

NFA Constitution

Please note: The by-laws and the code of ethics can be found separately on the website.

ARTICLE I: THE ORGANIZATION

Section 1:

This organization shall be known as the National Forensic Association.

Section 2:

This organization is an association of intercollegiate forensic programs. The organization is a re-organization of the National Individual Events Association and the 1971 and 1972 National Individual Events Tournament founded by Professor Seth C. Hawkins.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE OF THE ASSOCIATION

Section 1:

The purpose of the association is to promote intercollegiate forensics and to sponsor the annual championship tournament in Individual Events and Lincoln-Douglas debate.

Section 2:

The name of the tournament shall be the National Forensic Association National Championship Tournament.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP IN THE ASSOCIATION

Section 1:

Membership in the National Forensic Association is open to all institutions and individuals in education. Membership categories are as follows:

Library Membership: Institutional Libraries for copies of NFA Journal.

Student Membership: Limited to 4 years receives NFA Journal and Newsletters.

Individual Membership: Receives NFA Journal and Newsletters.

Institutional Membership: Receives NFA Journal, Newsletters and Voting Rights and necessary in order to attend national tournament.

Patron Membership: Receives NFA Journal, Newsletters and listing as "Patron."

Life Membership: Receives NFA Journal, Newsletters and listing as "Life."

Section 2:

Although encouraged, members of the association are not required to participate in the association's tournament(s).

Section 3:

The National Council as specified in Article IV, section I, shall determine the membership dues.

ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS-DESCRIPTION AND ELECTIONS

Section 1:

The officers of the association shall be: President; Secretary/Treasurer; Tournament Director (to be appointed by the President, and approved by the National Council); Vice President for Administration; Vice President for Professional Relations; and four National Council Members-at-Large. These officers shall constitute the National Council. In addition, one representative from the host school of the forthcoming National Tournament shall sit on the Council and be a fifth National Council Officer-at-Large. The Student Assembly shall also elect two student representatives, with one being the Junior Representative, and the other being the Senior Representative, from the participating students to be voting members of the National Council.

Section 2:

All elected officers except the student representatives and the Tournament Director shall be elected by mail ballot. They shall serve the following terms in office: President - 3 years, Vice President for Administration 3 years, Vice President for Professional Relations 3 years (elected in rotating years); Secretary/Treasurer - 3 years; Officers-at-Large -2 years. The student representatives shall serve staggered terms with one new representative being elected each year at the National Tournament.

Section 3:

An officer of the association may be a non-forensic coach as long as that person is a member of the association. The student representatives must be active participants in forensics.

ARTICLE V: OFFICERS--DUTIES

Section 1:

The National Council shall lead the association between semi-annual business meetings and uphold all articles of the Constitution and its By-Laws.

Section 2: The President shall:

- A. Chair the National Council.
- B. Chair all meetings of the association and the awards session at the National Tournament.
- C. Uphold the Constitution and its by-laws and all other decisions of the National Assembly.
- D. Represent the association to other organization meetings.
- E. Serve as Director of the National Tournament Committee.
- F. Appoint appropriate committees.
- G. Appoint a Tournament Director with the approval from the National Council.
- H. Appoint an Editor for the Association's Journal, with the approval from the National Council.
- I. Be responsible for tournament bid solicitation and approval.
- J. Make appropriate site visitations (when possible) along with the tournament director for the National Tournament.
- K. Assist the Secretary/Treasurer with the editing and mailing of newsletters, and coordinate any financial expenditures with the Secretary/Treasurer.
- L. On a temporary basis, reassign any responsibilities, as otherwise listed in Article V, as necessary.

Section 3: The Vice President for Administration shall:

- A. Assist the President
- B. Assume the office of President if the incumbent vacates the office.
- C. Assist the Tournament Director.
- D. Serve as a member of the Tournament Committee.
- E. Serve as the liaison to the Student Assembly

Section 4: The Vice President for Professional Relations shall:

- A. Serve as the primary program planner for the NFA Convention Programs at the National Communication Association Convention.
- B. Assist in the editing of the Newsletter and publication of the Journal.
- C. Serve as the liaison with other forensic organizations.

