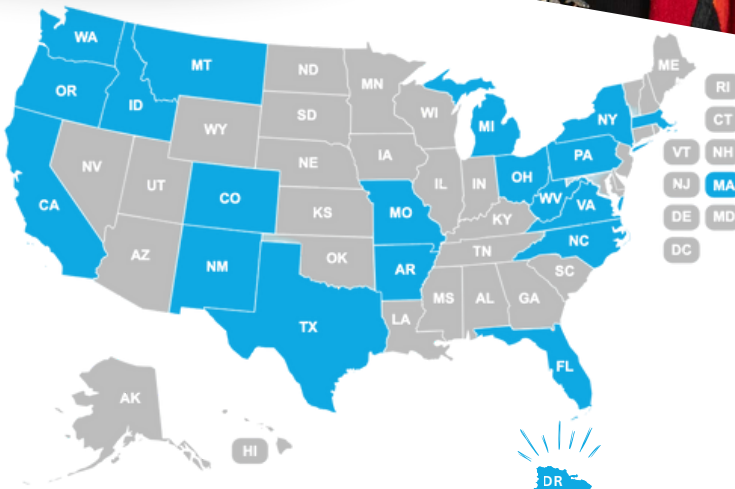


INTRODUCING THE SLC YOUR NSDA REPS



2025-2026 SLC Diversity + Dominican Republic



Gabriel Lopez



Brianna Zhang

I'm a small-school LD debater from Florida who joined the SLC to expand access, mentorship, and support for debate communities like mine with limited resources.

I'm from Michigan and primarily compete in Oratory! I work to improve resources for students and coaches to make this activity more inclusive for all.

Student Leadership Council

Founded in 2023, the Student Leadership Council (SLC) promotes equity, amplifies student voices, and develops initiatives that strengthen the speech and debate community. We view speech and debate as a transformative activity that fosters growth, confidence, and connection, driving a more inclusive and innovative community.

- **Advises on NSDA Initiatives** — Examines and provides student perspectives on NSDA program developments.
- **Provides Student Leadership for 100,000+ Members** — Serves as a point of contact for NSDA members to ask questions or give feedback.
- **Collaborates Across Committees** — The three SLC Committees, Access (belonging and recruitment), Resources (education and toolkits), and Content (branding and media), work together to achieve goals.

INITIATIVES WITHIN SPEECH AND DEBATE!



NATIONALS T-SHIRTS



The SLC helps create the most iconic things you can see at nationals, including pitching ideas for the T-shirts.

ONGOING PROJECTS

Intro to NSDA STUDENT MEMBERSHIP



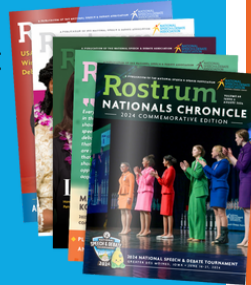
Learn the
essentials of
SPEECH & DEBATE

NSDA STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

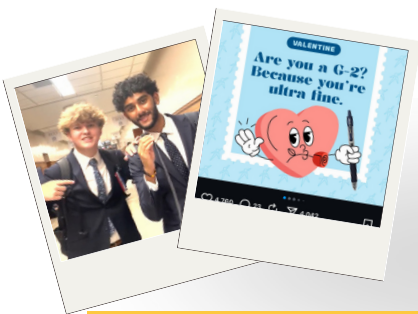
An SLC video course for new members covering NSDA account setup, Honor Society tracking, and event basics.

ROSTRUM

SLC members produce Student Spotlights and other features for the NSDA's magazine, *Rostrum*.



SOCIAL MEDIA



From tournament reels to Valentine's pickup lines, the SLC contributes to content.

INTERVIEWS



The SLC moderates Q&A events with national champions, offering speech and debate students nationwide insights and expert advice.

PLUSHIES



Nationals 2025 Sparky Plushie, which the SLC helped select!

WHY SLC MATTERS: CONNECT, ENGAGE, LEAD



The SLC matters because it amplifies student voices, ensuring competitors shape the outreach, resources, and direction of the NSDA.



