

District 6 Officer Candidate



Biographical Information

Candidate's Name	Harold Osmundson
Office Candidate is running for	Northern Division Governor
Toastmaster member since	12/01/2011
Toastmasters offices held and terms of service	Club Treasurer, AC Early Risers (Club #2665): 12/1/2011 – Present (3/9/2013) Area Governor, Area 56: 7/1/2012 – Present (3/9/2013)
Toastmasters honors and recognition	Sponsor of Nilfisk-Advance Toastmasters (club # 2868598), a newly chartered club. Member of Magnificent 7 for AC Early Risers club (#2665), 7/1/2012 – 6/30/2013. Trained all club officers in Area 56 in both rounds of club officer training during 7/1/2012 – 6/30/2013 Toastmasters year.
How has your Toastmasters experience most benefited you both personally and professionally?	Both personally and professionally, I have much more confidence, which allows me to speak, present, and lead in a comfortable and natural manner. I'm also more comfortable meeting new people and talking in larger groups. Professionally, when I work with new clients, I'm able to build rapport quickly with them and present my ideas confidently, and more importantly, naturally. This has made a significant difference in my effectiveness as a consultant. Serving in leadership

roles in Toastmasters has also made leading teams a regular, everyday activity. As a result, I've grown into a more natural leader that gravitates toward leadership roles wherever I am.

Personally, since I'm more comfortable meeting people, I've developed more and better personal relationships, and I continue to grow them on a daily basis. I probably wouldn't recognize the person I was before I joined Toastmasters.

That confidence that I've gained through Toastmasters is the result of consistently performing activities and roles that forced me to grow. Every meeting, every speech, and every activity as an Area Governor helped build confidence in myself. Eventually, what initially felt unnatural and awkward became natural and comfortable for me. My confidence and leadership ability grew bit by bit over the last two years because of Toastmasters. I've seen this same effect on several other Toastmasters. We grow bit by bit.

What lessons did you learn from Toastmasters?

I've learned many lessons through my Toastmasters experience. For example, I've learned to pay attention to time and respect the time of others. Meetings and interactions should start on time, and they should definitely end on time. Toastmasters has also shown me how effective and orderly meetings can be run. Of course, I've also learned to be a better speaker, and my presentation skills have improved significantly. The most important lessons I've learned have to do with evaluations (giving and receiving feedback), and in connecting with people.

Evaluations are a key activity in Toastmasters, as well as in personal and professional activities. Each of us benefits from being able to effectively give and graciously receive feedback, and we can make a significant impact on others by developing skill in this area. Through Toastmasters, I've learned to always find, highlight, and encourage the positive behaviors that I see in others. However, to be fair to the other individual, I also have an obligation to point out some

areas for the individual to improve in. I'll do the other person no good by omitting opportunities to improve. And knowing the value of constructive criticism myself, I now seek out the areas where I fell short and could use improvement. When I receive feedback, I don't want to hear only about the areas I did well in. The most valuable feedback is in the opportunities I have to improve.

But, the most important lesson I've learned from Toastmasters is that everything revolves around people. No matter the activity or goal, it's critical to connect with people. My experience as an Area Governor taught me this lesson. Running a successful club requires us to understand our members and what they want from Toastmasters. Each member has unique goals, needs, and approaches. Likewise, each club is different and has different needs and approaches. While best practices often apply to every club, a one-size-fits-all approach usually won't work, and it unfortunately alienates the clubs and members we aim to serve. Instead, as officers, we serve others best by connecting with them individually, in-person as much as possible, and understanding their goals and needs. We can all achieve the goals we have, but we have the best chance of achieving them when we connect with each other individually.

What key strengths would you bring to the role?

I believe I bring several strengths to the role I'm seeking. I have a strong, analytical mind, a background in systems thinking and engineering, strong leadership skills, and an easy-going personality that's compatible with nearly everyone I've ever met. In both my personal and professional life, I love to analyze situations, find bottlenecks and constraints, and then work to eliminate those constraints. However, more than anything, I bring a willingness to adapt to do what's needed to fulfill my responsibilities, serve the needs of others, and achieve something significant.

With humility, I'll concede and admit that the role I'm seeking will very likely require me to stretch and do things I haven't done before. But, that's often true

any time a new role is assumed. From past experience, I know that I'll stretch and do what's needed. As an Area Governor, the first round of officer training, club visits, and the Fall speech contest stretched me in different ways, and some the activities were awkward at first. However, I learned and grew from the experience, and the second round of these activities went very smooth. I expect the same pattern to happen with the role I'm seeking.

