

Northern California Forensics Association Constitution

(Last Updated August 2022)

ARTICLE I. NAME. The name of the organization shall be the Northern California Forensics Association (hereafter referred to as the Association).

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE. The purpose of the Association shall be to provide educationally worthwhile speech activities to complement the curricular programs of the member institutions.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP. Membership shall be open upon application to any collegiate institution. Although membership is generally focused on institutions located in Northern California, all colleges and universities regardless of location that wish to join may do so upon payment of dues. Northern California is defined as north to the Oregon border and south to San Luis Obispo.

ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS. There shall be four elective officers: a President, a Vice-President, a Treasurer, and a Secretary.

Section 1: Authority

The authority of the Association shall be administered by the Northern California Forensics Association Executive Committee.

Section 2: Executive Committee

The executive committee of the Association shall be comprised of: the President, the Vice-President, the Treasurer, the Secretary, and the immediate Past President. "The President, Vice-President and Secretary shall serve for a term of two years, the Treasurer shall serve for a term of 4 years. Newly elected officers shall assume office on July 1 and shall hold office until June 30 of the final year of their term."

A: Staggering of Elections

The President and Secretary shall be elected in the Spring of Odd-numbered years. The Treasurer and Vice President shall be elected in the Spring of Even-numbered years.

B: Nomination of Officers

Interested Parties shall contact the President. The President will compile and present an objective list of candidates at the Spring meeting. There shall be an opportunity for nominations from the floor for names of additional nominees prior to the election of the officers.

ARTICLE V. DUTIES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1: The President

It shall be the duty of the President to:

1. Preside at all meetings of the Association.
2. Assume all usual duties of the chief executive officer.
3. Determine the agenda for each meeting with the help of other members of the executive committee and members of the association. In no case shall the proposed agenda be final in the sense of excluding motions from the floor not otherwise prohibited by this Constitution or by the rules of procedure.
4. Appointing members to committees.
5. Calling special meetings.
6. Serving as spokesperson for the Association, including sending necessary and pertinent press releases.
7. Serving as, or appointing, a liaison to other organizations.
8. Appoint a webmaster for maintenance of the Association webpage, an Omsbudsperson, and a Parliamentarian.
9. The President shall be an ex-officio member of all standing and special committees.
10. The President shall solicit nominations, conduct the vote, and present all Association awards as determined by the Association's Bylaws.
11. Secure sanctioning for Association tournaments from all necessary forensic organizations (e.g., CEDA/NDT, NPDA, etc).
12. Appoint tournament director for Spring Fling and assist with finding a host.
13. Serve as tournament director of the Championship Tournament. For this tournament, the president must select the Tab Room staff (Director of Debate, Director of Individual Events, and a Director of Judges). Arrange for a host school. Prepare and post a tournament invitation. Prepare cumulating sheets for all events and report tournament result to CEDA, AFA NIET Region 1 Chair, and NPDA within two weeks of the tournament. Insure topics are created for impromptu, extemporaneous, parliamentary debate and other events if needed.
14. The President shall be able to appoint interim officers for those unable to fulfill their assigned duties.

Section 2: The Vice-President

It shall be the duty of the Vice-President to:

1. Preside over any meetings in the absence of the President.
2. In the case of vacancy of the office of the President, the Vice-President shall assume the duties of President for the remainder of the unexpired term.
3. Attend to duties as prescribed by the President.
4. With the President, set the time of the meetings and to notify all member colleges and universities.
5. Keep and maintain a list of all member schools and contact information.
6. Perform outreach to new and potential member schools and/or student-run teams with the goal of expanding participation.
7. Write and send recognition letters to school officials for association tournament hosts, executive committee members and Association award winners each year.
8. Be an ex-officio member of the tabroom at all NCFA tournaments, and have his/her judging commitment covered.

