

April 9, 2026
White Flint Amphitheater
Bethesda, MD
Time: 8:11 Eastern Time
Phi Rho Pi General Business Meeting

I. CALL TO ORDER

1. Roll Call
2. Minutes from PRP Business Meeting 2025 (MPS)

II. OFFICER'S REPORTS

A. Recording Secretary – John Nash

1. Website has been updated with business meetings minutes and results from last year. The website has been updated and streamlined. If you find anything that needs to be altered, please let me know. Please check your school information and regional information.
2. If you need certificates reprinted – please see John Nash as soon as possible
3. Region Webpages are a great place to record history – Let John Nash know if you want anything added to your Region page.
5. If you need to add or delete names from the listserv – contact John Nash
6. Membership pins were given out this year again. We would love your feedback on them. Pins are \$5 if you want to buy more.

B. President – Wade Hescht

1. June

The EB held its summer retreat online.

VP for Association Update

- 2028 contract signed
- Discussed possible sites for 2029.

VP for Tournament Update

- Discussed takeaways from the National Tournament.

Treasurer Update

- Discussed tournament Costs

Comptroller Update

- Discussed the necessary steps to add John Schultz to our Wells Fargo Accounts.

President Update

- Discussed strategic goals and priorities for the upcoming year.

2. August

Confirmed with the Comptroller that our 990's were submitted for the year.

3. October

Attempted to restart the task forces.

Mission Clarity and Brand Enhancement Task Force

- Mission: To evaluate and enhance PRP's mission, vision, and brand presence to ensure they accurately reflect our current identity, impact, and aspirations for the future.

4. December

The EB held a virtual meeting in place of NCA.

Recording Secretary Update

- Announced that the webpage is currently updated with national information.

VP for Tournament Update

- Discussed tab room staff for 2026.
- Announced that the tournament is live on FTN.
- Discussed hotel and housing form for the 2026 tournament

Treasurer Update

- Proposed PRP applying for a line of business credit with Wells Fargo for \$60,000.
- Discussed the awards order for 2026

Tournament Host Update

- Discussed possible themes for the 2026 tournament.
- Discussed possible opening speakers for the 2026 tournament.

President Update

- Discussed revisiting NCA attendance and in person summer retreats.

5. February

Worked with regional governors to appoint members to all standing committees.

New committee assignments were posted to phirhopi.org.

- All committees were officially given their charges.

6. March

Updated agendas for the 2026 National tournament.

C. Vice President of Association – Francesca Bishop –

1. No Report

D. Vice President of Tournament – Rolland Petrello

1. Competition Rooms – only being used during Flight A Semis – list will be posted after meeting if you want to see it.
2. Stand-by list available after the meeting
3. Tournament Tradition – Home Place Photo Forrest Glen Noon on Saturday.

E. Treasurer – Nathan Carter

1. If you have not yet paid for the tournament – please see Nathan Carter after the meeting
1. Submitted financial report for July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025.
 - a. Total income of \$57,558.08
 - b. Total expense of \$57,963.36
 - c. Net Income \$-405.28
 - d. See report below for actual details
 - e. We are stable – revenue and expenses are aligned, but there is little room for error.
 - f. Late year, we had some issues with the hotel that gave us unexpected costs. Going forward we are getting more specific on hotel contract language.
 - g. This year, our host, Tallassee State College took on some of the costs – thank you so much.
 - h. If you would like to host, it is a great time to due this – PRP does pick up many colleges.

F. Comptroller – John Schultz –

1. Wells Fargo investments:
 - a. Balance as of July 1, 2024: \$304,760.11
 - b. Revenue (Tournament & Investments): \$102,275.72
 - c. Expenses: \$61,745.74
 - d. Balance as of June 30, 2025: \$344,865.09 (Checking \$29,662.42 / Brokerage \$321,632.49)
 - e. See report for details.

