

# HOSTING A DEBATE TOURNAMENT

Hosting a debate tournament on campus is a great way to serve your local debating community, to attract students from other schools/universities to your campus, and to showcase the work of your team. This document provides an overview of the steps you need to follow in order to host a successful debate tournament on your campus.

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## First Steps

### *What kind of tournament?*

- Are you hosting a university-level tournament or a high-school tournament?
- What format will you use – British Parliamentary, Worlds Schools, other?
- How large of a tournament are you hoping to have? How many schools/attendees?

### *Choose dates*

- Make sure that your dates do not conflict with other major events on campus and other major debate tournaments/events in your community

### *Make a schedule*

- Will your tournament be 1 day, 2 days, or 3 days?
- Will you host workshops, social events, etc.?
- How many preliminary rounds will you hold? How many elimination rounds?

### *Reserve rooms on campus*

- To host a tournament, you will need a large auditorium-style room to be your “General Assembly” room or main meeting room, you will need a place for meals (if not the GA room), and you will need enough classrooms for all of the debates
- Make sure to check the availability of classroom space before announcing your tournament to others

### *Notify campus offices/administrators*

- Notify central campus offices (deans’ offices, security offices, etc.) to let them know of your plans to host a large event on campus

### *Budget*

- Draft a budget for your event and make sure you will have the funds to cover your event
- Main budget items for a tournament include – meals for tournament participants, awards, and fees to use classroom space on a weekend
- If you are paying to transport/house teams at your tournament, you will need to add that to your budget
- If you are bringing in IAs (independent adjudicators) or expert judges to your tournament, you will need to add this to your budget
- If you charge participants entry fees to attend your tournament, this can help to cover your costs or even generate revenue for your team

## **Tournament Administration**

### *Convener*

-Who will be the primary organizer of tournament logistics?

### *Adjudication Team/Motions*

-Who will choose the motions and who will be the top adjudicators of the tournament?

-Will motions all be impromptu motions or will some be researched/prepared and thus announced in advance? If the latter – when will you release the motions?

### *IAs/expert judges*

-Will you be bringing in independent adjudicators or expert judges? If so – how many and how will you choose them? Will you put out a call for applications or will you simply select people and invite them?

-What is your budget for this? Who will organize IA transportation/housing/meals?

### *Tabulation*

-Who will run the tabulation software to run the tournament and what software will you use?

-It is best to choose someone who has experience tabulating tournaments

### *Your team*

-How can you best utilize the members of your own debate team to help the tournament run smoothly – should they help convene, judge, organize meals, etc.?

## **Inviting Participants**

### *Draft an Invitation*

-The invitation should cover the tournament basics – location, dates, schedule, and registration fees as well as any other information that you think would attract people to your tournament (expert judges, workshops, fun social events, etc.) or information they need to know (hotel recommendations, transportation info, etc.)

### *Send to all potential participants*

-Send your invitation to all potential participants as early as you can (ideally a few months before your tournament)

-Encourage your team members and other contacts you have to spread the word

### *Set clear deadline for submission of participant info*

-Make sure you are very clear about when you will need preliminary entry information from participating schools to leave yourself time to order enough food, awards, etc. and to confirm you have sufficient classroom space

### *Identify contact info*

-Make sure there is someone available to answer all inquiries about the tournament – this could be the convener or someone else; put this person's contact info at the top of your invitation

## **Logistics**

### *Meals*

- How many meals will you serve to tournament participants and where will you get this food?
- Do you need to use campus dining services or can you order from out?
- Always order a bit more food than you think you will need so you don't run out

### *Awards*

- Determine how many awards you will give out (top 10 speaker awards and awards to all quarterfinalists, semifinalists, finalists, and champion?)
- Order your awards

### *Workshops*

- Do you want to hold any workshops along with your tournament - perhaps an "introduction to debate" workshop or a workshop on a specific debate skill, taught by one of your advanced debaters or expert judges?

### *Social Events*

- Will you organize any official tournament social events? If so, when/where will this take place?
- Make sure you have a specific policy on alcohol consumption if there will be under-age students in attendance; this should be consistent with your university's policy on this issue

### *Transportation/Housing*

- Will you designate a specific hotel/hostel for tournament participants? – if so, you should reach out to that hotel/hostel and see if they can offer you a discounted rate to hold a "block" of rooms
- Will you offer "crash housing" for tournament participants? – if so, where and for how many people? Who will organize this?
- Will you need to organize transportation between the hotel/hostel and the tournament location? Or do you want to make recommendations to participants about transportation?

## **Final Items**

### *Printed Items*

- Make sure to print all necessary tournament documents - schedules, maps, format overview

### *Registration*

- Determine who will run tournament registration at the beginning of the tournament – this will involve checking in the teams, noting changes, accepting payments, etc.

### *Tournament to-do list*

- Make sure to bring with you to the tournament a clear list of what needs to happen day by day, round by round, to keep everything running on time!

**Good Luck!**