



The Vassar College Invitational Tournament

October 2018

Dear Speech and Debate Coach:

2018 Executive Board

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The Vassar Debate Association is an undergraduate organization of Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York. Every year, the Vassar Debate Team travels throughout the United States and the world to compete in Parliamentary Debate.

On behalf of the Vassar Debate Society, we invite you and your team to the third annual Vassar College Invitational Tournament from Saturday, November 3rd, to Sunday, November 4th. The tournament will consist of competition in Varsity and Novice Parliamentary Debate.

We have expanded to a two-day competition for two reasons. First, we have found it difficult to complete everything in one day. Second, with a second day for the elimination rounds, we can start later on Saturday morning. We found many teams were spending Friday night in Poughkeepsie due to the early start, and some ended staying over on Saturday due to a late finish. We hope most teams will be able to come directly to Vassar on Saturday and only need spend one night on Saturday. We hope this is a convenient change for most attendees.

Everett Rutan from the Connecticut Debate Association will direct tab. In addition to that league, he has run the Parliamentary divisions at Yale, UPenn and teaches Parli at Dartmouth's summer debate camp.

This invitation and additional information will be posted on our tournament website, <http://vassarinv.tabroom.com>. If you have additional questions or need assistance please email us at vassarinv@gmail.com. Please do not hesitate to contact us if your team is experiencing financial difficulties.

Best wishes for the start of the school year. We look forward to seeing many of you in Poughkeepsie this November.

Sincerely,

Zariah Altman

The 2018 Vassar Debate Tournament

Note: Please read the entire invitation carefully. We hope it will answer most of your questions.

Registration

Please register for the tournament using www.tabroom.com. You will find the tournament listed on their front page or you can go directly to <http://vassarinv.tabroom.com>. If you are unfamiliar with tabroom, there are online instructions. We can also answer your questions about the system and help you to get registered properly.

We will initially limit each school to 4 teams, though we encourage you to register more if you have debaters who are interested in attending. *All teams will be automatically waitlisted*; we will clear the waitlist on a weekly basis as registrations come in. Registration opens on Monday, October 7th at 8AM. We have space for approximately 80 teams and we will accept new registrations up until the week before the tournament (through October 28) but we will begin allocating additional entries above 4 to teams two weeks before the tournament (October 21) so you will have sufficient notice.

Divisions

We plan to offer a Varsity and Novice division. Any student of high school age may compete in the Varsity division.

For this tournament a Novice is defined as someone in their first year of high school debate and who is in their Freshman or Sophomore year.

- Students who have debated in middle school and are in their Freshman year count as Novices.
- Students who debated as Freshman and are entering their Sophomore year are not Novices and must debate as Varsity.
- Students who have never debated before but are in their Junior or Senior years are not Novices for this tournament regardless of their inexperience and must debate in the Varsity division.

We feel it is important to give younger debaters experience in national tournaments and the Parli format, and we hope each school that attends will include at least one or two Novice teams in their initial four entries.

Fees

There will be a fee of \$80 per team. Please make checks payable to: Vassar College Debate Society. Fees may be mailed ahead of time or paid at registration on November 3.

Judging Requirements

Teams should bring one qualified judge for every two teams or part thereof (so three teams would mean two judges, as would four teams). **A qualified judge** is an adult or college student who understands high school debate, speaks English, and is experienced taking a flow and keeping time. A qualified judge knows how to decide the round, to assign ranks and speaker points, and to fill out a ballot including a reason for a decision. Judges familiar with Parliamentary debate are preferred, but experience judging other forms of debate is acceptable. We will post a guide for debaters and judges on the web site at least a month before the tournament which we hope your judges and debaters will review.

This is a national tournament and we do not have the time or staff to train new judges. It is unfair to expect your students to receive good judging while bringing a judge who cannot provide good judging to others. We understand that it can be difficult to obtain experienced judges, and some may be new to the Parli format. We expect that you will orient your judges appropriately. Judges with debate experience but new to Parli should have read the posted style guide before they arrive at the tournament. You are responsible for training any judge you bring.

