### Resolved: Freedom of expression is essential to progress.

*“If there be time to expose through discussion the falsehood and fallacies, to avert the evil by the processes of education, the remedy to be applied is more speech, not enforced silence.”*
— U.S. Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis

Whether through our actions, our speech, our dress, our look, or our actions, the individual’s ability to express ourselves has been a cornerstone of society. However, in the year 2024 with wild trends, influencer culture, and social media, we often find ourselves wading through a set of trends and fads. With a plethora of things being thrown at us each day, Option 1 for the NSDA’s 2024-2025 Big Questions topic asks us not only about our freedom of expression, but whether we can have too much of a good thing.

To begin the discussion, freedom of expression is a fundamental human right that allows individuals to freely express their thoughts, opinions, beliefs, and ideas without fear of censorship, retaliation, or legal sanction. In most democratic or free nations, this right is in some way, enshrined in legal code of some governing document.

Freedom of speech encompasses various forms of communication, including verbal speech, writing, art, and other forms of communication. According to the Harvard Law Council, this right is essential for the functioning of a democratic society, as it enables open debate, the exchange of ideas, and the ability to challenge and critique those in power.

Freedom of expression is like that of freedom of speech. It is often defined as the right of an individual to demonstrate or show their emotions, feelings, and opinions. Although this can fall under the freedom of speech, it differs in so far as it reflects actions rather than direct communications. The freedom of expression is protected by various international human rights instruments, such as Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. These documents affirm that everyone has the right to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Neither of these freedoms are absolute. For the safety of the general community, both may be restricted. These restrictions are typically aimed at protecting other important rights and interests, such as national security, public order, public health, and the rights and reputations of others. Any limitations of these freedoms must show to be necessary, not excessive, and often, defended in court.

Progress refers to the process of moving forward or advancing toward a particular goal or desired objective. It involves improvement, development, or a positive change in various aspects of life, society, or technology.

The concept of progress can be applied in many contexts. One of the most visible manifestations of progress is technological advancement. Innovations in fields such as communication, transportation, and medicine have revolutionized the way we live. The internet, for instance, has transformed global connectivity, making information accessible at our fingertips and enabling real-time communication across continents. During the pandemic, we saw how fast technology can advance and the quality-of-life improvement that it can offer. Furthermore, medical breakthroughs have led to the eradication or management of diseases that once plagued humanity, significantly increasing life expectancy and quality of life. Antibiotics, vaccines, insulin, organ transplants, and various cancer treatments are all products of technological advancement.

The concept of progress often implies a positive trajectory. This suggests that changes or developments lead to better conditions or outcomes than previous states. However, what constitutes “progress” can be subjective and vary depending on individual perspectives and cultural contexts. As Ian Malcom, the chaos theorist from *Jurassic Park* once said, “Your scientists spent so much time seeing if they could, they didn’t ask if they should.”

Progress is the driver of any dynamic society, enabling it to evolve and improve over time. These elements are driven by a complex web of factors that drives creativity, discovery, and advancement. Understanding these drivers can help societies harness and cultivate them more effectively.

At the heart of innovation lies human curiosity and creativity. Innate curiosity drives individuals to explore, question, and understand the world around them. This relentless quest for knowledge leads to experimentation and discovery, essential components of innovation. Creativity, the ability to think outside the box and develop novel solutions, is equally crucial. It allows individuals and groups to envision possibilities that extend beyond conventional boundaries, fostering new ideas and advancements.

Economic incentives play a vital role in driving innovation. Market demand for new products and improvements on old products stimulates companies and individuals to develop innovative solutions. The potential for profits encourages investment in new projects and businesses. Moreover, a competitive market environment fosters innovation as companies strive to outdo each other and capture market share.

Cultural and social factors also play a significant role in driving innovation. Societal values that encourage risk-taking, experimentation, and acceptance of failure create a conducive environment for innovation. Cultures that celebrate diversity and inclusion benefit from a wide range of perspectives, leading to more creative solutions. Social movements and grassroots initiatives can drive progress by advocating for change and mobilizing public support.

Progress can be driven by a multifaceted interplay of factors that stimulate creativity, discovery, and advancement. Human curiosity and creativity, education, economic incentives, technological advancements, government policies, collaboration, cultural factors, competitive pressure, problem-solving needs, and visionary leadership all contribute to fostering an environment conducive to innovation.

Understanding these drivers is essential for sustaining and accelerating progress in society. By nurturing these elements, societies can continue to evolve and improve, addressing challenges and seizing opportunities for a better future.

### Resolved: Creativity is a more powerful force than intelligence.

*“Creativity is Intelligence Having Fun.”
—* Albert Einstein

When I was in high school back in the early 2000s, the weirdest inter-activity fighting was between the debate team and the art club. This feud was the Clampetts and McCoys of our high school. To the debate team, the art students’ paintings and sculptures weren’t solving any real-world problems. In the art students’ minds, the debaters were cold, uncaring fact robots. For the life of us, we found ourselves diametrically opposed.

