

NPDA CONSTITUTION

Updated April 1997

Article I: The Organization

This organization shall be known as the National Parliamentary Debate Association (NPDA).

Article II: Purpose of the Association

Section 1. The purpose of the National Parliamentary Debate Association is to provide collegiate and other student debaters with opportunities to debate various topics using the parliamentary format. The Association will promote competitive practices which ensure the long-term growth and survival of intercollegiate, academic, and public debate by promoting a form of limited preparation debate which combines an emphasis on both content and delivery and which remains consistent with international styles of parliamentary debate.

Section 2. Each year the Association will provide sweepstakes trophies and other awards to recognize outstanding participants in the intercollegiate series of debate tournaments authorized by the Association.

Article III: Membership in the Association

Section 1. Institutional membership in the National Parliamentary Debate Association is open to any college, university, community college, secondary school, or other academic institution that, acting through its Director of Forensics, association President, or other appropriate authority wishes to join.

Section 2. Individual membership is designed to allow individuals without an institutional affiliation the opportunity to be a part of the organization. Individual membership is open to any interested person, without regard to sex, race, creed, age, or other consideration, who is willing to support the goals of the organization.

Section 3. Although encouraged to do so, members of the Association are not required to host or participate in Association tournaments.

Section 4. The annual membership fee shall be determined by the first Business Meeting of the Association.

Section 5. The period of membership covered by an annual dues payment shall be September 1 through August 31.

Article IV: Officers and Elections

Section 1. The officers of this Association shall be a President, an Executive Secretary, a Treasurer, and a National Student (intercollegiate level) Representative. These officers shall be elected on staggered, two-year terms with the offices of President and Treasurer running concurrently. If warranted regional members may be appointed to the Executive council. These officers shall constitute the Executive Council. Officers can be removed for mis-, mal-, or nonfeasance by petition of 2/3 of the membership of the organization or by a 2/3 vote of members present at any business meeting.

Section 2. Nominations for offices shall be submitted to the Executive Council for presentation at the first of the two Business meetings of the Association, at which time additional nominations for any office may be submitted by any members present.

Article V: Officers and Their Duties

Section 1. The Executive Council shall lead the Association between Business Meetings; shall provide interpretation of any article of the Constitution or its By-Laws; shall serve as a nominating committee as specified in Article IV, Section 2; shall, by majority vote, approve the applications to host NPDA approved tournaments; shall perform the functions outlined for them in the By-Laws and shall be consulted when any action not clearly specified in this Constitution or in the By-Laws is to be taken.

Section 2. The President's duties are:

- a. To chair the annual Business Meeting of the Association;
- b. To be responsible for upholding this Constitution and its By-Laws and all other decisions of the annual Business meetings of the association;
- c. To chair and be a voting member of the Executive Council;
- d. To serve as representative of the Association to other organizational meetings (if unable to attend, the Executive Secretary or the Treasurer, in that order, shall fulfil that obligation, or if neither of them can attend, then the President shall appoint a member of the association as a representative);
- e. To appoint from time to time, such committees as deemed suitable or as requested by the annual Business Meetings;
- f. To fill, by appointment, such vacancies as occur among officers and members of the Executive Council that are occasioned by death, resignation or other reason, such appointment to be for the unexpired term of the individual who has been replaced.

Section 3. The Executive Secretaries duties are:

- a. To conduct elections for officers of the Association and on such other matters as the Executive Council may direct;
- b. To prepare, and give, a report on National Parliamentary Debate Association Membership to the second Business Meeting of the society each year;
- c. To maintain official records of the current standings of schools in National Parliamentary Debate Association sweepstakes competition and periodically to communicate this information to the membership of the Association.
- d. To correspond, in the name of the Association, with prospective tournament hosts and/or members of the Association.
- e. To record and disseminate to the membership the minutes of the Business Meetings;
- f. To serve as a voting member of the Association;
- g. To establish an agenda for the Business Meetings of the Association with the assistance of the President;
- h. To maintain an updated version of the Constitution and By-Laws and to disseminate these to the membership periodically.

- Section 4.** The Treasurer's duties are:
- a. To receive all membership dues and other payments to the Association, and to pay all expenses of the Association that are authorized by the Executive Council;
 - b. To prepare and give an accounting of the financial state of the Association to the second Business Meeting of the Society each year;
 - c. To accept membership applications to the Association.

