



**The American Parliamentary Debate Association, Inc.**

**Annual Report  
2018-2019**

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# Overview

## Mission and Objectives

*Alex Johnson (APDA President 2018-2019)*

The American Parliamentary Debate Association (APDA) is the oldest intercollegiate parliamentary debating association in the United States. APDA was created in 1982 to coordinate tournament scheduling, liaise with other national and international debate organizations, raise funds to support debate tournaments, and sanction a national championship tournament each year.

Today, APDA sponsors approximately 60 tournaments per year (typically two or three each weekend), all in the parliamentary debate format, including the National Championship and the North American Debating Championship (along with the Canadian University Society for Intercollegiate Debate, or CUSID). APDA member schools are located as far south as South Carolina, as far west as California, and as far north as Vermont.

One of the primary features of APDA is its commitment to internal self-improvement as a debate community, which is best epitomized by its Executive Board, which oversees the governance of the league, and its six Committees. The Committees include:

- the Diversity Initiative, which was created in 2015 to raise awareness of and to combat issues faced by people of color on the league;
- the Equal Opportunity Facilitators, who work to facilitate a harassment-free environment and mediate personal conflicts that arise;
- the Expansion Committee, which aims to serve as a point of contact for and provide resources to new programs seeking to join or get more involved in APDA;
- the Gender Empowerment Initiative (formerly the Women's Initiative, reconceptualized in 2015), which aims to create awareness about issues that women, trans, and non-binary individuals face in debate, as well to empower those individuals;
- the Novice Mentor Committee, which works to welcome novices to APDA by engaging in outreach, providing resources, and running the [Point of Clarification](#) Facebook page (started in 2016), where anyone can anonymously submit questions about APDA and receive answers from the larger community;
- and the Video Recording Committee, which is dedicated to preserving APDA rounds from tournaments by recording and uploading them to the official APDA website.

Through these initiatives and more, APDA as an institution has taken on a more pronounced role in facilitating debate for thousands of college students across the United States each year.

## Geographic Reach

Emily Hu (Executive Board Member-at-Large 2018-2019)

Given that there has not been an Annual Report published since [2014-15](#), our last point of reference on the Geographic Reach of APDA is from that report. The following is a summary of how Geographic Reach has both changed and remained the same in the last five years.

1. *APDA remains an East-Coast oriented league*, with the majority of institutions being located in the Northeast.
2. *Many BP-oriented schools were not active in APDA this year*. For example, whereas Cornell was extremely successful in BP (and even had one of its teams appear in WUDC Finals), Cornell was not listed on the APDA member list this year and is not recorded to have paid dues. A similar situation may be observed of other BP schools, such as HWS, who were listed as active in 2014 but were not active this year. This may be indicative of a deeper need to reach out to the BP community in order to integrate schools that have BP programs, but do not (or no longer) compete in APDA.
3. *Many expansion schools—schools without a strong historical APDA presence—from 2014 are now no longer active*. This includes many local and community colleges, who historically find it difficult to maintain a consistent presence on the league. The fact that so many expansion schools have now fallen off the radar may mean that, in future years, the Expansion Committee should re-establish a point of communication.
4. *New expansion schools have joined our league*. At the same time, several new schools have joined the league since 2014, and members of these schools have been both competitively successful and influential throughout the league. For example, one of the Expansion co-chairs this year was from Binghamton University, a new expansion school.

### **Institutions that have Joined APDA Since 2013-14 (6 Schools):**

Binghamton University  
City University of New York  
Loyola University Chicago  
Trinity University  
Thomas Edison State University  
Villanova University

### **Institutions that Have Become Inactive Since 2013-14 (24 Schools):**

Babson College	Eastern Connecticut State University	Mater Ecclesiae University
Bryant University	Fairfield University	University of Windsor
Catholic University	Gettysburg University	Pennsylvania State University
Clark University	Harold Washington College	Plymouth State University
Colby-Sawyer College	Hobart and William Smith Colleges	Raritan Valley Community College
Cornell University	Loyola Marymount University	Rhode Island College
DePaul University		Rochester Institute of Technology
Duke University		
Durham Tech		

University of Delaware

University of New  
England

Of the 24 schools that became inactive in the last five years, **14 (58.3 percent)** were listed as newly-joined members in 2013-14. Overall, of 20 schools that newly joined APDA five years ago, only 6 remain active, making the retention rate **30 percent**. In other words, though it is easy to bring new schools to compete for a few times on the circuit, we have yet to achieve consistent, long-term engagement.

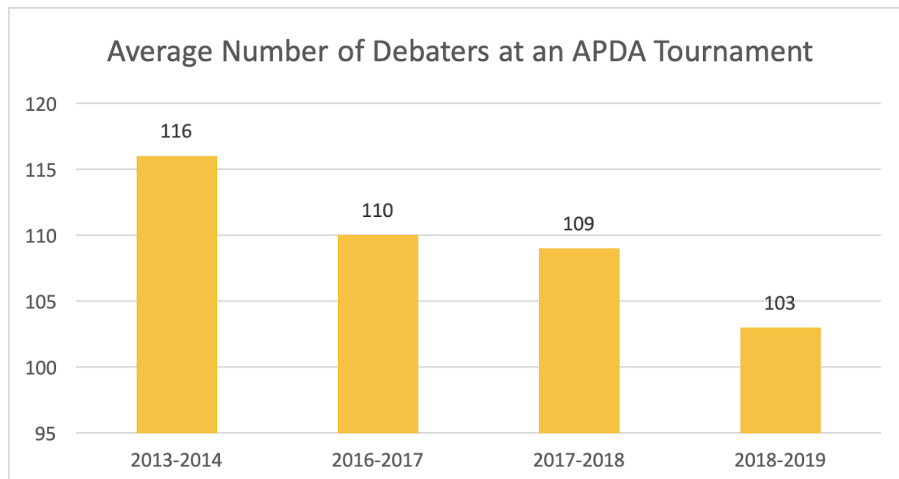
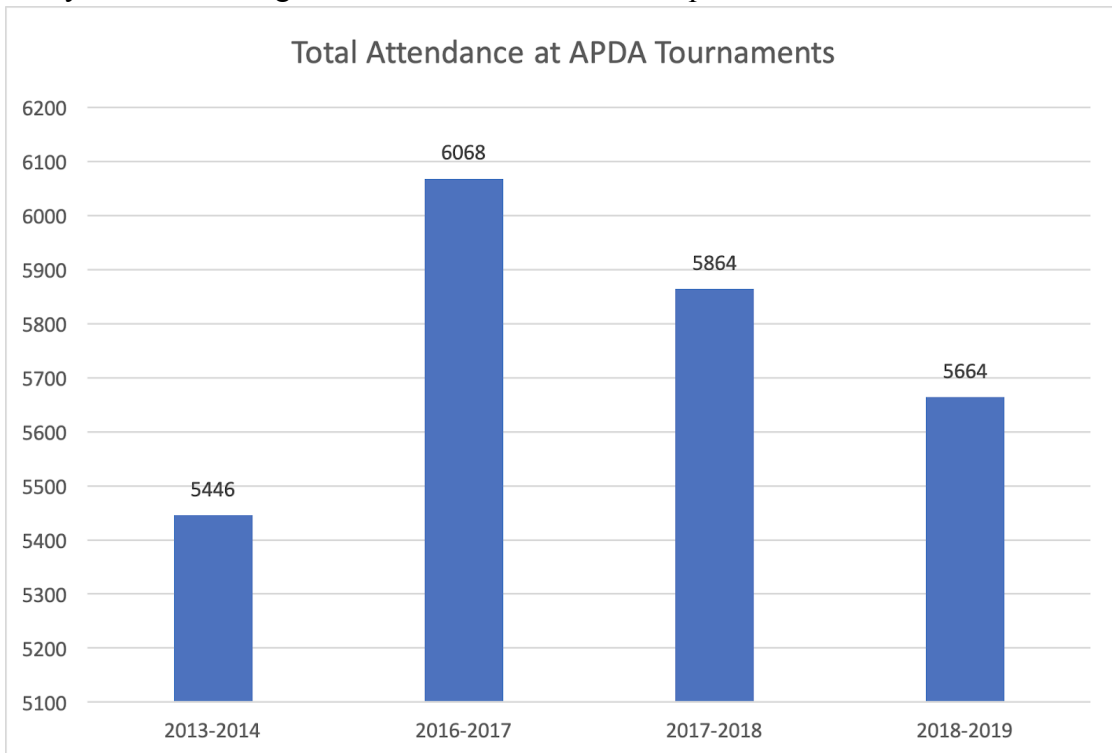
**Total APDA Member and/or Active Institutions as of May 10, 2019: 62**