F. Roberts Rules of Order: information given by Darren Elliott on Robert's Rules of Order

1. Motion to limit discussion to 5 minutes. (Motion Passes MSP)

III. COMMITTEE REPORTS (Actual proposals are attached below)

A. Nominations – Thuy Pham –

1. **Election for President – Wade Hescht elected to serve for 3 more years**
2. **Recording Secretary – John Nash elected to serve for 3 more years**
3. **Comptroller – John Schults elected to serve for 3 more years**

B. Awards – Dewi Hokett –

1. Please send the Bio for students and coaches to Dewi Hokett by Friday at noon.
2. **Proposal #1** – Adding additional names to Sweepstakes Awards. Recommended by Committee Friendly Amendment – Add another award – the Bob Becker Judging Award – would go to the person who judges the most rounds at the National Tournament. Friendly Amendment accepted. **(MSP)**

C. Constitution & By-Laws – Danny Cantrell – no report

D. Debate – Brittany Hubble

1. **Proposal #1** – Clarifying how electronic materials should be prepared and used. Recommended by Committee. No discussion **(MSP)**
2. **Proposal #2** – Codifies the current practice of how the 5 rounds of debates shall be paired. Recommended by Committee. Tabled until after Rules Committee. Motion Removed from table. **(MSP)**
3. **Proposal #3** – Bans the use of AI during prep for Parliamentary and IDPA. Recommended by Committee. Discussion occurred. AI would have to be turned off before search occurs. **(MSP)**

E. Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Ethics – Nathan Carter – No Report

F. Inter-organization – Francesca Bishop

1. **Community Colleges did extremely well at PKD, NPDA, IPDA, and AFA.**

G. Interpretation – Robert Hawkins –

1. Recording of IT will take place this year.

H. Public Speaking – Ethen Fife

1. **Proposal #1** - Use of generative AI or large language models are prohibited during Extemporaneous speech prep. Recommended by Committee. Discussion occurred. **(MSP)**
2. **Proposal #2** - During prep, competitors are provided fifteen (15) seconds of reading time before their full seven (7) minutes begin. Recommended by Committee. No discussion. **(MSP)**

I. Publications – Dug Hall – No Report

J. Rules – Dug Hall –

1. **Proposal #1** – No student may compete at the PRP National Tournament who is also pursuing a baccalaureate degree from a 4-year institution. Recommended by Committee. Discussion occurred. **(Motion Failed)**
2. **Proposal #2** In the event more than 50% of Debate events have winning records, they earn sweepstakes points. by Committee. Friendly Amendment: Add IT to the motion. (Accepted). **(MSP)**
3. **Proposal #3** Parliamentary and IPDA go from 5 to 4 round of competition. Recommended by Committee. Motion was withdrawn.
4. **Proposal #4** Parliamentary and IPDA go from 5 to 6 rounds of competition. Not recommended.

There was a motion to move Proposal #4 to the top of the order. Discussion occurred. **(MSP)**

There was a motion to open the Proposal for discussion. Motion Failed.

K. Site Selection – Francesca Bishop Debate

1. **Proposal #1** – PRP 2029 – Return to Bethesda North Marriot, Bethesda MD for PRP. Recommended by Committee. \$175 per night. F&B \$30,000. **(MSP)**

L. Tournament Evaluation – Bob Becker

1. **Please fill out the survey – it will be offered in paper and electronic form.**

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Tournament Director – Rolland Petrello – No report

- B. Tournament Hosts – John Schultz – No Report**
- C. Regional Governors – Francesca Bishop – No Report**
- D. 2027 Tournament Host - Moorpark will be hosting.**

Motion to adjourn – Adjourned at 10:19

Respectfully Submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JNash', written over the text 'Respectfully Submitted'.

John Nash – Phi Rho Pi Recording Secretary.

Select the Committee

Awards

Submitted by: Name

John Schultz

School Affiliation

Tallahassee State College

Email Address

john.schultz@tcc.fl.edu

I am...

...a coach submitting a proposal for discussion in committee

Proposal--Include the correct wording of the proposed resolution

Adding names to Sweepstakes Awards

Hindman/**Hescht**

Wheeler/**Przybylo**

Wyman/**Petrello**

Provide rationale FOR the resolution

These three awards are named after singular individuals, while all other awards are named after two individuals so there is a precedent for dual naming.

Wade Hescht has served in the PRP tabroom for 30 years. He served 17 years as Treasurer for PRP, and has served as PRP President for 6 years. As a coach his teams have won multiple National Titles here at PRP, most often in this division, and he has also coached students to great success at AFA and NFA as well. His accomplishments as a coach and a leader of this organization are worthy of this honor.

Jeff Przybylo has also served PRP in many leadership positions as well as being a leader in his region and a coach whose teams have achieved excellence at every level. He has served in the PRP tab room for over 20 years and served multiple terms as the PRP President. As a coach his teams have won numerous gold medals here at PRP, most often in this sweepstakes division. As a leader he has not only had a profound influence on this organization, but forensics as whole.

