



Standards and Policies

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Introduction

Founded in the fall of 1998, the Lafayette College Forensics Society has grown from humble beginnings and now has 15-20 students and two full-time coaches. The team travels a competitive regional and national schedule throughout both semesters, culminating in a trip to at least two national tournaments: Novice Nationals (for first year college competitors), Pi Kappa Delta, National Speech Championships, and the National Forensic Association Championship.

Our team has two main components: speech (individual events) and debate. Your level of involvement is up to you. You are welcome to compete in both speech and debate or choose one or the other.

The following event descriptions come from the National Forensic Association website: www.nationalforensics.org.

Event Descriptions

(from the NFA 2017 bylaws)

Extemporaneous Speaking

PURPOSE: A speech designed to motivate audience consideration of a significant argument related to a current domestic or international issue or event.

DESCRIPTION: Extemporaneous speeches are characterized by content that is directly and specifically topical, clearly stated and well-supported arguments, demonstration of a knowledge of current events, credible sources, timeliness, and vocal and nonverbal delivery choices that reflect the speech's purpose.

RULES:

- a. Students will construct and deliver a 5 to 7 minute speech*, after choosing from among three questions, with 30 minutes of preparation. The use of limited notes is allowed.
- b. Extemporaneous speeches must be the original work of the speaker. Consultation with coaches, teammates, other speakers, or anyone else after the draw has begun is strictly prohibited.
- c. Extemporaneous speeches should be prepared after topics have been drawn. While speakers are encouraged to draw from their own knowledge of current events, no student is allowed to speak from outlines, briefs, or other materials prepared before the round. Students are encouraged to consult and reference research from a variety of sources including newspapers, magazines, journals, books, websites and blogs - providing these resources lack excessive notation and alteration.
- d. Electronic methods of resource material storage and retrieval may be used.

* Unlike other event rules, minimum and maximum time limits provided for ALL events are enforced at the discretion of the individual judge rather than the association.

Impromptu Speaking

PURPOSE: A speech designed to motivate audience engagement of a significant argument.

DESCRIPTION: Impromptu speeches are characterized by a clearly articulated argument comprising a specific, direct response to the given prompt, well-supported claims, clear structure, uniqueness, and vocal and nonverbal delivery choices that reflect the speech's purpose.

RULES:

a. Students will construct and deliver an original argument in response to a prompt. Limited notes are allowed.

b. Impromptu prescribes a limit of 7 minutes, with speeches lasting at least 5 minutes.

* Prompts include ideas that can be comprehended and interpreted quickly such as quotations, both actual (from history or contemporary culture) and fictional (from movies, plays, novels etc.), single-frame cartoons, song lyrics, proverbs, rhetorical situations etc.

* Unlike other event rules, minimum and maximum time limits provided for ALL events are enforced at the discretion of the individual judge rather than the association.

Rhetorical Criticism

PURPOSE: A speech designed to describe, analyze and evaluate the rhetorical dynamics related to a significant rhetorical artifact or event.

DESCRIPTION: Rhetorical Criticisms are characterized by enlightening critical insight, in-depth analysis, description and application of rhetorical principles or a theoretical framework, topic significance, credible sources, and vocal and nonverbal delivery choices that reflect the speech's purpose.

RULES:

a. All speeches should be original, constructed and delivered by the student.

b. Speeches should adhere to the NFA Code of Ethics, Rules and Procedures.

c. Plagiarism in any form is prohibited.

d. Source citation should be specific, accurate and honest.

e. Although limited notes are permitted, speeches should be delivered from memory.

f. Audio-visual aids are permitted.

g. Maximum time limit of 10 minutes.*

* Unlike other event rules, minimum and maximum time limits provided for ALL events are enforced at the discretion of the individual judge rather than the association.

Persuasive Speaking

PURPOSE: A speech designed to influence audience attitudes and/or actions.

DESCRIPTION: Persuasive speeches are characterized by sound rhetorical strategy, well-supported arguments, credible sources, effective organization, timeliness, significance, and vocal and nonverbal delivery choices that reflect the speech's purpose.