American University	Harvard University	Tufts University
Amherst College	Haverford College	United States Military Academy – West Point
Bates College	Johns Hopkins University	University of Albany
Bentley University	Loyola University Chicago	University of California, Berkeley
Boston University	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	University of Chicago
Brandeis University	Middlebury College	University of Connecticut
Brown University	Moody Bible Institute	University of Maryland
Bryn Mawr College	Mount Holyoke College	University of North Carolina
Carnegie Mellon University	New York University	University of Pennsylvania
Binghamton University	Northeastern University	University of Pittsburgh
City University of New York	Odette School of Business	University of Vermont
College of William and Mary	Princeton University	University of Virginia
Columbia University	Providence College	Vassar College
Dartmouth College	Rutgers University	Villanova University
Fordham University	Smith College	Washington University in St. Louis
Franklin and Marshall College	Stanford University	Wellesley College
George Washington University	Stony Brook University	Wesleyan University
Georgetown University	Swarthmore College	Williams College
Grinnell College	Syracuse University	Yale University
Hamilton College	Temple University	
	Thomas Edison State University	
	The College of New Jersey	
	Trinity University	

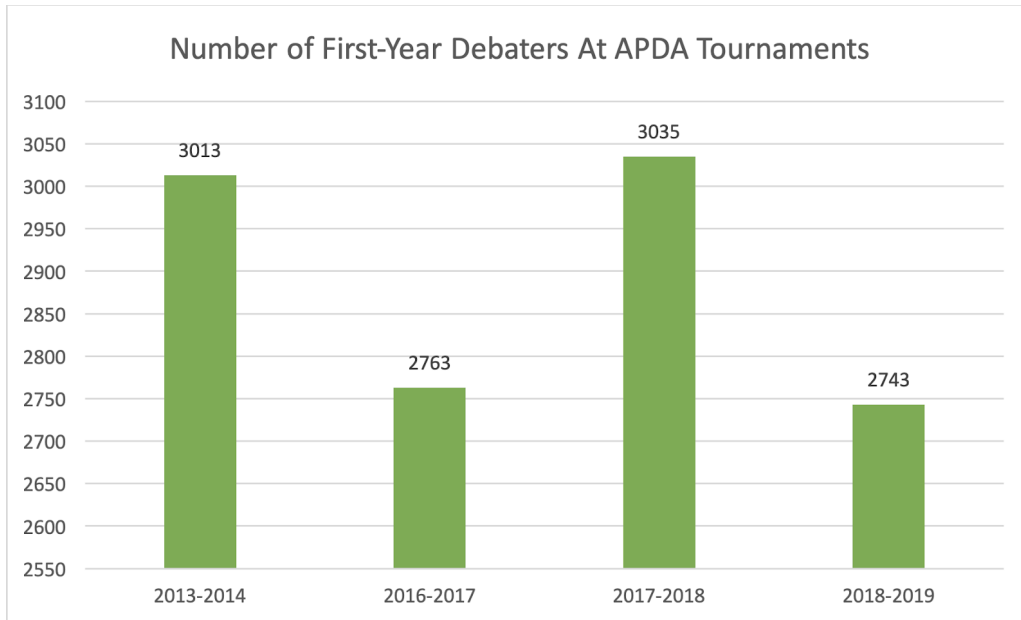
## League Growth

*Tiffany Yuan (Executive Board Member-at-Large 2018-2019)*

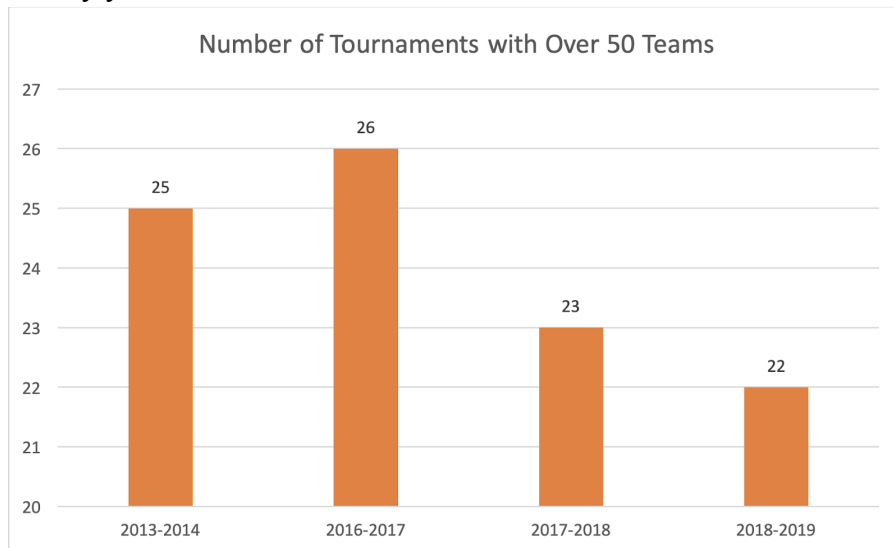
The total attendance of APDA tournaments decreased 3.4 percent this year from the previous year. In this season, total attendance at tournaments was 5,664 competitors, a dip from 2017-2018's 5,864 competitors, and a decrease from 2016-2017's 6,068 competitors. However, APDA is larger now than it was in the year of the last annual report (2013-2014), where there were 5,446 total competitors at tournaments, growing by 4 percent overall. Similarly, the average number of competitors at APDA tournaments has decreased slightly over the last three years, and is lower than it was at the time of the last annual report by 12.2 percent. This indicates that the league has gotten larger than the time of the last annual report, but has still been shrinking in the last three years since a surge in attendance since the last report



This year, there were 2,743 novices in attendance at tournaments throughout the season. This is a decrease following a spike in 2017-2018 of 3,035 novices, a sharp increase from the 2,763 total number of novices at tournaments in 2016-2017. During the time of the last annual report, there were 3,013 novices in attendance, a number more consistent with the numbers if 2017-2018 than this year. However, in the year before (2012-2013), there were 2,658 novices. Thus, there seems to be a fairly consistent trend of a spike in first year debater attendance one year and then a slight decrease the next year. Still, a decrease by 9.6 percent in first year debaters this year indicates that generally, first-year retention has decreased from last year.



The number of tournaments with total attendance of over 50 teams decreased slightly this year to 22 tournaments from 23 tournaments last year. This is also a decrease from the year of the last annual report, at 25 teams, for a 12 percent overall decrease. The number of 50+ team tournaments is, although not by a hugely significant amount, as the number generally has varied in the mid-20s every year since the 2009-2010 season.



# Year in Review

## Executive Board and Committees

*Alex Johnson (APDA President 2018-2019)*

### Executive Board & Trustees

**President:** Alex Johnson (University of Pennsylvania)

**Vice President for Operations:** Jasper Primack (Boston University)

**Vice President for Finance:** Max Neuman (Columbia University)

**Members-at-Large:** Emily Hu (Stanford University), Drew Harrington (University of Chicago), Tiffany Yuan (Johns Hopkins University)

**Trustee:** Sean Leonard (Rutgers University '16)

**Trustee:** Caleb Foote (Brown University '17)

### Diversity Initiative

**Board Liaison:** Drew Harrington

#### FALL 2018

**Co-Chair:** Jay Gibbs (UChicago)

**Co-Chair:** Patricia Ong (Georgetown)  
(previously CUNY)

Emily Rhyu (Smith)

Monica Ochoa (Wellesley)

Jela Shriver (Maryland)

Lydia Kim (GW)

Jessica Han (Rutgers)

Taleen Khleifat (GW)

Elmira Adili (W&M)

Ananya Kalahasti (Hopkins)

#### SPRING 2019

**Co-Chair:** Jay Gibbs (UChicago)

**Co-Chair:** Taleen Khleifat (GW)

Ananya Kalahasti (Hopkins)

Andrew Almeida (GW)

Elmira Adili (W&M)

Jela Shriver (UMD)

Monica Ochoa (Wellesley)

Patricia Ong (Georgetown)

### Equal Opportunity Facilitators

**Board Liaison:** Alex Johnson

#### FALL 2018

**Co-Chair:** Lydia Kim (GW)

**Co-Chair:** Shreya Marathe (Tufts)

Matt Cryer (GW)

An-Lanh Le (Princeton)

Ben Feshbach (Brandeis)

Allison Ross (Georgetown)

Taleen Khleifat (GW)

Cindy Wang (Georgetown)

Teddy Wyman (BU)

Christopher Morillo (Brown)

Charming Dube (Tufts)

#### SPRING 2019

**Co-Chair:** Lydia Kim (GW)

**Co-Chair:** Allison Ross (Georgetown)

An Lanh Le (Princeton)

Auriel Haack (Wellesley)

Chris Morillo (Brown)

Cindy Wang (Georgetown)

Claire Fishman (Brown)

Ellie Singer (Yale)

Haseeb Waseem (Villanova)

Matt Cryer (GW)

Monica Ochoa (Wellesley)

Rajul Bothra (Rutgers)



Shreyas Kumar (Princeton)  
Taleen Khleifat (GW)

Teddy Wyman (BU)