Section 3: The Treasurer

It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to:

1. Serve as the fiscal officer of the Association.
2. Establish and maintain a checking account for the Association.
3. Establish and maintain the Association's non-profit status.
4. Collect all tournament registration and membership fees, account for all expenses incurred by the tournament, and pay all hired judges.
5. Purchase all trophies according to the requirements of the NCFA tournament director.
6. The Treasurer shall be an ex-officio member of the tabroom at all NCFA tournaments, and have his/her judging commitment covered.

Section 4: The Secretary

It shall be the duty of the Secretary to:

1. Maintain complete and accurate minutes of the Fall and Spring meetings and to mail (electronically) copies of these minutes to all member coaches and interested parties no later than five days following the conclusion of said meetings.
2. Be responsible for recording modifications to the Constitution and By-Law documents, as approved by the body.

3. Be responsible for setting up and maintaining digital account(s) (*such as* Gmail correspondence, Google Calendar, YouTube archival page, etc.) for the executive committee.
4. Be responsible for all organizational correspondence.
5. Be in charge of the disposition of the Association's publications.
6. Collect and maintain historical records for the organization, including:
 - a. Individual and sweepstakes award winners at NCFA Champs, NCFA End-of-Year Awards.
 - b. Names and schools of officers and positions in the NCFA Executive Committee.
 - c. Set up a web collection method (e.g. Google News) for collecting online articles about member school successes.
 - d. Regional and national tournament events and enter them on organization's calendar.
7. Assist member schools and President with Press Releases about national successes for member schools.

Section 5: Appointed positions not on Executive Committee

Appointment 1: Omsbudperson

1. Serve as Ombudsperson at NCFA sponsored tournaments.
2. Be responsible for ensuring compliance with Associations from all necessary forensic organizations (e.g., CEDA/NDT, NPDA, etc).
3. The Omsbudperson may not serve more than 2 consecutive years.

Appointment 2: Parliamentarian

1. Be responsible for ensuring the accurate use of Robert's Rules of Order in all NCFA business meetings.
2. Be responsible for timekeeping at all NCFA business meetings.
3. Serve as a backup for note- and minute-taking at all NCFA business meetings.
4. When possible, this position should be filled by the immediate past president.

ARTICLE VI. COMMITTEES

As needed, shall be appointed by the President.

A standing committee shall be created by the President for topic creation (Parliamentary debate, Impromptu, Extemporaneous, and other events as needed) at NCFA Spring Champs.

ARTICLE VII. MEETINGS. The Association shall meet at least twice during the academic year, once per semester. The Spring Meeting shall be the organizational meeting during which officers for the following year shall be elected to the positions that need to be filled. The Spring Meeting will be held during the NCFA Championship Tournament.

ARTICLE VIII. SPONSORED EVENTS. Sponsored events are those events run directly by the Association. Member schools interested in hosting a sponsored event must be selected and approved by the Association in accordance with its Bylaws.

ARTICLE IX. RATIFICATION. This Constitution shall become effective by a three-fourths vote of the members of the Northern California Forensics Association present at any regularly scheduled meeting, provided a quorum is present. A quorum shall be defined as fifty percent of the membership plus one.

ARTICLE X. AMENDMENTS. This constitution may be amended by a three-fourths vote of the members of the Northern California Forensics Association present at any regularly scheduled meeting, or responding to an online balloting, provided through the listserv, provided a quorum of dues paying members is reached, and that fifteen days written or electronic notice is given prior to the meeting at which the balloting is to take place. Balloting may occur online at the discretion of the Executive Committee.

BYLAWS

(Last Updated on 2/24/2019)

