



December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Dear Forensics Coaches, Judges, and Participants:

On behalf of the Columbia Debate Society, we are honored and privileged to invite you to the 2025 Columbia Invitational, our 23<sup>rd</sup> annual competition. This year's competition will be from **Friday, January 31<sup>st</sup>**, to **Sunday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>**.

This year's tournament will host the following formats:

- 1) Lincoln-Douglas (LD) Debate - [*Varsity*<sup>1</sup>, Novice]
- 2) Public Forum (PF) Debate - [*Varsity*, Novice]
- 3) \*NEW\* Congressional Debate - [Varsity]
- 4) \*NEW\* Policy (CX) Debate - [Varsity]

This year's tournament will be hosted *virtually*.

Additionally, we are excited to announce bids for the *JW Patterson Tournament of Champions* in Lincoln-Douglas and Public Forum. The breakdown is as follows:

- Lincoln-Douglas (LD) - Finals Qualification
- Public Forum (PF) - Gold: Quarterfinals Qualification | Silver: Octofinals Qualification

Carly Persell and Amrit Ammanamanchi will join us as our tab directors.

This packet should answer any questions you may have about the tournament. If you need any additional information, please do not hesitate to email us at [columbiadebate.tournaments@gmail.com](mailto:columbiadebate.tournaments@gmail.com) (for tournament-related questions) or [columbiadebate@gmail.com](mailto:columbiadebate@gmail.com) (for general questions).

Happy Prepping,

Zoran J. Curgus, Jr. & Alejandra (Ale) D. Avila

Tournament Directors

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<sup>1</sup> Italicized format divisions indicate a qualification bid for the *JW Patterson Tournament of Champions*



2025 Columbia Invitational  
High School Forensics Tournament

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*Columbia University in the City of New York*

January 31<sup>st</sup> to February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025

**For problems during the tournament, please contact:**

**Tournament Directors**

[columbiadebate.tournaments@gmail.com](mailto:columbiadebate.tournaments@gmail.com)

**Tabroom Directors:**

[columbiainvitational.issues@gmail.com](mailto:columbiainvitational.issues@gmail.com) | (402) 577-0366

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## ***Registration***

### **General Information**

All registration will take place online via the Tabroom tournament page. **Please register before the deadline: January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Judges must be requested or registered in Tabroom by end of day on January 24th. Missing judge fines will be assessed at that time and must be paid prior to tournament start. See Payment Procedures for more information regarding payment.**

### **Waitlist**

To accommodate as many teams as efficiently as possible. We will open registration for the tournament on tabroom.com on a waitlist-only basis. **Institutions with a history of judge absences and/or unpaid fees will either be barred from registering until fines/fees are paid or have delayed participant approval.**

The waitlist will be cleared on a *rolling basis*. Please be patient as the tab team reviews entries and updates the waitlist.

### **Eligibility**

#### **Degree/Diploma-issuing Institutions**

Teams representing their bona fide degree or diploma-issuing institution may compete at this tournament. This does not discriminate against private or public accredited institutions; we expect most tournament entries to fall under this category.

### **Independent Entries**

Independent Entries may compete at our tournament if they meet the requirements below:

- 1) You *must* represent a singular public or private accredited institution. No independent entries will be accepted if they are members of external debate clubs, drill groups, or any other entity that is not accredited.
- 2) Your institution's administration and debate coaching staff know your attendance and *approve* your attendance at the Columbia Invitational.
- 3) You *must* enter under your institution's *actual name*. Invented names or appended names with words such as "Independent" will be put *under review*. Various debate leagues have rules against competing against independent entries, where this requirement circumvents this issue.
- 4) You *must* have a responsible adult available during the tournament for the Tabroom to contact (your provided judge can fulfill this role). This person must be approved by your school and coaching staff and **listed as your team's contact on Tabroom**. For this tournament, your accompanying adult must be reachable by phone or Zoom during all competition hours.
- 5) Provided judges are experienced in judging national circuit debates and are comfortable flowing and making decisions based on the flow and arguments in the round. If the tournament staff is unconvinced that the judge you provided is of caliber, they will be removed, and the competitor will have to pay a fine.

## **Other Entry-types**

No other entry types will be allowed to participate in the tournament, such as camp entries, hybrid entries, entries made with anonymous email accounts, etc. Tab will bar any entry of this kind from competing in the tournament. If we miss any other entry types during registration and find out they are actively competing at the tournament, these entries will be immediately dropped from all rounds, and no refunds will be provided.

## **Novice Status**

*Novice* is defined as a student in their first season (2024-25) of debate competition at any academic level.