### **Expansion Committee**

**Board Liaison:** Emily Hu

#### **FALL 2018**

**Co-Chair:** Jacob Bezner (Binghamton)  
**Co-Chair:** Zachary Lemonides (UChicago)  
**Region 1** (DC, South): Jela Shriver (Maryland), Elmira Adili (W&M)  
**Region 2** (Mid-Atlantic): Vignesh Valliyur (Penn)  
**Region 3** (NY Area): Jacob Bezner (Binghamton)  
**Region 4** (New England): Julie Graves (Smith), Trent Kannegieter (Yale)  
**Region 5** (West): Aditya Ram (UChicago), Andrew Hamilton (UChicago), Zachary Lemonides (UChicago), Michael Cooper (Stanford)

#### **SPRING 2019**

**Co-Chair:** Jacob Bezner (Binghamton)  
**Co-Chair:** Zachary Lemonides (UChicago)  
**Region 1** (DC, South): Elmira Adili (W&M)  
**Region 2** (Mid-Atlantic): Jela Shriver (UMD)  
**Region 3** (NY Area): Jacob Bezner (Binghamton)  
**Region 4** (New England): Julie Graves (Smith), Madeline Turner (Smith)  
**Region 5** (West): Aditya Ram (UChicago), Andrew Hamilton (UChicago), Zachary Lemonides (UChicago)

### **Gender Empowerment Initiative**

**Board Liaison:** Tiffany Yuan

#### **FALL 2018**

**Co-Chair:** Aba Tieku (W&M)  
**Co-Chair:** Cindy Wang (Georgetown)  
**LGBT+ Liaisons:** Julie Graves (Smith), Matt Cryer (GW), Madeline Hudalla (Wellesley), Aislinn O'Brien (BU)  
Jay Gibbs (UChicago)  
Shreeya Singh (Yale)  
Madeline Turner (Smith)  
Ananya Kalahasti (Hopkins)  
Romina Lilollari (Harvard)  
Alexis Rivett (Wellesley)  
Amna Amin (Princeton)  
Wejing (Winnie) Qin (Brandeis)

#### **SPRING 2019**

**Co-Chair:** Aba Tieku (W&M)  
**Co-Chair:** Cindy Wang (Georgetown)  
**LGBT+ Liaisons:** Julie Graves (Smith), Madeline Hudalla (Wellesley), Matt Cryer (GW), Mikaela Rose V Tajo (GW)  
Aislinn O'Brien (BU)  
Ellie Singer (Yale)  
Jay Gibbs (UChicago)  
Leyla Remh (BU)  
Lucy Augustine (W&M)  
Robin Gloss (GW)

### **Novice Mentor Committee**

**Board Liaison:** Max Neuman

#### **FALL 2018**

**Co-Chair:** Tanay Patri (Northeastern)  
**Co-Chair:** Cayleigh Soderholm (Georgetown)  
**Digital Coordinator:** Zachary Intrater (Tufts)

#### **SPRING 2019**

**Chair:** Cayleigh Soderholm (Georgetown)  
**Digital Coordinator:** Haseeb Waseem (Villanova)

**Events Coordinators:** Jackson Utley (Rutgers), Aditya Ram (UChicago),  
Trent Kannegieter (Yale) Akshay Srinivasan (Swarthmore)  
Anish Welde (Penn) Amna Amin (Princeton)  
Karthik Tadepalli (Penn) Javaria Abbasi (UVA)  
Jessica Han (Rutgers) Jessica Han (Rutgers)  
Kelsey Dunn (Wellesley) Leah Block  
Parker Kelly (GW)  
Romina Lilollari (Harvard)  
Alexis Rivett (Wellesley)  
Amna Amin (Princeton)

### **Video Recording Committee**

**Board Liaison & Spring 2019 Chair:** Jasper Primack

#### **FALL 2018**

**Co-Chair:** Michael Froid (Brown)  
**Co-Chair:** Haseeb Waseem (Villanova)  
Ellis London (Brandeis)  
Ravi Simon (Brandeis)  
Sean Wells (UVA)  
Andrew Hamilton (UChicago)  
Teddy Wyman (BU)

#### **SPRING 2019**

Haseeb Waseem (Villanova)  
Ravi Simon (Brandeis)

## Executive Board

### APDA Board Projects

*Alex Johnson (APDA President 2018-2019)*

The Board undertook a number of initiatives this year. Many were successful and many remain incomplete, but there are fruitful takeaways from both, with which the league should be familiar. At the beginning of the year, each Board member wrote down all their goals for what they would like to see happen on the league during their tenure, which proved a helpful metric for guiding our decisions even if not all ideas were realized.

### Online Presence

1. *The website.* The transition to the new website was extraordinarily difficult and presented a number of challenges, such as porting all old standings & results over from the old website, keeping it updated regularly (especially when it came to giving committee chairs access), monitoring spam, and generally encouraging uptake. While the website is now successfully utilized, some problems remain that the next Board should address: porting over old video recordings, making all -OTY rankings visible, monitoring spam comments and accounts (especially on the forum), and updating and importing other key parts of APDA information (e.g., the wiki).
2. *APDA Facebook page.* This year, I significantly increased the extent to which we used the APDA Facebook page as a means for making Board announcements, partially as a function of the new forum's lack of visibility. This was a successful strategy and is one I recommend the next Board continue.
3. *[APDA Committee News & Resources Facebook group](#).* In the summer of 2018, after consulting with the rest of the Board and the Fall 2018 committee chairs, I also created a communal group for all committee information to replace the disparate patchwork of Facebook groups that previously existed for the committees. This has been successful in increasing the net visibility of committee Facebook posts, although I would have preferred more frequent posting (e.g., the GEI shoutouts after every tournament). I recommend the next Board continue this group's usage and encourage committee chairs to use it more actively.
4. *APDA Committee Steering Chat & Presidential Chat Presence.* Each semester, I created a group chat of all the Board members and committee chairs in a steering chat to coordinate activities, plan meetings across tournament, and generally have a larger group of league leaders to consult on changes (c.f., the aforementioned Facebook group). I as the President also was added to every committee group chat both semesters in order to oversee operations, offer Board support beyond the purview of the other Board liaisons if necessary, and help coordinate between groups. Both of these were successful strategies, and I recommend the next Board continue them.

### Committees

1. *Streamlined reapplication.* The Board agreed to make the spring 2019 committee application process much more streamlined for reapplicants from the fall 2018 committee cohorts as a means of encouraging longevity in committee service, which we believe

makes it more likely projects get finished. This seemed successful and suggests that it is important to have longer terms, as the transition--particularly from fall to spring, which occurs over a very short time frame--requires so much work in of itself (changing every committee's website, contact information, linked forms, etc.) that it saps many members' will to complete projects. I would support more reforms aimed towards longevity (e.g., year-long terms for all members or at least for co-chairs, although there are obvious drawbacks to these that should be discussed at length before implementation).

2. *Funding.* For the LGBTQ+ meet-up hosted by GEI at breakfast at the Princeton tournament this year, I observed several members of GEI discussing collectively pitching in to purchase a box of donuts that would serve as an additional draw to the meeting and cut down on the limited time they had by ensuring attendees would not have to locate, obtain, and then travel from the tournament-provided breakfast instead. After consulting with the VP Finance, we determined that the Board's budget could spare the (very low) amount of money required to fund this committee idea. The Board acted similarly when it came to subsidizing a seder hosted during Passover, which fell on a tournament. I am not aware of the Board budget ever being used to fund committee activities, including food, in the past, but attendance at committee meetings is already so regularly low that an added draw seemed like something we could easily justify, given the importance of committees. However, I strongly recommend that the Board develop a much more rigorous process when it comes to providing funding for future committee events, such as an application at the beginning of each semester that can be assessed in line with the state of the budget at the time.
3. *General Comments.* In addition to the online changes mentioned above, the Board struggled this year with finding times to help committees schedule meetings, particularly as the number of unopposed tournaments shrinks and thus time for APDA meetings becomes even scarcer. I would support a norm going forward of encouraging committee meetings hosted on opposed weekends much more frequently (ideally in conjunction with each other, i.e., a Northern and a Southern DI meeting on the same weekend) and that committees and the Board work more closely together in figuring out the scheduling for these as far in advance as possible, particularly as agenda items get tabled to future APDA meetings.

### **Tournament Preparation & Board Assistance**

1. *Dino Database.* In the summer of 2018, I revamped and revitalized the previously woefully outdated and inaccessible Dino Database of all alumni, organized it by location for maximal usefulness, and made it a pinned post on the forum for maximal accessibility. While the process of inputting new entries into the location-sorted sheets is somewhat manual, it has been very successful, and I recommend the next President continue using the existing document.
2. *[Tab Observer Selections & Qualifications](#).* For maximal transparency, the Board developed a list of necessary and preferred characteristics for TO applicants in order to make it clear to prospective TOs why their applications were denied (if they were). Transparency in this regard is often tricky, given equity concerns especially as they relate to bias and hearsay, but at least we think this document was a step in the right direction.

