



The Vassar College Invitational Tournament

September 2019

Dear Speech and Debate Coach:

Executive Board 2019-20

Tabraiz Lodhi
President

Bryan Fotino
*Vice President,
Operations*

Anik Parayil
*Vice President,
Operations*

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 tournaments.

On behalf of the Vassar College Debate Society, we invite you and your team to the fourth annual Vassar College Invitational Tournament from Saturday, November 2nd to Sunday, November 3rd, 2019.

The tournament will consist of competition in Varsity and Novice Parliamentary Debate.

This is Vassar's fourth consecutive year hosting our high school tournament. We hope to replicate the success of previous years by making our tournament as efficient, well-organized, and enjoyable as attendees have come to expect. We will continue to use the two-day format inaugurated in 2018. We hope this has been a welcome change for teams from the previously more restrictive one-day format.

Everett Rutan from the Connecticut Debate Association will direct tab. In addition to running the CDA league, he has run the Parliamentary divisions at Yale and University of Pennsylvania, and teaches parliamentary debate 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 you in Poughkeepsie this November!

Sincerely,

Tabraiz Lodhi

The 2019 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 at www.tabroom.com. You will find the tournament listed on their front page. You can also visit us directly at <http://vassarinv.tabroom.com>. Online instructions are available if you are unfamiliar with the Tabroom system. We can also answer your questions directly and help you get registered.

We will initially limit each school to 4 teams, although we encourage you to register for 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 will open on Monday, September 30th at 8AM. We have space for approximately 80 teams and will be accepting new registrations up until the week before the tournament (through October 28th). We will begin allocating additional entries above 4 teams two weeks before the tournament (October 21st), so you will have sufficient notice. Teams from a distance with travel needs will be given special consideration.

Divisions

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

For the purposes of this tournament, a Novice is defined as a speaker in their first year of high school debate who is either a Freshman or a Sophomore.

- Students who have debated in middle school and are in their Freshman year count as Novices.
- Students who debated as Freshmen and are entering their Sophomore year are not Novices and must compete as Varsity speakers.
- Students who did not debate as Freshmen and are entering their Sophomore year may debate as Novices.
- Students who have never debated before but are in their Junior or Senior year 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 with the Parliamentary 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 \$90 per team. Please make checks payable to: Vassar College Debates Society. Fees may be mailed ahead of time or paid at registration on November 2nd. Teams in need of **fee waivers** or financial support should email vassarinv@gmail.com with their queries.

Judging Requirements

Teams should bring one qualified judge for every two teams or part thereof (so three teams would require 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 in 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 reasoning for the decision. Judges familiar with Parliamentary debate are preferred, but experience judging other formats of debate is acceptable. We will post a guide for debaters and judges on the website at least a month before the tournament which we hope judges and debaters will consult.

This is a national tournament and we do not have the time or resources to train new judges. It is unfair to expect your students to receive quality judging while, at the same time, bringing a judge who cannot

adequately judge. We understand that it can be difficult to obtain experienced judges, and some may be new to the Parliamentary format. However, we expect that teams will be considerate enough to orient their judges appropriately. Judges with debate experience who are new to the Parliamentary format should consult the aforementioned guide. Teams are responsible for training any judges they bring.

We will use electronic ballots for the first time. Judges should be linked to tabroom so they can receive notices and ballots and respond to them. While this can be done using a cellphone, it is much easier on a larger device such as a tablet or laptop. We can help link judges who are unfamiliar with this process during registration.

Hired Judges

We expect to have some judges available for hire at the rate of \$100 per judge. Their services are available for every two teams, so if you have one team not covered by a judge you may hire one-half of a judge's services for \$50. The number of hired judges is limited. Their services cannot be guaranteed, and will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. In allocating hired judges, we will favor teams coming from far away 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 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 that 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/or other illegal or disorderly behavior is: (1) to disqualify involved contestants from further competition; (2) to communicate the offending incident to the contestant's 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, a judge, or an observer—at their sole discretion.

Waiver Form

All students **must** fill in and have their parents sign the attached **waiver form** (see page 5). These forms will be collected during registration. Students who fail to present a signed waiver risk being prevented from participating.

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 more detailed explanation of the format please see the APDA web site: <http://apda.online/>. Note that 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 motions for each round, and debaters will have 15 minutes before the start of debate to prepare cases. For some rounds teams may be assigned sides; for others the motion and sides will be determined by a coin toss.

The debate format is extemporaneous. 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 laptops or tablet computers to take notes during preparation, or during the round, or to speak from the podium, but they may not use research materials stored on said devices, or 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 that 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 snowy. 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 the General Assembly room. Please wear comfortable shoes.

Schedule

The tournament will run for two days. Due to limits on campus availability, we have to end a bit earlier than usual on Saturday, so we can only run 4 rounds that day. We hope to have enough teams to have five preliminary rounds of single-flight debate with a break to quarter-finals in the Varsity Division and semi-finals in Novice. However, we understand that some teams may not want stay over to Sunday if they do not break.

We will poll the coaches as to their preference to have a 5th full round on Sunday or a break to Octo-finals in Varsity. The preliminary schedule is as follows:

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

There may be slight delays in this schedule but we will try to run on time and would greatly appreciate everyone’s cooperation towards that end. **Rules and schedule are subject to change. The tournament will make you aware of any changes at or prior to registration.**



Parent/Guardian Consent and Waiver
Health Insurance Information

To be completed by the program coordinator:

Name of program, dates, description of the Activity to take place on the Vassar College campus:

To be completed by the parent:

I understand that the program activity described below is an optional and purely voluntary program being offered to my child, (print name)_____. My child is in good health and in proper physical condition to participate in the Activity. I agree to assume all risks and responsibilities associated with my child's participation in the Activity

I give permission to Vassar College to undertake any emergency/urgent treatment or medical care that may be deemed necessary for my child's health. Also, if hospitalization is deemed to be medically necessary, I give permission for my child to be hospitalized at an accredited hospital.

Please list any special instructions we may need to know about your child, including any allergies, physical limitations, i.e., asthma, visual impairment, use of prescription medication, etc.

Child's Health Insurance

Vassar requires participants to maintain personal health insurance. Please indicate private insurance coverage or Medicaid eligibility below.

Name of Insurance Company _____ Policy # _____ Group # _____

Policy Holder's Name _____ Relationship to Participant _____

If you do not have private insurance for your child, have you applied for Medicaid? Yes___ No___ (If not, please do so)

I also authorize Vassar College to use any photographs, motion pictures, recordings, images or any other record of my child's participation in the Activity for any legitimate purpose.

Indemnification and Hold Harmless: I agree to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless Vassar College, its trustees, agents, and employees from, and against, any and all claims on account of injury or damage to personal property that may result from my child's participation. I have read this waiver of liability and fully understand its terms. I acknowledge that I am signing the agreement freely and voluntarily, and **intend by my signature, for this to serve as a complete and unconditional release of all liability** to the greatest extent allowed by law.

Parent/Guardian Signature Date Printed Name

Parent's Emergency Contact Information

Home Phone # () _____ Contact Name _____

Work Phone # () _____ Contact Name _____

Cell Phone # () _____ Contact Name _____