



THE LAFAYETTE DEBATES

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

2019

JUDGE HANDBOOK

Thank you for volunteering to judge at The Lafayette Debates! The national college debate community greatly appreciates your willingness to share your expertise and experience with our debaters.

This document provides an overview of your role as a judge.

- Section 1 summarizes your role as a judge.
- Section 2 provides guidance on judging a college debate.
- Section 3 provides background on the topic for the debate you will be judging.
- Section 4 explains how to complete your ballot.

I. SUMMARY

Each round will last about an hour and will involve two competing teams of two or three debaters each. The debaters will be responsible for timing and attending to the order of their speeches and/or there will be a timekeeper in the round.

You will receive a paper ballot. At the end of the round you will be asked to indicate if your vote goes to the affirmative or the negative team as the winners of the round.

At the conclusion of each round you will also have an opportunity to provide the debaters with an oral critique. We're honored to have such highly qualified judges and hope our debaters can benefit from your experience and expertise.

During the oral critique, please DO provide positive feedback and constructive criticism to each debater in the post-round discussion period.

II. JUDGING AT THE LAFAYETTE DEBATES

The Lafayette Debates provides college debaters a rare opportunity to test their skills debating before judges drawn from both inside and outside of the college debate community, including distinguished professionals and topic experts. Please do not worry if you do not have experience judging college debate rounds. The most important thing to remember when judging a debate is that if a team convinces you they have won the round, they have won the round!

What to expect

Debaters are expected to time their own speeches and attend to the order of the speeches. The precise order of the speeches is provided at the end of this handbook. As a general rule the debate will proceed in two stages: (1) Constructives & Cross Examinations and (2) Rebuttal Speeches.

Constructives & Cross Examinations. The round will begin with four six minute speeches each followed by a four minute cross examination. During this 40 minutes of speaking time, teams should introduce and defend their primary arguments for or against the topic while responding to the facts and arguments introduced by their opposition.

Rebuttals. The round will conclude with two six minute speeches. (There are no cross examinations after these last two speeches.) During these last two speeches debaters are encouraged to explain to judges why the primary arguments they have presented in their earlier speeches are collectively more persuasive than those of their opponents as regards the core question raised by the topic.

Picking the winner

Your primary task as a judge is assessing which team has done the better debating the core question raised by the tournament topic.

If you are judging on Saturday, you will be the sole judge in the room.

If you are judging on Sunday, you will be assigned to a panel of judges and asked to reach consensus on a winner after the round.

When selecting the winner, you should set aside your personal opinions on the topic. You may conclude that a team has done the better debating even if you do not personally agree with the team's arguments.

We suggest judges consider the following three questions when assessing which team did the better debating:

- (i) Did both teams clearly express their primary arguments for or against the topic?
- (ii) Did both teams effectively develop and defend their primary arguments using logic and evidence as necessary?
- (iii) On balance, which team was more effective in demonstrating their arguments to be, collectively, more persuasive in resolving the core question raised by the topic?

Every debate is different but if you can clearly answer this last question in one team's favor they have likely done the better debating in the round.

If neither of the teams in the round distinguish themselves on these three questions, you should consider the following additional questions when assessing who has done the better debating: Were the speeches well organized, easy to follow, and presented in a manner that kept your attention? Did debaters provide direct and succinct answers in cross examination to the extent possible? Did the debaters demonstrate creativity and command of the subject matter?

Discount new arguments presented in the final two speeches

Because the opposing team does not have an opportunity to respond it is particularly important that you discount new facts, evidence and explanations presented in the very last speech of the debate that could have been presented earlier in the debate.

Debaters should not present new primary arguments for or against the topic in either of the last two speeches. Although they may respond to arguments presented by their opponents, debaters are asked in these last two speeches to assess the arguments that have been presented in the earlier speeches rather than presenting new facts, evidence and explanations that could have been presented earlier in the debate.

Interpreting the topic

You should interpret the burden the topic places on the Affirmative and Negative teams in a manner consistent with the topic statement. Debaters will sometimes attempt to interpret topics in a manner that “tilts” the playing field to their advantage. This approach should be disfavored.

If a question of topic interpretation is not resolved by reference to the topic statement, you should adopt a “centrist” interpretation of the topic that allows both teams to engage the core, predictable question you believe raised by the topic and topic statement’s plain language.

Cross Examination

Cross examination is an essential element of the debate format chosen for this weekend’s competition. It is also an element that requires debaters to cooperate in good faith with their opponents to some extent, which may be a complicated proposition in a competitive debate.

Cross examination can be an invaluable tool for moving debates “forward” by establishing undisputed facts, clarifying areas of agreement, isolating areas of dispute, and allowing rigorous examination of opposing arguments. Cross examinations may be far less productive, however, if debaters waste cross examination time so as to avoid having their arguments clarified and scrutinized by answering questions that haven’t been asked, filibustering, and otherwise failing to directly and succinctly answer questions to the extent possible. In such cases, debates may even become hostile as cross examiners may be forced to talk over their opponent to prevent their opponent from dominating the cross examination period.

