

National Speech Tournament Charter

Adopted by AFA National Meeting, November 3, 1978

Amended by AFA membership vote, 1983, 1984, 1985, 2005, 2013, 2018, 2020

I. The National Speech Tournament Committee

A. Committee Membership

1. The National Committee shall consist of the following AFA members:
 - a. ~~The Chair of the NST Committee (ex-officio, voting member--tie breaking only)~~
 - b. The Vice Chair of NST Committee (ex-officio, voting member)
 - c. The Secretary of the NST Committee (ex-officio, voting member)
 - d. The Chair of each District (elected, voting members)
 - e. The tournament director (ex-officio, voting member)
 - f. The tournament host (ex-officio member with voice but no vote)
 - g. A representative of the Educational Practices Committee (ex-officio member with voice but no vote)
 - h. The Chair of the American Forensic Association National Speech Tournament Board of Trustees (ex-officio, voting member)
 - i. The Chair of the Committee for Diversity, Equity, and Access appointed by the Chair of the AFA-NST (ex-officio, voting member)
 - j. **Sexual Harassment Officer (SHO) (ex-officio, voting member)**
 - k. One representative appointed by the AFA President from each of the AFA Regional Forensic Associations to serve for two-year terms (ex-officio, voting members)
 - l. A Two-Year College Representative appointed by the President of Phi Rho Pi.
 - m. Immediate Past chair of National Committee (ex-officio, voting member)
 - n. Two National Student Representatives elected from the body of the district student representatives (voting members)
2. Election Procedures
 - a. The District representatives shall be elected to office at the District Tournaments and shall be members of the AFA.
 - b. The Tournament Director and the Tournament Host shall be appointed by the Committee.
 - c. District Chairs in odd numbered districts shall be elected during odd numbered years, and District Chairs in even numbered districts shall be elected in even numbered years.
3. Term of Membership
 - a. The Tournament Director and the Tournament Host shall serve as long as the National Committee wishes to retain their services, and as long as those appointed to such positions consent to serve.
 - b. All other members shall be elected to a two-year term.
 - c. Terms of office shall begin on May 1 of each year.
 - d. Members representing the Regional Forensic Associations shall be appointed as follows: Southern and Eastern representatives shall be appointed in odd numbered years, and Central and Western representatives shall be appointed in even numbered years.

National Speech Tournament Charter

4. Officers
 - a. The Committee Chairperson and other necessary officers shall be elected by and from within the membership of the voting members of the National Committee.
 - b. The National Chairperson of the NST Committee shall be elected for a two-year term.
 - c. The Vice Chair shall be elected for a two-year term and will replace the National Chairperson should the Chairperson resign or be unable to fulfill duties of the office during the tenure of the office.
 - d. The Secretary shall be elected for a two-year term.
5. The constituency represented by the AFA-NST Chair, and the AFA-NST Secretary shall be represented for their terms for the purposes of debate and voting during AFA-NST Committee meetings by a new person chosen by regular procedures.

B. Duties

1. The following rights shall be reserved to the National Committee:
 - a. to review present district practices and initiate, when necessary, uniform procedures for the selection of National participants and district committees.
 - b. to regulate the number of districts and the geographical and numerical size of the districts.
 - c. to establish a uniform formula for determining the number of participants which the districts may qualify via the District Tournaments, and the formula for participants to qualify via the AT-Large Method
 - d. to establish and administer the National Speech Tournament procedures with respect to:
 - (1) number and form of qualifying rounds
 - (2) events and rules for each number of elimination rounds
 - (3) number of elimination rounds
 - (4) other procedures which may be necessary to the function of the NST
2. The National Committee shall be responsible for the establishment and execution of tournament and related policy with respect to:
 - a. number of judges per round
 - b. qualification and selection of guest judges
 - c. payment of guest judges
 - d. social features (banquet, programs, publications, awards, etc.)
 - e. eligibility of participants
 - f. selection of a tournament director
 - g. selection of a site
 - h. selection of ballots
 - i. publicity activities
 - j. appointment of subcommittee to assist the tournament director in the administration of the National Speech Tournament
 - k. maintaining an up-to-date list of institutions carrying on speech programs and the instructional staff of those programs.