3. [\*Tab Training\*](#). While this is still a work in progress, I worked with Ben Muschol to develop a public-facing NU-Tab guide for tournaments--especially ones with less experienced tabrooms--to use. I also am working with Tanay Patri to developing a publicly accessible folder with files that people can use to NU-Tab, including: a judge upload file, a team upload file, a room upload file, and a master file (finances, housing, etc.). This folder should be available on the linked forum post by summer 2019. I am also working with two other individuals to develop a guide on Tabroom for APDA, which should be done prior to the start of the next season. I strongly encourage future resources on how to tab and generally how to run a tournament.
4. [\*APDA Member Institutions Policies & Practices: A Guide\*](#). Based on a survey that was disseminated to all of APDA from 2017-2018, I developed a guide designed to present a holistic picture of internal operations of APDA teams to help expansion schools--or schools in between the statuses of expansion and established--create internal team policies, practices, and cultures like those of successful and/or highly established schools. Sections include executive board, elections, funding, tournaments, recruitment & tryouts, training & practices, social, equity, casebook, tournament selections, and judging. This guide received very positive feedback from many individuals, and I hope others build on it in the future.
5. *General Comments*. Assisting tournaments was a very tough position for the Board this year, as tournaments would often reach out for help with requests we simply could not accommodate. Beyond providing contact information (which we do, via the Dino Database) and/or a travel subsidy for judges or TOs, there is very little that the Board can do to encourage dino attendance at tournaments, and tournaments very rarely reached out with a request for a travel subsidy (i.e., the limiting factor was rarely the inability to cover a willing dino's travel and lodging). With an increased budget and better planning than I did, it would be possible for the Board to reach out proactively to dinos to offer to fund their travel should they be willing to serve as a TO, although this of course requires coordination with each and every host school to determine again that funding is the limiting factor. However, tournaments instead simply asked for the Board to "help" with securing a TO or a set of dinos to judge, which is a request that the Board cannot really help fill absent (a) actions the host themselves could take (i.e., Facebook messages or emails); or (b) a large amount of funding as an incentive (although there exists a large norm of tournaments covering the cost of travel and lodging for dino judges). I recommend the next Board think long and hard about other ways to solve this problem, as it was a frustrating one for the 2018-2019 Board.

## Transparency

1. *YLS Eligibility poll*. After two Yale Law School students requested to be recognized as a separate institution at WUDC 2019 in order to be allowed to compete--a proposal which required a vote by the WUDC Council, on which I served as the USA representative--I created a poll asking member schools to vote in favor of or against their recognition and promised that my vote would be bound by the results of the poll. I would not recommend this strategy in the future. I think the poll would have been much more useful if I had not made it seemingly mandatory for all schools to vote (instead allowing the most opinionated to come forward) and if I had included an optional comment section where

people could express their rationales for their preference, as what happened in the status quo was a flurry of forum and Facebook discussions that would have been much better resolved by (a) the aforementioned revised version of the poll; (b) a discussion between the YDA and YLS to achieve the conclusion eventually reached at the end of all the discourse. Such radical attempts at direct democracy seem to backfire when it comes to APDA, and something more along the lines of a temperature check that prioritizes the most affected parties while also encouraging internal resolution would be far preferable if an analogous situation arises in the future.

2. *WUDC Report*. After the events that transpired at WUDC 2019 regarding racial discrimination (both in terms of discussion at Council , and in terms of the larger protests), I made the decision to write a brief summary of both in order to keep the APDA community informed of and thinking about important developments in the global world of debate and to solicit suggestions/feedback in light of upcoming proposals to be voted on at Council. I think this was valued by the community based on a straw poll of WUDC attendees from APDA who expressed interest in this type of summary, and I recommend that future Presidents engage in a similar kind of transparency when it comes to the actions they take on APDA's behalf at Council.
3. *General Comments*. Transparency is often a very tricky ground for the Board to navigate, for the simple reason that the things that make it tricky--i.e., equity-based and general sensitivity-related concerns--are the very things that the Board cannot disclose. As per the inclusion of a financial summary within this report, I strongly encourage direct transparency when it comes to the Board budget, as well as decisions made regarding bylaws interpretations (usually, the Board should simply be able to cite the interpretation of the trustees as the rationale for their actions; in particular, a deviation should require explanation if the recommendation made by the trustees was non-binding) and large shifts from pre-existing norms (e.g., the committee Facebook group). I also think the Board should be more active in making the Board Feedback form more public, as it was a helpful source of suggestions this past year.

## Other

1. *Elections*. The Board staggered elections at Princeton this year, electing the President before Round 1, electing the unopposed VP Operations and starting questioning of VP Finance candidates between Rounds 1 and 2, and finishing the VP Operations election and electing the Members-at-Large after Round 3 (in the regular fashion). This was an extraordinarily successful scheduling decision, even though it came at the expense of time regularly allotted for APDA meetings, as elections finished significantly earlier than past years--allowing everyone to get more sleep and thus be both healthier and more competitive without sacrificing the fulfilment of democratic duties to the league. Adding up all the time for the elections would have put the end time around 6:00 am if we had started after Round 3 as in previous years, and elections did not appear to significantly hold up Friday rounds because we concluded much earlier than the next round's pairings were announced after each instance of elections. I strongly, strongly recommend the next Board continue this pattern. However, the Board erred in announcing this departure from tradition somewhat late (due to delays in receiving a concrete green light from Princeton), which likely hurt teams that had to book travel (e.g., flights) far in advance. Future

Boards that use this schedule should announce this plan as early as possible and coordinate with the host of elections as early as possible as well.

2. *Tournament Data*. Spearheaded by Member-at-Large Emily Hu and Ben Muschol, the Board established an online repository of CSV data from every tournament in order to allow for statistical analysis from those who desired to conduct it. This was an excellent initiative by the two of them and should be continued in the future.
3. *Conflict resolution and mediation*. When problems with tournaments made their way to the Board, it is not clear what the official Board action should be (e.g., desanctioning a tournament, working with equity to ban individuals from tournaments, preventing individuals from serving as a TO in the future, etc.). However, we did find that we were often looked to as an impartial body that could help reconcile differences and make recommendations. What we found most effective was to solicit statements from all involved parties, discuss amongst ourselves to identify problems and solutions thereto, and make those identifications public in a statement.
4. *Limits of board purview*. Sometimes throughout the year, the Board was presented with ideas or requests far outside the scope of our purview (e.g., the aforementioned TO/dino assistance beyond providing contact information and a subsidy if necessary, in addition to ideas that would legally implicate the Board and create perverse incentives). It is important for the Body to remember that the Board is comprised of six college students who do not have professional training and to keep that in mind when requesting projects that would require that kind of background.

### **Incomplete Projects**

In the list of ideal projects were many that were not completed. The ones that were most theoretically fleshed out include:

- *Standardized calibration*. If this is done, it should probably be done by the Nationals Tab Staff in conjunction with trustees and/or volunteer dinos to help oversee the system; it is far outside the scope of what the Board normally does.
- *Standardized tab scratch system*. If this is done, it should probably be done by the EOFs (with help from, but not led by, the Board liaison). However, this idea--as theorized by Alison Chan from the University of Pittsburgh--is an excellent one, and I support its pursuit in the future.
- *Tab training workshops*. Hopefully the aforementioned guides will be large steps in the right direction, but with the limited time for APDA meetings and committee meetings (and lack of tab-savvy dinos who are not in the tabrooms at tournaments), it is hard to make these happen. If dino judges want to volunteer to do these, the Board should work to help make that happen; otherwise, the Board may want to setting up online recordings of these.

It has been an honor to lead the 2018-2019 Executive Board!

## **Financial Summary**

*Max Neuman (Vice President for Finance 2018-2019)*

APDA is a nonprofit organization with under \$50,000 in gross revenues annually. As a result, it files a brief 990-E tax form every year with the Internal Revenue Service.

### **FY 2018-2019 Assets:**

At the end of FY 2018, APDA has \$290.40 in its PayPal account, \$445 in cash, and \$2,192.68 in its Wells Fargo account, for a subtotal of \$2928.08. APDA's current liabilities, all in unpaid reimbursements from the recent season, total \$583.99. As a result, APDA's current net balance is \$2,344.99.

The above figure does not include a total debt owed to APDA by member schools of approximately \$992. This consists of \$300 in unpaid dues, \$392 in unopposed fees, and approximately \$300 in other fees. Because the other fees (for unaffiliated debaters and meal-related issues) rely upon the average registration charged at a tournament, their precise amount has not been determined.

### **FY 2018-2019 Budget:**

Revenues:

- Donations: \$50
- APDA Dues: \$3,200
- Unopposed fees: \$889
- Total revenues: \$4,339

Note re dues: A total of ten schools received full or partial APDA dues waivers, for a total of \$900 in waived dues.