For these reasons, when determining the winning team and assigning speaker points judges should favor debaters who respond to questions directly and succinctly to the extent possible and disfavor debaters who consistently fail to do so. “To the extent possible” is an essential qualifier to this requirement. Debaters should be allowed reasonable time to answer “open” questions or any other questions that cannot be answered in succinct fashion.

Responsible Advocacy

Students should be responsible advocates. This includes confirming the “facts” they intend to present and correctly framing and introducing any evidence on which they are relying. Teams and debaters that present false statements of facts and/or misframe evidence should be marked down substantially and this may be a reason to vote against a team in an otherwise close debate. There is a difference between a debater misstating a point and a debater advancing a fact supporting their argument that is demonstrably false or citing evidence in a highly misleading manner.

Equity Statement

While a judge may not consciously privilege the arguments or positions of particular groups of people over others, studies have shown that decisions nevertheless may be influenced by societal biases or prejudices in regards to, inter alia, race and gender. Daniel Kelley and Erica Roedder (2008) have found implicit bias in a number of settings analogous to debate including job hiring practices, grading, and sports officiating. Deborah Tannen (1998) has shown that in the field of competitive argument men are sometimes presumed to be more reasonable and less emotional and that these presumptions may lead a judge to implicitly give more weight to a man's argument than a woman's. We therefore ask each judge to consider their implicit biases in evaluating participants' arguments and performance before making their decision.

III. TOPIC

Democracy is the best hope for peace

The topic for the 2019 Lafayette Debates is: “**Democracy is the best hope for peace**”. In addition to the topic, debaters have been provided with the following Topic Statement to guide their preparation, arguments and topic interpretation.

Topic Statement

Immanuel Kant posited that if all countries were liberal democracies, war would become a thing of the past. Kant's thinking was revived in the 1960s by scholars arguing democratic governments are less likely to wage war due to, among other things, shared democratic institutions, norms, and values. The 2019 Lafayette Debates topic challenges students to scrutinize the contemporary utility of democratic peace theory. Affirmatives are asked to defend the proposition that liberal democratic habits, norms and institutions are the most desirable outcomes for the promotion of interstate peace. Affirmative are not asked to defend specific proposals for promoting democracy or democracy promotion in general but instead to focus on the value of democracy as a potential outcome. Negatives are asked to rebut this proposition by arguing either that liberal democracy is not a reliable predictor of interstate peace or that some other theory of interstate peace and conflict should be preferred when assessing and understanding which outcomes are most likely to promote interstate peace.

IV. SPEECH TIMES & ROUND TIMELINE

- **1st Affirmative Speaker:** 6 minutes
- **Cross examination by 2nd Negative Speaker:** 4 minutes
- **1st Negative Speaker:** 6 minutes
- **Cross examination by 1st Affirmative Speaker:** 4 minutes
- **2nd Affirmative Speaker:** 6 minutes
- **Cross examination by 1st Negative Speaker:** 4 minutes
- **2nd Negative Speaker:** 6 minutes
- **Cross examination by 2nd Affirmative speaker:** 4 minutes
- **Preparation time:** 2 minutes
- **Affirmative Rebuttal:** 6 minutes
- **Preparation time:** 2 minutes
- **Negative Rebuttal:** 6 minutes

Thank you again for the generous commitment of your time to this program and the wonderful students involved in it.



2019 Lafayette Debates [Sample] Ballot - Sunday

The topic for the 2019 Lafayette Debates is: **Democracy is the best hope for peace.**

Topic Statement: Immanuel Kant posited that if all countries were liberal democracies, war would become a thing of the past. Kant's thinking was revived in the 1960s by scholars arguing democratic governments are less likely to wage war due to, among other things, shared democratic institutions, norms, and values. The 2019 Lafayette Debates topic challenges students to scrutinize the contemporary utility of democratic peace theory. Affirmatives are asked to defend the proposition that liberal democratic habits, norms and institutions are the most desirable outcomes for the promotion of interstate peace. Affirmative are not asked to defend specific proposals for promoting democracy or democracy promotion in general but instead to focus on the value of democracy as a potential outcome. Negatives are asked to rebut this proposition by arguing either that liberal democracy is not a reliable predictor of interstate peace or that some other theory of interstate peace and conflict should be preferred when assessing and understanding which outcomes are most likely to promote interstate peace.

Please circle the name of the winning school

Affirmative _____

Negative _____

Instructions: Cast your ballot for the winning team by both circling “affirmative” or “negative” above and writing the name of the winning school below. Please review the sections of the Judge Handbook entitled “Picking a Winner,” “Discounting New Arguments in Final Speeches,” and “Equity” before casting your ballot.

Winning team _____