National Speech Tournament Charter

C. Rules of Procedure

1. A quorum of two-thirds of the voting members of the National Committee shall be required for transaction of National Committee business.
2. Policy decisions shall require a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting, or a simple majority vote in two consecutive years.

II. Meetings

- A. The AFA-NST Committee shall have a minimum of two meetings each academic year.
- B. Each district should establish and hold an open meeting. The purpose of the meeting shall be to elect district committees and for committee members to receive information and feedback which they can bring to the attention of the AFA-NST Committee.

III. AFA-NST Eligibility

- A. Any accredited (or pursuing accreditation) two or four-year college/university shall be eligible to send participants to the NST.
- B. To gain eligibility, participating institutions must be in good standing with the financial requirements as established by the NST Committee and Board of Trustees.
- C. Students earning qualifying legs with the at-large qualification method must be full or part-time undergraduate students enrolled for a minimum of six semester hours or the equivalent per term.
- D. Eligibility requirements for participants shall be determined by the AFA-NST Committee and set forth yearly in the Tournament announcement and information, with the stipulation that no student should be allowed to compete who has participated in judged intercollegiate competition in 3 or more tournaments (as defined in the alternate qualifying procedures as established by the NST Committee) in eight or more six-month periods (July 1 - December 31 or January 1 - June 30).
- E. Participants in the AFA-NST must be full-time or part-time undergraduate students. An undergraduate is defined as a person not possessing a baccalaureate degree. Under unusual circumstances, involving valid educational or professional justifications, students who have received bachelor degrees may participate if they never competed as an undergraduate; are enrolled in an advanced/accelerated/combined Bachelor's/Master's program; completed their Bachelor's Degree within three years, and are finishing their Master's Degree at the same institution. These students may compete with this exception for two consecutive time blocks.
- F. If a participant qualifies for the AFA-NST while eligible under Sections C and D and graduates during the academic year, such participant will be able to compete in the AFA-NST for that academic year.

IV. Qualifications for the AFA-NST

- A. The NST shall establish and maintain the procedure for determining the qualifications procedures to be met by participants in the National Speech Tournament.
- B. A District Qualifying Tournament shall be held in each District.
 1. The District Tournament shall be open subject to the following criteria:
 - a. The NST subscription fee must be paid.
 - b. The school has met established eligibility requirements.

National Speech Tournament Charter

- c. The entry meets criteria established and published by the AFA-NST and District Committees.
2. Rules and procedures of District Tournaments shall not violate the intent of rules and procedures of the AFA-NST Committee.

V. AFA-NST Board of Trustees

A. Membership

1. The Board shall consist of five members of the AFA appointed by the President of the AFA with the approval of the National Speech Tournament Committee.
2. Each member shall be appointed for a term of five years except that of the five members appointed in the Board of Trustees in 1979, one member shall be appointed for a term expiring in 1980, one member for a term expiring in 1981, one member for a term expiring in 1982, one member for a term expiring in 1983, and one member for a term expiring in 1984. In the event of death or resignation of a member of the Board, the President of the AFA shall appoint a person to fill the unexpired term.
3. The Chairperson of the Board shall be elected annually by and from the membership of the Board of Trustees. Any member of the AFA shall be eligible to serve on the Board.
4. The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for all financial affairs of the AFA National Speech Tournament. It shall draft the budget for each AFA-NST, established any assessments for the districts and the participating schools, and sign any agreements with sponsoring institutions, with the approval of the AFA-NST committee. It shall have the sole authority in negotiating with the agent(s) financing the AFA-NST.
5. The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for establishing whatever legal framework is required for it to execute its duties.

