**Novice Debater FAQ**

***What is the NYU CEDA policy debate?*** CEDA stands for Cross Examination Debate Association. CEDA is the largest, evidenced-based intercollegiate debate organization in the world. Policy debate requires an affirmative to advocate an action on an issue of current controversy and defend its advantages against the negative team. Schools send numerous pairs of students to tournaments to debate against pairs of students from other schools on a topic voted on by all the colleges annually.

***Are there any special advantages to being on the debate team?*** Yes. Debate teaches you problem solving, critical thinking, research skills and information filtering. NYU pays for you to travel, see the country and meet some of the smartest college students around. We have a direct line to President Emeritus John Sexton, a former top debater and coach. Team members have the inside track to win a share of **$37,000 in tuition awards available** in the Global Debates. If you have over 60 credits, you can earn national academic recognition regardless of your win percentage. Newcomers can win TWO national championships just for novices.

***How many tournaments do you attend?*** There are 16 tournaments on the squad schedule for the year. However, we expect active novices to only attend 2-3 tournaments in the fall and another 2-3 tournaments in the spring. The entire schedule is available to committed team members on our Dropbox.

***How does a college debate tournament work?*** A tournament is held on a weekend in either a 3-day format (Fri-Sun) or 2-day format (Sat-Sun). Tournaments charge fees ranging from $100-$250/two person team to compete. Once you sign up three weeks in advance, the coaches or officers will pay all your fees and register you and a partner to compete at a specific tournament based on your experience. Tournaments are organized into divisions: open (very experienced debaters), junior varsity (debaters with extensive high school experience or some college experience), and novice (debaters with minimal or no college debate experience).

***How are individual debate rounds organized?*** Most tournaments consist of 6 preliminary debate rounds (3 on the affirmative and 3 on the negative) and elimination rounds based on the number of teams competing. All rounds are held in separate divisions. Each prelim round takes just over 2 hours. Before each round, the tournament director releases electronically (sometimes on paper) *pairings* that show what side you are debating on (affirmative and negative), what room you are in, who you are being judged by and what school you are facing. The first two rounds are random, meaning you can debate anyone in your division at the tournament. After that, you debate teams with the same win/loss record but different speaker points. If you do well enough in prelims (based on wins and speaker points) you can advance to elimination rounds. Most judges will provide feedback after the debate round and reveal the decision so you can monitor your progress.

***How do we get to the tournament?*** Depending on the start time, the squad leaves together on Friday morning or Friday evening and travels to the tournament. For East coast tournaments, we travel by bus, car or van. For national tournaments, we fly. We stay until our judging commitments are fulfilled, our last team is eliminated or we win the tournament on Sunday and return home late Sunday evening. **NYU pays for shared lodging transportation and registration fees. At some tournaments, meals are included.**

**Novice Debater FAQ**

***What topic are we debating?*** The topic area is environmental protection focused on reducing emissions from the private sector. This means we will be debating about issues like Flint, MI, climate change, nuclear energy, environmental justice, fracking, and alternative energy. The aff will say reductions are a good idea and the neg will try to prove it’s not.

***That’s a lot of issues. How can I prepare to compete against other teams?*** Relax. Experienced NYU team members started working in May to put together successful arguments and strategies for the fall. The team met twice a week over the summer to brainstorm and review possibilities. The returning team members and coaches have prepared evidence for all the major topic approaches. A new debater’s job is to focus on learning HOW to debate, contribute to organizing the evidence and familiarize themselves with the material. Once that’s complete, the rest of the semester is spent fine tuning those arguments and preparing strategies against specific positions developed by our opponents.

***How do I get a partner?*** You can bring a friend to debate with, interview with an experienced novice debater and become partners or be partnered by the coaches.

***What would be my time commitment to be on the debate team***? The key is to work smart so we maximize effectiveness with less effort.For a novice debater who wants to win, the time commitment for the two weeks leading up to tournaments looks like this:

**2 hours** General Meeting on Wednesdays at 8:30pm (30 minutes admin, 1 hr 30 min learning debate)

**3 hours** Weekend workshop (three hours on Saturday or Sunday afternoon)

**1 hour** Novice Assignment consisting of either formatting, indexing, researching, or intelligence gathering

**2-4 hours** Learning specific arguments with your partner, private coaching sessions

**8-10 hours** **total**

For **non-tournament weeks**, the time commitment looks like this:

**2 hours** General Meeting on Wednesdays at 8:30pm (30 minutes admin, 1 hr 30 min learning debate)

**1 hour** Novice Assignment consisting of either formatting, indexing, researching, or intelligence gathering

**1-2 hours** Learning specific arguments with your partner, private coaching sessions

**4-6 hours total**

***How do I join? Do I have to tryout?*** Come to our opening meeting on this Wednesday night at 8:30pm in the Kimmel Center in Room XXX.

CHECK OUT OUR TEAM WEBSITE – [www.nyudb8.com](http://www.nyudb8.com)