Policy Debate Orientation Script

Welcome to this Christian Communicators of America competition event. In the following presentation, you will learn everything you need to know in order to judge a Christian Communicators of America debate round. We will be going over what debate looks like, how to make your decision, and filling out the ballot.

I would like to thank you all for coming and donating your time to the purpose of judging our speech and debate tournament this weekend. Without you, tournaments like this would not be possible."

The reason our students are doing this is ultimately for the purpose of glorifying God. We want our students to become better communicators for Christ and have found that the activities of speech and debate are an excellent way to hone these skills. Debate is an educational activity, in which the students become more familiar with a wide range of topics as well as research and presentation skills.

Judging A CCA Debate Round

As the judge in the round, you play the role of the teacher. Even if you do not know anything about debate, or about the topic being discussed, your life experiences and perspective give you valuable knowledge which you can then give to the students.

As the teacher, you have both quite an easy job, and an extremely hard job. The easy job is that no matter what decision you make, you are always right. We fully support any decision you make in the round. The hard part, however, is that you must separate your bias, your prior knowledge, and your current leanings regarding the topic and make your decision based solely upon what is argued in the debate round between the students. If the students make an argument that you personally disagree with, you should not make your decision based on your personal feelings but based solely upon what is argued in the round.

The Resolution

It is important to remember as you are judging that policy debate is not a pursuit of a perfect policy but is an exercise in argumentation. We are here to train the students in how to argue well. It cannot be a pursuit of perfect policy, because if a team were to develop the perfect policy, then all other teams would adopt that policy, and in a very short time, we would have a debate competition consisting of all Affirmative Teams adopting the same winning policy. Therefore, it is important to understand that debate is an exercise in argumentation, and not an exercise to seek out perfection in public policy. As an exercise in argumentation, we have a resolution that limits the scope of what the students may argue.

At this point, there is a pause in video for the orienteer to present resolution.

The purpose of this resolution is to limit the scope of discussion in the round. The Negative Team will come to the debate expecting that the affirmative has stayed within the bounds of the resolution and in all fairness, they cannot prepare for a topic greater than this. Therefore, the affirmative must be constrained in these areas.

Debate Round Structure

When you walk into the room, there will be two teams. On one side is the Affirmative Team, which is arguing for change or affirming the resolution, and the other side, which is negating the resolution as the Negative Team. The Negative Team will be arguing that we should keep the status quo as is and not adopt the change that the Affirmative Team has proposed.

Each team consists of two speakers. Each speaker has the opportunity to speak two times, a constructive speech, and a rebuttal speech, and then also answer and ask cross-examination questions. If you look at the flow sheet you have been given, it will provide you with a roadmap for how the round will progress. Note taking in the debate round is referred to as flowing. Flowing is the taking of notes in a systematic fashion to track the arguments through the round. It is necessary for the judge to flow a round to fairly access all the arguments and to make sure that each team did not drop arguments.

You will be provided with a flow sheet that will assist you in this process. By taking notes in the vertical column allotted to each speech, you will see the flow of the arguments across the page. The first four speeches, called the constructive speeches, are eight minutes in length. During these speeches, teams are still building their case and still constructing their arguments. At the end of each of these speeches, there will be three minutes of cross-examination where a member of the other team will stand at the podium and ask three minutes worth of questions.

After the four constructive speeches, there are four rebuttal speeches. These speeches are all five minutes in length, and the reason that they are shorter is because the purpose of these rebuttal speeches is to narrow the arguments down to the key points in the round for you, the judge. No new lines of argument may be introduced by either team in the rebuttal speeches.

Keeping Time

The debaters are required to keep their own time, which means you as the judge do not have to worry about it. It is the responsibility of each team to have two timers with them that countdown and beep at the end, so everyone knows when the time is up. They take one timer up to the podium with them in their speech to keep track of their time while they are speaking, and they keep one timer at the desk to keep track of their preparation time.

