



## PAN-AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES DEBATING CHAMPIONSHIP (PUDC) 2016

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### ADJUDICATION POLICY

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Quality adjudication is a priority for Pan-Ams. All judges are expected to provide fair and competent judging and to make themselves available for detailed constructive feedback after debates. The organizers and adjudication team of the tournament are committed to offering a high standard of adjudication and ensuring a diverse judge pool.

#### INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATORS

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To further this mandate, Pan-Ams will place an emphasis on securing capable independent adjudicators through recruitment and open application. The tournament will provide attractive subsidies to individuals who, in addition to having a strong judging/debating CV, have displayed a commitment to developing a debate culture, especially in an international context. Pan-Ams aims to ensure the availability of at least one subsidized adjudicator per room for all rounds. Subsidized judges may be invited to conduct workshops in Jamaica prior to the event.

The application for independent adjudicators will open on September 15, 2015 and will close on December 15, 2015. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis. Decisions will be announced in two cycles: the first on November 15, and the second on January 15. The application form will be posted online. A standard adjudication subsidy package includes: full accommodation for four (4) nights in a hotel suite, inclusive of three (3) meals per day, entertainment and beach passes, and a travel subsidy of approximately \$400, and airport pickup and transportation to and from all rounds. Subsidies packages will vary depending on the competences of adjudicators, available resources and time of application.

#### OPEN PRELIMINARY ROUNDS AND FEEDBACK FROM ELIMINATION ROUNDS

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At Pan-Ams, ensuring accountability and facilitating participant development are core objectives. All **preliminary rounds** will be open. Adjudicators will be required to disclose results and provide feedback at the end of each preliminary round. As a result of power-matching, the last few preliminary rounds are expected to yield the closest debates, which makes feedback even more crucial for teams.

For **elimination rounds**, results are not immediately disclosed. Instead they are announced to the tournament upon the conclusion of the respective set of rounds. For these rounds, adjudicators will be required to provide oral justification and feedback to teams *after* the announcement. There will be time for this in the schedule. This arrangement relieves teams of the burden of tracking down judges for feedback and provides judges space to explain their decision to teams while it is still fresh in their minds.

## MANDATORY FEEDBACK ON ADJUDICATORS

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The adjudication team will be giving considerable weight to judge feedback scores in deciding the judge break and judge allocations. It is our belief that judges and debaters should be meeting each other halfway: debaters need to persuade the average reasonable voter, while judges have a duty to demonstrate that their decisions reflect a thoughtful and plausible evaluation of the debate. For some debates, there may be several valid, plausible calls.

In the same way that judges are able to rank teams, debaters deserve the ability to provide feedback on their judges. Moreover, feedback from adjudicators on each other provides valuable insight on the deliberative and reasoning process. We believe that peer review is an important step in creating an accountable tournament culture.

Many of the problems associated with the feedback system involve incomplete or unreliable data. To address this, feedback on chairs will be **mandatory** for all teams. Similarly, feedback from chairs on panelists and vice-versa will also be **mandatory**. Runners will be instructed to ensure that all tournament participants complete feedback forms in addition to other compliance measures. Any statistical anomaly in feedback scores (such as low marks from a vengeful team) is likely to be offset by having many data points.

## JUDGE ALLOCATION AND PANEL BALANCING

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The adjudication team will strive to allocate at least one highly ranked adjudicator to every debate room in all rounds and rotate judges across brackets to ensure that all teams benefit from quality adjudication. The adjudication team will also strive to ensure that panels are sufficiently balanced – as far as is practicable – to facilitate diverse and representative deliberations.

## RELEASE OF ADJUDICATION TAB AND FEEDBACK

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The tournament will publish the tabulation of adjudicator feedback. We will strive to anonymize the information (ex. include aggregate scores per round instead of team-specific scores). Teams will be given the opportunity to also provide written, qualitative feedback for their judges, which we will release to judges anonymously.

## JUDGE TRAINING AND TESTING

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The adjudication team will administer a judge test prior to the tournament. A recorded debate and judge briefing will also be released online. We will strive to conduct local workshops for judges weeks before the event.

The adjudication team looks forward to highly competitive and memorable Championship in 2016.

**Sharmila Parmanand**, Chief Adjudicator

**Rodje Malcolm**, Chief Adjudicator

**David Alatorre López**, Chief Adjudicator

**Alejandro Jose Garcia Noguera**, Chief Adjudicator