- Section 5.** The National Student Representative's duties are:
- a. To interface with students competing on the NPDA intercollegiate level and to bring their concerns to the attention of the officers of the organization.
 - b. To represent NPDA at annual meetings of other parliamentary debate organizations (national and international) which are solely student run, and to serve on such committees as he or she shall be elected or appointed to.
 1. Funding for the student representative's travel to such meetings will normally be in conjunction with the student's travel to compete at the championship competitions held at the same time. Such costs will normally be covered by the institution which the student attends.
 2. The student representative may petition the Executive Council for travel funding for the purposes of attending these meetings. The Executive Council has the option of approving funding for all or part of this travel, but is not obligated to do so.
 - c. To prepare and give a report concerning his or her area of responsibility for presentation at the Business Meetings.
 - d. To serve as a voting member of the Executive Council.

Article VI: Annual Business Meetings of the Association

Section 1. The annual Business Meetings of the National Parliamentary Debate Association constitute the governing body of the National Parliamentary Debate Association at the times they are meeting, and are the only bodies that can institute changes in the Constitution or its By-Laws. Between Business Meetings, actions of the Executive Council will have the force of By-Laws. These decisions must be reported to the next Business Meeting and are automatically placed on the agenda as indicated in Article VIII, Section 2.

Section 2. Business Meetings shall be held annually at the National Tournament/Convention or at a time and place agreed to by the Executive Council. At least sixty days notice will be given before the meeting.

Section 3. Each member institution may be represented by one voting representative (who need not be the Director of Forensics but may be a substitute from the same school or a proxy given to the representative of another school) at a Business meeting. No member institution represented at a Business Meeting may vote more than 10 proxies in addition to its own vote. At least 5% of member institutions must be personally represented (proxies do not suffice for this purpose) for the meeting to conduct any business other than hearing reports and discussing them.

Section 4. If sufficiently attended, as defined in the preceding section, the Business Meetings may adopt new By-Laws or change existing ones by majority vote of schools present (personally or by proxy). It may propose constitutional changes by a two-thirds vote of the schools represented (personally or by proxy).

Section 5. The presiding officer of a Business Meeting will be entitled to vote as the representative of his or her institution.

Section 6. Any vote that results in a tie will be considered to have failed.

Article VII: Sweepstakes Awards.

Section 1. One aspect of the work of the National Parliamentary Debate Association will be the conferring of sweepstakes awards on schools that have participated in the National Parliamentary Debate Association Tournaments during the year.

Section 2. Points will be accumulated for sweepstakes according to the following formula:

- a. One point for each debate win (including a win for a bye and a win for a forfeit) by a team in up to 6 preliminary rounds of a National Parliamentary Debate Association approved division of a tournament and two points for a win by a team in an elimination round.
- b. Each of the two teams for which a school receives credit toward sweepstakes at a National Parliamentary Debate Tournament will receive at least one point toward Association sweepstakes, even if they win no debates at all.

Section 3. Final sweepstakes awards will be based on the total points accumulated at the 4 NPDA-approved sweepstakes tournaments at which each school has gained the most points during the competitive year.

Section 4. In case of ties in the standing, these will be resolved by tie-breaker points based on places won at the tournaments at which the school has won the most points, at the rate of five points for a first place, three points for a second place, and one point for a third place (or a tie for third).

Section 5. Where students from two different schools combine to form a National Parliamentary Debate Association team at a tournament, the total points earned such a split team will be divided between their two schools.

Section 6. Should a school enter more than two teams in a National Parliamentary Debate Association tournament, then the rounds of only the two best teams in National Parliamentary Debate Association Competition in the tournament will be counted toward sweepstakes.

Section 7. Should two teams from the same school reach a final round in a National Parliamentary Debate Association division of a tournament, their school will receive two points for winning the round, even if the debate was not held. The same rule shall hold true whenever two teams from the same school meet in elimination rounds (or preliminary rounds), even if no actual debate occurs.

Section 8. Teams from a host school may enter competition in their own tournament. Wins by those teams will count toward NPDA sweepstakes and those teams may also compete for whatever trophies are awarded in that tournament.

Section 9. At tournaments in which teams in elimination rounds are given byes a team receiving a bye shall be awarded the win.

Section 10. To be counted for sweepstakes points, the National Parliamentary Debate Association division of a tournament must contain at least six teams from a minimum of three schools.

Section 11. At the end of the first semester and at the end of the National Parliamentary Debate Association season, the Executive Secretary will calculate the sweepstakes ranks based on the performance of each school's top two teams at the four NPDA-approved tournaments at which each school gained the most points. At the end of the season, overall sweepstakes trophies for first through tenth places will be presented.

