



The Vassar College Invitational Tournament

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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.

September 2016

Dear Speech and Debate Coach:

On behalf of the Vassar Debate Society, we invite you and your team to the first annual Vassar College Invitational Tournament on Saturday, November 5th. The tournament will consist of competition in Varsity and Novice Parliamentary Debate. We expect to offer five preliminary rounds and break to quarterfinals.

Vassar has hosted high school debate tournaments in the past, though not consistently. We hope to resume that tradition and make this an annual event. We also host a collegiate level APDA (American Parliamentary Debate Association) tournament with participants from colleges all over New England.

This year, Everett Rutan from the Connecticut Debate Association will direct tab. In addition to that league, he has run the Parliamentary divisions at Yale, UPenn and teaches Parli at Dartmouth's summer debate camp.

This invitation and additional information is or will be posted on our tournament website, <http://vassarinv.tabroom.com>. If you have additional questions or need assistance please email us at vassarinv2016@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 many of you in Poughkeepsie this November.

Sincerely,

Zariah Altman and Antony Manokin

The 2016 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 using www.tabroom.com. You will find the tournament listed on their front page or you can go directly to <http://vassarinv.tabroom.com>. If you are unfamiliar with tabroom, there are online instructions. We can also answer your questions about the system and help you to get registered properly.

We will initially limit each school to 4 teams, though we encourage you to register more if you have debaters who are interested in attending. Registration opens on Tuesday, September 6 at 8AM. We have space for approximately 100 teams and will accept new registrations up until the week before the tournament (October 29) but we will begin allocating additional entries above 4 to teams two weeks before the tournament (October 22) so you will have sufficient notice.

Divisions

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

For this tournament a Novice is defined as someone in their first year of high school debate and who is in their Freshman or Sophomore year. Students who have debated in middle school and are just entering their Freshman year count as Novices. Students who debated as Freshman and are entering their Sophomore year are not Novices and must debate as Varsity. Students who have never debated before but are entering their Junior or Senior years are not Novices for this tournament and must debate in the Varsity division.

We feel it is important to give younger debaters experience at national tournaments. 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 \$50 per team. Please make checks payable to:

Vassar College Debate Society
124 Raymond Ave Box #1195
Poughkeepsie, NY 12604

Fees may be mailed ahead of time or paid at registration on November 5.

Judging Requirements

Teams should bring one qualified judge for every two teams or part thereof (so three teams would mean two judges, as would four teams). We expect to have some judges available for hire at the rate of \$50 per judge. We charge by the team, so if you have one team not covered by a judge you may hire one-half of a judge's services for \$25. Hired judges are available on a first come, first served basis, with a bias in favor of any team requiring an overnight stay.

A qualified judge is an adult or college student who understands the activity, speaks English, and is experienced 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 reason for the decision. Judges familiar with Parliamentary debate are preferred, but experience judging other forms of debate is acceptable. We will post a guide for debaters and judges on the web site at least a month before the tournament which we hope your judges and debaters will review.

Supervision

All students must be accompanied by their 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 must be a high school graduate; high school students who have passed their 18th birthday do not count. All registrants must provide a name and phone number for an adult contact who will be present at the tournament and is responsible for the students in case of an emergency.

Safety

A tab room phone number will be provided at registration. Please make all your students and judges aware of this number so 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 other illegal or disorderly behavior is: (1) to disqualify involved contestants from further competition, (2) to communicate the offending incident to the contestants' 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, judge or observer—at its sole discretion.

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 at least a month before the event. For a broader discussion of the format please see the APDA web site, <http://www.apdaweb.org/> .

We will release one or more straight-link motion 15 minutes before the start of each round. Some rounds teams may be assigned sides, others motion and side will be determined by a coin toss. Teams will prepare their cases during the 15 minutes prior to the round start.

The format is extemporaneous debate. 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 laptop or tablet computers to take notes during preparation or the round, or to speak from, but they may not use research material stored on said devices. This 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 they can be critically evaluated.

Schedule

The tournament will run for one day. We hope to have enough teams to have five preliminary rounds of single-flight debate breaking to quarter-finals, though we may shorten the schedule if we have a small field.

Time	Activity
8-9 AM	Registration and coffee
9-9:30AM	General assembly
9:30-10:45AM	Round 1
10:45AM-Noon	Round 2
Noon-1:15PM	Round 3
1:15-1:45PM	Lunch
1:45-3PM	Round 4
3-4:15PM	Round 5
4:30-5:30PM	Quarter finals
5:30-6:30PM	Semi finals
6:30-7:30PM	Finals
7:30-8PM	Awards

This is a long day, but no longer than the Saturday schedule—and shorter than the actual time—for most national tournaments. We believe the schedule is generous enough so that we will be able to stay on time.

Rules and schedule are subject to change. The tournament will make you aware of any changes at or prior to registration.