Rolland Petrello has served his region, state, and PRP for over 30 years running hundreds of tournaments and has served as an officer at every level including PSCFA, CCCFA, as well as decades as a regional governor and multiple terms as the VP of Tournament here at PRP. He has also mentored and trained countless coaches for positions of service. As a coach, his teams have won sweepstakes in this division numerous times, as well as coaching multiple AFA and NFA national championship teams prior to his time at PRP.

Provide rationale AGAINST the resolution

None came out of committee.

Check box below (to be checked by the committee chair).

The Committee recommends the proposal

Electronic Signature.

Submitted by the Committee Chair

Proposal 1 - E-Flowing and Prep

Recommended Unanimously

Submitted by:

Brittany Hubble

School Affiliation

El Camino College

Proposal--Include the correct wording of the proposed resolution

Section 3: Event Rules II. Event Rules A. Debate 1. Parliamentary Debate f.

Original Wording:

Debaters will not be allowed to consult any other person during prep time. During Parliamentary Debate prep, debaters will be allowed paper, dictionaries, almanacs and/or electronic research material, including internet. During the debate, debaters will be limited to using any notes they have written during prep time. During the debate, debaters may take notes on an electronic device as long as said device is NOT connected to the internet. Judges are permitted to verify this during the round.

Proposed Wording:

Debaters will not be allowed to consult any other person during prep time. During Parliamentary Debate prep, debaters will be allowed paper, dictionaries, almanacs and/or electronic research material, including internet. Debaters are permitted to prepare notes on paper and/or electronic devices. Electronically prepared notes may NOT include copy and pasted materials. During the debate, debaters will be limited to using any notes they have written and/or typed during prep time. During the debate, debaters may take notes on an electronic device as long as said device is NOT connected to the internet. Judges are permitted to verify this during the round.

Section 3: Event Rules II. Event Rules A. Debate 3. IPDA (International Public Debate Association)

Original Wording:

Debaters will not be allowed to consult any other person during prep time. Debaters will remain in the prep room until they are released to go to the round by the monitor. As per IPDA rules, debaters will be allowed paper and/or electronic research material, which may be quoted or paraphrased from notes during the round, but not read directly, as extemporaneous delivery is required. During the debate, debaters may take notes on an electronic device as long as said device is NOT connected to the internet. Judges are permitted to verify this during the round.

Proposed Wording:

Debaters will not be allowed to consult any other person during prep time. Debaters will remain in the prep room until they are released to go to the round by the monitor. As per IPDA rules, debaters will be allowed paper and/or electronic research material, which may be quoted or paraphrased from notes during the round, but not read directly, as extemporaneous delivery is required. Debaters are permitted to prepare notes on paper and/or electronic devices. Electronically prepared notes may NOT include copy and pasted materials. During the debate, debaters will be limited to using any notes they have written and/or typed during prep time. During the debate, debaters may take notes on an electronic device as long as said device is NOT connected to the internet. Judges are permitted to verify this during the round.

Provide rationale FOR the resolution

- This codifies the spirit of the rule and clarifies how electronic materials should be prepared and used during the round and how debaters may electronically flow.
- Clarifies which materials debaters may use during IPDA

Provide rationale AGAINST the resolution

In the instance where a debater is attempting to directly quote a source, inaccuracies can occur when transcribing the content.

Proposal 2 - 5 Rounds Codification

Recommended Unanimously

Submitted by:

Darren Elliott and Ryan Guy

School Affiliation:

KCKCC and Modesto CC

Proposal--Include the correct wording of the proposed resolution

II. Event Rules A. Debate 1. Parliamentary Debate ADD j.

Teams will compete in five (5) preliminary rounds. Rounds one and two will be preset. All succeeding rounds will be power matched. Round five (5) will be a coin flip by the computer with no side constraints.

II. Event Rules A. Debate 2 of 2 2. NFA Lincoln Douglas ADD h.

Teams will compete in five (5) preliminary rounds. Rounds one and two will be preset. All succeeding rounds will be power matched. Round five (5) will be a coin flip by the computer with no side constraints."

Proposal 3. II. Event Rules A. Debate 3. IPDA Debate ADD f.

Teams will compete in five (5) preliminary rounds. Rounds one and two will be preset. All succeeding rounds will be power matched. Round five (5) will be a coin flip by the computer with no side constraints.