Section 12. Any errors or omissions in the National Parliamentary Debate Association reports of tournament results and sweepstakes point totals must be brought to the attention of the Executive Secretary no later than fourteen days prior to the commencement of the final tournament of the season. Any mistakes made on tournaments held within two weeks of the final tournament must be corrected during the first day of the final tournament.

Section 13. Tournaments may advertise as many elimination rounds as is desired, but only elimination rounds meeting the following specifications will be counted toward National Parliamentary Debate Association Sweepstakes:

For semi-finals, there must be a field of 8 teams in the division;

For quarter-finals, there must be a field of 15 teams in the division;

For octa-finals, there must be a field of 29 teams in the division;

For double octa-finals, there must be a field of 58 teams in the division;

For double-double-octafinals, there must be a field of 115 teams in the division.

Section 14. A team must be present and debate in more than half the rounds as a team to count for the purposes of determining the number of teams in a division as part of the determination of the appropriate number of elimination rounds that earn National Parliamentary Debate Association points.

Article VIII: Amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws

Section 1. Amendments to the Constitution

- a. An amendment to the Constitution may be initiated by any member school;
- b. Amendments to the Constitution must be submitted to the Executive Secretary thirty days prior to a Business Meeting to be considered at that meeting. The Executive Secretary will communicate proposed amendments to the membership no later than fifteen days prior to the Business Meeting;
- c. A two-thirds vote of the schools represented at the Business Meeting will be necessary for a proposed constitutional amendment to be sent to the membership;
- d. Within 10 days following the Business Meeting, the Executive Secretary will distribute by mail a ballot containing all proposed constitutional amendments. Balloting on these will cease at midnight thirty days after the date of the Business Meeting;
- e. A two-thirds vote of the schools voting by mail on the proposed amendment will be necessary for its enactment.

Section 2. Amendments to the By-Laws

- a. An amendment to the By-Laws may be initiated by any member school;
- b. Amendments to the By-Laws must be submitted to the Executive Secretary no later than 30 days prior to a Business Meeting to be considered at that meeting. The Executive Secretary will communicate proposed amendments to the membership no later than fifteen days prior to the Business Meeting;
- c. A majority of the schools represented and voting at the Business Meeting will be necessary for enactment of the amendments to the By-Laws.

Section 3. Further Amendment Procedures for the Constitution and By-Laws

- a. An amendment may be proposed by two-thirds of the Executive Council or by a petition of 5% of the current National Parliamentary Debate Association membership to the National Parliamentary Debate Association Executive Secretary and the National Parliamentary Debate Association President;
- b. The proposed amendment shall be distributed to the membership. Members shall have 45 days to send comments on the proposed amendment to the Executive Secretary.
- c. Within sixty-five days of the publication of the proposed amendment, the Executive Secretary shall mail a ballot to the membership containing a copy of the proposed amendment, along with a statement of the arguments for and against the amendment. The author of the amendment shall have the opportunity to include a statement of reasons for the amendment. The President may designate an individual to outline potential objections to the amendment. Both of these individuals shall have access to the comments received by the Executive Secretary. Ballots shall be due no later than three weeks after the mailing.
- d. A three-fourths vote of all members voting will be required to enact an amendment initiated under this section.
- e. A majority of the Executive Council may vote to exclude the time period from June 1 to September 1 from the time period in items b. and c. of this section.

Article IX: Tournament Procedures and Administration

Section 1. Local rules for National Parliamentary Debate Association tournaments are left strictly to individual tournament directors who may determine the forensic level of the National Parliamentary Debate Association division(s) and may allow as many teams per school to enter their National Parliamentary Debate Association divisions as they wish. The tournament is obligated to use the appropriate National Parliamentary Debate Association format.

Section 2. At tournaments offering individual vents and multiple forms of debate, it is recommended that parliamentary debate be scheduled so as not to conflict with individual events.

Section 3. Tournament directors are responsible for choosing a suitable mix of topics which gives all teams an equitable chance for success:

- a. Topics can be policy based similar to topics chosen for extemporaneous speaking or philosophical in nature, similar to topics chosen for impromptu speaking.
- b. Topics should be written to challenge students to use their creative and critical thinking skills, forcing them to draw upon their educational and research backgrounds. During switch sides preliminary rounds, if at all possible, policy based questions should be given in back-to-back rounds to give all teams the opportunity to debate policy or the government side on the government side of the motion.