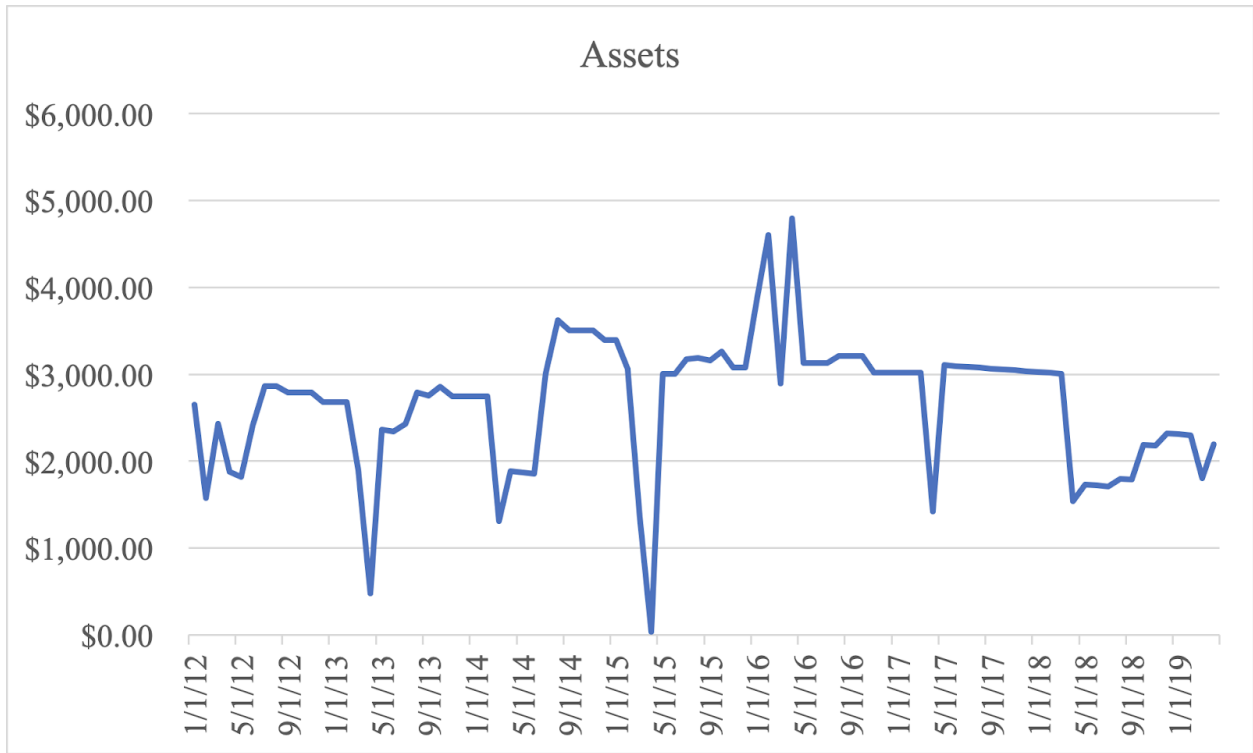
### **Expenditures:**

- Judge Subsidies: \$1,500
- Trophies: \$2,951.36
- Tournament Event Subsidies: \$70
- Website Maintenance: \$159.46
- Wells Fargo Account Fees: \$120
- Total expenditures: \$4,800.82

This represents a total loss of \$461.82, largely accounted for by a \$500 year-on-year increase in nationals judge subsidies and a decrease in the quantity of unopposed tournaments.



**Wells Fargo account trend:**



## **APDA Meeting Minutes**

*Jasper Primack (Vice President for Operations 2018-2019)*

### **UVA 2018 (8/31/18-9/1/18)**

1. The Body sanctioned Harvard as a Saturday-Sunday tournament on September 6th-7th. Harvard's president, Lawrence Bacow, is being inaugurated on the Friday Harvard was initially given, making it difficult for them to host on that day.
2. The Body sanctioned Brandeis to replace Williams on the September 7th-September 8th weekend. Williams was unable to host their tournament.
3. The Body overruled the granting of Michael Koo's reaffiliation exemption.
  - a. Michael Koo's (a Johns Hopkins debater who had graduated in 2018 but had one semester of eligibility remaining) reaffiliation exemption to Hopkins was subject to a vote of disapproval by the Body under the language of section 5.09B.2 of the bylaws, which reads, "The Body may overrule the granting of an exemption with a two-thirds vote and may overrule the denial of an exemption with a majority vote."
4. The Body passed an amendment to section 5.09.B.2 and 5.09B.3 overhauling the language on reaffiliation procedures. The sections now read: "For the APDA National Championship Tournament, the host school shall be entitled to send their qualified debaters, and/or their free seed, to compete at that Championship Tournament" and "The Body is authorized to grant exemptions to enable debaters to debate for schools at which they are not primarily enrolled. Exemptions must be approved by a two-thirds secret vote of the Body."
5. The Body did not approve Michael Koo's new reaffiliation exemption to Johns Hopkins, requested under the new reaffiliation procedure listed in 5.09B.3.

### **Harvard 2018 (10/6/18-10/7/18)**

1. The Body approved the nationals tab staff recommended by Trustees Caleb Foote and Sean Leonard: Matthew Rohn (Tab Director), Katy Li, Pasha Temkin, Zoe Morgan, and Nate Urban.
2. The Body approved an exemption for the Brandeis tournament from the "lunch tax" explicated in 5.08D of the bylaws.
3. The Body passed the following schedule changes:
  - a. Hopkins was removed from the weekend of 2/1/2019.
  - b. Villanova was added to the weekend of 2/1/2019.
4. The Body discussed, but did not vote on, Chicago's proposal to move their tournament from the weekend of 4/12 to the weekend of 2/15, and Wellesley/GW's desire to host a Gender Minorities tournament. Discussion was tabled to Rutgers.
5. The Body discussed, but did not vote on, an amendment proposed by Craig Diskin to create a Best Practice that would recommend tournaments to allow novice-novice teams to rerun cases. Discussion was tabled to Rutgers.

### **Rutgers 2018 (10/19/18-10/20/18)**

1. The Body passed the following schedule changes:
  1. Chicago moved from 4/12-4/13 to 2/15-2/16.

2. GW and Wellesley wanted to oppose each other on a given weekend in order to host Gender Minority tournaments, and the Body moved them to the weekend of 4/19-4/20.
  1. The Body voted to give Wellesley a regular tournament on the weekend of 3/8-3/9, which was Wellesley's condition for hosting a Gender Minority Tournament.
  3. TCNJ II was moved to 4/12-4/13.
  4. UVA II was moved from 4/12-4/13 to 2/15-2/16.
2. The Body discussed and did not pass a Best Practice amendment from Craig Diskin of Brandeis University to suggest that tournaments allow novice-novice teams to rerun cases in prelims during the first couple of months of the fall semester.
3. The Body passed an amendment proposed by Jay Gibbs of UChicago, as an addition to 5.08D (in the bylaws as: "Tournaments shall, as a portion of registration forms and documentation, ask that teams indicate... at least 24 hours before the start of the tournament.")
4. The Body passed an amendment proposed by Mitchell Mullen of Rutgers University to replace the language in 5.08D (in the bylaws as: "Starting on... simple majority vote.")
  1. This amendment removes the clause allowing tournaments to provide a lunch subsidy to avoid incurring the "lunch tax" and mandates that they provide lunch, with exceptions possible through a Board or Body action.

#### **North American Debating Championship 2019 (1/25/19-1/27/19)**

1. The Body approved the Board's decision to exempt Villanova from the fine imposed by section 5.08D of the bylaws.
  - a. Villanova sought the aforementioned exemption. The Board approved an exemption prior to the meeting, consistent with "Tournaments may appeal to the Board for an exemption to this fee one (1) week in advance of their tournament."
2. The Body approved the request of George Washington University and Wellesley College that their tournament weekend be designated a gender minority tournament, per section 5.09D of the bylaws. George Washington University and Wellesley College's on 4/19-4/20 became gender minority tournaments.
3. The Body approved a schedule for the 2019-2020 season, which can be found [here](#).
4. The Body approved Harold Washington College's request that the Body sanction their tournament on 4/5-4/6.
5. The Body passed an amendment proposed by Alison Chan of the University of Pittsburgh to amend section 5.09C(7) (in the bylaws as: "(7) Winning a sanctioned APDA tournament... 175 driving miles of its main campus's zipcode").
6. The Body approved the reaffiliation of Leah Block, a debater currently enrolled at NYU but no longer affiliated with NYU's team, to change her affiliation to CUNY consistent with section 5.08B.
  - a. Unfortunately, due to an error by the presiding officer, the first vote on Leah's reaffiliation (which was in favor of it) was not secret, which was not consistent with the language of 5.08B. The Board consulted with the trustees and determined that an APDA meeting should be held the next day to conduct another vote. The Body held a meeting the next day, and the secret vote was again for reaffiliation.