RULES:

- a. All speeches should be original, constructed and delivered by the student.
- b. Speeches should adhere to the NFA Code of Ethics, Rules and Procedures.
- c. Plagiarism in any form is prohibited.
- d. Source citation should be specific, accurate and honest.
- e. Although limited notes are permitted, speeches should be delivered from memory.
- f. Audio-visual aids are permitted. g. Maximum time limit of 10 minutes.*

* Unlike other event rules, minimum and maximum time limits provided for ALL events are enforced at the discretion of the individual judge rather than the association.

Informative Speaking

PURPOSE: A speech designed to clarify and/or explain a significant development, process, concept, person, place or topic.

DESCRIPTION: Informative speeches are characterized by in-depth content development that likely enhances audience understanding beyond what was previously known, well-established topic relevance, clear organization, credible sources, timeliness, and vocal and nonverbal delivery choices that reflect the speech's purpose.

RULES:

- a. All speeches should be original, constructed and delivered by the student.
- b. Speeches should adhere to the NFA Code of Ethics, Rules and Procedures.
- c. Plagiarism in any form is prohibited.
- d. Source citation should be specific, accurate and honest.
- e. Although limited notes are permitted, speeches should be delivered from memory.
- f. Audio-visual aids are permitted.
- g. Maximum time limit of 10 minutes.*

* Unlike other event rules, minimum and maximum time limits provided for ALL events are enforced at the discretion of the individual judge rather than the association.

After-Dinner Speaking

PURPOSE: A speech designed to entertain by advancing a relevant point through the use of humor.

DESCRIPTION: After-Dinner speeches are characterized by humorous content development, creativity, uniqueness, timeliness, clear organization, significance, credible sources, and vocal and nonverbal delivery choices that reflect the speech's purpose.

RULES:

- a. All speeches should be original, constructed and delivered by the student.
- b. Speeches should adhere to the NFA Code of Ethics, Rules and Procedures.
- c. Plagiarism in any form is prohibited.
- d. Source citation should be specific, accurate and honest.
- e. Although limited notes are permitted, speeches should be delivered from memory.
- f. Audio-visual aids are permitted.
- g. Maximum time limit of 10 minutes.*

* Unlike other event rules, minimum and maximum time limits provided for ALL events are enforced at the discretion of the individual judge rather than the association.

Prose Interpretation

PURPOSE: An interpretive performance designed to engage the audience through the development of a story.

DESCRIPTION: Students choose, excerpt and/or cut (with due respect paid to issues of literary integrity), and perform a selection or selections of original and/or published prose material of literary merit.

RULES:

- a. Prose material includes: short stories, novels, essays, and story-centered new media. Prose material from new media should first be referenced against the original source to ensure it is not drama. If the original source is non-genre specific then material where the performance focuses on the development of story would be acceptable. Focus of non-genre specific material as described above will be critiqued by the preference of the judging pool, not cause for disqualification.
- b. Use of manuscript is required.
- c. Maximum time is 10 minutes, including any introductory and/or transitional comments.

* Unlike other event rules, minimum and maximum time limits provided for ALL events are enforced at the discretion of the individual judge rather than the association.

Dramatic Interpretation

PURPOSE: An interpretive performance designed to engage the audience through the development of character(s) within a dramatic context.

DESCRIPTION: Students choose, excerpt and/or cut (with due respect paid to issues of literary integrity), and perform a selection or selections of original and/or published dramatic material of literary merit.

RULES:

a. Dramatic material includes: plays, material written for stage/screen/radio, documentaries, and character(s)- centered new media. Dramatic material from new media should first be referenced against the original source to ensure it is not Prose. If the original source is non-genre specific then material where the performance focuses on the development of character(s) would be acceptable. Focus of non-genre specific material as described above will be critiqued by the preference of the judging pool, not cause for disqualification.

b. Use of manuscript is required.

c. Maximum time is 10 minutes, including any introductory and/or transitional comments.

* Unlike other event rules, minimum and maximum time limits provided for ALL events are enforced at the discretion of the individual judge rather than the association.

Duo Interpretation

PURPOSE: An interpretive performance by two individuals designed to engage the audience through the interaction of multiple characters.

DESCRIPTION: Students choose, excerpt and/or cut (with due respect paid to issues of literary integrity), and perform a selection or selections of original and/or published material of literary merit. This is not an acting event. Selected literature must present the perspectives of multiple characters, representing those different characters using voice and/or body. The focus of this event is the interaction of multiple and related voices

RULES:

a. Any type of material(s) of literary merit may be used as long as the performance highlights interaction.

b. Use of manuscript is required, which prohibits physical contact between performers

c. Off-stage focus is required

d. No costumes, props, etc. are to be used.

e. Maximum time is 10 minutes, including any introductory and/or transitional comments.*

* Unlike other event rules, minimum and maximum time limits provided for ALL events are enforced at the discretion of the individual judge rather than the association.

