**

**Jeannie Rapstad, ACG, ALB - 9/1**

**Grant Madison East - 10/1**

**Shaojun Xie - 10/1**

*Welcome!*

# TOASTMASTERS AT PURDUE 2020-2021 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

## President Korina Wilbert, DTM



**My affiliation with Purdue:** I am Director of Strategic Communication for The Graduate School and an alumna.

**Why I joined Toastmasters:** I joined Toastmasters to improve my public speaking skills. Few people are expert speakers right out of the gate. Most of us have to work at it, but we don't get many opportunities to practice until we are faced with a career-defining moment. You want to get all the kinks worked out and your nerves under control well before that happens. Toastmasters has a proven educational program that gives you the tools you need to hone your style and plenty of opportunities to practice. It helped me and so many others who have gone from being a bundle of nerves to being TED Talk-worthy.

**An interesting fact about me:** I love the beach and coastal life. I've explored coastal towns in seven countries and beaches on the Atlantic Ocean, Pacific Ocean, Mediterranean Sea, North Sea, and the Gulf of Mexico. But some of the best beaches can be found just a few hours north of us on Lake Michigan.

## Vice President Education, Zhenhua Zeng, EC2



**My affiliation with Purdue:** Research Scientist in the Davidson School of Chemical Engineering



[www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org)

## Did You Know...

Toastmasters began as a series of speaking clubs organized by Ralph C. Smedley during his time working for the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) in Bloomington, Illinois, United States. As director of education at the YMCA, Smedley saw a need for the men in the community to learn how to speak, conduct meetings, plan programs and work on committees, and he wanted to help them.

## Vice President Membership Brian Dineen, ACS



**My affiliation with Purdue:** I am a Professor of Management in the Krannert School of Management

**Why I joined Toastmasters:** I joined my first Toastmasters Club in Lexington, KY, and was fortunate enough to find the Toastmasters at Purdue Club after my move to West Lafayette. I am continually impressed with what I have been able to learn from fellow club members over the years, and am grateful for the many communication and professional development opportunities Toastmasters has afforded me. Toastmasters will improve your communications skills, but it will take you far beyond that. I encourage you to visit a nearby club as a guest and see what it's all about!

**My favorite hobbies:** I enjoy downhill skiing and decorating my house with thousands of Christmas lights!

## The Toastmasters International Club Mission

We provide a supportive and positive learning experience in which members are empowered to develop communication and leadership skills, resulting in greater self-confidence and personal growth.



# Toastmasters at Purdue 2020-2021 Executive Committee

## Vice President Public Relations Jennifer Merzdorf, DTM



**My affiliation with Purdue:** I am a Purdue staff member, alumna, and mom to three Purdue graduates.

**Why I joined Toastmasters:** I joined Toastmasters at the very first meeting I attended. I wanted to develop my leadership and communication skills, and I believed the Toastmasters club was the right place to reach my personal and professional goals! I have received encouragement from fellow Toastmasters who have pushed me to accomplish more than I ever imagined. I am looking forward to giving back to other members who are on their own Toastmasters journey.

**My favorite hobbies:** I love traveling in the mountains. Having grown up and lived my entire life in the Midwest, I am recharged by landscapes that look different than home! My dream is to someday relocate so I can look out the window and see the mountains every day.

## Secretary Hillary Merzdorf



**My affiliation with Purdue:** I'm a PhD student in Engineering Education, studying cognition and design learning with educational technology.

**Why I joined Toastmasters:** I joined Toastmasters to improve my research presentation skills, for professional development, and to be a more confident leader on my research team.

**Something about me:** I love cooking and learning new recipes. It's a relaxing way to be creative, and I love trying foods from around the world!

## Treasurer Taylor Stayback, CC



**My affiliation with Purdue:** Staff member at Purdue (Senior Data Analyst in IDA+A)

**Why I joined Toastmasters:** I joined Toastmasters to become more comfortable speaking in front of other people. Since joining Toastmasters, I have gained confidence and improved my public speaking and leadership skills. Toastmasters has given me the confidence to present at conferences and lead meetings effectively. I am so thankful for the support that I have received from other members of our club and other Toastmasters clubs across Indiana.

**Something about me:** My favorite hobby is playing with my new kitten, Ollie.

## Sergeant-At-Arms Shawn Whitaker



**My affiliation with Purdue:** I work at Purdue University as an Information Technology Senior Manager.

**Why I joined Toastmasters:** I was encouraged to join Toastmasters by my boss and friend at Purdue. Initially, I wondered what Toastmasters was about. I was confused as to why I should join a wine drinking and tasting club. Why did my boss suggest attending the meetings? After all, I don't really like to drink wine. After doing a little bit of research and I attended my first meeting I realized that it isn't about wine. During my first few meetings I would show up and observe the meeting, but not really participate. As I got more comfortable with the group and the meeting format it all changed. A few months later I became a member. The club had given me access to a great mentor. Brian and I would meet often. Through his positive approach he helped me grow within the club. Every single one of the members has always been great. I have been very impressed with the positive environment of the Toastmasters club.

**Something about me:** During my free time I like to volunteer with local organizations and my favorite is the Fowler Movie Theater ([www.fowlertheater.com](http://www.fowlertheater.com)).