Section 4. Since parliamentary debate is an extemporaneous activity, no prepared materials or resources for the debater's use in the round may be brought into the debating chambers.

- Section 5.** The composition of the judging pool is critical to training students to speak before audiences. Therefore:
- a. Although flexibility is left with the tournament director, the recommended guidelines for the composition of the judging pool shall include the use of non-student lay judges, and forensics faculty or such personnel.
 - b. In order to provide a fair and educational tournament, judge assignment insofar as possible should be random from a pool that excludes judges from the same school as the debaters and judges who, according to the perceptions of debaters, judges, or tournament director, have a conflict of interest.
- Section 6.** Except for the period between the announcement of the topic and the beginning of the debate, there will be no preparation time.
- Section 7.** In order to give all participants equal information, tournament invitations should include clear definitions of events and divisions, clear explanations of matching and judge assignment systems, clear explanations of criteria for advancement to elimination rounds and for awards, clear announcements of fees and schedules, and a clear statement of tournament rules.
- Section 8.** In order to provide a fair and educational tournament, administrators matching debate rounds should attempt to allow students an equal number of rounds of each side of the resolution and should maximize insofar as possible the range of opponents encountered by each team.
- Section 9.** In order to maximize the educational function of all tournaments, administrators should make results and ballots available to all participants as soon as possible after the end of competition.

By-Laws

I. Membership Dues:

Annual dues in the National Parliamentary Debate Association for the year September 1 and to August 31 will be \$30 for regular membership, \$20 for affiliate membership (affiliate membership applies to schools that did not enter teams in National Parliamentary Debate Association competition during the preceding year), and \$10 for individual membership.

II. The National Parliamentary Debate Association Season:

The National Parliamentary Debate Association season begins September 1 and ends May 15.

III. Executive Secretary's Office

The Office of the Executive Secretary shall receive an annual budget to defray the telephone and mailing expenses connected with doing National Parliamentary Debate Association business.

IV: Direction of the National Parliamentary Debate Association National Tournament/Convention.

The National Parliamentary Debate Association shall be responsible for holding a National Parliamentary Debate Tournament/Convention in March or April of each year. These tournaments should have 8 preliminary rounds and offer elimination rounds for all teams with 5-3 record or better up to a maximum of 64 teams.

- a. Member schools may bid to host the National Tournament. The Executive Council of the National Parliamentary Debate Association shall receive bids for the following year at its National Tournament/Convention and shall award the tournament on the basis of bids received. The tournaments should rotate geographically.
- b. The National Parliamentary Debate Association organization shall be responsible for such tournament operation as invitations, awards, schematics, etc.
- c. The tournament should be scheduled to avoid conflicting with significant religious holidays, such as Easter and Passover.
- d. In accepting bids from tournament hosts, the National Parliamentary Debate Association Executive Committee shall obtain appropriate assurances from prospective hosts that religious observances for interested parties can be secured at or near the host site. Religious observance may include a place of worship and special dietary requirements.

V: Tournament Conflicts:

Members of the Executive Council should coordinate the scheduling of National Parliamentary Debate Association tournaments in their respective regions to avoid conflicts among those tournaments insofar as possible.

VI: Code of Ethics:

The National Parliamentary Debate Association, as an organization and as a body of forensic educators, endorses the Preface of the AFA Code of Forensic Program and Forensic Tournament Standards for Colleges and Universities and endorses those parts of the AFA Code applicable to the National Parliamentary Debate Association organization: Competitor standards, Competitor practices (excluding the individual events section), and Tournament practices (excluding the individual events section).

VII: Institutional Agreement:

Institutional members of the National Parliamentary Debate Association, agree, by joining the Association and paying the membership fee, to follow the Constitution and By-Laws of the National Parliamentary Debate Association in their participation in National Parliamentary Debate Association sanctioned activities.

VIII: Criteria for sanctioning NPDA tournaments:

Tournaments meeting the following general criteria will be designated as counting for sweepstakes points:

1. unless hosted by a national or regional organization whose rules specify invitation of members only, the tournament shall be open to all members of NPDA and must be included in the NPDA calendar. The NPDA calendar will be prepared no later than June 1 by the Executive Secretary based on applications submitted from tournament hosts. The Executive Secretary may prepare addenda to the NPDA calendar later in the debate season.
2. unless the tournament director applies for and is granted an exception, the tournament must follow NPDA Tournament Procedures and Administration (see Article IX *NPDA Constitution*) and NPDA guidelines.
3. the tournament must be attended by at least six teams from a minimum of three NPDA member schools.
4. Copies of the results of the tournament must be sent in a timely manner to the person designated to count sweepstakes points. Unless precluded by the date of the tournament, all results to be counted for sweepstakes must be in the hands of the person designated to count sweepstakes points no later than ten days prior to the beginning of the NPDA championship tournament.