7. The Body discussed, but did not vote on, an amendment by Claire McMahon Fishman of Brown to amend section 5.09C to the following text: “(2) Advancing to the semifinal round or being one of the two highest-ranking teams from the United States at the North American Debate Championship during that season; (3) Advancing to the octofinal round at the World Universities Debating Championship during that season; [...] or (5) Advancing to the final round at the Yale IV; or (6) Winning the Brandeis Intervarsity tournament.” Based on a temperature check, this amendment did not have enough support to pass at the APDA meeting, and discussion was tabled to the Princeton APDA Meeting.

### **Princeton 2019 (3/29/19-3/30/19)**

The Body elected the Executive Board Officers for 2019-2010 (found above).

### **Nationals 2019 (4/26/19-4/28/19) - Annual Meeting**

1. The Body passed an amendment proposed by Sandy Greenberg of Brown University, amending 5.09B (in the bylaws as: “Competing at British Parliamentary debate tournaments... shall not count towards the use of a semester of eligibility.”).
2. The Body passed a Best Practice amendment proposed by Alison Chan of the University of Pittsburgh (in the bylaws as: “Tournaments who plan on offering registration breaks... requested at the deadline”).
3. The Body passed an amendment proposed by Caleb Foote of Brown University, amending 5.09C (in the bylaws as: “Each member with four or fewer... will not count against this limit.”).
4. The Body discussed, but did not vote on, a proposal by Alexander Chang of Johns Hopkins University to reform the reaffiliation process described in the last paragraph 5.09B.
  - a. This proposal would have replaced the current two-thirds secret Body vote with a two-step process – a vote by the Officers of the Board, and then a review by a committee should the Officers deny the request. Members of the Body expressed varying opinions on the margin of the Board vote, the composition of the committee, and the general sensibility of this proposal, and discussion was tabled to next years’ APDA meetings to accommodate other agenda items.
5. The Body discussed, but did not vote on, a proposal by Drew Harrington of the University of Chicago to increase the dues specified in Appendix A from \$100 to \$200, to raise more money for the Association. Because last year’s Annual Report was not available, the Body elected to table further discussion pending a publication of the Association’s finances.
6. The Body discussed, but did not vote on, the following proposal by Andrew Hamilton of the University of Chicago: “In 5.09c, insert after ‘(b)’ the following text: ‘does not charge any member institution more than \$125, times the number of teams competing on behalf of the member in total registration fees, exclusive of penalty fees for late registration or late changes to registration, (c)’, and replace the existing ‘(c)’ with ‘(d)’.”
  - a. Members of the Body expressed support for this language, and reservations about the specific number and the way that the proposal might harm funding for individual schools. The Body elected to table further discussion to next years’ APDA meetings.

7. The Body elected Nate Urban of Swarthmore College as a Trustee of the Association from 2019 to 2021. Nate ran uncontested.
8. The Body passed a schedule change, switching the weekend of Fordham with the weekend of Johns Hopkins/CUNY on next year's schedule.
9. The Body tabled the following to the online APDA Meeting:
  - a. A vote on the host of 2020 Nationals;
  - b. A proposal by Ben Feshbach of Brandeis University to abolish NOTY.

### **Online Meeting (5/11/19-4/28/19)**

1. The Body approved Princeton as the host of the 2020 National Championship.
2. The Body discussed and did not pass a proposal by Andrew Hamilton of the University of Chicago, which would reform registration in the following way: In 5.09C, insert after "(b)" the following text: "does not charge any member institution more than \$125, times the number of teams competing on behalf of the member in total registration fees, exclusive of penalty fees for late registration or late changes to registration, (c)," replace the existing "(c)" with "(d)."
3. The Body passed a schedule change, moving the Gender Minority weekend to 11/8-11/9 (originally 4/17-4/18), moving Wellsley to 11/8-11/9 (originally 4/17-4/18), moving Tufts to 3/6-3/7 (originally 11/8-11/9), and moving Bates to 4/17-4/18 (originally 11/8-11/9).
4. The Body discussed and did not pass a proposal by Ben Feshbach of Brandeis University to ban NOTY.

## **Committee Updates**

### **Diversity Initiative**

**Board Liaison:** Drew Harrington

**Fall 2018 Co-Chairs:** Jay Gibbs (UChicago), Patricia Ong (Georgetown) (previously CUNY)

**Spring 2019 Co-Chairs:** Jay Gibbs (UChicago), Taleen Khleifat (GW)

This year, the Diversity Initiative continued several past practices and evolved a few others from previous years. First, the DI continued the practice of surveys. These surveys allowed us to gather qualitative data about tournaments and the experiences of those there. Generally, the results from surveys show a few broad trends. Competitive tournaments tend to lead to the most novice debaters feeling excluded. Motions tournaments seem to have more inequitable arguments. Debaters running cases focusing on race consistently feel that their experiences are being negated even when warranted correctly. And, in an interesting find that gave DI the opportunity to coordinate with the Gender Empowerment Initiative, the surveys gave debaters a chance to express their frustration with being postrounded as a female judge by all male debaters. Non-male debaters expressed their frustration at having arguments attributed to someone else.

These problems are not necessarily new to APDA. However, using the surveys, we were able to get a better understanding of where they occur. Surveys gathered in the Fall, for example, were able to gather enough information about sexism in tournament housing, which DI was able to

lend to GEI during their excellent panel at the Harvard Tournament. In the Winter, the survey moved to a digital format for expediency in data collection.

Additionally, the Diversity Initiative launched our first Affinity Groups: small Facebook communities built around identities. At title tournaments, DI held panels and informational sessions meant to show the league how it needs to interface with competitors of color. These events allowed those who experience the problems endemic to competitive debate to speak their truth and suggest solutions. To follow up, DI began publication of blog posts meant to create a living history of how debaters of color conceptualize issues on the league and learn to thrive. After the tumultuous and racially tense events at the Worlds Debating Championship, DI hosted an explanatory session to keep the league informed of issues concerning debate writ large even outside of the APDA circuit.

Overall, this year DI has continued old practices and enhanced them with greater collection of information. Most importantly, however, is that we have begun to make use of the information gathered in taking action. Forming affinity groups, hosting PoC meetups, and creating a blog are simple examples of this. Finally, with the beginning of a massive, automated data project meant to show disparities in speaks on racial or ethnic grounds, DI is set to act even better in the near future. As a committee, our key goals for over the summer and fall quarter are to build a model race-based casebook, actively reach out to HBCUs and bring them into APDA, create strategies for increasing attendance at events and panels, and host even more PoC meetups.

## **Equal Opportunity Facilitators**

**Board Liaison:** Alex Johnson

**Fall 2018 Co-Chairs:** Lydia Kim (GW), Shreya Marathe (Tufts),

**Spring 2019 Co-Chairs:** Lydia Kim (GW), Ally Ross (Georgetown)

### **Fall 2018 Report**

The Equal Opportunity Facilitators committee started off the year with a video conference call in which all members of the committee were able to introduce themselves and familiarize themselves with the details of how to serve as an Equity Officer at a tournament (which announcements to make at the beginning of the tournament, how to take tab scratches, etc.). This was an effective way to ensure everyBody was on the same page regarding the committee and answer any questions. If possible in the future, it would be a good idea to continue these sessions at the beginning of each school year.

This year we had four equity officers at the BU Novice tournament (double the normal amount). Considering the abnormally large amount of equity complaints that are usually made at the novice tournaments, this seems like a smart idea. Despite having four equity officers, we were still overwhelmed by the number of issues brought up. We'd definitely recommend staffing novice tournaments with additional equity officers when possible.

While the number of equity complaints made at each tournament decreased as the year continued, it was still abnormally large compared to past years. Specifically, many debaters brought up issues regarding sexism in their debate rounds. However, it's difficult to determine whether this is due to an increase in the likelihood of debaters bringing these issues to the attention of the EOF committee or an increase in sexism in the league itself.

One last issue of note was the lack of gender parity in APDA North's EOF committee. There was only one non-male identifying member of the committee in APDA North. While the gender parity in the committee as a whole was balanced, having only one non-male identifying member in the North put strain on the committee. When selecting members of the committee in the future, paying attention to this aspect would help prevent a situation where one member of the committee has to serve as an equity officer at numerous tournaments.

### **Spring 2018 Report**

As usual, the Equal Opportunity Facilitators committee began the semester with a video call, training new EOFs on the procedures for taking tab scratches, giving equity briefings, and handling equity complaints at tournaments. Unlike other semesters though, the committee also held an in-person training session at the Georgetown tournament. Compared to video conferences, the in-person session better facilitated conversation among the EOFs, since it felt more personal and focused. Participants asked more in-depth questions about equity procedures than they had during prior online trainings, spending more time on the nuances of equity situations. Though it can be difficult to find tournaments that a majority of the EOF committee will be at given geographic differences, future committees should look into using unopposed or central tournaments for additional in-person EOF trainings or briefing sessions.

In addition, future committees should look into holding more recurring training sessions. Currently, EOFs reach out to committee chairs or other EOFs when they are not sure how to respond to an equity issue and need advice or assistance. Monthly EOF conference calls would provide a space for EOFs to discuss questions, concerns, and common equity issues, better allowing the committee to formulate responses to new equity problem or address gaps from the initial training session.