REACH OUT

slc@speechanddebate.org

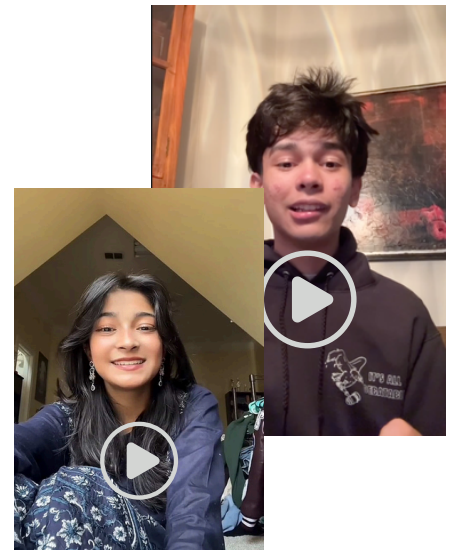
Contact us with ideas or questions—we're here to listen and help make change happen!

STEPS TO APPLY

- Talk to your coach for nomination by February 15.
- Be selected by your district by March 1.
- Record a video expressing why you would like to join and your ambitions for the SLC.

Video Topic Ideas

- How have you displayed leadership within your speech and debate community?
- Which duties are you most interested in and why?
- What change do YOU want to implement?



JOIN ONE OR MORE COMMITTEES

ACCESS

Prioritizes equity and belonging in the community
Supports school and student recruitment

RESOURCES

Develops educational materials, toolkits, programs, and guides for students and coaches
Builds internal support for SLC projects

CONTENT

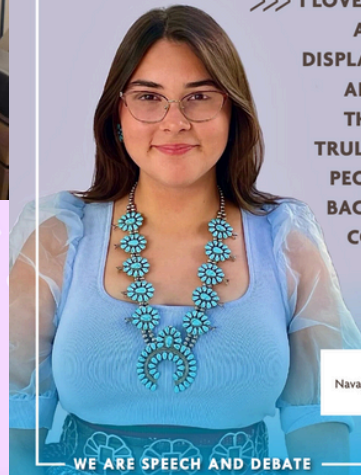
Manages NSDA branding and storytelling across platforms
Writes *Rostrum* pieces, social media posts, and graphics



NATIONAL SPEECH & DEBATE ASSOCIATION
100 YEARS
A CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

“

>>> I LOVE BEING ABLE TO AUTHENTICALLY DISPLAY MY CULTURE AND IDENTITY IN THIS ACTIVITY. IT TRULY SHOWS THAT PEOPLE FROM ANY BACKGROUND CAN COME TOGETHER FOR SPEECH AND DEBATE.



ASPY NASKALLA
Navajo Preparatory School, NM
Class of 2026

WE ARE SPEECH AND DEBATE

”

Intro to NSDA STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

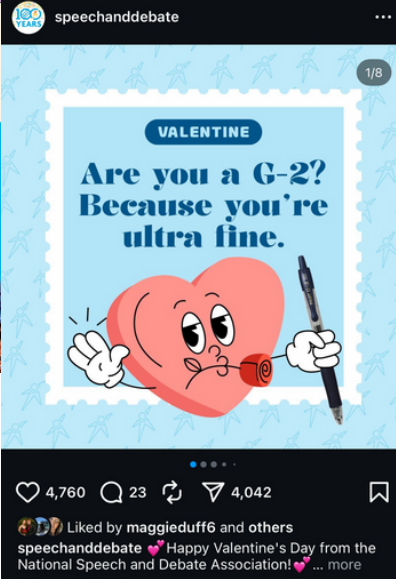


Learn the essentials of SPEECH & DEBATE

WE'D MAKE A PERFECT DUO



HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY



4,760 Q 23 4,042

Liked by maggie6 and others
speechanddebate Happy Valentine's Day from the National Speech and Debate Association! ... more



SPEAK DEBATE LEAD

Since NSD, the National Speech & Debate Association (NSDA) has been the authority on public speaking and debate in the United States. NSDA promotes academic excellence, leadership, and civic engagement through its various programs, including its annual National Speech & Debate Tournament, its online resources, and its advocacy work.