Each team in a debate round has five minutes of total preparation time and they can use those five minutes however they choose throughout the round. However, they may not use preparation time before cross-examinations. But they can use it before any one of

their other speeches. When they take preparation time, it is the responsibility of the team, and they must do this, they must let you as the judge know that they are taking preparation time and then when it is over, how much they have used. That way, they have accountability for how much preparation time is being used during the round.

Stock Issues

The mechanism that we ask you to use to measure and determine who has won or lost the debate round is called the four stock issues.

The first of these four stock issues is topicality. Topicality is an unusual stock issue in that it is the only one that you would render a decision for in the middle of the round.

Topicality is the question: has the Affirmative Team stayed within the bounds of the resolution? The negative has a reasonable expectation that the Affirmative Team will stay within the bounds of the resolution. Keep in mind that the resolution is designed to limit the discussion. If the Affirmative Team does not stay within the bounds of the resolution, the Negative Team must ask for a topicality ruling and make a topicality argument in the first negative constructive speech. This is marked in the second vertical column on your flow sheet.

If you, as the judge, determine that the affirmative case is not topical then you will stop the round and render a decision in favor of the Negative Team at the end of the cross examination following the second negative constructive speech. This is also marked upon your flow sheet. It you judge that the affirmative case is in fact topical and then the debate round will continue to a normal conclusion. If the affirmative case is not topical, the debate round will end, and the negative team will be declared the winner.

This is the only circumstance under which you will announce your decision to the debaters in the debate round. In all other circumstances, and for all other reasons, who has won the debate round and why is reserved for the ballot, which will be given to the team members at the end of the tournament.

The second stock issue is that of significance. The question of significance is: did the Affirmative Team make a large enough or important enough change to justify the risk of change?

All federal policies have a risk of unintended consequences when they are changed and in the event of that change, there must be a compelling or weighty reason – a significance – to the affirmative's case to justify that change. Typically, significance is expressed in terms of qualitative or quantitative importance.

The third stock issue is that of solvency. The question of solvency is: has the Affirmative Team presented a case that will in fact fix the problems that they have pointed out in the status quo, and thereby bring forth the advantages?

The last stock issue is that of inherency. The question of inherency is: can the current system, and will the current system, fix the problem without the affirmative plan? For if the problem can and will be fixed without the affirmative plan, then there is no need for the affirmative case.

The negative will try to convince you that the current system can fix the problem and will fix the problem without the affirmative's plan. The affirmative, to show that their case is inherent, needs to show you that the present system cannot or will not fix the problem.

These are the four stock issues:

1. Topicality – did the affirmative stay within the bounds of the resolution.
2. Significance – did the affirmative present a change that was large enough or weighty enough to justify the risk of change.
3. Solvency – is the case structured in such a way that it in fact fixes the problems that have been presented by the Affirmative Team and brings about the advantages.
4. Inherency – is there a reason in the current system that the problem cannot be fixed or will not be fixed without the affirmative's plan.

These four stock issues must be won by the Affirmative Team to win the debate round. If the Negative Team wins any one of these four stock issues, the Negative Team wins the debate round.

Again, to review, the Affirmative Team must win all four stock issues to receive an affirmative ballot – topicality, significance, solvency, and inherency. If the Negative Team were to win any one of these stock issues, it would result in a negative win.

Individual Arguments

Now that you have thought about the umbrella issues of how to judge a debate round through the lens of the four stock issues, let us examine an individual argument. How do you decide whether the Affirmative Team or the Negative Team has won an individual argument?

Let me give you an example. Let us say perhaps that an affirmative competitor claims that one million dollars is adequate funding to achieve some mandate, and the Negative Team simply claims that one million dollars is inadequate to achieve some mandate. In this example, neither team has presented good argumentation, nor have they used adequate justification for their position, and it will be exceedingly difficult for you to decide based on the arguments that the competitors have made.

However, if the one team were to argue a million dollars is adequate to achieve their plan because it has been done here before, and they give an example, and it has been done there before, and they give another example, and here is a credentialed expert who believes that it is enough, and they read a piece of evidence – that is juxtaposed to the

Negative Team who says, we simply do not believe that a million dollars is adequate. Now you can see how you can weigh the two arguments and decide that the argumentation and justification for the million dollars being adequate is in fact greater than the argumentation and justification for the million dollars being inadequate.