This semester in particular, the committee saw a standard number of equity complaints, though we do not track the specific number or nature of equity complaints from semester to semester. That said, the EOF committee noted a disproportionate number of complaints about arguments that generalized large groups of people, often by race or income. Additionally, a significant number of female-identifying debaters approached EOFs about judges who attributed their arguments to male-identifying debaters, compared to prior semesters. To address these issues, the EOF committee added relevant reminders to the standard pre-tournament briefing, and committee chairs discussed specific situational responses with EOFs at certain tournaments. While we are not sure about the explanation for this change in equity complaints, future committees should focus on providing more thorough training to EOFs on generalizing statements and argument misattribution in particular.

#### **Note from the Board Liaison**

Two of the most significant changes that were made were establishing a document outlining the decision tree for equity officers dealing with a complaint and underscoring the importance of training at the beginning of each semester. Many applicants, including accepted ones, are well-intentioned and qualified, but the process of handling equity complaints is sensitive and specific and should be explained as clearly and quickly as possible after the announcement of each new cohort. I strongly support the publication of a sample equity policy online.



## **Expansion Committee**

**Board Liaison:** Emily Hu

**Fall 2018 & Spring 2019 Co-Chairs:** Jacob Bezner (Binghamton), Zachary Lemonides (UChicago)

In addition to the routine work of serving as a point of contact for new teams interested in APDA, the Expansion Committee this year rolled out several initiatives to enhance the tournament experience of debaters at expansion schools.

The biggest innovation from previous years was the roll-out of the point-person system. Informed by concerns that members of entirely new teams would often attend one or two APDA tournaments, but--perhaps overwhelmed by the experience--disappear afterwards. The point-person system is designed to make support available to expansion debaters at tournaments. This differs from previous approaches in that, in past years, the Expansion Committee focused primarily on providing pre-tournament support through initiatives such as case assistance and registration/reg break advice. In contrast, the point-person system puts an Expansion Coordinator at each APDA Tournament to be visible and actively engaged with debaters from new teams, to ensure that they are not alone in GA or otherwise lost and confused in the tournament setting.

While this system had a limited roll-out this year, starting in the Winter Quarter, the experience has largely been a positive one, and the anecdotal reviews have largely suggested that this system did help debaters feel more welcome at their first tournaments. For this reason, we suggest future Expansion Committees continue the system and formalize it such that it becomes a regular experience on the league.

This year, the Expansion Committee also placed more emphasis on proactive outreach. The easiest expansion of the league occurs when schools proactively wish to join and reach out to the committee; however, there are many schools that either do not do debate at all, or focus on a different format (such as NDPA or BP) without knowing much about APDA. Coordinators this year have focused on trying to make inroads with these schools and other circuits to build up more robust local APDA circuits. While the *rate* of success was fairly low, this strategy was successful in getting several schools which have not traditionally sent teams to APDA tournaments to attend local competitions. We hope in future years these ties will be expanded upon to bring these schools more fully into the league.

We have also focused on increasing not just tournament attendance of expansion schools, but tournament hosting as well. Expansion Coordinators are actively working with expansion schools on plans to host new tournaments in the next two years; future committees should be vigilant and active in providing the support necessary to make these plans a reality, especially in light of some of the setbacks this year. Expansion schools looking to be added to the schedule for this year found unexpected resistance from school administrators, and despite a high degree of preparedness to compete on APDA and preparedness from team members, the administrative burden of actually hosting a tournament on occasion proved unexpectedly burdensome.

The primary issue highlighted by these experiences is the importance of, and occasional difficulty in securing, administrative support for new schools looking to host. Thus far, expansion guides have been focused largely outwards, with emphasis placed on things such as showing schools how to access VRC rounds, making forum posts, registering for tournaments and the like. While this is important, this year's experience motivated the Expansion Committee to include suggestions for talking to University Administration, as well as the creation of a checklist detailing what administrative support teams looking to host a tournament will need to acquire for a successful tournament.

## **Gender Empowerment Initiative**

**Board Liaison:** Tiffany Yuan

**Fall 2018 & Spring 2019 Co-Chairs:** Aba Tiekou (W&M), Cindy Wang (Georgetown)

The Gender Empowerment Initiative (GEI) enjoyed a successful year facilitating conversations about gender equity in debate and providing mentorship to gender minorities across APDA.

Our 14 members in the fall and 12 members in the Spring all completed hybrids with first and second year gender minorities on the league. Additionally, many of our members completed hybrids at both the George Washington and Wellesley Gender Minorities Tournaments this spring.

Thanks to the cooperation of several institutions throughout the year, we hosted several successful meetings throughout the year.

At Harvard, we held a meeting to discuss the status of #MeToo on APDA inspired by an [email](#) submitted by APDA alumna Tiffanie Schadler on the history of sexual misconduct on the league. Her email reflects upon many of the challenges regarding enforcing safe and equitable spaces at debate tournaments. The concerns that she raised are ones that continue to impact gender minorities on the league.

At Rutgers, we hosted a panel including gender minorities representative of various backgrounds across the league including current debaters and dinos, expansion debaters, LGBTQ+ debaters, and debaters of color. They spoke of their unique experiences and answered questions from the audience regarding ways to improve gender equity within their own teams and across the league.

At Princeton, with the help of the Board, we held a LGBTQ+ meetup during breakfast specifically for queer debaters that was facilitated by our LGBTQ+ Liaisons.

At both Swarthmore and Providence, we again held panels of current debaters from various backgrounds across the league discussing different ways to improve gender equity.

Currently, we are working on a data collection project, which collects data (speaks, ranks, win rates, etc.) of female debaters from 2017-2018 season, and create an analysis based on the results. We are currently 25 percent done with the data collection and organization and expect to have substantial progress during the summer.

Throughout the year, GEI discussed several challenges with regards to improving gender equity on the league. Many of our members continue to express concern with regarding to maintaining equity and safety throughout all aspects of tournaments, including socials and housing. We hope that GEI continues to focus on tackling these problems in the future.

## **Novice Mentor Committee**

**Board Liaison:** Max Neuman

**Fall 2018 Co-Chairs:** Tanay Patri (Northeastern), Cayleigh Soderholm (Georgetown)

**Spring 2019 Chair:** Cayleigh Soderholm (Georgetown)

The purpose of the Novice Mentor Committee (NMC) is to provide resources to debaters who are in their first year of debate, primarily via hybrids, in order to improve their experiences on the league. This year, the committee continued a focused effort on reaching out to novices across the league. We ensured that novices receiving hybrids were from a diverse set of schools in order to distribute resources and opportunities in the best possible way.

This year, the NMC primarily focused on organizing hybrids and running Point of Clarification. The newly-created position of Digital Coordinator was pivotal in ensuring that POC was run efficiently and questions were posted frequently.

With that said, the NMC has great potential to do more for the league. This year, the committee suffered from a lack of organization and coordination, which meant traditional NMC operations beyond hybrids and POC weren't executed to their full extent. For example, the NMC did not put out any articles on novice development this year and did not host events at tournaments. Future NMCs should ensure that the committee is organized, members are aware of their responsibilities, and that there is some central planning to ensure that the committee can execute more functions.

One of the biggest struggles for the committee came as a result of lack of visibility. Despite attempts to hold events at tournaments in order to raise awareness about the work that the committee is currently doing (for example, offering NM hybrids), most of the times the events were pushed off the schedule either due to the presence of other committee events at the tournament or just tournament time/room constraints. This lack of visibility also meant less engagement with the committee outside of tournament events as well.

In order to mitigate the lack of visibility the committee faced, in the spring semester we began posting in Facebook event pages for each tournament to indicate and tag which Novice Mentors were in attendance at each tournament so that novices knew whom they could reach out to for mentorship and advice. We also developed language to incorporate into equity briefings dealing with the equitable treatment of novices in particular, which should be in use by Fall 2019.

Moving forward, the biggest goal for the NMC should be to create a centralized set of accessible resources that individual novices are able to use. This resource bundle should contain details about delivering speeches as well as other debate strategy advice. The density of the documents should also vary, with advice available for both new novices who are attending their first few tournaments as well as those who may be a bit more experienced and are looking to improve and learn.

## **Video Recording Committee**

**Board Liaison:** Jasper Primack

**Fall 2018 Co-Chairs:** Michael Froid (Brown), Haseeb Waseem (Villanova)

**Spring 2019 Chair:** Jasper Primack

The Video Recording Committee, originally the Video Task Force, was formed to create a streamlined, unified process for putting up videos of American parliamentary debate. These videos educate future generations of debaters, and serve as an important institutional memory of past debates. The Video Recording Committee relies on the work of committee volunteers and debaters staying to watch elimination rounds to contribute videos.