I. SPONSORED EVENTS

1. The NCFA shall host at least three events each year. They shall be:
 - a. The Fall Coaches' Conference.
 - i. NCFA will make an effort to send an official representative to the PSCFA Fall Coaches conference.
 - b. The NCFA Championship tournament, which will normally be held in February.
 - c. The Spring Fling Tournament, which will normally be held in late April or early May.
2. The NCFA bears the financial responsibility for all sponsored events. All costs and fees will be established by consultation between the Association treasurer, the event director, and the event host.
3. Event descriptions
 - a. **FALL COACHES' CONFERENCE**
 - i. The purpose is to conduct association business and hold workshops of interest to coaches.
 - ii. The conference schedule and location will be determined by the President of the NCFA in consultation with the body.
 - iii. Host school responsibilities:
 1. Arrange for site.
 2. Large meeting room for business meeting.
 3. Arrange for caucus rooms.
 4. Setting up lodging arrangements for conference hotel.
 5. Communicating site information to the association President.
 6. Arrange for meals and receptions as needed for the conference.
 7. Set conference fee to cover costs.
 - iv. Conference Director:
 1. The association President will be the conference director.
 2. Conference Director's responsibilities:
 - a. Making available invitations and information
 - b. Soliciting caucus and workshop suggestions.
 - c. Establishing agenda.

d. Distribution of agenda prior to meeting.

b. **Event 2: NCFA SPRING FLING**

- i. The Spring Fling shall offer Novice Parliamentary Debate, Novice Policy Debate, Novice Impromptu, Novice Informative Speaking, Novice Persuasive Speaking, and Novice Oral Interpretation (which allows contestants to follow the rules of Programmed Oral Interpretation, Prose Interpretation, Poetry Interpretation, or Dramatic Interpretation). If entries warrant, the Oral Interpretation category may be sub-divided by speech type.
- ii. Awards will be presented in all events for first, second, and third place, and for all finalists. Awards should be maximized, with the particulars of how to do so left to the discretion of the director. The director will decide what physical awards will be presented, in consultation with the association treasurer and the host.
- iii. No school sweepstakes awards will be made.
- iv. Judging
 1. Every attempt will be made to use experienced undergraduate competitors as judges.
 2. Outstanding undergraduate competitor judging will be recognized at the awards ceremony.

c. **Event 3: CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENT**

- i. The Championship Tournament shall offer Parliamentary Debate, Policy Debate, and all eleven individual events as defined by the American Forensics Association NIET. Additional events may be offered as determined by the NCFA President. The national rules for each event will be followed.
 1. For debate formats, the tournament should attempt to advance half the field. If advancing all winning records results in less than 50% of the field advancing, the tournament should pull up as many teams as it takes to reach the 50% mark. No team with a losing record should be advanced to elim rounds.
- ii. Awards
 1. Awards will be given for first, second, third, and all finalists in all individual events. The tournament will also acknowledge the top non-advancing novice if an event is collapsed.

2. Ties for first, second, and third places in individual events will be broken using the AFA guidelines for breaking ties.
3. Awards will be given for all competitors in the elimination rounds. Speaker Awards will be given to the top 20% of competitors in each division of debate.
4. First, second, and third place sweepstakes awards will be given at the Championship tournament in each of the following divisions:
 - a. Open University Division
 - b. Limited Entry University Division (4 or fewer contestants from a school as of the drop date)
 - c. Open Community College Division
 - d. Limited Entry Community College Division (4 or fewer contestants from a school as of the drop date)
 - e. Cynthia Sutherland Individual Sweepstakes Award - This award is given to the student who earns the most sweepstakes points for their school.
5. If a school is competing in the Limited Entry Division, and qualifies for an Open Division award, they can earn awards in both divisions.
6. Sweepstakes awards will be determined according the following formula:
 - a. Individual Events
 - i. 10 points for each I.E. or LD first place
 - ii. 7.5 points for each I.E. or LD second place
 - iii. 5 points for each I.E. or LD third place
 - iv. 2.5 point for each I.E. or LD finalist
 - b. Team events
 - i. 20 points for team debate and Readers Theatre first place
 - ii. 15 points for team debate and Readers Theatre second place
 - iii. 10 points for team debate and Readers Theatre semifinalist
 - iv. 5 points for team debate and Readers Theatre quarterfinalist
 - v. 2.5 points for team debate and Readers Theatre octafinalist
- iii. Interstate Oratory Representative. The student from a Northern California school, who places highest in the open division of Persuasive Speaking will be designated the Northern California representative to the Interstate Oratory Contest. If that student cannot go, the next highest placing student from a Northern California school will be designated the

representative. The designation will be passed down until a student is found who will attend the contest.