This brings us back to the issue of judging on what the debaters have said rather than what you believe to be true. You may in fact believe that the million dollars is inadequate. However, as you can see from this example, the argumentation was such that you as the judge would need to vote in favor of the team that argued that the million dollars was in fact adequate.

Affirmative Case Structures

There are two permitted case structures, the first of which is a Needs Analysis Affirmative. This is the most common case structure, and it begins with the Affirmative Team presenting harms or problems that exist within the status quo. They would then present a plan including mandates, as to how to fix these problems, and advantages (or benefits) that would come from adopting the affirmative plan. This is a Needs Analysis Affirmative case structure.

The second case structure is a Comparative Advantages Analysis Affirmative case structure. In this case structure, the affirmative adopts all of the goals of the status quo, and shows that they are in fact good goals, then shows that they have a better way to achieve those goals and then shows the advantages that come from achieving those goals more effectively than the current system.

In both case structures you have problems, whether they are harms or goals that have not been met to their fullest capacity, which are being fixed by a series of mandates that then generate a series of advantages. In both case structures, we ask you to use over-arching view of the four stock issues to determine the winner of the round.

Affirmative Plans

No matter what case type they are running, each of the case types has at least one thing in common, and that is that they all have a plan, and all plans are structured the same way.

Plank 1 – Mandates In most debates, this is the essence of the plan. In this plank, the Affirmative Team specifies the mandates given to the agency that administers the plan. The Affirmative Team must specify exactly what it requires the agency to do. Any new legislation needed to conduct the Affirmative Team's plan will be included in this plank.

Plank 2 – Agency In this plank, the Affirmative Team specifies who will be responsible for administering its plan. This may include identifying who will enact the plan and/or who will do the work of the plan. The Affirmative Team must provide the essential details of the agency that will put its plan into effect.

Plank 3 – Enforcement In this plank, the affirmative specifies how the plan will be enforced. In the need and inherency issues, the affirmative has provided many reasons for people to resist its plan. Now it must provide a means of making people behave the way they want them to. The affirmative may find it necessary to provide fines, prison terms, or other forms of coercion or incentives to make people act in the way necessary for their plan to work. In some circumstances, the affirmative may be able to demonstrate that under the new conditions created by its plan people will act in the desired way because it is now in their self-interest to do so. Most often enforcement will be through "normal means," meaning it is not specified by the plan, but simply uses the existing law enforcement mechanisms of the status quo.

Plank 4 – Funding and Staffing In this plank, the Affirmative Team specifies how it will get the funds and staff the agency needs to conduct its mandates. These actions many times occur through "normal means" unless the mandates require a substantial change in the funding and staffing of the resolutional actor (typically the US Federal Government)

Plank 5 – Addendum In this concluding plank, the Affirmative Team adds such further provisions as may be necessary to complete the implementation of its plan. (This plank is quite often unneeded)

Oral Critiques

After you have listened to the four debaters speak to you, you have the wonderful opportunity to give them immediate feedback in the oral critique. At the end of each round, you as the judge have the opportunity to orally critique the students for up to ten minutes. The students will set a timer to time you for ten minutes as you give the oral critique. The purpose of the oral critique is to give immediate feedback to the students so that they can put it into action at the beginning of their next round. During this oral critique, it is especially important that you do not reveal your decision to the students. You will reveal your decision on the ballot, which is what we will be going over next. It is also important to remember, just as the debate was a presentation to you by the debaters, not a conversation, the oral critique is a presentation by you to the debaters. You should not ask the debaters any additional questions once the round is over. The debaters have been instructed to listen to your comments but not to ask or answer questions from you as the judge.