Poetry Interpretation

PURPOSE: An interpretive performance designed to engage the audience through the development of linguistic imagery.

DESCRIPTION: Students choose, excerpt and/or cut (with due respect paid to issues of literary integrity), and perform a selection or selections of original and/or published poetry of literary merit.

RULES:

- a. Poetry can include poems, slam poetry, and lyrics - any material with poetic elements.
- b. Use of manuscript is required.
- c. Maximum time is 10 minutes, including any introductory and/or transitional comments.*

* Unlike other event rules, minimum and maximum time limits provided for ALL events are enforced at the discretion of the individual judge rather than the association.

Program Oral Interpretation

PURPOSE: An interpretive performance designed to engage the audience through the development of a theme or argument using multiple genres of literature as support.

DESCRIPTION: Students choose, excerpt and/or cut (with due respect paid to issues of literary integrity), and perform a selection or selections of original and/or published prose, poetry, drama, etc., of literary merit. Selections should be constructed around a theme, argument or thesis and should utilize at least two different genres of literature.

RULES:

- a. Any material(s) of literary merit may be used.
- b. Use of manuscript is required
- c. Maximum time is 10 minutes, including any introductory and/or transitional comments.

* Unlike other event rules, minimum and maximum time limits provided for ALL events are enforced at the discretion of the individual judge rather than the association.

Lincoln-Douglas Debate (abbreviated)

PURPOSE: A debate event designed to engage the audience through a policy-oriented dialogue.

DESCRIPTION: NFA Lincoln-Douglas Debate is a one-person, persuasive, policy debate on the traditional stock issues of policy debate (harms, inherency, solvency, and topicality). It is a communication event, in which competitors will be evaluated on their analysis, use of evidence, and ability to effectively and persuasively organize, deliver and refute arguments. Rapid-fire delivery, commonly called "spread delivery," is considered antithetical to the purpose and intent of this event.

Meetings, Practices, and Tournament Registration

As with any team, the Forensics Society relies heavily upon group meetings and individual practices between competitors and coaches. Group meeting times will be negotiated and announced at the beginning of each semester. You are expected to attend these meetings. They will serve the purposes of general business announcements; group research and practice; discussion of previous tournament experiences; discussion of upcoming tournament preparation; and additional functions as necessary.

Additionally, you are expected to sign up for individual practice times with coaches. These practices are essential to prepare for tournaments.

Tournament Readiness

Your relationship with the Lafayette College Forensics Society should be viewed as a contract. Lafayette graciously provides the financial backing for you to attend tournaments at zero cost to you – this is not an insignificant sum. Therefore, we expect you to hold up your side of the contract: tournament readiness. At tournaments, you are representing Lafayette College. It is important that other teams be able to observe you and draw the conclusion that students from our team take this activity seriously. Therefore, the coaches reserve the right to remove you from competition if you are not adequately prepared to compete. To that end, the following tournament readiness guidelines will be enforced.

Individual Events

You are expected to complete “tournament ready” (TR) practices prior to tournament registration. At a bare minimum, the competitor’s speech must be memorized (for interpretive and platform events), meet the minimum time restraints (for limited preparation events), or be completely written and in-book (interpretive events). The “tournament ready” standard will be defined on a case-by-case basis following discussions between each competitor and a coach. Additionally, you are expected to grow in skill and maturity throughout the year and over the course of your time with the Forensics Society; thus, TR standards will increase over time.

In order to meet the minimum TR practice requirement for a new event, you should have at least one TR practice with a coach (or another individual/student designated by the coach). Once events have been to at least one tournament, you must still have one TR practice to meet the requirement. In the case of back-to-back tournament weekends, the TR practice minimum for the second weekend can be waived.

Debate

In order to be considered “tournament ready” (TR), debaters will be expected to have completed all work assigned by the coaching staff and at least two practice rounds (one affirmative and one negative) in the week prior to the tournament. In addition, debaters must demonstrate regular attendance at debate meetings. In the case of back-to-back tournament weekends, the TR practice round minimum can be waived.