## **Fees and Fines**

### Registration Fees

#### Lincoln-Douglas (LD)

- Varsity: \$85/entry | Novice: \$75/entry

#### Public Forum (PF)

- Varsity: \$85/entry | Novice: \$75/entry

#### Policy (CX)

- Varsity: \$85/entry

#### Congress

- Varsity: \$55/entry (There are no judge obligations in Congress - see Judging Requirements section for additional information)

### Fines

- Uncovered judge obligation: **\$800/uncovered judge** (do not hesitate to contact the tournament regarding Institutional Judge Hiring)
- Unreported team drops day of tournament: **\$100/team**
- Judge misses a preliminary round: **\$100/round**
- Judge misses an elimination round: **\$125/round**

## **Fee Exemptions & Waivers**

We will be offering fee exemptions for teams that are part of an **Urban Debate League (UDL)** or if they are a **Title I Institution**. In addition, for schools not in those classifications that will or may have a financial burden attending the tournament, we are here to work with you to ensure the Columbia Invitational is accessible for all.

New for this tournament year, we ask all schools to complete the form linked [here](https://forms.gle/8PPL5geiGTuffL7R7) (<https://forms.gle/8PPL5geiGTuffL7R7>). We believe this will allow us to better respond to institutions' financial needs and burdens.

The form will be reviewed on a *rolling basis*. All requests must be submitted prior to the entry deadline for consideration.

## **Institutional Judge Hiring**

Teams should make every effort to cover judge obligations with qualified judges from their circuit. However, Columbia will again offer hired judges to institutions that indicate the need. The rate for hired judges is \$300.

Please fill out the form (when available) linked [here](https://forms.gle/nVEupdChThBx3yXy8) (<https://forms.gle/nVEupdChThBx3yXy8>).

The form will be reviewed on a *rolling basis*. **Judge requests are due by January 17th.**

## **Payment Procedure**

*All payment is due by the start of the competition on Friday, January 31<sup>st</sup>, and can be submitted physically or electronically.*

### **Physical Payments**

We will be accepting payment via check. Please mail checks to the following address:

**Administration and Planning**  
**ATTN: USL Office - Hameer Deo, Columbia Debate Society**  
**Learner 510, Mail Code 2601**  
**2920 Broadway**  
**New York, NY 10027**

Please *make the checks to “The Trustees of Columbia University”* and write *“ATTN USL Office - Hameer Deo, Columbia Debate Society” on the memo line.*

### **Electronic Payments**

We will also accept electronic payments via credit cards; use the below link to make these payments (instructions regarding receipt confirmation are within the website):

[\(https://securepay.cuit.columbia.edu/payment/pub/tournamentpayments/\)](https://securepay.cuit.columbia.edu/payment/pub/tournamentpayments/)

## **Additional Information**

Please note that we will be very strict about payment and receipt of registration fees. Please do not submit payments late. If you anticipate having trouble submitting your payment on time or have any questions about how to send in payment, please email the tournament directors, Zoran Jeffrey Curgus, Jr. and Alejandra (Ale) D. Avila, at [columbiadebate.tournaments@gmail.com](mailto:columbiadebate.tournaments@gmail.com) or [columbiainvitationallissues@gmail.com](mailto:columbiainvitationallissues@gmail.com).

***Schools with unpaid fines will not advance to elimination rounds and will be noted as non-payers for future tournaments.***

## ***Event Rules and Policies***

### **Lincoln-Douglas (LD) Debate**

The Lincoln-Douglas resolution will be the **January-February NSDA topic**. Lincoln-Douglas will follow the 6-3-7-3-4-6-3 format, with 5 minutes of prep time. Ties will be broken based on win-loss record, adjusted points, total points, double-adjusted points, judge variance, opponent average wins, and coin flip, in that order.

The *JW Patterson Tournament of Champions Qualifier Bid* is for **Varsity LD Finals**.

Judge preference sheets for Varsity will be posted at by 12 PM Eastern on January 30th. This will only be available to teams with no outstanding registration fees and who brought judges with posted paradigms.

### **Public Forum (PF) Debate**

The Public Forum resolution will be the **January NSDA topic**. Public Forum will follow the 4-4-3-4-3-3-3-2-2 format with 3 minutes of prep time. Ties will be broken using the same criteria as the Lincoln-Douglas Debate.

For a Gold Bid for the *JW Patterson Tournament of Champions*, the *Qualifier Bid* is for **Varsity PF Quarterfinals**.

For a Silver Bid for the *JW Patterson Tournament of Champions*, the *Qualifier Bid* is for **Varsity PF Octofinals**.

Judge strike sheets for Varsity will be posted at by 12 PM Eastern on January 30th. This will only be available to teams with no outstanding registration fees and who brought judges with posted paradigms.

