

Greetings:

We have been working with the University to provide information regarding the positions of the University and the Harvard Debate Council on issues related to the Coronavirus.

Harvard University continues to closely monitor the evolving 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCov) outbreak centered in China. Harvard University is monitoring all University affiliates who have returned from China since January 19, 2020.

The Harvard Debate Council is adopting the following policies for tournament participants:

1. Students that would like to reduce person-to-person contact do not need to shake hands with their opponents after rounds. Judges should not penalize any students who choose not to shake hands.
2. Students who feel more comfortable wearing masks will not be penalized by judges for this.

All schools from China that were planning to bring competitors to the tournament have withdrawn from the tournament. The remaining competitors representing schools from China are students who were already in the U.S. and will not be traveling from China.

The one confirmed case in Massachusetts, a student at the University of Massachusetts Boston who had recently returned from Wuhan, is under control. This student was self-identified early, did not participate in UMass Boston activities since arrival from China, and remains in isolation until cleared by health authorities. In addition, the U.S. Department of State has placed major restrictions on incoming travelers from China.

Please be sure to take the same reasonable precautions that we use to prevent the spread of all viral illnesses: practice good hand hygiene, don't share food/drinks etc., avoid close contact with others if you feel sick, and cover your cough/sneeze. We will not be providing bottles of water this year. Please ask your students to bring their own water bottles with them.

This is an evolving situation to which Harvard, public health officials, and government agencies are responding in real time, and Harvard may impose new requirements if warranted by changing circumstances. If there are any policy changes that the tournament participants need to be aware of, we will update this information for you.

We emphasize that treating every member of our community with care and respect is of principal importance, especially during trying times like these. No member or segment of our community is at fault for this outbreak, and the risk that any particular individual is infected remains low. We maintain our commitment to treating every member of our community with dignity and respect.

Thank you,

Sherry Hall and Tripp Rebrovick

Harvard Debate Council, Tournament Directors