Provide rationale FOR the resolution

After data collection, the National Organization went to 5 rounds in the debate formats. The change was based on the elimination round formula in the Competition Rules. This codifies the practice in the actual Event Rules. This is consistent with I.T. event rules.

Provide rationale AGAINST the resolution

None. The committee and business meeting have voted on this change in the past.

Proposal 3 - Generative AI in Prep

Recommended Unanimously

Submitted by: Name

Harry Bodell, Liz Fritz, Carolyn Clarke

School Affiliation

College of Lake County, McHenry County College, Highland Community College

Proposal--Include the correct wording of the proposed resolution

Parliamentary Debate

e. No coaching allowed in Parliamentary debate during the preparation period. Judges will patrol prep time in order to ensure compliance of the closed prep rule. Debaters will not be allowed to consult any other person or generative AI during prep time. During Parliamentary Debate prep, debaters will be allowed paper, dictionaries, almanacs and/or electronic research material, including internet. During the debate, debaters will be limited to using any notes they have written during prep time. During the debate, debaters may take notes on an electronic device as long as said device is NOT connected to the internet. Judges are permitted to verify this during the round.

IPDA (International Public Debate Association)

b. Debaters will not be allowed to consult any other person or generative AI during prep time. Debaters will remain in the prep room until they are released to go to the round by the monitor. As per IPDA rules, debaters will be allowed paper and/or electronic research material, which may be quoted or paraphrased from notes during the round, but not read directly, as extemporaneous delivery is required. During the debate, debaters may take notes on an electronic device as long as said device is NOT connected to the internet. Judges are permitted to verify this during the round.

Provide rationale FOR the resolution

A. Preserving Competitive Integrity and Individual Skill

The core purpose of both Parliamentary Debate and IPDA is to evaluate a competitor's ability to think critically, organize arguments, and respond extemporaneously under time constraints. Allowing the use of generative AI during preparation risks shifting the activity away from assessing individual skill and toward evaluating a competitor's ability to prompt and curate AI-generated content. Restricting generative AI ensures that competitive outcomes reflect the debater's own reasoning, analysis, and advocacy.

B. Maintaining Equity Across Competitors

Access to and familiarity with generative AI tools varies significantly among competitors. Some students may have greater technological access, experience, or institutional support, while others may not. Without restrictions, generative AI use could introduce inequities unrelated to debate ability. Prohibiting its use during prep promotes a more level competitive field by ensuring that all competitors rely on comparable resources and personal skill.

C. Alignment with Existing Coaching Restrictions

Both formats already prohibit outside coaching during preparation time. Generative AI functions, in many respects, as a form of external assistance providing argument generation, evidence framing, and strategic suggestions. Extending existing "no coaching" and "no group prep" rules to include generative AI is a logical and consistent application of current competitive norms.

D. Alignment with Lincoln-Douglas Debate

The use of generative AI is explicitly forbidden in Lincoln-Douglas Debate at Phi Rho Pi. This practice should be uniform across all debate styles offered at Phi Rho Pi.

Provide rationale AGAINST the resolution

A. Enforcement Challenges and Practical Limitations

Monitoring and enforcing a ban on generative AI may be difficult in practice. Competitors often use personal electronic devices, and distinguishing between legitimate research and

AI-assisted content may not always be feasible. This could place an additional burden on judges and tournament staff, potentially leading to inconsistent enforcement or disputes.

B. Potential Overapplication of the Restriction

The proposal may be viewed as overly broad, particularly if it prohibits all forms of generative AI regardless of use. Some applications (quick clarification of concepts or summarization) may not provide a substantial competitive advantage. A blanket ban could unintentionally restrict benign or educational uses of technology.

Subject: New Form Entry: Online Committee Proposal
Date: Tuesday, April 7, 2026 at 10:38:16 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From: no-reply@weebly.com
To: Hescht, Wade

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Submitted Information:

Select the Committee
Public Speaking

Submitted by: Name
Ethan Fife

School Affiliation
Casper College

Email Address
ethan.fife@caspercollege.edu

Cell Phone (optional)
618-841-4818

I am...
...a committee chair submitting a proposal coming out of committee

Proposal—Include the correct wording of the proposed resolution
Add content to Extemporaneous Speaking (Section 3; Part II; Sub-category B; category III: Limited Preparation Events; Sub-Category A) rule ii to include:

Use of generative AI or large language models are prohibited during speech prep.