Filling out the ballot

At the conclusion of the oral critique, you will return to the "*Judge Quite Room*" to fill out your ballot. As you fill out the ballot, you will be judging the students individually and then also as a team. As you are judging each of the students, you will be evaluating them in five categories on a scale of one to four, one being low and four being high. Some judges find it helpful to think of them as letter grades, 4 being an "A" 3 being a "B" 2 being a "C" and 1 being a "D."

After you assign points in each of the categories, you will then total those points up and mark it in the spot total speaker points. Then based upon those points, you will rank the students. In this case, one is high and four is low. So the speaker with the highest total

speaker points will receive the first-place ranking, the second highest total second ranking, and so on. If there happens to be a tie among the speaker points, that is okay, and you can break that tie during the speaker ranking. So if among the four speakers you have one that has nineteen speaker points, one with eighteen speaker points, and two with fourteen speaker points, the one with nineteen would receive the first-place ranking and the one with eighteen speaker points would receive the second-place ranking. You would then have to use your discretion to break the tie between the two speakers with fourteen speaker points, giving one third, and one fourth, because there can be no tie in the speaker ranking.

There are five speaking areas in which you will be judging the competitors.

First, argumentation: Argumentation refers to the structure and applicability of the arguments that they chose to support their case. Do their arguments support their case, or refute the case that the other team has brought up? Are they meaningful and complete arguments, or simply assertions?

The second area is communication. Communication considers things such as their vocabulary, the pace with which they speak, proper enunciation and pronunciation of words, as well as their overall delivery style.

The third area that you will be scoring is cross-examination. When you are judging them on cross-examination, you will be judging both how well they ask questions, and how well they answer the questions. We want our debaters to be assertive, but not aggressive. If you notice that they are too aggressive, or if there is rude behavior, that should come into account when you are judging in cross-examination. Additionally, when they are answering questions, we want them to answer the questions truthfully and honestly and not be evasive or avoid answering questions that they think may harm their case.

The fourth area is that of justification. Justification is the logic and evidence that they are using to support their arguments. A well-justified case will not only say that this is so, but it will explain why it is so, with reasoning and evidence.

The final area that you will be judging them on is organization. How well organized is their speech? Can you follow what they have to say? Are their arguments selected and ordered in such a way as to maximize their effectiveness, or are they running out of time at the end of their speech?

Record your decision on each of the four stock issues by checking the appropriate blank, either affirmative or negative. Remember, the affirmative must win all four stock issues to be awarded the win in the debate round. The negative need only win one stock issue to win the round.
After you have judged each of the speakers individually, you will then vote for the team. If you check the affirmative blank, then that means the Affirmative Team won the round; if the negative blank, the Negative Team won the round. There is an option for a double loss, but this should only be used in extremely rare occasions where the team that won

the round had some sort of an ethical violation and therefore should not be given the win. After you check the box either affirmative or negative, then please fill out your reason for decision, or the reason you voted for the team that you voted for.

Ethics Violations

At the very bottom of the ballot, you will notice there is a box marked ethics. In this box you can make a comment if there have been any ethical violations in the round. An example of ethical violation would be extremely rude behavior, tag teaming -- when one team member is at the podium speaking and is communicating with his other team partner seated at the table: as well as falsification or misuse of evidence. If you believe there has been an ethical violation in the round, please ask to see the tournament director before filling out your ballot.

Finally, date and sign your ballot and then turn it in at the ballot return.

A Quick Review

- Debate is an exercise in argumentation, not the pursuit of perfect policy.
- Judge based on the students' arguments not your preferences, or personal knowledge.
- Guard against becoming the fifth competitor in the room and advocating for your preferred position on the topic.
- The debate round is a presentation from the debaters to you as the judge, not a conversation that you participate in. Conversely, the oral critique is a presentation from you, as the judge, to the debaters. Avoid asking questions at the completion of the debate round.
- The four stock issues: topicality, significance, solvency, and inherency, are the basis for your decision in the round.
- Ask the Debate Orienteer if you have any questions.
- Assistance is available in ballot return should you need help with your ballot.

Again, we thank you for giving your time and talents. Please enjoy yourself today and remember it is only because of you that these students can participate in this educational activity.