

Conference IV #1

October 1-2, 2021
University of Alaska Anchorage

Your squad is cordially invited to the first of what I hope will be many conference tournaments. Our plan for this event is to demonstrate a "proof of concept" for some of the changes to BP practice that we've been discussing for a number of weeks.

My hope is that once some of these practices are tried we can reach consensus on a set of common operating procedures and agree to continue the conference experiment going forward. Please note the meeting time following finals for the leaders of each squad to discuss next steps.

Highlights

Conference IV #1 will incorporate a number of approaches that are significantly different from current BP practice. We encourage you to review [the original proposal](#), the [discussion on Slack](#) and this invitation to understand those differences. More importantly, you should discuss those differences with your competitive debaters prior to the tournament so that all attendees operate from a common set of assumptions.

In brief, the major differences at this tournament are:

- Motions produced by a crowd-sourcing process
- Points of privilege allowed during the round to address equity concerns in-round
- Escalated equity issues handled by the tournament host or designee with the option of involving the host institution's equity and compliance office.
- Open deliberation following the debate, to be observed by the debaters

Schedule

Friday, 10/1

3:00 - Registration/Tech check

3:30 - Rd 1

5:30 - Rd 2

Saturday, 10/2

10:00 - Rd 3

12:00 - Lunch

1:00 - Rd 4

3:00 - Finals & awards

5:00 - Coaches' meeting: discussion of conference structure & schedule

Platform

We'll use Yaatly for this online event. You'll need to create an account for your squad (including debaters and judges) if you haven't already done so. You may read about creating a squad account and adding your debaters & judges to that account [here](#).

[Follow this link to access the tournament](#)

Registration

Entries are due by **midnight, Monday, September 27**. Please register teams at forensicstournament.net.

Each school is entitled to register as many teams as you'd like, provided you cover your entry with a sufficient number of judges. Judge requirements are determined using the N-1 formula, where N = the number of teams you're entering. In other words, if you intend to enter 3 teams, they'll need to be covered by 2 full-time judges.

There will be no registration fee for this tournament.

Topics

Topics will be crowd-sourced using the following approach:

1. Each registered school will submit a specified number of motions by **midnight Tuesday, September 28**. The number of motions to be submitted by each school will be determined by the number of schools registered. Our intent is to solicit a sufficient number of motions to produce a slate that contains at least twice as many motions as the number of rounds (including elim rounds) in the tournament.
2. On Wednesday, September 29 we'll circulate a poll to the coaches of all registered squads in which they can rank the motions. That poll must be completed by **midnight Thursday, September 30**.
3. The top-ranked motions shall be randomly selected for use in preliminary and elimination rounds.

Directors are encouraged to involve debaters in the motion generation, submission and ranking process.

Judges

As noted under Registration, you must register judges sufficient to cover your team entries using the N-1 formula. You should designate a judge as either a "Chair" or a "Panelist" upon registration. Generally, experienced, mature and confident judges should be designated as a Chair as they will have additional responsibilities in this tournament.

Chairs will serve two very important roles in this tournament that differ substantially from judges' typical responsibilities.

1. Chairs are expected to manage Points of Privilege offered by the debaters. Points of Privilege are intended to allow debaters to address potentially-offensive behavior by other debaters in the round. If a debater requests a Point of Privilege, the Chair should stop the speaker's time, allow the debater raising the point to state their concern and then respond either by counselling the speaker on more appropriate behavior, counselling the debater raising the point that their point is not valid or by deferring decision by taking the point "under advisement."
2. Chairs are expected to lead deliberation about the ranking of teams that will be observed by the teams competing. As such, Chairs should feel confident managing the deliberation so that all teams are given due consideration in the decision and that

all members of the panel are given ample opportunity to weigh in on their decision. Debaters must listen silently to the deliberation and may be excused at the discretion of the Chair if they refuse to do so. Following the deliberation and ranking, the Chair may offer a brief summary adjudication to the debaters but is not required to do so.

Equity

This event embraces an approach to equity predicated on two assumptions:

1. Actions or utterances which may cause offense are often the product of ignorance or error rather than malice, and
2. Equity issues are opportunities to improve awareness and competence when interacting with others.

As such, our protocol for equity concerns will encourage direct and immediate addressing of equity issues with an eye toward improving the perspective and comprehension of all involved.

1. Debaters may raise a Point of Privilege in-round to address equity issues occurring in the moment. The Chair should immediately stop time, address the concern (typically by counseling the debaters to refrain from potentially-offensive behavior) and then resume time. Judges are empowered to consider equity issues and/or abuse of Points of Privilege when assigning rankings and points.
2. Should any participant(s) believe the equity issue is not sufficiently addressed via a Point of Privilege or should an equity issue occur outside a debate round, the participant(s) may address the issue with the tournament host or their designee. The coach of the programs involved must be invited to participate in this discussion. The host or designee should assume an ombuds perspective, with a charge of resolving the equity issue which may involve facilitating discussion between those involved to address the issue. No participant unwilling to participate in such a discussion may be required to do so.
3. Should the issue remain unresolved or if it is of sufficient magnitude to exceed management by tournament staff, the host or involved parties may seek the involvement of the host institution's Title IX/Diversity/Equity/Compliance office.

Importantly, as this event is hosted under the auspices of the University of Alaska Anchorage, all those who attend are considered "Affiliates" of the university while they participate and, as such, are subject to the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Alaska. All attendees should familiarize themselves with the University of Alaska's policies governing Affiliates:

The University of Alaska is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer and educational institution and prohibits illegal discrimination against any individual. The University of Alaska and the Affiliate subscribe to the policy of equal opportunity and will not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, citizenship, age, sex, physical or mental disability, status as a protected veteran, marital status, changes in marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, parenthood, sexual orientation, gender identity, political affiliation or belief, genetic information, or other legally protected status. The University of Alaska's commitment to nondiscrimination, including against sex discrimination, applies to students, employees, and applicants for admission and employment. Both institutions shall abide by these principles in the administration of this agreement and

neither institution shall impose criteria which would violate the principles of non-discrimination. Both parties agree to comply with Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and related regulations, and further shall comply with all applicable federal and state laws, rules, regulations, and Executive Orders. The University is required to follow Board of Regents' Policy and University Regulation regarding harassment and discrimination reporting and investigation, regardless of where the alleged conduct occurs; Affiliate agrees to cooperate with any related processes, including interim measures and investigation. Contact information, applicable laws, and complaint procedures are included on the University of Alaska's statement of nondiscrimination available at <https://www.alaska.edu/nondiscrimination>.