IX: Student Eligibility Standards:

- A. Participation in NPDA is open to undergraduate students pursuing course work at an accredited college or university. A student must be enrolled for at least one class or credit hours totaling the equivalent of one class and should be making progress toward the completion of a degree in his or her chosen field.
- B. Generally, students who possess a baccalaureate degree are not eligible for participation in NPDA. A student is considered as possessing a baccalaureate degree upon his or her completion of requirements toward that degree and/or having been approved for graduation by his or her respective school. While mid-year graduates and graduate students may possess a baccalaureate degree, they may be granted consideration for limited competition.
 1. Mid-year graduates may compete at the NPDA national tournament in the Spring after their graduation at the discretion of the program's Director of Forensics, but may not participate in invitational tournaments leading up to the national tournament during the term following their graduation. In other words, those who graduate in December may compete during the fall and may attend nationals, but may not compete at invitational tournaments during the Spring.
 2. In unusual cases, graduate students who possess a baccalaureate degree may petition for one "tournament year" of eligibility. A "tournament year" shall include any year in which the student attends *any* national speech and/or debate tournament.
 - a. Graduate students making such a request must have no previous experience in intercollegiate speech and/or debate activities of any kind, and must require involvement in competitive speech and debate for a specific type of degree, certification, or other professional requirement.
 - b. Coaches who have a student deserving of consideration must submit a request in writing to the NPDA President prior to entering the student in competition. The request should explain the student's specific degree-related need, certify that the student has no previous experience or provide a detailed description of the student's previous experience, and outline the

student's prior academic associations including other schools he/she attended and degree(s) earned. The President, in concert with other NPDA Officers, will consider each request and issue the "tournament year" of eligibility in writing if satisfied that the request is appropriate.

- c. The granting of one national tournament year of NPDA eligibility shall not interfere with the eligibility requirements of other national organizations and/or individual tournament directors.
- C. No person shall be allowed to participate in more than four NPDA nationals as a contestant.
1. Undergraduate students are limited to no more than eight semesters of eligibility.
 - a. A semester is considered "used" when a student competes in three or more tournaments during the semester.
 - b. The number of semesters in which a student competes is superseded by the number of national tournament years in which the student competes. In other words, a student competing in no more than one or two tournaments during a semester retains eligibility for that semester, providing that he or she does not attend a national tournament during the course of that year. Once a national tournament is attended, that year is "used" regardless of the total number of tournaments in which the student has competed that year.
 2. Contestants are limited to four national tournament years.
 - a. A national tournament year is one in which a student competes in a national tournament sponsored by any national forensic organization including but not limited to: AFA-NIET, NFA-IE Nationals, Novice IE Nationals, NDT, CEDA, NEDA, Phi Rho Pi, Delta Sigma Rho - Tau Kappa Alpha, Pi Kappa Delta, Interstate Oratory, APDA, and any other nationally recognized organizations and tournaments that may be added to this list.
 - b. The number of national tournament years in which a student has competed supersedes the number of semesters in which he or she has competed. Thus, if a student does not compete in the Fall or attends only a limited number of tournaments, he or she has still used up their tournament year of eligibility if he or she attends any national tournament in the Spring.
 - c. The intent of this standard is to exclude students from competing in national tournaments for more than four years. During their four national tournament years, students may attend as many national tournaments as they wish or as their program's budget allows, but they may not compete in four AFA-NIET nationals or four CEDA nationals, for example, and then move on to compete in four NPDA nationals over the course of several years.
- D. Protests related to eligibility should be directed to the President and Officers of the NPDA. The President and Officers will contact the coach(es) of the student(s) in question.
1. The responsibility for demonstrating eligibility falls upon the student's program. The NPDA Officers may require written documentation delineating the student's competitive experiences as well as written statements from past coaches in order to certify that a student is eligible to compete.
 2. Coaches are encouraged to keep written records of national tournaments their students attend. Furthermore, coaches may want to obtain a letter from the former coach of any transfer student to ensure that there are records of the student's attendance at previous national tournaments.
- E. These eligibility standards pertain only to the National Parliamentary Debate Association and shall not interfere with the eligibility requirements of other national organizations and/or the requirements set forth by individual tournament directors.