### Owen L. Coon Memorial Tournament – Invitation

On behalf of the Northwestern University and the Northwestern Debate Society, I would like to invite you to the 54th Owen L. Coon Memorial Debate Tournament. We will host the tournament on **February 4th, 5th, and 6th**, 2017. Many of you have not had a chance to compete at our tournament due to campus construction in 2015; The University of Texas kindly agreed to host three years in a row in order to accommodate our temporary lack of rooms on campus. We plan to return to the tradition of alternating our hosting with Texas going forward. As per our agreement, Texas will continue to host in even years and Northwestern will host in odd years. We are grateful that Gary Larson has agreed to return to tabulate the tournament, and that Northwestern debate alumnae Cate Palczewski and LaTonya Starks will be the tournament administrators. We look forward to welcoming each of you to Evanston in February!

Best,

Daniel J. Fitzmier

Director of Debate

Senior Lecturer

School of Communication

Northwestern University

### Tournament Information

#### Format

Debates will use the 2016-2017 Cross Examination Debate Association topic and employ a 9-3-6 time format with 10 minutes of preparation time per team. Speaker points will be assigned on a 30-point scale, in one-tenth increments, with no tied points. We will offer eight preliminary rounds and break to double-octa finals. Student eligibility to compete will be determined by the relevant CEDA and American Debate Association rules. Each team must consist of two students enrolled with their college or university. Individual students will not be eligible to compete in elimination rounds. Individual debaters can participate in preliminary debates but the team must be intact for more than half of the preliminary rounds to qualify for the elimination rounds. Hybrid teams are not eligible for elimination rounds, unless the hybrid has already satisfied the National Debate Tournament hybrid criteria. Tiebreakers for team seeding will be win/loss record, points dropping one high/low, total points, average opposition seed. Tiebreakers for individual speaker awards will be points dropping one high/low, total points, dropping two high/low, and Z-score.

#### Registration & Tournament Entry Procedures

All pre-tournament registration will be entered through Tabroom.com. Schools should finalize their entries and judging commitments by January 26th, the Thursday prior to the tournament. Judge preferences will be made available at 12:00 noon, January 30th, and will be due at 6:00 PM, Friday February 3rd. Judges and participants are expected to enter constraints as per the rules and norms of our governing institutions. Gary Larson will seek verification of constraints before prefs are opened. Registration fees will be set at $75.00 for each tournament participant (individual contestants, judges, coaches, etc.) Fees may be paid in check or cash at registration. We are working on setting up an online and in-person credit card option; further information to follow on CEDA Forums as it becomes available.

#### Tournament Pairing & Judge Assignment Procedures

The first two debates will be preset. Gary Larson will use his algorithm for prelim pairings, which eliminates the need for a high-high debate.

We intend to release the pairing for the first two debates on Saturday morning as per the enclosed schedule; in addition, we will release a list of the buildings that each team will be assigned to on Friday night in order to facilitate our guests’ movement in the morning on Saturday. We have decided to release the pairing on Saturday morning in order to give ourselves the option to expand the preset debates to a total of four; we will only do so if we face particularly inclement weather. If there are adverse weather conditions, we will also adjust the tournament schedule to allow more time to move between debates. We will make an announcement about adjusting the schedule on Friday if it looks like the weather will turn against us.

We will continue our tradition of both breaking brackets and equalizing sides in the elimination rounds. Rules for side equalization and bracket breaking will be available at the tabulation table on the ninth floor of the Hilton Orrington throughout the elimination debates.

We will release the full pairing for the double-octa finals, with rooms and judges, on Sunday night. The tabroom-conducted flip to determine sides for the doubles will occur at 7 AM sharp, Monday morning. Subsequent flips will be conducted and posted at the start of the 2AR of each elimination debate.

We will employ an ordinal ranked mutual-preference judge assignment system as we have in the past. The tournament director and tabulation staff will seek to maintain a high standard of judge diversity in both the preliminary and elimination debates. The Northwestern Debate Society strongly encourages coaches and tournament participants to be mindful of achieving diverse judging outcomes as they fill out their preferences. We will adopt five judge panels in the double-octa finals, and may continue to do so as we proceed into the elimination debates based on judging availability. The tournament director is responsible for official tournament decisions, including judge placement, and will endeavor to provide an excellent pool of judges throughout the tournament.

No Northwestern teams will compete at this year’s tournament; however, we always reserve the discretion to enter our teams in future years. If we decide to do so at subsequent tournaments, we will continue our tradition of maintaining an inviolable wall between the tournament tabulation staff and any Northwestern teams that participate in the tournament. As always, we aim to achieve the highest level of confidentiality regarding competitor’s preferences and strictly limit access to such data to the absolute minimum number of tournament staff.

#### Transportation

It is entirely possible to participate in the tournament without having to rent vehicles for your teams. Transportation to Evanston from both Midway and O’Hare airports is easy either to prearrange or to hire when you arrive in Chicago. There are well-marked cabstands at both airports. The main tournament hotel is immediately adjacent to campus and there a number of restaurants and the like within a short distance of the hotel.

The tournament will provide transportation from the Orrington and other official tournament hotels to campus each morning. We will also run a number of shuttles to help judges and individual teams move about campus during the day. We will release additional information about the routes that the shuttles will take at registration in the Orrington on Friday and online. We will continue to provide our traditional evidence moving service to any participants that would like us to move their boxes and tubs to and from campus each morning and evening.