- iv. Judging Philosophies: Any judge responsible for covering a debate commitment must submit a judging philosophy prior to the start of the first round. Failure to submit a judging philosophy will result in the disqualification of the judge and issuance of appropriate uncovered judging fees.

II. SPONSORED TOURNAMENTS RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. Sponsored tournaments are those run by the organization and a member school serves as host. Normally they include the NCFA Championship Tournament and the Spring Fling. Others may be added by a vote at a meeting of the Association the year prior to the tournament.
2. Tournament hosts will change year-by-year and will be ratified by a meeting of the Association the year prior to the tournament. Offers to host the tournaments will be considered at the Spring meeting of the Association in the year prior to the tournament.
3. Duties of the hosts:
 - a. Order refreshments for coaches, tab room staff, and contestants.
 - b. Arrange details of association meeting (location, cost) and forward information to the tournament director.
 - c. Arrange for hiring judges and arrange for motel rooms for hired judges if necessary.
 - i. The association will pay for hired judges motel rooms.
 - ii. Motel rooms will be provided only for those judges who must travel distances making lodging necessary, and who are not rooming with member schools.
 - iii. Judges will be housed up to four per room, utilizing the fewest rooms possible.
 - d. Arrange for competition rooms.
 - e. Compile a list of competition and tournament management rooms and forward it to the Tournament Director.
 - f. Establish tournament schedule in coordination with the tournament Director.
 - g. Provide lists of hotels and restaurants.
 - h. Provide copy, printing and computing resources for the tab room.
 - i. Copy ballots for all individual events.

- j. Provide a campus map and parking information and forward them to the Tournament Director.

4. Expenses

- a. Fees (including entry fees, judging fees, late fees, and school fees) shall be established by the tournament director, tournament host and the NCFA treasurer and collected at the tournament by the NCFA Treasurer. An administrative fee (school fee) not to exceed \$50 may be charged per school. The purpose of this fee is to cover administrative costs of the tournament including the tab room.
- b. Judging fees shall not be greater than the amount paid to judges.
- c. The NCFA shall be responsible for all tournament related expenses, including: posting of invitations, tournament refreshments, tournament photocopying and supplies, tab room staff meals, paying judges, paying for rooms if necessary to hold the tournaments, and tournament awards. Costs are expected to be within reasonable discretion.
- d. Host schools are not expected to operate an NCFA sponsored tournament at a financial loss or gain. The NCFA will subsidize any revenue shortfalls for sponsored tournaments and will receive any financial gain.
- e. Tab room staff and Ombudsperson will be credited with the number of rounds they would have been able to judge had they not been in the tab room. That credit will be deducted from any judging fees.

5. Student Eligibility Requirements for Participation

- a. A student must be regularly enrolled—that is, enrolled in at least one class—at the member college he/she is representing. (College shall mean the entry entity the student is representing.) If a student is enrolled at more than one college the student may represent the college of his/her choice.
- b. No student may participate in more than five Championships and four Spring Fling tournaments sponsored by NCFA.
- c. Each college participating at an NCFA sponsored or sanctioned event must be represented by a coach. The coach need not be from the same school as the contestants, but must be officially recognized as their faculty representative by their institution. Students will not be allowed to compete without a faculty representative at the tournament. Exceptions can be made for student-run teams, as determined by the Executive Committee in consultation with the host.

6. Student Eligibility for Classifications within Divisions

- a. All events shall have three divisions: Open, Junior, and Novice.