### **Policy (CX) Debate**

The Policy resolution will be: ***The United States federal government should significantly strengthen its protection of domestic intellectual property rights in copyrights, patents, and/or trademarks.*** In addition, we will follow the Novice Case Limits set out by NSDA. Policy will follow the 8-3-8-3-8-3-8-3-5-5-5-5 format with 8 minutes of prep time. Ties will be broken using the same criteria as the Lincoln-Douglas Debate.

### **Congressional Debate**

Legislation will be available for debaters to download from tabroom and blasted to registered schools by January 1st, 2025.



The following procedures and policies will guide the Congressional Debate Tournament held between Friday, January 31<sup>st</sup>, and Sunday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Tournament will adhere to the best of its ability to adhere to these standards, and we expect the competitors to do the same. If there are any concerns regarding these policies during the tournament, please reach out to the Tabroom Directors via email at [columbiainvitational.issues@gmail.com](mailto:columbiainvitational.issues@gmail.com) or via call or text at (402) 577-0366. Happy Legislating to all!

- I. The docket order for the preliminary houses may be set by the chambers individually. This can be done through both the traditional caucusing and docket nomination process before the round or through a suspension of the rules and the appropriate motions and votes during the round. The Parliamentarian is responsible for reporting the final docket order to the tabroom staff. **The docket order for the first two bills in semifinals and finals may NOT, in any circumstance, be changed.**
- II. We will aim to keep preliminary houses a reasonable size, such that debaters will have the maximum opportunities to give speeches and participate. This requires the students to be respectful to the judges and their competitors. Failure to be respectful is grounds for dismissal from the tournament.
- III. The tournament intends to advance no more than one-third of all preliminary contestants to the final session. While the number of students advancing is dependent on the number of preliminary chambers and the optimum number of students in the final chambers, generally we anticipate roughly 4-6 students advancing from each preliminary chamber. This number is subject to change at the discretion of the tournament director(s), as are any rules that they deem fit.
- IV. We will be utilizing direct questioning in all houses, preliminary and final. The chair will yield time to members of the chamber wishing to question the speaker in blocks of 30 seconds. There will be no more than 4 blocks of questions after the first speech in affirmation and the first speech in negation on a respective piece of legislation, and no more than 2 blocks of questions after subsequent speeches. Questioner selections will be decided by precedence and recency on questions, not speeches.
- V. Additionally, in regards to questioning, competitors may not permanently amend, extend, or remove the questioning period at any point in debate. The questioning rules are not allowed to be suspended at this tournament.
- VI. There are no authorship rights at this tournament, as all bills have been authored by the tournament itself. There will be no “Final Appeal” speeches.
- VII. Each individual preliminary chamber is tabulated independent of the others. Legislators with the lowest cumulative rank total advance to the next level of competition. The parliamentarian’s preference will break all ties. Tabulation beyond the preliminary chamber will occur in respect to the hierarchy as follows:
  - A. Semifinals (These rules apply to quarterfinals, if it is necessary to run them.)
    1. Total Ranks in Semifinals
    2. Total Ranks in Preliminaries and Semifinals Minus Highest Score and Lowest Score
    3. Parliamentarian Preference in Semifinals House
  - B. Finals
    1. Total Ranks in Finals
    2. Total Ranks in All Rounds Minus Highest Score and Lowest Score
    3. Parliamentarian Preference in Finals House
- VIII. There will be a student presiding officer, selected via the chamber in a method they see fit, throughout every round of the tournament. There will also be a dedicated Parliamentarian in addition to the Point Recorders.

- All rules and regulations are subject to change based on tournament conditions and either tournament or tabroom director discretion. (We don't anticipate this rule ever being invoked, but it is being included solely as a measure of last resort). s

## **Breaks**

We plan to break into Double-Octofinals in the Varsity division for LD and PF. Based on pool size, we will break to whatever is appropriate for the Novice division. Since CX and Congress are new for this year, we will determine respectable breaks based on pool size for each event.

## ***Judging Requirements and Policies***

Teams should bring the following number of qualified judges:

- LD/PF/CX: 1 judge for every two registered teams
- Congress: There are no judge obligations in Congress. The Columbia Debate Society will provide judging, and judging fees are included in the entry cost.

### **Obligations**

Judges in LD and PF are tentatively obligated to judge through to Octofinals, then **one round past the last full round in which their students are active**. Several Columbia Debate Society (CDS) members will be available for hire. Requesting one of these members to judge will be at a fixed cost. Remember, a limited number of available CDS members are to be hired; requests are on a first-come-first-serve basis. **Acceptances will be sent by email via tabroom.com. No team is guaranteed that a hired judge is available.** Lastly, you can all bring your judges, such as coaches or alumni of your respective teams, at no cost.

