



PI KAPPA DELTA

The Art of Persuasion, Beautiful and Just

Presidential Candidate Statements

Please read the statements from our two candidates for the next President-Elect of PKD.

Ryan Louis, Ottawa University

For six wonderful years I've served as PKD's Province Coordinator. After joining the Council in Portland, I dedicated myself to enhancing opportunities for our members to interact and advance the mission of the organization. In my first year, I drafted and implemented a social media campaign (PKD previously had no such presence) and advanced efforts to create competition events online. I also started investigating how to take skills developed for tournaments and transform them into "real-world" opportunities.

After being re-elected in St. Louis, I initiated Persuasion Works: a campaign with a mission to develop and adapt events (e.g. Pitch it to Pi Kappa Delta, Student Scholarship) to directly connect values to effect. As the result of the "Pitch It" campaign, for example, we donated hundreds of dollars to charities while also sponsoring a Congressional debate at a member university. PW established a permanent award for Persuasive Speaking finalists to help advance their solvency arguments (by donating to a cause on a student's behalf and by helping to spread the word about important issues). I have employed scholars to review Student Scholarship submissions, thus advancing research opportunities. And this is only the beginning! As president, I pledge to expand the offerings of Persuasion Works so students, coaches and alumnae can practically employ their earned skills inside competition to advance our mission *outside* of it. I am a big fan of things like Interviewing and Pitch It... because they help students invest in skills that help them (experience, résumé building) *and* their communities (donations, sponsorships) grow.

Elected again in Ohio, these last two years have been exceptionally productive. I spearheaded two major projects near and dear to my heart. The first involved updating PKD's Constitution. This has been a difficult process because it entails thinking through the vision of our organization so it remains impactful while becoming more inclusive. This year, the membership will now be able to vote on those proposed changes. Lastly, I negotiated the installation and dedication of our [national archives at Ottawa University](#)—our founding chapter! I am working tirelessly through details. Having hired an archivist, I am helping to assemble artifacts while advancing both on-ground and digital opportunities to share our

collected history with all. As president I will nurture the growth and health of the archives—dedicating more support in order to expand its reach.

If you elect me as president, I will work to maintain all of these programs. But we are approaching another juncture. The work we are doing now will be compounded by the development of a new strategic plan. I look forward to being a significant part of that. We must figure out how to sustainably grow while concurrently spreading the power of *voice*. To do this, the organization needs to have a better system of public relations and marketing. Though we are effective speakers, we must work beyond word-of-mouth ventures. Our inchoate social media needs to be enhanced by dedicated individuals who can write press releases, continually engage with traditional media, create new partnerships and even lobby effectively on behalf of our collective interests. Programs are being cut, governments are suspicious of the humanities and we are an organization primed to promote the value of speech and debate to a wider audience.

In closing, I want to comment on our organization's public response to President Trump's immigration ban. I am proud to have helped craft it; the first line of that news release is indicative of how I appreciate our organization and—if you allow me—how I will serve/lead it:

Pi Kappa Delta is a community based upon inclusion of all persons and the free and open exchange of ideas. I stand by these words and will work and work...and work to ensure our organization does everything it can in order to ensure the continued relevance and impact of speech and debate activities. When the free-flow of *voice* is under attack, we must hold firmer to our values and work to ensure that our artful attempts at persuasion are, in fact, pure and just.

Christopher Leland, Colorado Christian University

Dear PKD Colleagues,

At our biennial tournament and convention this year in Boise we once again have the opportunity to elect a President of the organization to serve over the next four years. I am announcing my intent to be considered for election and to serve if chosen.

My history with PKD goes back to my high school and college forensic career. As a member of the PKD chapter at Ripon College, I also worked in the NFL offices. My first PKD tournament was in Estes Park, Colorado at the YMCA of the Rockies. What Pi Kap meant to me then and now is about our vision for community. The training students receive and the networks they develop are essential to their professional development. The collegiality we share as coaches and staff members is essential to our own careers. We laugh together. We mourn together. We face tough cultural issues together. We promote a civil and healthy dialog in the world around us that needs, more than ever, the skills, abilities and desire to cultivate an environment of trust and civil discourse.

My reason for running has to do with four basic tasks that come from our vision. I want to do all we can to protect it and our activity. **First**, the organization has gotten to a point where it needs a newly energized strategic vision and I believe I can help to shepherd that process. **Second**, we need to explore and find a productive plan for our biennial tournament. We are an organization committed to comprehensive programs and the involved of all in our convention and tournament experience, but there is a down-side to being so popular. Our options for campuses that are able to host this tournament are dwindling with our increased numbers. Finding a way to make the logistic work, the tournament fit on a campus, while maintaining our mission as an honorary organization is a tension to managed and not necessarily a problem to be solved. I would hope to help navigate that discussion and decision making process. **Third**, as I have done on the National Council (and I articulated when I stood before you to run for the Council) I am committed to our organization defending and supporting programs that may find themselves fighting for their existence in the turbulent times on college and university campuses. We need to find a way to provide resources and tools to help those programs – and that may include on-site visits from members of our Council who can speak into those discussions. **Finally**, I am committed to making sure that our relationship with NSDA is both productive and balanced. We need to find ways for us to be our own entity of PKD while still fostering a great relationship with our colleagues in the high school community.

The organization should be aware that as I wrestled with this decision, one key challenge was the fact that I may not be around my current program nor at a school that has a forensic program in the next year. However, after talking this over with several others, I have decided that my commitment to PKD is greater than that obstacle. If elected, I will start a new chapter (service or otherwise) where I am administrating if there is not one in existence. Second, I would enter my new position with a commitment firmly in place to lead, attend, organize, and support PKD and the National Council.

Thanks for the consideration as the next President of PKD.