Please note that if you do drive to Evanston or have rental vehicles you may park on campus after 4:00 PM on weekdays and anytime during the weekend without being ticketed so long as you observe the posted rules for reserved spaces. Given the proximity of the campus to the tournament hotel, you may well find that you can save a substantial amount of money in parking fees by doing so. Parking is available at the hotel for purchase, there are also a number of public pay lots close to the Orrington.

#### Accessibility Initiative

We have asked Northwestern alumna LaTonya Starks to direct an accessibility initiative at this year’s tournament. She will serve as the main point of contact for any tournament participants with disabilities or health related needs. You should feel free to contact her directly at [latonyastarks@gmail.com](mailto:latonyastarks@gmail.com) with any accommodation requests. Please let us know as soon as possible if you would like to avail yourself of this initiative so that we can plan accordingly.

We will be happy to provide accessible transportation, limited room movement, and anything else we can reasonably accomplish to make the tournament experience the best we can for all our guests. We recognize that the scale of the tournament and the weather conditions at this time of year in Evanston pose unique challenges – please let us know what we can do to make this an exceptional experience. We have committed extraordinary resources to accomplish this goal and aim to exceed your expectations in this regard.

Quiet room space will be provided throughout the tournament as per standard practice.

#### Tournament Provided Meals

The tournament will provide a number of meals for tournament participants throughout the weekend. We will provide breakfast and coffee each morning, lunch on Saturday and Sunday, and dinner on Sunday evening. Participants are on their own on Saturday night as this is the best time to avail yourselves of the many excellent dining opportunities in Evanston and Chicago. We will provide breakfast for the remaining elimination round participants and judges on Monday morning at the Orrington. We will do the same for the remaining participants during lunch, and will host a reception with tournament provided food and beverages at the onset of the Finals for anyone remaining at the tournament. The Finals Reception has been well reviewed in the past and we hope that it will count as another reason to stay one more night at the tournament and make yourselves available for judging throughout the elimination debates.

#### Audio and Video Recording

All debates are open to registered tournament participants and may be electronically recorded for private educational use by registered tournament participants. We request that tournament participants respect the wishes of those competitors and participants who request not to be recorded, but note that such requests are not binding. Public distribution of such recordings is expressly prohibited unless prior written consent of all persons appearing on the recording is obtained and unless prior written consent of Northwestern University is obtained. Private sharing for educational use is permitted.

#### Guest Conduct

We encourage all tournament participants to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct in their interactions with other tournament participants, members of the Northwestern Debate Society, and members of Northwestern University’s faculty, staff, and students. All participants debate at the invitation of Northwestern University according to its tournament rules as well as any rules of their own sponsoring institutions. The tournament abides by the rules and norms of the American Forensics Association, the American Debate Association, and the Cross Examination Debate Association. As Northwestern University employees we are obligated to report any destructive, threatening, violent, harassing, or otherwise unacceptable behavior to the appropriate campus authorities. Please bear in mind that the elimination debates are located on private property at the Orrington; the representatives and staff of the hotel expect the highest standard of conduct from their guests and may enforce hotel rules and regulations at their discretion and independently of tournament rules and norms.

Please note that various academic units and departments across campus grant us access to many of the buildings that we use for the tournament at their discretion. It would not be possible for us to host such a large tournament without their generous cooperation. As such, we ask tournament participants debating in such areas to observe the posted signs that designate quiet spaces where members of the Northwestern community will be working, teaching, studying, taking examinations, and the like. Similarly, we ask that no tournament participant unplug, move, modify, or otherwise interfere with classroom technology or furniture. Tournament participants have an affirmative obligation to both respectfully abide by requests by members of the Northwestern community regarding noise levels and other disruptive behaviors, and to report any such interactions as soon as feasibly possible to the tournament staff so that we can immediately assist in best balancing our obligations to our colleagues and tournament participants.

### Tournament Schedule

#### Friday, February 3

6:00 – 8:00 PM Registration, Hotel Orrington – location TBD

7:00 PM or ASAP Release of buildings for rounds 1 and 2

#### Saturday, February 4

7:00 AM Pairings for Rounds 1 and 2 Released

8:00 AM Round 1 – 10:30 AM decision deadline

11:15 AM Round 2 – 1:45 PM decision deadline

11:45 AM NDT Committee Meeting, location TBD

1:30 PM Lunch served

2:15 PM Round 3 pairings

3:00 PM Round 3 – 5:30 PM decision deadline

6:00 PM Round 4 pairings

6:45 PM Round 4 – 9:15 PM decision deadline

#### Sunday, February 5

7:00 AM Pairing for Round 5

8:00 AM Round 5 – 10:30 AM decision deadline

11:00 AM Round 6 pairings

11:45 AM Round 6 – 2:15 PM decision deadline

1:45 PM Lunch served

2:45 PM Round 7 pairings

3:30 PM Round 7 – 6:00 PM decision deadline

5:45 PM Dinner served

6:30 PM Round 8 pairings

7:15 PM Round 8 – 9:45 PM decision deadline

#### Monday, February 6

6:30 AM Light Breakfast for tournament participants

7:00 AM Tabroom flip for sides for doubles – Orrington 9th Floor

8:00 AM Double octafinals – 10:45 AM decision deadline

11:00 AM Awards

11:30 AM Lunch for tournament participants

12:00 PM Octafinals – 2:45 PM decision deadline

Further elims to follow with 30 minutes preparation time and decision deadlines 2:45 from start time; we will host a reception for all remaining participants at the start of the Finals.