

## Recommendations for Parliamentary Debate Judges

***Please read the rules of the competition, judge recommendations, examine sample ballots and other materials. The students participating in the competition work diligently preparing for the contest. They make good faith efforts to do their best debating in a challenging impromptu forum. It is important that judges match their seriousness with their own rigorous and fair efforts.***

### **Judge Ballots**

Ballots will be distributed in Dwinelle 145. Please return completed ballots to this location after debates. Please check to ensure that your ballot is complete. Your ballot should include the names of individual participants (noting speaker order), an indication of the winner of the debate (circle of the winning team name), individual speaker points, a written reason for decision and other helpful comments for the debaters, and your signature.

### **Beginning and Ending the Debate**

Start and conclude debates in a prompt manner. Do not take more than 5 minutes to explain judging philosophy, answer questions, or engage the participants prior to the debate. After deliberation to make a decision and ballot completion, take no more than 5 minutes before returning the speed ballot to the judge house (Dwinelle 145). The periods prior to and after debates should be timed to ensure that no more than 5 minutes is used. After you turn in your speed ballot, you may take your time filling out the complete ballot with comments. We suggest you use the debater's preparation time before the next debate to write a thoughtful, comprehensive analysis of the debate round.

### **Taking Notes**

Judges should take careful notes of all major arguments in the debate. A debate flow chart, also known as a flow sheet or, simply, flow, is included in the judging packet. A flow chart is simply a way to organize notes for multiple speakers. Key information from each speech is recorded in a column. Information is listed such that an initial argument and any subsequent development of the argument are recorded next to each other in adjoining columns. Notes detaining the argument are said to 'flow' from the left to the right side of the page, allowing a judge to identify the progress of any individual argument in the debate. For example:

1 <sup>st</sup> Prop Speaker	1 <sup>st</sup> Opp Speaker	2 <sup>nd</sup> Prop Speaker	2 <sup>nd</sup> Opp Speaker/Opp Rebuttal	Prop Rebuttal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing a problem: homelessness and poor quality</li> <li>• Need new public housing</li> <li>• Federal investment of \$1B would create 100,000 homes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree, but you have the wrong solution</li> <li>• Public housing the problem; need privatization</li> <li>• Keeping the government out of housing would create more housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must act immediately; private markets work too slowly</li> <li>• Need a short-term solution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tax advantages for private housing would develop it quickly</li> <li>• Quality and number of private projects better than federal housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economy will not support new housing in areas needing it</li> <li>• No guarantee of private housing and the need is too great to wait for it</li> </ul>

### **Keeping Time**

The judge should keep time for speakers during the debate. Speaking order and time is:

1 <sup>st</sup> Proposition	7 Minutes
1 <sup>st</sup> Opposition	7 Minutes
2 <sup>nd</sup> Proposition	7 Minutes
2 <sup>nd</sup> Opposition	7 Minutes
Opposition Rebuttalist	5 Minutes
Proposition Rebuttalist	5 Minutes

The judge should signal time by hand for the final 5 minutes of each speech. The judge should raise a hand, signaling the remaining time to the debater at the 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 minute marks of the speech. The judge should raise the appropriate number of fingers and hold his/her raised hand for a few seconds to catch the attention of the speaker. Once seen by the debater, the judge may lower her/his hand. The judge should signal one-half minute remaining at the 30-second mark (a single finger, bent in half will do) and should raise a clenched fist as time elapses.

In addition to these time signals, the judge must announce the time for points of information in the debate.

Debaters may advance points of information. Points are questions or statements offered by one or more speakers on a team to their opponent holding the floor. Points may be made after the first minute and before the last minute of each speech. The first and last minute of each speech, therefore, is 'protected time' and may not be interrupted by the opponent. The judge should 'knock' with the knuckles of a hand or slap a desk or table top one time to indicate that one minute has elapsed (this happens at the 6 minute mark of each speech, i.e., with 6 minutes remaining in the speech.) This lets the debaters know that points of information may commence. Judges should 'knock' with 1-minute remaining in each speech to indicate that no more points may be attempted.

If a qualified person is listening to the debate and will volunteer to keep time, the judge may designate a timekeeper for the debate.

### **Making a Debate Decision/Ranking the Speakers**

After the final rebuttal speech in the debate, the judge should carefully deliberate on the issues of the debate. The judge should avoid imposing personal opinions regarding the topic and should make a decision indicating which side did the better job of debating. In other words, did the proposition team prove its case for the topic or did the opposition team effectively undermine the proposition team's case? The judge should be able to satisfactorily explain the reason that a team has won a debate before completing the debate ballot.

The judge should circle the winning team on the ballot. In addition, the judge should assign speaker points for each individual debater. Speaker points represent individual achievement in the debate. For example, how effectively did each of the individual speakers present her/his ideas? Was the speech well organized? Were arguments logical and consistent? Did the arguments make a convincing case? Was the speech delivered in a persuasive manner?

Although speaker points are on a 30-point scale (the score of 30 represents a perfect score), the range of points, in practical terms, is generally 30-22 points. Points may be given in half point increments (e.g., 27.5). Here is a model scale:

30 points	Magnificent speech; the judge will not be likely to ever hear this sort of speech again
29-29.5 points	Outstanding speech; a rare presentation akin to the finest public speeches in politics or the academy
28-28.5 points	An extraordinary achievement in interscholastic debate; an impressive performance
27-27.5 points	Consistently strong performance; superior delivery and content
26-26.5 points	Well above average; only subtly flawed performance
25-25.5 points	A solid speech but, perhaps, an uninspiring or unspectacular one
24-24.5 points	An average speech; flawed in at least one major way
23-23.5 points	Below average presentation with several major flaws but some well made points\
22-22.5	An inexperienced speaker; the speech is flawed in several major ways
21.5 and lower	Any points below this ranking ought to be reserved for exceptional circumstances, for example, thoroughly obnoxious, offensive or unethical conduct by a debater