

Social Justice Debates (./)

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Social Justice
Debates
National
Championship
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Morehouse

College

January 18- 19, 2020

The 2020 Social Justice Debates National Championship will be held at Morehouse College on Saturday and Sunday, January 18-19, 2020!

The Social Justice Debates aspire to harness speech and debate as tools for engaging diverse groups of civil society stakeholders and students on social justice topics inspired by the work of leading social justice scholars. The Social Justice Debates were inspired by the teaching and scholarship of Professor Derrick A. Bell.

The Selected Scholars for the 2019-20 Social Justice Debates are Professors William A Darity Jr. and Roy L. Brooks. Both have

written and testified extensively on the question of whether the federal government ought pay direct compensation reparations to African Americans who descended from slaves. We are excited to expect one or both of our selected scholars to attend the SJD national championship in January at Morehouse College on MLK Weekend!

Click [here](#)

(https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScNt8Nlo5dO-Ep5mUv_MLrTl5MN4GakL6yUQZTfLjuEfjosLw/viewform) to register for the tournament.

Topic

The United States Federal Government should provide direct compensation to African-Americans who descended from slaves as reparations for slavery.

Topic Statement

For African Americans and the nation as a whole, the question of reparations is the most significant issue in the quest for racial equality since the passage of civil rights legislation in the 1960s. With race relations today severely challenged and getting worse, Black reparations can be an opportunity to turn things around — but only if we seize upon this moment with probity and intelligence.

**- Professor Roy L.
Brooks**

In 2014, journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates reignited national discussion over reparations for slavery and discrimination with his Atlantic article, The Case for Reparations. In his article, Coates explained the value and

importance of public debates on the issue of reparations as follows:

Scholars have long discussed methods by which America might make reparations to those on whose labor and exclusion the country was built ... To celebrate freedom and democracy while forgetting America's origins in a slavery economy is patriotism à la carte. Perhaps no statistic better illustrates the enduring legacy of our country's shameful history of treating Black people as sub-citizens, sub-Americans, and sub-humans than the wealth gap. Reparations would seek to close this chasm. But as surely as the creation of the wealth gap required the cooperation of every aspect of the society, bridging it will require the same.

Perhaps after a serious discussion and debate—the kind that [the Bill for the Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act] proposes—we may find that the country can never fully repay African Americans. But we stand to discover much about ourselves in such a discussion—and that is perhaps what scares us.

The 2019-20 Social Justice Debates responds to this call and others for debate and dialogue on reparations for slavery by inviting students, judges, stakeholders, activists, scholars and citizens to engage the scholarship of William A Darity Jr. and Roy L. Brooks on the question of whether the United States Federal Government should provide direct compensation to African-Americans who descended from slaves as reparations for slavery.

Darity described the core objective of reparations in his 2019 testimony to Congress as follows:

Today, Black Americans constitute approximately 13 to 14 percent of the nation's population, yet possess less than 3 percent of the nation's wealth. A core objective of the reparations program must be to move the Black American share to at least 13 to 14 percent. Reparations designated specifically for Black American descendants of slavery must be enacted and implemented to achieve that aim, moving Black wealth, roughly, from less than \$3 trillion to \$13 to 14 trillion.

To promote discussions exploring the challenging policy questions raised by Darity and Brooks on the implementation of reparations for slavery, affirmatives are asked to defend a model of reparations

with direct compensation by the United States Federal Government to African-Americans who descended from slaves as a central element of a policy intended to address this wealth gap consistent with Darity's and Brooks' scholarship. Negatives may win by either rebutting the affirmative arguments for implementing the affirmative's model of direct compensation reparations and/or by demonstrating the superiority of a competing model; i.e., demonstrating that it would be more desirable to implement solely the negative's model rather than the affirmative's model or both the affirmative's and negative's models.