- b. Any student may enter open division, regardless of experience. Students with four semesters of collegiate experience in an event type must enter open division.
 - c. Students with less than four semesters of collegiate experience in an event type may enter junior divisions. Junior eligibility is lost when a student places first, second, or third in Junior and/or Open division at three different tournaments. If a student has been in final rounds of junior and/or open division of debate at three tournaments he/she must move to open division.
 - d. Novice Division shall be open only to those students meeting the following NCFA Eligibility Requirements. (NOTE: NCFA Novice Eligibility is stricter than national organization rules, and will be adhered to.)
 - i. High school experience in debate and Individual Events--if a student has competed in high school for two semesters, the student must compete in junior division.
 - ii. College experience in debate--If a student has advanced beyond the first elimination round at two tournaments, or if the student has competed in the final round at three tournaments in any debate format (team or Lincoln-Douglas) then he/she must enter in a higher division.
 - iii. College experience in Individual Events--A novice competitor must advance to junior (or open) division if he/she places (first, second, third) in an event, or like event, twice.
 - e. Participation in Novice Division at Spring Fling will not affect a student's eligibility.
7. Experience in one event type will not change the student's eligibility in other event types. Like Event types are as follows:
- a. INTERPRETATION EVENTS: Prose, Poetry, Drama, Oral Interpretation
 - b. GROUP EVENTS: Dramatic Duo, Readers Theatre
 - c. LIMITED PREPARATION EVENTS: Impromptu, Extemporaneous Speaking
 - d. UNLIMITED PREPARATION EVENTS: Informative, Persuasive, After Dinner Speaking, Communication Analysis
 - e. DEBATE: Team, Parliamentary, or Lincoln-Douglas
 - f.
8. Collapsing Divisions
- a. If a division in an individual event has fewer than 5 entrants, the lower division will be collapsed into the higher division.
 - i. Any contestants entered in a lower division who qualify for the higher division final round must compete in the higher division final. Such

students are to be recognized for that achievement at the awards presentations.

- b. Whenever an Open or Junior division of debate has fewer than 8 entries OR insufficient entries to pair 6 discrete preliminary rounds (no repeat matches or matches between teams from the same school), the two divisions should be collapsed into a single Open Division.
 - i. All teams will be eligible for an Open Division elimination bracket, which will begin at a level consistent with CEDA sweepstakes rules. The results of the Open Division eliminations will be reported to CEDA.
 - ii. Teams originally entered in a lower Division who do not qualify for the higher Division elimination bracket will be eligible for a lower Division elimination bracket.
9. In order to best utilize judges, when the total of all three divisions of an event is 12 or fewer contestants, with no division having 6 or more contestants, the divisions could be mixed in the same room with the same judge, and the contestants ranked separately.
10. Judges will not be required to judge beyond their school's commitment unless they are: (a) asked first, and (b) paid for each round beyond their school's commitment at the prevailing rate for hired judges.
11. Judging Requirements. Each school's judging commitment is three rounds of debate judging for each team or Lincoln-Douglas entered (6 rounds for 2 entries) and 1 round for each 2 individual event slots entered per pattern. If the tournament has only 2 preliminary rounds of individual events, then each school is obligated to provide one round of judging for each three individual events slots per pattern. Judges will not be expected to judge beyond their commitment and will be paid if they agree to do so.
12. Competent Judge Standards. Each college entered shall fulfill the judging requirement outlined or pay the requisite judging fee. Only a competent judge may be used to fulfill this requirement. Competent judges shall be defined as one of the following:
 1. A college Forensics coach.
 2. A former college forensics coach.
 3. College instructors of Speech communication or allied disciplines.
 4. A high school forensics coach or former forensics coach, teacher of speech, or allied discipline.
 5. A college graduate who competed in college two or more years

6. A student who has not completed a BA degree but who:
 - a. has retired from competition and has exhausted her/his competitive eligibility.
 - b. is at least two years removed from Novice competition.
 - c. had a distinguished record in Open Division the type of event he/she is judging. Such a person may judge Novice Division rounds at their first tournament, and Open Division rounds thereafter.

The following situations should be avoided:

- 1 No judge may be assigned to judge a contestant representing the same school.
- 2 Any student still competing may only judge Novice Division.
- 3 No judge should accept a ballot on a student whom he/she does not feel he/she can fairly judge.

