

News Event First Place Winner
By Sophia Li from Lakota East

With keynote speaker Mary Beth Tinker and sessions led by students, advisers and Kent State faculty, the sixth annual Ohio Scholastic Media Association (OSMA) convention aimed to give students the best “overall experience,” said OSMA executive director Candace Perkins Bowen.

The convention took place at Kent State on Friday, April 5 and Saturday, April 6.

A highlight going into the OSMA state convention for Lakota East High School junior Rachel Hartwick was Tinker’s address at the banquet.

“I’m really excited to hear her speak,” said Hartwick, who came to the convention although she was on spring break. “[The OSMA convention] is a great learning opportunity.”

Both Bowen and Georgia Dunn, the Journalism Education Association director of Ohio, were very excited to have Tinker as the keynoter.

“So many times in school we hear about people who made history,” Dunn said. “Tonight we’re going to get a chance to see someone who had a big part in history.”

There have been many additions to the convention this year in order to find “the right balance of sessions.” According to Bowen, the addition of a student board has helped with generating session ideas and “giving advice on what people really want” in the sessions. Students were able to apply to the board last fall and some even taught classes alongside high school advisers.

This inclusion of the students is a “positive move,” said high school adviser Angela Spano.

“[The class] felt a little thrown together—I found out about it last week, but for us it worked,” said Spano, who led an opinion-writing workshop and moderated a publication-sharing session.

Another new addition to the OSMA convention was a tour of Kent State on Saturday of the event. These new opportunities have all stemmed from comments about past conventions.

While the number of students attending the convention was slightly lower than in 2012, with approximately 350 people at the Friday banquet, Dunn attributed the attendance to students being on spring break.

“We were hoping to grow every year but that’s not always possible because of scheduling,” Dunn said.

Looking toward the future, Bowen said she hopes to have more female speakers. Having Tinker as the keynote speaker was special not only because of her Supreme Court case but also because of the large male presence in previous keynoters. Bowen mentioned that she hopes to bring Kent State alumna and nationally syndicated columnist Connie Schultz to the convention in the future.

Dunn and Bowen both spoke about the challenges faced in running the convention. From finding a good date that will not interfere with Easter or other journalism conventions, to securing an interesting keynote speaker, one of Dunn’s major concerns is having more involvement with advisers.

“What has been a disappointment to me is that we cannot get more advisers involved,” Dunn said. “I know they’re busy. But our whole goal is to try to help the advisers and the staffs, and we could use more input.”