Section 5: The Secretary/Treasurer shall:

- A. With the assistance of the President, edit and mail newsletters to all member schools.
- B. Serve as treasurer for the association whose signature, or the President's, shall be required on all expenditures.
- C. Coordinate, along with the President, all correspondence to membership.
- D. Maintain all financial records for the association.
- E. Serve as the archivist for the association.
- F. Serve as the historian for the association.

Section 6: The At-Large Representatives of the National Council shall:

- A. Assume responsibility to chair one of the standing committees as appointed by the President.
- B. Be available at the request of the Tournament Committee for assignments to tournament operation duties.

Section 7: The Tournament Director shall:

- A. Be responsible for certification of all entries for the National Tournament. If questions arise concerning certification, the Tournament Director shall consult with the Tournament Committee.
- B. Be responsible for the preparation of the tournament schematics, tabulation, and other materials necessary for tournament operation.
- C. Shall serve as a member of the National Council.
- D. Make appropriate site visitations (when possible) along with the President for the National Tournament.

Section 8:

The Tournament Committee shall include the President, Tournament Director, Vice President for Administration, and other individuals appointed by the President. The Committee is chaired by the President.

Section 9:

The Tournament Committee shall make all personnel assignments for the tournament.

Section 10:

The President shall appoint at least 3 members to each of the following Standing committee, with the chair of each being a member of the National Council:

- A. Constitution: This committee shall be responsible for proposing changes and monitoring the NFA constitution and by-laws.
- B. Elections: This committee shall be responsible for insuring that a full slate of qualified candidates runs for each NFA office and shall count the ballots for all elections.
- C. Ethics: This committee shall oversee the Code of Ethics and assist the Constitution committee in proposing necessary changes as warranted; and shall oversee its enforcement.
- D. Extemporaneous: This committee shall create the extemporaneous topics for the annual tournament.
- E. Impromptu: This committee shall create the impromptu topics for the annual tournament.
- F. Research: This committee shall oversee all research to be conducted at the national tournament.

Section 11:

A seven-member committee shall oversee Lincoln-Douglas debate. This committee shall be comprised of:

- A. The Tournament Director.
- B. Two appointments by the President from the Executive Council, one of who will serve as chair.
- C. Three at-large members elected annually by mail ballot.
- D. One student representative elected by the Student Assembly.

This committee shall develop a system of obtaining topic area suggestions from the general membership during the academic year, with the topic announced on August 1st.

ARTICLE VI: THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Section 1:

The National Assembly is the governing body of the association and is the only body of the association that can change the Constitution and By-Laws.

Section 2:

The National Assembly shall consist of one representative from each member institution plus all officers of the association. Although any interested person may attend and participate in discussion, each school shall have only one vote. The President will only vote when said vote affects the outcome of that vote.

Section 3:

Each member institution shall notify the Secretary/Treasurer of the name of its National Assembly representative. This should be done at registration for the national tournament.

Section 4:

The President of the association shall appoint a parliamentarian for the National Assembly. The latest revised edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall determine all questions involving parliamentary procedure not provided for in this Constitution.

Section 5:

The National Assembly shall meet bi-annually at the National Tournament and the National Communication Association Convention.

Section 6:

A quorum of the National Assembly shall be 1/3 of the schools registered for the National Tournament and 20 schools for the meeting at the National Communication Association Convention.

Section 7:

The National Student Assembly shall meet annually at the NFA National Tournament.

ARTICLE VII: THE NATIONAL TOURNAMENT

Section 1:

The association shall sponsor the National Tournament on the third weekend of April. Specific dates are to be established by the National Council.

Section 2:

The National Council shall decide by majority vote the location of the annual tournament, when possible, prior to March 1 of the year preceding the tournament. All member schools shall be notified of the decision.

Section 3:

In order to ensure maximum participation under normal circumstances, there are no limits on the number of contestants a single school may enter in the national tournament.

Section 4:

Relative to the tabulation of sweepstakes awards, in order to protect the competitive intent of these awards, certain tabulation limitations exist. (Note sweepstakes tabulation in Article V, Section 5 of By-laws)

Section 5:

Bid specifications for hosting the National Tournament may be requested from the President of the association. Bid applications should be submitted to the President by November of the academic year preceding the National Tournament.