The full rule will be written as follows:

Contestants in Extemporaneous Speaking are allowed to use any electronic devices and/or internet access during their prep time. The use of printers is not allowed. Internet access is not guaranteed by the tournament nor is electronic access. Use of generative AI or large language models are prohibited during speech prep.

Provide rationale FOR the resolution

-Rule i of Extemporaneous Speaking explicitly states the speech must be the work of the student. Use of generative AI and/or LLMs creates outputs that are amalgamated work of other creators.

-Closing the door to use of algorithmic created content preserves the rigor of limited preparation events like Extemporaneous Speaking

Provide rationale AGAINST the resolution

-Using generative AI or LLMs doesn't guarantee that competitors will use the output in round. We could be limiting legitimate search options that students use to search for and understand content that the competitor could just as easily incorporate fairly into their speech through paraphrase.

Check box below (to be checked by the committee chair).The Committee recommends the proposal

1

Electronic Signature.Submitted by the Committee Chair

1

Subject: New Form Entry: Online Committee Proposal
Date: Tuesday, April 7, 2026 at 10:05:55 PM Eastern Daylight Time
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Submitted Information:

Select the Committee
Public Speaking

Submitted by: Name
Ethan Fife

School Affiliation
Casper College

Email Address
ethan.fife@caspercollege.edu

Cell Phone (optional)
618-841-4818

I am...
...a committee chair submitting a proposal coming out of committee

Proposal--Include the correct wording of the proposed resolution
Rules for Impromptu Speaking will be amended to include the following:

During prep, competitors are provided fifteen (15) seconds of reading time before their full seven (7) minutes begin. Judges will time for fifteen (15) seconds before verbally calling for a competitor's time to start and starting full prep time. During this reading time, students may not begin writing. If a student begins writing, the judge should verbally acknowledge that prep time has started.

Provide rationale FOR the resolution

-The rule standardizes Phi Rho Pi rules to align with other national tournaments.

-The rule removes ambiguity concerning when prep time starts in relation to when the competitor opens

their quotations. Rules currently leave read time to judge's discretion.

-It can be argued that reading is not a part of prep. Taking away the stress of a split second choice can enhance speech quality. This is especially prescient given rule changes that force the retirement of examples as competitors move through the tournament.

Provide rationale AGAINST the resolution

This rule change could be looked at as watering down the difficulty of the event. It could also be seen as a way for competitors to get extra prep time. Even though students might not be writing, that doesn't mean they aren't already silently beginning prep in their head and gaining an unfair advantage compared to students following the letter of the law.

Check box below (to be checked by the committee chair). The Committee recommends the proposal

1

Electronic Signature. Submitted by the Committee Chair

1

Subject: New Form Entry: Online Committee Proposal
Date: Wednesday, April 8, 2026 at 7:58:39 AM Eastern Daylight Time
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Submitted Information:

Select the Committee Rules

Submitted by: Name
Brandon Wood

School Affiliation
College of Dupage

Email Address
woodb66@cod.edu

Cell Phone (optional)

I am...
...a committee chair submitting a proposal coming out of committee

Proposal—Include the correct wording of the proposed resolution
Section 2: Eligibility

C. No student may compete at the Phi Rho Pi National Tournament who is pursuing a baccalaureate degree from a four-year university.

Provide rationale FOR the resolution
The extension of the third year of eligibility was meant to address the inequity caused by Covid competitors and to acknowledge the path of the modern community college student has slowed down due to a multitude of reasons.

1. The following suggested changes to the Student Eligibility section of the rules is meant to address a

growing trend to use this rule change for a third purpose. To continue an individual forensicators career at the phi rho pi national tournament while successfully transferring to a four year institution.

This comes into conflict with the nature of organization's constitution. Excerpt from Article II Purpose ' The specific purposes of Phi Rho Pi shall be:

- A. To promote educational forensic programs in individual Junior and Community Colleges throughout the United States.
- B. To promote educational regional forensic associations to foster the growth, development, and participation of forensics in that area.
- C. To promote an educational national association to foster the growth, development, and participation of all member Junior and Community Colleges in the forensic arts; to promote educational services to the membership..."

2. Phi Rho Pi is by its constitution a junior/community college serving institution. The use of changed eligibility language creates the following issues

-Students now face a growing body of third year competitors who are competing at their junior college, no longer for the sake of eventual transfer or certificate completion, but for personal and team competitive success.