Champion Q&A

ESTHER OYETUNJI

Three-Time Original Oratory Champion



NATS25
PLUSHIE



NATS24
PLUSHIE

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



DYLAN DE LEON

Dylan is a co-founder of the Washington State Forensics Association (WSFA) Student Advocacy Committee.

by Taite Kirkpatrick

Last January, students around Washington State were facing a common challenge: a lack of judges put swaths of students at risk of dropping out of tournaments. However, Dylan De Leon, from Newport High School, was unwilling to accept this predicament. Instead, he dreamed up and later co-founded the Washington State Forensics Association (WSFA) Student Advocacy Committee: a group of students from around the state who collaborate virtually to acknowledge, discuss, and solve challenges facing the broader forensic community. It all began when a friend from Dylan's school district approached him and described her school's

challenge in finding qualified and reliable judges. She asked Dylan for help, but he had little to offer. As Dylan puts it, "I realized that if I didn't know the answer, maybe somebody else did. What if we could all just talk about it? I naturally think that talking with other people tends to be where a lot of creativity comes from. So, the more voices, the better."

That same month, Dylan approached the president of the WSFA, the state-level governing body for forensic competition. The WSFA runs the state tournament and has significant influence over the rules and norms for competitions throughout the season. Additionally, its quarterly coaches' meetings and frequent committee work give coaches a forum for discussion and camaraderie. The WSFA approved the creation of the Student Advocacy Committee and handed it off to Dylan to organize its first meeting.

"First, we had to set everything up. We wanted as many people there as possible. We contacted a lot of people from Western Washington, but also wanted to get people from across the state with different experiences from us," Dylan explains. Washington State is divided in two by the Cascade Mountains. To Dylan, from Western



Left to right: Taite Kirkpatrick from Mount Vernon High School, Autumn Covert from Gig Harbor High School, and Brandon Luu from Newport High School attend the initial Washington State Forensics Association Student Advocacy Committee meeting.

“What we do is really important. Speech and debate has the power to change people's minds and inspire students to advocate for themselves.”
— Dylan De Leon

are farmhands, we are farmers. We typically have less resources for academic competitions, such as speech and debate." The Student Advocacy Committee moved into a space to begin acknowledging and reconciling that divide. The first meeting, held last spring, shortly after Washington finished its

state tournaments, had over 20 students from over 13 schools around the state. Dylan was impressed with the turnout and people's ideas. "We went in with an agenda, but deviated to follow the flow of the conversation," he explains. Students wrote a six-page report with conclusions from the meeting. The report highlighted successes of

teams across the state, as well as challenges facing the entirety of the community. "That's probably the peak of our collaboration: when we present everything to all the coaches to have a statewide impact," Dylan states.

This strong beginning provided a model to continue and encouragement that there was interest across the state. The WSFA Instagram account (@wastatedebate) shared a story inviting students to join for their second meeting, held over the summer. "I first heard about it on a post... a couple of my speech and debate friends had a conversation about joining it," Parker recalls. As the Committee grew, Parker and Dylan would have a shared passion to promote it.

At that meeting, much of the discussion focused on the aforementioned divide between different sides of the state. "I really enjoyed how people were comfortable just coming in, sharing how they felt," Parker states. "This was a success from the WSFA's perspective as one of the founders of the group. When discussing his initial vision, he adds, "We

wanted to have a diversity of viewpoints. That makes it a lot easier to come up with solutions to problems."

Through fostering community, the committee has helped shift focus from competition toward camaraderie. Both Parker and Dylan feel there is still a long way to go to keep improving the community through the Student Advocacy Committee. As Parker notes, "I feel like we're just getting established," while Dylan adds, "It's still in its infancy."

However, the group already has brought together students who may have never met otherwise and given students from very different areas a chance to bond over key similarities—a shared love for their activity and a shared passion to promote it.

Parker says, "People don't always see that speech and debate has value in learning, research, critical thinking, writing, and timing. These are all such valuable things."

Taite Kirkpatrick is a WSFA Student Advocacy Committee co-founder and NSDA Student Leadership Council member.