Hired Judges

We expect to have some judges available for hire at the rate of \$100 per judge. We charge by the team, so if you have one team not covered by a judge you may hire one-half of a judge's services for \$50. Hired judges are limited in supply, cannot be guaranteed, and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis, with a bias in favor of teams coming from a distance and requiring two nights' stay in Poughkeepsie.

Every team is expected to bring some judges. Tournaments cannot run without a diverse group of judges from many schools. Absent exceptional circumstances, a school should not assume it can satisfy its judging burden with hires.

Supervision

All students must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian, or by a school-approved adult guardian, teacher, or coach who is empowered to deal with emergencies, medical or otherwise. The adult guardian may not be another high school student: *high school students who have passed their 18th birthday do not count*. All registered teams must provide a name and phone number for an adult contact who will be present at the tournament and is responsible for the students in case of an emergency.

Safety

The tab room phone number will be provided at registration. Please make all your students and judges aware of this number so they can contact tab. This number is for on-site issues only and will be answered only during the tournament.

The policy of the Vassar Invitational concerning consumption of alcoholic beverages by minors, illegal use of controlled substances, vandalism, and destructive, and other illegal or disorderly behavior is: (1) to disqualify involved contestants from further competition, (2) to communicate the offending incident to the contestants' on-site guardians and/or parents, (3) to require financial reimbursement for all damages or liabilities caused directly or indirectly by the incident, and (4) to notify the local legal authorities. The precise remedy or remedies selected will remain at the discretion of the tournament staff.

The Vassar Collegiate Invitational staff reserve the right to refuse entry to the tournament to anyone—be they a competitor, judge or observer—at their sole discretion.

Parliamentary Debate Format

We will follow the collegiate APDA style with the 7-8-8-8-4-5 format. We will provide a more detailed style guide for debaters and judges on the tournament web site. For a broader discussion of the format please see the APDA web site, <http://apda.online/>. Note the APDA website has a "Novice Mentor" section with a number of useful articles on various aspects of Parliamentary debate that we highly recommend.

We will release one or more straight-link motion for each round, and debaters will have 15 minutes before the start of debate to prepare cases. Some rounds teams may be assigned sides, others motion and side will be determined by a coin toss.

The format is extemporaneous debate. Debaters are not permitted to use briefs, prepared cases, research material or the internet during their preparation period or during the debate. They may use laptop or tablet computers to take notes during preparation or the round, or to speak from the podium, but they may not use research material stored on said devices, or to reference online sources. They may use electronic devices to keep time.

"Extemporaneous" does not mean that debaters cannot cite facts or references during the debate, only (following APDA guidelines) that these facts be generally well known or fully explained in the speech to both the other team and the judge so they can be critically evaluated. The posted style guide and the APDA website have a more detailed discussion of the use of evidence.

Weather and Dress

Fall in Poughkeepsie can be anything from warm and sunny to rainy to snow. Please check the weather before attending and dress appropriately.

Vassar's campus is quite spacious, and our rooms are located in buildings up to 5 minutes' walk from General Assembly. Please wear comfortable shoes.

Schedule

The tournament will run for two days. We hope to have enough teams to have five preliminary rounds of single-flight debate breaking to quarter-finals in the Varsity Division. Based on attendance last year, Novices will likely have four rounds and break to semi-finals. We will update you on this as registration progresses.

Time	Activity
Saturday, 3rd November	
9-10 AM	Registration and coffee
10-10:15 AM	General assembly
10:15-11:45AM	Round 1
11:45AM-1:15 PM	Round 2
1:15-2:00PM	Lunch Break
2:00-3:30PM	Round 3
3:30-5PM	Round 4
5-6:30PM	Round 5
Sunday, 4th November	
9:00-9:30AM	Teams report in
9:30-11:00AM	Quarter finals
11:00AM-12:30PM	Semi finals
12:30-2PM	Finals
2-2:30PM	Awards

Although there may be slight delays, we will try to run on time, and greatly appreciate everyone's cooperation toward that end.

Rules and schedule are subject to change. The tournament will make you aware of any changes at or prior to registration.