-And while not universal in motivation the perception of this use of the rule creates can develop a feeling of inequity by community college teams not withing close proximity of Universites that can allow for dual enrollment.

-Allowing a third year of eligibility can provide significant competitive advantages as can be seen by four year national tournaments where Juniors and Seniors often have increased levels of competitive success. Thereby, teams not able to develop continued dual-enrollment of students because of lack of proximity face environment that know longer promotes the growth of Junior College students first and foremost, which again we are called to by our constitution.

-The skills and abilities our students gain with their time with a forensics program can be used to allow students who now transfer apply those sought after leadership and soft skills to new academic, co-cirricular, or internship opportunities.

-their can be a negative impact to individual programs as break/award distribution is inequitably taken up by third year competitors making the retention of 1st year students more difficult because of percieved skill deficit of veteran third year competitors.

Provide rationale AGAINST the resolution

1. Many four year institutions do not have forensics programs and thus this students would lose access to a rewarding community where they have developed various communication abilities they wish to continue to test in the unique competitive environment that is phi rho pi.

2. Phi Rho Pi enrollment could be impacted by absence of the now "junior" class of competitors.

Check box below (to be checked by the committee chair).The Committee recommends the proposal

1

Electronic Signature.Submitted by the Committee Chair

1

Subject: New Form Entry: Online Committee Proposal
Date: Wednesday, April 8, 2026 at 8:00:47 AM Eastern Daylight Time
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Submitted Information:

Select the Committee Rules

Submitted by: Name
Brittany Hubble & Ryan Guy

School Affiliation
El Camino & Modesto

Email Address
bhubble.tab@gmail.com

Cell Phone (optional)

I am...
...a committee chair submitting a proposal coming out of committee

Proposal—Include the correct wording of the proposed resolution
Original Wording:

No more than 50% of the original field can earn team sweepstakes points. If the above rules result in breaking more than 50% of the original entry, the lowest seeded non-advancing entries from the bronze round will not receive team sweepstakes points. Individuals will still earn points towards the Bovero award.

Proposed Wording:

In the event more than 50% have winning records, they will earn sweepstakes points .

Provide rationale FOR the resolution

With the transition to 5 rounds in debate, the likelihood that more than 50% of the field has winning records. Schools with competitors who are lower seeds are penalized despite having winning records. This happened last year in both NPDA and IPDA. Those lower seeds could have the same record as those in the top 50% and only differ in speaker points. Speaker points often lack consistency and some competitors could have more judges who are harsher with speaker points than others.

In 2025...

In IPDA, the 3 debaters who had winning records but weren't in the top 50% were nearly identical to those who were in the top 50%.

In NPDA, the 2 debaters who had winning records but weren't in the top 50% were nearly identical to those who were in the top 50%.

Provide rationale AGAINST the resolution

In the event more than 50% of the field advances to elimination rounds, schools who compete in debate and/or IT have an unfair advantage.

Check box below (to be checked by the committee chair).The Committee recommends the proposal

1

Electronic Signature.Submitted by the Committee Chair

1

Subject: New Form Entry: Online Committee Proposal
Date: Wednesday, April 8, 2026 at 8:04:35 AM Eastern Daylight Time
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Submitted Information:

Select the Committee
Rules

Submitted by: Name
Harry Bodell, Liz Fritz, Carolyn Clarke

School Affiliation
CLC, McHenry CC

Email Address
hbodell@clcillinois.edu

Cell Phone (optional)

I am...
...a committee chair submitting a proposal coming out of committee

Proposal--Include the correct wording of the proposed resolution
Proposal: Return to six (6) preliminary rounds of Parliamentary Debate and IPDA

****Friendly Amendment in Committee****

Cut NPDA & IPDA down from 5 preliminary rounds to 4.

Provide rationale FOR the resolution
Competitive balance and fairness (even numbered rounds)

Student Wellness

Competitive Equity and Side Balance

Reinstating a sixth preliminary round restores a fundamental standard of competitive fairness: equal opportunity on both sides of the resolution. With five preliminary rounds, competitors necessarily receive an imbalanced distribution of sides (either three Affirmative and two Negative rounds, or vice versa). This imbalance introduces structural inequity into the tournament, as side assignment can influence competitive outcomes due to topic bias, judge preferences, and preparation constraints. A six-round structure ensures a 3-3 distribution, aligning with best practices in debate formats and preserving the integrity of competitive results.