Tournament Registration

Registration usually occurs at the beginning of the week of each tournament. Therefore, it is important that you commit to attend tournaments as early as possible. Tournament sign-up sheets are posted on the bulletin board outside of the office. Often those sign-ups will include a space for the earliest time you are able to leave campus.

Entries are based on the sign-up sheets. If you decide to drop an event or your entire entry after we have submitted the registration, you will be expected to pay your registration and drop fees. Additionally, if the tournament involves a flight, you will be expected to cover the cost of your tickets if you are unable to attend (exceptions apply).

Team Office Rules

The Forensics Society has primary use of two rooms: our squad room and office in Simon G6 and the practice room in Simon G5. The following guidelines apply:

1. We encourage you to use the squad room for research, speech preparation, and homework. We even encourage you to stop by to say hi or hang out for a while. However, all coach requests for volume decrease, work increase, etc. should be respected.
2. You can be given storage space in the squad room on request. Feel free to use that space to store homework, files, non-perishable food, etc. Anything left on the desks, tables, couch, etc. at the end of each day is at risk of being thrown away.
3. You may make use of the refrigerator and microwave. If you make a mess, clean it up. If you put food in the refrigerator, label it with your name. Coaches reserve the right to throw away any food that has passed its expiration date. **DO NOT EAT FOOD THAT IS NOT YOURS!**
4. You should only make use of the copier and/or printer with permission from one of the coaches. The supply cabinet is off limits to students.
5. If a coach is not in the office, you should not enter his/her desk area without his/her permission.

Travel and Tournament Behavior

Adapted from George Ziegelmuller, debate coach at Wayne State University.

Driving

On-the-hours is a team tradition. When we are driving, every hour, on the hour, you should run through one of your events. Coaches will wake you up to complete your on-the-hours. This is not a time to memorize your events – it is a time to polish your memorization.

Dress

At tournaments, you are expected to dress professionally. If you have a question about what professional dress entails or have trouble acquiring appropriate clothing, please see one of the coaches. This dress code will remain in effect for the entire time we are on site.

Decorum

If you are not competing during a prelim round, you may use the time to watch a round, do homework, etc. However, during elimination rounds, you are required to watch something if you are not competing. Feel free to sit in on an event you are interested in, or go support a teammate. This rule applies to all team members. At awards assemblies, you are still representing Lafayette College and our team. That means no headphones, no cell phones, and you are expected to applaud fellow team members and those from other programs.

“Van talk” (comments critical of team members or other individuals in attendance) shall be reserved for private settings. Extreme situations that require immediate attention should, if at all possible, be handled through one of the coaches.

Drinking and Drugs

Students and coaches are prohibited from drinking (alcohol) and using drugs during official Lafayette Forensics Society functions.

Delivery

Winning a trophy is NEVER a requirement for participation in this program. However, students are expected to be “tournament ready” and able to perform to the best of their ability. Judges, coaches, and peers should be able to observe any Lafayette student perform and conclude that Lafayette Forensic Students are committed to the activity and education.

Diet

Coaches will be responsible for feeding the team on tournaments. We will do our best to take into account individual preferences and dietary restrictions – time, location, and convenience permitting. Please speak with the coaches privately if you have any concerns regarding food. Whining will not be tolerated. Headphones are not allowed at meals and cell phone usage should be kept to a minimum.

Other Notes on Tournaments and Travel

Forensics is a team activity – emphasis on the word “team.” On a tournament weekend, you are expected to be a part of all team activities, including but not limited to transportation to and from the tournament, rounds, practice and work sessions, meals, and other outings. Accommodations can be made for extreme and unusual circumstances if and only if the coaches are notified prior to the tournament. For example, you may eat with or be driven back to the school by your parents after a tournament; however, this must be discussed with the coaches prior to the tournament.

You are NEVER allowed to leave a tournament or opt out of tournament activities without first consulting with the coaches. The coaches are responsible for your well-being at tournaments and must be able to account for all students at all times. You are expected to attend awards without question. Do not ask to get back to Lafayette earlier than the rest of the team because you have a paper, exam, early class, meeting, etc. Everyone has obligations, but part of attending a tournament is paying respect to other teams and enjoying your/our successes at awards. Agreeing to attend the tournament means agreeing to the entire schedule.