In the last year, the Video Recording Committee has moved from Vimeo to YouTube as our primary platform for hosting videos. While Vimeo's password feature provided a greater amount of security for videos, YouTube's ease of access and editing system made it a preferable choice. Therefore, the Video Recording Committee has been uploading videos under the "[APDA Vrc](#)" channel. Dozens of videos from the 2018-2019 season have been recorded, as well every Nationals elimination round in which debaters consented to recording.

The Committee has faced a number of challenges.

1. *Transition from the old website to the new website.* The Body determined that the old website (apdaweb.org) should be replaced with a new website (apda.online). The transition process has not gone smoothly for the videos section – Jasper and the current webmaster (Harry Elliott) are still trying to find a way to automate the importation of video posts from videos.apdaweb.org to the new website. We hope to have this process completed by the end of summer. Moreover, the Wordpress formatting in the new website is different from the old website, creating a roadblock for Committee members who are not familiar with the new website.
2. *Lack of interest in committee participation.* The Committee has historically been a large committee; however, applications to the committee plunged in Spring 2019. Rather than recruiting lots of new members, Jasper instead messaged tournament directors and debaters staying to watch elimination rounds at tournaments and asked them to record videos. While dozens of videos were recorded over the course of the year, the formalized process that in previous years allowed the Committee to work as a team on obtaining consent for and uploading videos has fallen off.
3. *People preemptively refusing consent for round recordings.* Rather than withdrawing consent after videos have been recorded, debaters have begun refusing consent for filming rounds prior to recording. This trend may be the result of camera anxiety, or debaters' fear that videos may circulate despite them withdrawing consent. Next year, the Committee should strive to find ways of reassuring debaters that recorded rounds will be secure.

In the next year, the Committee's goals will be threefold:

- a. First, the Committee will find ways of improving recruitment, ideally in advance of the close of applications.
- b. Second, the Committee will create a guide on technical use of the website.

- c. Third, the Committee will seek to record and publish as many videos as possible, continuing the Committee's years-long mission.

# Plans for Upcoming Year

## Executive Board

- **President:** Drew Harrington (University of Chicago)
- **Vice President for Operations:** Tanay Patri (Northeastern University)
- **Vice President for Finance:** Tiffany Yuan (Johns Hopkins University)
- **Members-at-Large:** Haseeb Waseem (Villanova University), Ellie Singer (Yale University), Anish Welde (University of Pennsylvania)

## Board Projects

*Drew Harrington (APDA President 2019-2020)*

Over the course of the next year, the Board will launch and continue to invest in a number of initiatives to support its goal of making the league both more equitable and more accessible. This past year has seen an expansion of the work done by committees and the number of tournaments APDA has hosted. We are seeing geographical growth and regrowth in the Midwest, the creation of gender and racial minority tournaments, and more schools finding success on TOTY and -OTY. But our focus has to be finding ways of ensuring the quality of each tournament does not go down, and that this activity is one people actually want to participate in week after week.

The first thing we hope to do is increase and standardize judge training on the league. Judge training is an extension of the existing support mechanisms the league and the Board have at its disposal to improve the quality of expansion tournaments. But more importantly, it is one of the few mechanisms we can use to ensure that everyone in each bracket and throughout the tournament receives equitable judging and RFDs. Throughout the year, the Board will be piloting a number of training methods from on-site judge trainings and film debate judging tutorials that will be uploaded to apda.online. These will hopefully follow the preexisting and successful models applied throughout the British parliamentary debate community and can hopefully ensure that not only the best teams have access to quality judge pools.

In addition to training, the Board will attempt to improve tournament quality by reaching out to every tournament, established or expansion, earlier, more often and in conjunction with pre-existing committees to ensure they have the resources necessary to succeed. Tournaments that have needed our help in past years will get it in the form of suggestions for Tab Directors and Tab Observers and help with getting societies to their particular tournaments. This also means better providing subsidies for key parts of tournaments, such as committee initiatives and events. But we also want to find ways of teaching more people how to tab and run tournaments so that more than a few people have tab experience, and we do not have to overstrain tab directors and observers week after week. Part of this involves better accounting for dinos when they leave college and knowing if they are around to help run tournaments, but tab experience also means ensuring tournaments are sharing *amongst each other* data from MIT tab and write ups of how their tournament went to better inform future tournaments of common mistakes and pitfalls that have come up.

Thirdly, we hope to solidify and standardize data collection practices at tournaments and over the course of the season. Over the course of the past few years, the Diversity Initiative and the Gender Empowerment Initiative have taken the lead on finding ways of both collecting and presenting data at tournaments. This has led to a number of breakthroughs and thousands of surveys in the past couple years alone, but we can still do better to actually quantify inequality and inequity on the league. This means continuing to find a way of increasing novice retention as a whole and especially for underrepresented groups in debate. Data is the only objective metric that allows us to gauge experiences on the league, and it is likely the only way to tell how well people who do not already have a voice on APDA are doing. That is why it is essential that the Board and Body continue to create surveys, examine data from tab cards, and eventually standardize how we can assess experiences on the league.

We also have individual plans as liaisons for respective committees. For the Expansion Committee, in addition to the above with increasing judge training, we also hope to spearhead the creation of more guides and revitalize old ones necessary for teams undergoing transition periods. This includes (but not limited to) expansion schools, institutional teams that have multiple varsities graduate, teams that have not maintained a central resource of institutional knowledge, expansion schools whose leaders have graduated, etc. Part of this includes data analysis, such as the examination of registration costs over the last few years to update the registration break guide, the creation of more regulated check-in procedures to handle non-tab related logistics (food, rooms, etc.), and the formation of a Transportation Database to collate information about travel to increase accessibility and visibility of smaller schools on the circuit.

For EOF, we have a few initiatives planned. EOF accountability is important, but the Board currently does not get a sense of what the league thinks of EOF performance until the next public comment period. The first change is simply that we intend to post an anonymous feedback form on the website so Board can constantly understand how EOFs are doing and respond quickly to any concerns instead of needing to wait until the next anonymous comment period. Second, we would like to test drive [Alison Chan's confidential tab scratch forum](#) at tournaments to see if we ought to start encouraging its use at tournaments amongst EOFs, if not also TDs and TOs. Finally, in tandem with Lydia Kim (one of this year's co-chairs across both semesters) and other members of the committee, we intend to develop a comprehensive equity policy and, once completed, assist in putting forward a best practice about using it.

More broadly, the Board wants to make sure more diverse and representative videos are uploaded to the archives. Understanding that some people are not willing to burn their cases, we will attempt to organize recorded demonstration rounds using motions with debaters from various schools, gender and racial identities, and more to expand the individuals represented in videos.

For the Novice Mentor Committee, we are planning to conduct a review of novice training resources on the league and implement additional resources and networks of support. The first part of this process will be a survey as well as discussions with representatives from the league's institutions to better understand the strengths, weaknesses and structure of their novice training programs. We recognize the importance of updating the public support resources and the benefits



that this can have for expansion schools, schools that have a large amount of novices, and/or schools with lower varsity retention. Alex Johnson created a great document (that everyone should read: [APDA Member Institutions Policies & Practices: A Guide](#)). We hope to build on this regarding novice training and implement more public resources and strategies. We would greatly appreciate if representatives or members of institutions could fill out the following form: [APDA League Novice Training Review](#). We have already begun generating ideas on this and are currently looking into open source curricula, revamping the video lectures introducing novices to APDA, developing more in-depth content lectures, etc. The second part of the project, which we hope to begin earnestly in the fall is the actual implementation of these strategies. We welcome any input from the community at large, and look forward to taking this project forward!

## 2019-2020 Schedule

*Tanay Patri (Vice President for Operations 2019-2020)*

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Tournament</b>
September 6-7	Binghamton (APDA Meeting)
September 13-14	W&M, Providence College
September 20-21	GW, BU, Swarthmore (Novice)
September 27-28	UVA, Haverford, Smith
October 4-5	UMD, Columbia, HWS (NAUDC)
October 11-12	Harvard (APDA Meeting)
October 18-19	Penn, Brown
October 25-26	Pitt, Yale IV
November 1-2	AU, NU (Pro-Ams)
November 8-9	TCNJ, Wellesley (Gender Minority)
November 15-16	Fordham (APDA Meeting)
November 22-23	Hopkins, CUNY
December 6-7	Villanova, Brandeis IV
January 10-11	Chicago
January 17-18	CMU, Tufts
January 24-25	UVA, NorthAms
January 31-February 1	Georgetown, Brandeis, WUSTL
February 7-8	Rutgers (APDA Meeting)
February 14-15	GW, NU, Moody Bible
February 21-22	CUNY, Yale (Pro-Ams)
February 28-29	NYU, Wellesley
March 6-7	F&M, Stanford, Tufts
March 13-14	Temple, Brown
March 20-21	AU, BU
March 27-28	Princeton (Elections & APDA Meeting)
April 3-4	Swarthmore, Dartmouth
April 10-11	W&M, West Point
April 17-18	TCNJ, Bates
April 24-25	Princeton (Nationals)