1 of 3

Increased Reliability of Competitive Outcomes

A sixth preliminary round improves the statistical reliability of tournament outcomes. With only five rounds, win-loss records are more susceptible to variance, increasing the likelihood of ties and placing greater weight on secondary metrics such as speaker points. Adding a sixth round increases differentiation among competitors, reduces reliance on tiebreakers, and strengthens confidence that advancement to elimination rounds reflects sustained competitive performance rather than isolated outcomes.

Meaningfulness of All Preliminary Rounds

The claim that an additional preliminary round is "not statistically meaningful" is inconsistent with the cumulative nature of tournament ranking systems and rooted in data that has never been shared with the community at large. Each round contributes directly to a competitor's record, speaker points, and overall standing. In particular, later rounds often play a decisive role in determining advancement to elimination rounds – we have data to demonstrate this (to be shared with committee). As such, any round that has the potential to influence break thresholds is, by definition, meaningful.

Alignment with National Tournament Standards

As the culminating event of the season, the national tournament should reflect the highest standards of competitive rigor. Reinstating six preliminary rounds aligns IPDA and Parliamentary Debate with broader norms in intercollegiate debate, where larger and more competitive tournaments typically employ six or more preliminary rounds to ensure fair and valid outcomes.

Limited Impact on Student Wellness

While student wellness is an important consideration, the marginal time added by one additional preliminary round is minimal within the context of a multi-day national tournament. Competitors already engage in multiple events, travel, and extended schedules. Meaningful improvements to student wellness are more likely to result from structural considerations such as scheduling efficiency, adequate breaks, and reasonable daily endpoints rather than the elimination of a single round. In a sense, going to four rounds would be a better way to align student wellness with positional balance, but nobody is making that argument.

Provide rationale AGAINST the resolution

Student Wellness and Tournament Fatigue

Opponents of reinstating a sixth round may argue that reducing the number of preliminary rounds helps mitigate student fatigue and promotes overall wellness. Debate rounds require sustained cognitive engagement, and extending the schedule may contribute to exhaustion, particularly for students competing in multiple events.

Tournament Scheduling

There may be a scheduling burden placed on the tournament if these rounds are reinstated (although this wasn't an issue before the change was made)

Perceived Limited Impact on Competition Outcomes

Some may contend that a sixth preliminary round does not significantly alter which competitors advance to elimination rounds, particularly in larger pools where performance trends are already established. From this perspective, the additional round may be viewed as redundant rather than essential. We would challenge whoever has this data to share it publicly and only then - once the full Phi Rho Pi community has been allowed to review it – consider returning to five rounds.

Check box below (to be checked by the committee chair).The Committee recommends the proposal

1

Electronic Signature.Submitted by the Committee Chair

1

Rules #4

I am...

...a committee chair submitting a proposal coming out of committee

Proposal—Include the correct wording of the proposed resolution

Extend the number of debate rounds in NPDA and IPDA to 6.

Provide rationale FOR the resolution

Competitive Fairness

Provide rationale AGAINST the resolution

Scheduling

We need more data on the 5 round structure

Check box below (to be checked by the committee chair).

The Committee **does not recommend** the proposal

Electronic Signature: Submitted by the Committee Chair

Subject: New Form Entry: Online Committee Proposal

Date: Wednesday, April 8, 2026 at 10:33:37 AM Eastern Daylight Time

From: no-reply@weebly.com

Hescht, Wade

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Site Selection

Submitted by: Name
Francesca Bishop

School Affiliation
El Camino College

Email Address
francescabishop@cox.net

Cell Phone (optional)
310 621 7792

I am...
...a committee chair submitting a proposal coming out of committee

Proposal—Include the correct wording of the proposed resolution
The Phi Rho Pi National tournament will return to the Marriott Bethesda North for 2029.

Provide rationale FOR the resolution
The location is desirable with educational and cultural opportunities a metro ride away.
Food options near the hotel are varied in price and selection.
In 3 years, all the students will be different.
The rate of \$175 is excellent, only \$6 higher than this year, yet three years in the future.
The F&B minimum has been lowered from \$40k this year to \$30k in 2029.
Tournament facilities are well-suited to PRP competition, with plenty of meeting space available.

Provide rationale AGAINST the resolution
2029 will be the third time we have been at this hotel and the same location gets boring for coaches.

Check box below (to be checked by the committee chair).The Committee recommends the proposal

1

Electronic Signature.Submitted by the Committee Chair

1