

Proposal #1 – Addition of an LD representative to the national council.

(requires a 2/3 majority to pass)

Summary/justification: Currently, Lincoln-Douglas debate makes up a large part of the National Forensics Association, but remains underrepresented on the National Council. Student representation is limited to the junior and senior student representatives, who rarely come from LD or have any experience with the format. This occurs for several reasons: sometimes, simple luck means both representatives come from speech; more often, it is near-impossible for LD students to get elected since many NFA schools do only speech and wouldn't elect an LD student they don't know; and occasionally, LD students are intentionally disenfranchised, such as in the case of the 2019 NFA National Tournament when LD students were sent to their next debate round before the junior and senior representatives were voted on. Last NFA, LD students made up nearly 15% of entries, and that contingent of students function within a different community with different norms and needs than speech students. Often, student representatives who come from speech remain wholly unable to adequately represent the LD student body due to a lack of knowledge regarding how LD functions and the unique needs of a debate event. NFA functionally brings together two entirely separate organizations: a relatively unified speech world and an entirely disparate LD world. Given this fact, the lack of LD student representation on the National Council is disturbing. The statutory inclusion of a single Lincoln-Douglas coach on the Council is tokenizing at best and leaves students voiceless when their needs and views diverge from the coaches' perspective (something the NFA seems to acknowledge is important given the inclusion of student representatives). LD student disenfranchisement is utterly shameful for a democratic organization that purports to meet the needs of all students, yet relegates LD to a single coach on the National Council and a student representative on the LD committee whose sole role is involvement in the topic process and who has no voice on issues that affect the entire organization. The inclusion of a Lincoln-Douglas student representative on the National Council will remedy these concerns, provide a more diverse set of opinions for the Council to consider, and improve the ability of student representatives to truly represent all students.

Current language in the Constitution:

ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS - DESCRIPTION AND ELECTIONS

Section 1: The officers of the association shall be: President; Secretary; Treasurer; National Tournament Director; Vice President for Administration; and Vice President for Professional Relations.

Section 2: **The National Council shall consist of the officers of the association, four at-large representatives, one Lincoln-Douglas Debate representative, Past President (ex-officio),**

graduate student and two undergraduate student representatives, with one being the Junior representative and the other being the Senior representative. A school may not have more than one member on the council at any given time, with the exception of the undergraduate student representatives. Undergraduate student representatives may be from the same school as a current National Council member. However, no school can have more than one undergraduate student representative at any given time.

Section 3: All National Council members except the undergraduate student representatives, Past President; and the Tournament Director shall be elected by ballot to the NFA membership. They shall serve the following terms in office: President - 3 years; Vice President for Administration - 3 years; Vice President for Professional Relations - 3 years; Secretary – 3 years, Treasurer – 3 years; At-large representatives - 2 years; Lincoln-Douglas representative – 3 years; and Graduate Student Representative – 1 year. **The junior undergraduate student representative shall be elected for a two-year term (first year serving as junior representative and second year serving as senior representative) and a new junior representative will be elected each year by the undergraduate student assembly.** The National Tournament Director shall be appointed to a three-year term by the President, upon approval by the National Council. No elected member of the national council (President, Vice President for Administration, and Vice President for Professional Relations, Secretary, Treasurer, Lincoln-Douglas representative, or member at large) may serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office. The Past President may serve as an ex-officio member of the council until the election of a new President.

Section 4: A National Council member may be a non-forensic coach as long as that person is a member of the association.

Section 5: The graduate student representative must be an active participating coach enrolled in a graduate program working toward an M.S., M.A., M.F.A., or Ph.D. at an NFA member school. If running in April for a school which they will begin attending in September, they must provide the elections committee chair a letter of acceptance to the graduate school and endorsement by the graduate school's Director of Forensics.

Section 6: The undergraduate student representative must be an active participant in forensics. Eligible students for the junior representative position must be at least a sophomore with two remaining years of intentional forensics eligibility. Eligible undergraduate students must provide a letter of support from a director/captain of their program at the time of election and must not be from the same school as the current senior student representative. The junior representative will automatically serve as the senior representative in their second year of service unless impeached by a vote of no confidence by the undergraduate student membership at the national tournament with a majority of 66%. In the case of impeachment, the runner up from the previous year's election will serve as the senior representative.

Proposed language:

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Section 1: The officers of the association shall be: President; Secretary; Treasurer; National Tournament Director; Vice President for Administration; and Vice President for Professional Relations.

Section 2: **The National Council shall consist of the officers of the association, four at-large representatives, one Lincoln-Douglas Debate representative, Past President (ex-officio), graduate student and three undergraduate student representatives, with one being the Lincoln-Douglas student representative, one being the Junior representative for speech and the other being the Senior representative for speech.** A school may not have more than one member on the council at any given time, with the exception of the undergraduate student representatives. Undergraduate student representatives may be from the same school as a current National Council member. However, no school can have more than one undergraduate student representative at any given time.

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Section 4: A National Council member may be a non-forensic coach as long as that person is a member of the association.

Section 5: The graduate student representative must be an active participating coach enrolled in a graduate program working toward an M.S., M.A., M.F.A., or Ph.D. at an NFA member school. If running in April for a school which they will begin attending in September, they must provide the elections committee chair a letter of acceptance to the graduate school and endorsement by the graduate school's Director of Forensics.

Section 6: The undergraduate student representatives must be active participants in forensics. Eligible students for the junior representative for speech position must be at least a sophomore with two remaining years of intentional forensics eligibility in any of the eleven NFA individual events. The junior representative will automatically serve as the senior representative in their second year of service unless impeached by a vote of no

confidence by the undergraduate student membership at the national tournament with a majority of 66%. In the case of impeachment, the runner up from the previous year's election will serve as the senior representative. Eligible students for the Lincoln-Douglas student representative position must have at least one remaining year of intentional forensics eligibility in Lincoln-Douglas debate. Eligible undergraduate students must provide a letter of support from a director/captain of their program at the time of election and must not be from the same school as the current senior student representative. The newly elected Lincoln-Douglas student representative and junior representative from speech must not be from the same school as each other, and if two students from the same school win their respective elections, the student who won the election by a bigger margin will be appointed and the runner-up will be appointed for the other position.