Final round postings, awards, and team dinners should be joyous occasions. We understand that tournaments can be stressful and that results do not always meet personal expectations. It is important that students find productive ways to manage disappointment. Your coaches and teammates can be a powerful resource.

You are a representative of Lafayette College; therefore, conversation should always be professional. The use of ad hominem attacks, insults, and/or vulgar language to describe judges, tournament officials, students from other teams, or Lafayette participants is NEVER acceptable.

Student Officers

The Lafayette College Forensics Society will have up to three officers: a president and up to two vice presidents. To ensure balanced and active representation among the officers, the following policies will be in effect:

1. Officers will be required to maintain a GPA of 2.6 or higher while they are in office.
2. Officers will be required to attend *at least* two regional tournaments per semester while they are an officer.
3. Returning competitors may nominate themselves for the President and Vice President positions by notifying the coaches

Selection of officers will take place early in the fall semester.

President

Recruitment and Promotions

The President should organize the booths at recruitment and involvement fairs on campus, post flyers around campus when appropriate, and organize social icebreakers at the beginning of the first semester to encourage interaction between new and returning team members.

Social

The President should serve as the administrator of the student Facebook group, work with the officers to host events that include both IEers and debaters, and assist coaches in the organization of team end-of-semester parties.

Service

The President should work with the coaches and officers to coordinate one team service project per semester.

Peer Coaching

The President will, with the assistance of the two Vice Presidents, work to organize and operate a peer-coaching network.

Public Relations

The President is responsible for ensuring that a press release is completed at the conclusion of each tournament. The President may write brief press releases following each tournament, highlighting the accomplishments of the team over the previous weekend and announcing the next tournament or event. The President may also delegate this task to other officers or members of the team approved by the coaches. These press releases should be submitted to

the coaches by the Tuesday immediately following the tournament. Coaches will distribute them to appropriate outlets.

Vice President(s)

Assistance

The Vice Presidents are responsible for assisting the President. This includes duties relating to public relations, service, and may also include coordinating events or other official team responsibilities. The Vice Presidents will also assist the President in organizing a peer-coaching network within the team.

Social

The Vice Presidents should organize and/or help organize an end of semester activity.

Social Media

The Vice Presidents should also make use of the team's Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook accounts to enhance the team's social media profile by providing regular content. The Vice Presidents should coordinate social media messaging with the Public Relations message and Service opportunities developed by the President.

Historian

The Assistant Vice President will be the historian for the Forensics Society. They will be responsible for collecting photos from the team following tournaments and posting them to the team Facebook page. They will also work together to create an audio-visual scrapbook to be debuted at the end-of-the-year gathering.

Grade Requirements

The Lafayette College Forensics Society is a *co-curricular* organization. One of our primary responsibilities at Lafayette is to complement what you learn in your academic courses. Therefore, your grades are especially important to your continued participation in forensics. The following are minimum grade requirements. We encourage you to strive to do your very best, not to simply meet the minimum standards.

Full Participation

Students who maintain a GPA (current, not cumulative) of 2.6 or higher will be eligible for full participation with the Forensics Society and will be allowed to run for officer positions.

Probation

Students who maintain a GPA (current, not cumulative) of 2.0 to 2.59 will be on probation. These students will be allowed to travel but will not be allowed to miss class for a tournament and will not be eligible to run for officer positions.

Ineligible

Students whose GPA (current, not cumulative) falls below a 2.0 will not be allowed to travel or participate in the activities of the Forensics Society.

Grade Checks

Grade checks will take place at the end of each semester and during the spring midterm. Students who have a D or F in any class at the spring midterm may not be eligible to travel to the National Forensic Association Championship Tournament – this decision will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Final Steps

Verification

Participation on the team **requires** that you have read, understand, and agree to abide by the Lafayette Forensics Society's Standards and Policies, the Lafayette College Student Code of Conduct, and the National Forensic Association's Code of Ethics.

To verify this, please fill out [this form](#).

[Lafayette College Student Code of Conduct](#)

[National Forensic Association's Code of Ethics](#), begins at Section VIII on page 16

Travel

In order to travel with the team, you are **required** to fill out a "Personal Information Sheet" that provides us with the information necessary to provide assistance in a medical emergency.

Please fill out the [personal information sheet](#) here.