VI. National Speech Tournament Board of Trustees: Statement of Procedures Governing Income and Disbursements

A. Source of Income

1. *Subsidy from the American Forensic Association:* The amount of the subsidy requested will be determined by the Board Of Trustees meeting at the National Speech Tournament. The request for the subsidy will be made by the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.
2. *Subscription Fees:* The amount of the subscription fee for the following year will be established by the Board of Trustees meeting at the NST. Subscription fees are to be collected not later than December 31, by each District Chairperson. A portion of the fees must be designated to be retained by the Districts, with a check for the remaining fees, together with the names of the schools, directors, and mailing addresses being forwarded to the Chairperson of the AFA-NST committee. By January 10, all fees collected by the National Chairperson of the AFA-NST Committee shall be forwarded, along with a list of subscribers, to the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees. No subscription fees will be accepted after December 31, unless approval is given by both the AFA-NST Committee and the Board of Trustees.

National Speech Tournament Charter

3. *Registration Fees:* The amount of the registration fee for the following NST shall be established by the Board of Trustees meeting at the annual convention of the National Communication Association. Registration Fees shall be collected by the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees or a person designated by the Treasurer. Receipts are to be issued by the Board of Trustees.
4. *Grants and Subsidies:*
 - a. Procedure: The Board of Trustees shall be the sole agency-designated by the American Forensic Association to negotiate with sponsoring evns, groups, organizations, or institutions. All negotiations must be conducted by or at the direction of the Board. All agreements with sponsors are to be approved by the Board of Trustees. The AFA-NST Committee is authorized by the board to negotiate with educational institutions interested in hosting the NST Before the final approval is given by the NST Committee, the Board of Trustees must be furnished the following documents.
 - (1) A letter of invitation from the principal officer of the institution.
 - (2) A statement of any goods and/or services to be provided by the institution.
 - (3) A statement of any charges to be made for use and care of any facilities.
 - b. The official acceptance of an invitation to host the NST shall be written by the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.

B. Disbursement of Funds

1. Treasurer of the Board of Trustees
 - a. The Treasurer, elected annually by the Board from among its membership at the meeting of the Board during the NST, shall be authorized to receive and disburse funds in the name of the Board of Trustees.
 - b. The Treasurer shall be authorized to make cash advances to the Chairperson of the NST, the Director of the NST, and the Tournament Host. Any cash advances are to be covered by receipts and any balances are to be received by the Treasurer not later than June 1 following the NST for which the advance was made. The Treasurer is authorized to make payments on receipts of invoice for goods and services listed as line items in the budget. A written report of income and disbursements shall be prepared by the Treasurer and forwarded to the members of the Board, the NST Committee, and all subscribing schools not later than August 1.
2. The Budget for the AFA-NST: The budget for each AFA-NST is to be developed by the AFA-NST Tournament Director, the Chairperson of the NST Committee, and the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. The NST committee must be consulted concerning the line items of the budget. The budget must be approved by the Board of Trustees during the meeting at the annual convention of the National Communication Association. Only the Chairperson of the NST Committee, the NST Tournament Director, and the Tournament Host are authorized to incur indebtedness in the name of the Board of Trustees. Such indebtedness may not exceed the sum specified in the budget line item without approval of the Board of Trustees. The Treasurer is to be notified when such approval is given.

National Speech Tournament Charter

VII. Ratification

Upon passage by a majority vote of those AFA members present and voting at a regular AFA business meeting, this charter shall be adopted.

VII. Amendment

The NST charter shall be subject to amendment by submitting a printed ballot mailed to the membership of AFA after discussion and passage of the recommendation by those present and voting at the annual AFA meeting. A summary of the pro and con arguments from the discussion shall accompany the proposal. The ballots shall carry instructions that include a return deadline date no earlier than thirty days from date of mailing. Changes in the charter will be accepted if ratified by a majority vote of the members voting. Changes in the charter shall not apply to the NST immediately following the annual meeting at which changes are voted upon.