I also have high expectations for myself, for other district officers, and the clubs we serve. I like to raise the bar and see what we can all achieve. While it's not always possible to achieve perfection or a stretch goal, just pursuing the goal tends to bring out productive behaviors, such as reframing a problem, making extra efforts, and working as a team to achieve something that can't be done individually. However, while I have high expectations, those expectations are communicated to others in a tactful and easy-going fashion.

Why do you want to serve in this position?

I want to serve in the Division Governor position for several reasons, ranging from a strong belief in Toastmasters and the impact it has on others, to the personal growth I expect to experience by stretching to fulfill this position's responsibilities.

In the two years I've been in Toastmasters, I've experienced a significant amount of personal growth. Likewise, I've met many other Toastmasters who share a similar story of growth. Serving as an Area Governor allowed me to visit several clubs, meet many people, and see the positive influence Toastmasters has on its members. I believe that Toastmasters is an important organization that makes a positive difference in people's lives. As I often say to others, I don't know anyone that wouldn't benefit from actively participating in Toastmasters. Given that, I have a real interest and passion for promoting the growth of Toastmasters and seeing others benefit from it.

I also believe that district officers can be a strong influence on the development of clubs. Given our

	<p>roles, which enable us to visit many clubs and observe the practices that clubs use, we have the ability to identify and promote best practices, and to also disseminate useful information to clubs and their members. When we do our jobs well and connect with our clubs, the clubs and their members really benefit. Those benefits will help improve a person's skills, confidence, and life. In sum, I enjoy serving the clubs. As a Division Governor, I can serve more clubs and broaden the positive impact I hope to make as a district officer.</p> <p>Finally, serving as a Division Governor will stretch me personally and require me to develop new skills and behaviors. The experience alone is worth it. As an Area Governor, I've grown significantly as a leader; I refined my voice and leadership style, and my life is better because of that. As a Division Governor, I hope to continue my personal growth while also serving the division's Area Governors, clubs, and its members.</p>
<p>In your opinion, what are District 6's major objectives and how would you work to achieve them?</p>	<p>In my opinion, District 6's major objectives revolve around expanding the number of clubs in the district, increasing membership, and making each club a quality club that serves the needs of its members and attracts new members.</p> <p>To help the district expand the number of clubs, I plan to work with the district trio to take advantage of new-club sponsoring and mentoring opportunities since they help the district and are also great experience. As an Area Governor, it has been a pleasure sponsoring and working with the Nilfisk-Advance Toastmasters club, a newly chartered club. The district added a club, my area grew, and the club became chartered as a result. From that experience, whenever a new club opportunity comes around, I plan to jump at the chance to get involved and either sponsor or mentor the club. Also, I'll encourage the Area Governors in the division to get involved.</p> <p>Membership has been a key topic for the district this year. While membership has declined, there's still great opportunity to grow membership since Toastmasters is a great value. Further, there's a large</p>

market of potential members that hasn't yet been reached. To help grow membership, I'd like to work with those clubs that seem to consistently grow. I'd like to model the practices and approaches these strong clubs have for building membership, and disseminate that information to other clubs in the division who need members. For example, it'd be great to see every club have an updated web site, as well as a presence on social media sites, such as meetup.com and LinkedIn. Achieving a consistency in this area across clubs should help us reach more potential members.

Making each club a quality club that serves its members and attracts new members will also require information and best practices to be distributed across the clubs and reinforced. This information can be compiled and shared with each club through club visits, club officer training sessions, or other channels if needed.

More than anything, at the end of my term as Division Governor, I hope to have established a philosophy and system for how a division, area, and club should be successfully run. For example, it'd be great to have an established plan for club visits and officer training that helps us get all club officers trained without unnecessary effort. Blueprints for the division and area speech contests are another example. Also, it'd be very helpful to establish a list of best practices, templates, and other materials for clubs to help them reach their educational and membership goals. This leaves the next Division Governor and Area Governors a blueprint and foundation to begin the next year with. While the next class of Division and Area Governors are free to choose their own approach, there's no need for them to start from scratch.

Additional information you would like us to know:

It'd be an honor to serve as a Division Governor. I believe I can have a positive impact on the district, its clubs and their members during my term. While I can't promise specific results at this point, I promise to do everything I can to fulfill my responsibilities as a Division Governor.