Students representing colleges that do not meet the above judge responsibilities shall not be permitted to continue in competition.

13. Student Run programs must provide authorization by an institutional representative to compete at NCFA sponsored events.

TOURNAMENT RULES AND ETHICS VIOLATIONS

In the case of protests over rules or ethical questions, the following procedure will be utilized.

- A. Protests must be initiated by a coach or tournament official.
- B. The first ruling shall be made by the Ombudsman after consultation with all parties involved in the complaint.
- C. Appeals of this ruling shall be directed to the Executive Committee of the NCFA. After the committee reviews all available information, the ruling of the committee shall be final.

III. SANCTIONED TOURNAMENT RULES AND REGULATIONS

- A. Sanctioned events are those events run by a member school and officially acknowledged as Association activities. Member schools interested in holding a sanctioned event must be approved by the Association.

- A. The Association has no financial interest in sanctioned events.
- C. Member schools holding sanctioned events must publish deviations from NCFA rules; otherwise, sanctioned events must adhere to NCFA rules.
- D. Member schools are expected to try to support sanctioned tournaments, but are not required to attend.
- E. Member schools shall not institute a tournament that conflicts with an NCFA sanctioned tournament, with the following exceptions:
 - 1. The instituting school is geographically remote from the sanctioned school, and is unlikely to compete for entries.
 - 2. The school hosting the sanctioned tournament agrees to the unsanctioned tournament.
 - 3. Any day of a designated weekend not being used for the sanctioned event shall be deemed available for a Forensics event scheduled by any other NCFA member.
- F. Sanctioned tournament dates will normally begin in September. If possible, sponsored and sanctioned tournaments will not be scheduled on consecutive weekends.
- G. Schools submitting a bid will agree that:
 - 1. NCFA rules on judging and judges will be enforced.
 - 2. Judging fees will not be greater than the amount paid the judges.
 - 3. NCFA rules concerning collapsing of divisions will be followed as described in the bylaws.
- H. Schools which submit bids for designated weekends will retain autonomy for:
 - 1. Days of the tournament.
 - 2. Events offered and pattern of events.
 - 3. Divisions offered.
 - 4. Tab room staffs.
 - 5. Awards.
- I. Bids for sanctioned tournaments will be considered at the association meetings at the end of the school terms one year prior to the events.

1. Bids will specify events and divisions to be offered.
 2. Bids will specify any departure from normal NCFA rules and procedures.
 3. Priority will be given to schools that have traditionally held tournaments on the sanctioned weekends.
- J. Any NCFA member-school is free to sponsor any tournament or festival on the non-designated weekends.
- K. Tournament hosts may charge a fee to help offset the costs of child care, if it is provided.

IV. ASSOCIATION AWARDS

- A. Process of award nominations and voting
1. The NCFA President will solicit nominations for all awards and will conduct the elections.
 2. The NCFA President will be responsible for notifying recipients and their respective administration and/or campus leadership.
 3. Nominations and voting for the awards will take place electronically in Spring semester.
 4. An individual may win more than one award in a given year.
 5. Nominations can be made by coaches or students. Each school may nominate as many people as they desire. On the final ballot, each NCFA school may vote once for each award.
- B. Awards given
1. The “Tony Bernacchi” Distinguished Service Award. The intent of the award is to recognize a coach for substantial service to the NCFA over a significant period of time.
 2. New Coaches Award. The intent of which is to recognize a coach in their first or second year of coaching in an NCFA program.
 3. Peer Coaching Award. The intent of which is to recognize student work in assisting with a program.
 4. Coach of the Year. The intent of which is to recognize a coach in reviving an existing program, creating a new program, and/or demonstrated excellence in forensics leadership or education.

5. Outstanding Forensics Speaker. The intent of the award is to recognize students demonstrating characteristics epitomizing the values held to be intrinsic to the forensics activity. Awards will be given in the following three areas: (1) Debate Events, (2) Public Address events, and (3) Interpretive Events. Awards will consist of both a Community College and a University student winner.