### **Paradigms**

We expect all varsity judges to publish paradigms on tabroom.com; teams can only strike judges if their judges do have paradigms.

### **Tab & Ballots**

We will publicly post the results of every round in LD, PF, and Policy after each round is tabbed to serve as a confirmation. Though judges in debate events are not required to disclose their decisions, they are highly encouraged to do so and give feedback and critiques. Pairings will be posted online. Congress ballots and feedback will be posted at the conclusion of preliminary rounds.

### **Evidence Challenges**

In line with NSDA guidance, Judges are responsible for evaluating evidence based challenges during rounds. Please review [this](#) document for details on what is considered an evidence based challenge and how to adjudicate it.

<<https://www.speechanddebate.org/wp-content/uploads/Debate-Evidence-Guide.pdf>>

## ***Tournament Logistics***

### **Equity**

The Columbia Invitational prioritizes its participants' safety and equity concerns. As a result, we have put together an equity team for the tournament, members of which will be available for competitors and judges to contact throughout the weekend with any equity-related issues. The equity team has also put together an equity policy, which can be found on our Tabroom page. For your convenience, here is the respective document: [Columbia Invitational Equity Policy](#).

### **Awards**

Due to logistical reasons, the 2025 Columbia Invitational will not mail physical awards. However, the Columbia Debate Society will send out certificates featuring the participant's competitive and/or speaker placement at a later date.

### **Online Platform**

We will use the NSDA Campus software for this year's tournament. Guidelines for using this software will be released before the tournament.

## Tentative Schedules

The tentative schedules for the 2025 Columbia Invitational are below:

Friday   January 31st, 2025						
	LD / PF	Policy	Congress			
	Round 1		Opening Meeting / Caucusing	4:00 PM		
Posted	4:00 PM	4:00 PM	Session 1			
Judge Check-in	4:10 PM	4:10 PM	Tech Check-In	5:15 PM		
Tech Check-In	4:20 PM	4:20 PM	Debate	5:30 PM - 9:30 PM		
Start	4:30 PM	4:30 PM	Houses are expected to break for up to 45 minutes for dinner during this session.			
	Round 2					
Posted	5:30 PM	6:00 PM				
Judge Check-in	5:40 PM	6:10 PM				
Tech Check-In	5:50 PM	6:20 PM				
Start	6:00 PM	6:30 PM				
	Round 3					
Posted	7:30 PM					
Judge Check-in	7:40 PM					
Tech Check-In	7:50 PM					
Start	8:00 PM					
Saturday   February 1st, 2025						
	Round 4	Round 3			Session 2	
Posted	9:30 AM	9:30 AM	Tech Check-In	9:45 AM		
Judge Check-in	9:40 AM	9:40 AM	Debate	10:00 AM - 1:00 PM		
Tech Check-In	9:50 AM	9:50 AM	Semifinals			
Start	10:00 AM	10:00 AM	Tech Check-In	1:30 PM		
	Round 5	Round 4	Debate	1:45 PM - 4:45 PM		
Posted	11:15 AM	12:00 PM	Finals			
Judge Check-in	11:25 AM	12:10 PM	Tech Check-In	5:00 PM		
Tech Check-In	11:35 AM	12:20 PM	Debate	5:15 PM - 8:15 PM		
Start	11:45 AM	12:30 PM	Congress Awards - 8:30 PM			
	Round 6	Round 5				
Posted	1:30 PM	2:45 PM				
Judge Check-in	1:40 PM	2:55 PM				
Tech Check-In	1:50 PM	2:05 PM				
Start	2:00 PM	2:15 PM				
	Outround 1	Outround 1	<b><i>*Outround breaks for all events will be determined by event entry size</i></b>			
Posted	3:15 PM	4:15 PM				
Judge Check-in	3:25 PM	4:25 PM				

Tech Check-In	3:35 PM	4:35 PM		
Start	3:45 PM	4:45 PM		
	Outround 2	Outround 2		
Posted	5:00 PM	6:45 PM		
Judge Check-in	5:10 PM	6:55 PM		
Tech Check-In	5:20 PM	7:05 PM		
Start	5:30 PM	7:15 PM		
	Outround 3			
Posted	6:45 PM			
Judge Check-in	6:55 PM			
Tech Check-In	7:05 PM			
Start	7:15 PM			
	Outround 4			
Posted	8:30 PM			
Judge Check-in	8:40 PM			
Tech Check-In	8:50 PM			
Start	9:00 PM			
Sunday   February 2nd, 2025				
	Outround 5	Outround 3		
Posted	9:30 AM	9:30 AM		
Judge Check-in	9:40 AM	9:40 AM		
Tech Check-In	9:50 AM	9:50 AM		
Start	10:00 AM	10:00 AM		