For the purposes of exploring this research question, debaters should interpret the topic in a manner consistent with this topic statement and the reparations scholarship of Professors Darity and Brooks. This should include assuming that the United States

Federal Government is the only potentially viable actor for providing comprehensive reparations for slavery to African Americans. It should also include affirmatives both defending the proposition that all or nearly all African Americans who descended from slaves should receive direct compensation including all or nearly all middle class and lower-upper class African Americans who descended from slaves, and being prepared to specify in cross examination whether they would propose to fund reparations in any manner other than normal means and to defend any such specification. The Affirmative's advocacy is not meant to be exclusive of reparations for other groups or other types of reparations. The GWU Social Justice debates is intended to serve as preparation for the Social Justice Debates National Championship at Morehouse College. Per the topic statement for that competition, on the

Morehouse campus both the terms "African American" and "Black" are acceptable and appropriate terms for referring to people who have Black skin and are of African descent. The purpose of the 2019-20 Social Justice Debates is not to resolve which term is more appropriate.

Instructions to Preliminary Rounds Judges

Elimination rounds will be judged by panels of topic experts who will be given the SJD topic, topic statement, and judge handbook. This means that as a prelims judge you are preparing students to debate before topic experts who will be using the published topic, topic statement, and judge handbook provided above to guide their decision making process. Your most

important task as a prelims judge is to judge rounds in a manner that prepares the students advancing to elimination rounds to excel in those debates.

Judges are asked to interpret the research questions raised by the topic in a manner consistent with the topic statement. Students are responsible for analyzing the topic and topic statement and understanding the research questions raised for debate. Students may quote from the topic statement as necessary to establish the parameters of the research questions raised by the topic.

Debaters are asked to provide direct, succinct responses to direct questions in cross examination. Filibustering, answering questions that haven't been asked, and otherwise failing to provide direct, succinct answers to direct questions should result in lower speaker points and--in very close debates--

-assigning a loss. (Obviously open ended questions may require open answers.)

The judge handbook identifies specific obligations for students introducing evidence. This includes being ready to immediately provide copies of relevant portions of the introduced sources to their opponents for review upon request.

Please read the complete judge handbook including the topic and topic statement. This handbook is written for elimination rounds judges who possess topic expertise but who are not necessarily experienced debate judges. Again, your most important task as a prelims judge is to prepare students to excel before these judges.

Speaker points should be assigned on a scale of 90-100 with no ties. Judges should be "reluctant" to give speaker points

between 97-100; i.e., absent an exemplary performance reflecting high level research, argumentation, delivery and performance, judges should not give speaker points in this range. "Very Good" performances should receive scores in the 95-96 range. "Good" performances should receive points in the 93-94 range. No ties. Half points are allowed.

Judges will be asked to take a picture of their ballot and email it to jeffreyslear@gmail.com before delivering their decision.

Decisions should be announced and explained. Speaker points should not.

Format

Students will compete in teams of two debaters each. Teams will be assigned to affirm or negate the topic.

Each speaker will give one 6 minute speech, be cross examined for 4 minutes, and cross examine an opposing debater for 4 minutes. In addition one speaker on each team will also give a 6 minute closing rebuttal. Over the course of the four preliminary rounds, each speaker on teams of two must give two closing rebuttals for their team and their partner must give two closing rebuttals for their team.

1st Affirmative 6 Minutes

Cross examination by 2nd
Negative 4 minutes

1st Negative 6 minutes

Cross examination by 1st
Affirmative 4 minutes

2nd Affirmative 6 minutes

Cross examination by 1st
Negative 4 minutes

2nd Negative 6 minutes

Cross examination by 2nd

Affirmative 4 minutes

2 minutes of preparation time

Affirmative Rebuttal 6 minutes

2 minutes of preparation time

Negative Rebuttal 6 minutes

Schedule

Saturday January 18

8:30 AM Check-in

9:00 AM Judge Registration

9:30 AM Round 1

11:00 AM Round 2

12:30 PM Lunch

2:00 PM Round 3

3:30 PM Round 4

5:00 PM Quarterfinals

6:30 PM Dinner on your own

Sunday January 19

9:00 AM Registration/Check In

9:30 AM Judge Briefing

10:00 AM Semifinals Draw

11:30 AM Awards

12:30 PM Finals