Section 6: Tournament Fees

A. Fees shall be decided by the National Council.

B. Fees shall cover the cost of the tournament including:

1. Trophies and Awards. Bids should be received from several sources and must meet the exact specifications of awards approved by the association.

2. Office supplies needed to operate the tournament.

3. Mail costs.

4. Per Diem expenses for the Executive Council working on tournament

preparation as assigned by the President. Each member of the Council is expected

to provide one full day of work prior to the National Tournament without compensation.

5. Any special meals during the tournament should be optional to any of the participants in the tournament and not included in the required fees.

ARTICLE VIII: AWARDS

Section 1: Individual Event Awards

The awards shall be first through sixth in each event; Open Sweepstakes, first through tenth to schools compiling the most sweepstakes points in the current year's tournament; President's Sweepstakes, first through tenth; Pentathalon, first through fifteenth; Founder's Cumulative Sweepstakes Award to the school with the highest cumulative sweepstakes points earned for each year at the tournament (when a school wins its total becomes zero); for non-advancing quarterfinalists and non-advancing semifinalists.

Section 2: Lincoln-Douglas Awards

Awards shall be given to all contestants advancing to elimination rounds; Open Sweepstakes, first through fifth to school compiling the most sweepstakes points in the current year's tournament; individual speaker awards to the top ten individual speakers in Lincoln-Douglas debate.

ARTICLE IX: MAIL BALLOT

Elections and Lincoln-Douglas topic selection shall be held by mail ballot prior to the national tournament. The Secretary, along with the President, shall send ballots to all member schools. Only returned ballots shall count in determining the outcome of any vote.

ARTICLE X: AMENDMENT PROCEDURES

- A. All amendments to the Constitution and By-laws must be submitted in writing to the Secretary before, but no later than registration of the National Tournament.
- B. Constitutional Amendments must receive a 2/3 majority of the National Assembly to be enacted.
- C. By-law Amendments must receive a simple majority of the National Assembly to be enacted.
- D. Unless stated in the amendment, all amendments go into effect at the next National Tournament or school year.

ARTICLE XI: EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

The National Forensic Association is committed to assuring equal opportunity to all persons regardless of race, color, religious creed, handicap, age, sex or sexual orientation. Students entering the competition at the National Tournament must meet the qualification procedures described in Section III of the By-laws.

ARTICLE XII: STATEMENT OF DISTRIBUTION OF ASSETS

Section A:

No part of the net earnings of the association shall insure to the benefit of, or be distributed to its directors, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the association shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in this Constitution. No substantial part of the activities of the association shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in this Constitution. No substantial part of the activities of the association shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the association shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate of public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, the association shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on (a) by a corporation exempt from Federal Income Tax under provisions of the Tax Code currently in force.

Section B:

Upon the dissolution of the association, the Executive Council shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all the liabilities of the association, dispose of all of the assets of the association exclusively for the purpose of the association in such manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization or organizations under Provisions of the Code, as the National Council shall determine. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by the Court in which the principal office of the association is then located (The office of the Executive Secretary), exclusively for such purposes, or to such organization or organizations, as the National Council shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

Section C:

In the event that the association is determined to be a private foundation within the meaning of Section 509 of the Code:

1. The association shall distribute its income for each taxable year at such time and in such manner as not to become subject to the tax on undistributed income imposed by Section 4942 of the Code, as hereafter amended or supplemented.
2. The association shall not engage in any act of self-dealing as defined in Section 4941 of the Code, as hereafter amended or supplemented.
3. The association shall not retain any excess business holdings as defined in Section 4943 of the Code, as hereafter amended or supplemented.
4. The association shall not make any investments in such manner as to subject it to tax under Section 4944 of the Code as hereafter amended or supplemented.
5. The association shall not make any taxable expenditure as defined in Section 4945(d) of the Code, as hereafter amended or supplemented.

Section D:

The National Forensic Association is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, educational, and scientific purposes, including for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law).