Years later, I have grown to realize that the two clubs might have had their differences, but we all had more commonalities than discrepancies. We both demonstrated incredible intelligence and creativity. The debate team showed our creativity through argument choice and public speaking, and the art club demonstrated intelligence through the design of their sculpture and the interplay of light in mixing paints.

This might seem like a childish debate today but is a real point of conflict that still exists. It may not be the art club or debate team anymore, but it manifests itself in the debate between intelligence and creativity. This is question is the focal point of Option 2 for the NSDA’s 2024-2025 Big Questions topic. This topic asks us to answer to settle the debate over creativity vs. intelligence.

Creativity is the idea that encompasses the ability to generate novel and valuable ideas, solutions, or artistic expressions. It is a fundamental human trait that plays a crucial role in various domains, including arts, science, business, and everyday problem-solving. This essay delves into the nature of creativity, its key components, and its significance in different contexts.

Creativity can also be the process of bringing something new and original into existence. This can manifest as an idea, a product, a piece of art, or a solution to a problem. Creativity involves thinking in ways that are different from conventional patterns, breaking free from established norms, and seeing connections between seemingly unrelated concepts. It is often characterized by several concepts. I have boiled these down to five core concepts.

1. Originality: The creation of ideas or products that are unique and not derived from existing concepts.
2. Value: The ideas or products must be valuable, useful, or meaningful in some way.
3. Imagination: The ability to envision possibilities beyond the current reality, often involving abstract thinking and mental simulation.
4. Cognitive Abilities: Cognitive processes such as divergent thinking, which involves generating multiple solutions to a problem, and convergent thinking, which involves narrowing down these solutions to find the best one, are crucial for creativity. Other cognitive abilities include problem-solving skills, memory, and the ability to make associations between disparate ideas.
5. Knowledge and Expertise: A deep understanding of a particular domain provides the foundation upon which creativity can build. Expertise allows individuals to recognize gaps, opportunities, and potential improvements within their field.

In the arts, creativity is the driving force behind the production of music, literature, visual arts, and performance. It allows artists to express their emotions, convey messages, and explore the human condition in unique and impactful ways.

In science and technology, creativity leads to groundbreaking discoveries and innovations. Creative thinking enables scientists to develop new theories, design experiments, and invent technologies that address complex problems and improve lives.

In the business world, creativity is essential for developing new products, services, and business models. Entrepreneurs and innovators rely on creative thinking to identify market opportunities, differentiate themselves from competitors, and drive economic growth.

Intelligence can be defined as the capacity to acquire and apply knowledge and skills. It involves a combination of cognitive abilities that enable individuals to navigate and make sense of the world around them. Psychologists have proposed various definitions and theories of intelligence, and I have condensed these down to a core five concepts.

1. Reasoning: The ability to think logically and make sense of complex information.
2. Problem-Solving: The capacity to identify, analyze, and find solutions to problems.
3. Learning: The ability to acquire new knowledge and skills through experience and education.
4. Adaptability: The capacity to adjust to new situations and environments.
5. Abstract Thinking: The ability to understand and manipulate abstract concepts and ideas.

Intelligence comes in several different manifestations. Fluid Intelligence refers to the ability to think abstractly, reason, identify patterns, and solve novel problems. Crystallized Intelligence involves the accumulation of knowledge, facts, and skills acquired through experience and education. Emotional Intelligence involves the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one’s own emotions and the emotions of others. Practical Intelligence, also known as “street smarts,” involves the ability to solve everyday problems through the application of knowledge and skills in real-world situations.

Intelligence encompasses a range of cognitive abilities and processes, including reasoning, problem-solving, learning, adaptability, and abstract thinking. It is influenced by both genetic and environmental factors and plays a significant role in education, the workplace, personal development, and social interactions. Various theories, such as Spearman's g-factor, Gardner's multiple intelligences, Sternberg's triarchic theory, and the CHC model, provide different perspectives on the nature and structure of intelligence. Understanding and nurturing intelligence in its many forms can help individuals and societies achieve greater success and well-being.

One major point of debate is the relationship between creativity and intelligence. Some theories, such as Howard Gardner’s, suggest that creative and analytical intelligence are separate domains within a broader spectrum of cognitive abilities. Others argue that creativity is inherently linked to intelligence, as the ability to think creatively often requires a certain level of intellectual capability. This raises questions about whether high intelligence naturally leads to high creativity or if the two can exist independently.

While intelligence and creativity can be viewed as distinct cognitive abilities, their interconnections and the ways in which they complement each other are equally important. As a society, we seek to recognize the value of both, and striving to nurture them through balanced educational practices can lead to more innovative and effective problem-solving capabilities in individuals.