

NIU Forensics
Organizational Constitution

Ratified, May 2, 2000

Amended, August 22, 2015

I. PREAMBLE

Forensics was formed in 1928, and became an official chapter of Pi Kappa Delta, the national honor society for forensics participants, in 1934. For more than eight decades, Forensics has provided meaningful opportunities for students to learn the skills of problem solving, advocacy, oral interpretation, and public speaking. “Forensics” is a term derived from Aristotle’s ancient text, The Rhetoric, which then meant the particular kind of speaking associated with the establishment of past-fact. “Forensics” is more generally used to describe organizations devoted to the study and practice of public expression. Particular emphasis is placed on skills associated with advocacy and activism; however additional activities include other forms of oral expression, such as dramatic interpretation, poetry and prose. Throughout NIU Forensics’ decades of activity the organization has been responsible for the training of many NIU student leaders. During the late 1960s, at the time the NIU Student Association was forming, members of NIU Forensics were active participants in the student power movement on campus. Since then, as a student organization, NIU Forensics has become a training ground for student leaders and future advocates. Alumni often continue their interest in public advocacy and leadership into their impressive careers.

II. Mission

- a. Forensics provides meaningful opportunities for students to learn the skills of problem solving, advocacy, oral interpretation, and public speaking. Particular emphasis is placed on skills associated with advocacy and activism; however, additional activities include other forms of oral expression, such as dramatic interpretation, poetry and prose. The mission of Northern Illinois University Forensics is to provide students with oratory skills to help them in their future careers and in life.
- b. At NIU these activities are conducted within one student organization. While NIU Forensics is a fully functional student organization, funded by student funds and governed by student officers, the organization continues to cultivate its traditionally useful association with the Department of Communication for coaching support. Thus, NIU Forensics remains grounded in the rich traditions of student power and advocacy, and benefits from the combined knowledge of highly skilled experts in the field of argumentation and speech.

III. The Organization

- a. Competitive Intercollegiate Debate
 - i. Competitive debate at NIU is a program designed to train students interested in becoming advocates, through travel to debate tournaments within the region and nationally.
 - ii. Competitive debate strives to access different levels of competition that provide continuous exposure to judged debate rounds. This requires that NIU belong to some nationally recognized forensics organizations, such as the Lincoln Parliamentary League (LPL), the National Parliamentary Debate Association (NPDA), and Pi Kappa Delta (ΠΚΔ). From time to time, the members of Forensics may choose to enter other national associations as needed to support a healthy competitive schedule.
- b. Individual Events (I.E.)

- i. The individual events aspect of the program offers NIU students opportunities to improve their public speaking, limited preparation, and oral interpretation skills. Activities include the following: informative speaking, persuasive speaking, communication analysis, impromptu speaking, extemporaneous speaking, after-dinner speaking, dramatic interpretation, prose interpretation, poetry interpretation, program of oral interpretation, and duet interpretation.
- c. Academic Outreach (These activities will be manifested as the board sees fit to instate the activities during the academic years. Specific responsibilities fall to the officers assigned, see V.C)
 - i. Public Debate – involves students interested in learning about the function of debate in a democratic society. The purpose of this wing of the organization is to spur public discussion on pressing issues facing local communities. The public debate organization seeks to use discussion and debate as a tool to expand the campus community’s understanding of important political issues, as well as the potential role that public discussion and debate can play in resolving these issues. Public debate strives to facilitate a regular schedule of on-campus discussion and debate forums, it involves the membership of both competitive debate and individual events competitors, as well as those seeking access to Forensics for public debate exclusively.
 - ii. Public Speaking Workshops – as public speaking is a great fear to the general populace, we feel that it is our responsibility to teach individuals across campus, and in the community, skills of advocacy. Therefore, as the need presents itself, members of NIU Forensics are able to coach and run workshops to help people become more competent and effective public speakers.
 - iii. Interdisciplinary Debate – One of the current missions of the college is to promote interdisciplinary learning across campus. Thus NIU Forensics has responded by working with the College of Business Accounting Master’s Program. The students are able to teach their debate and critical speaking skills to business students, and in turn forensics students are taught about economic policy

IV. Membership

- a. A student is automatically an “active member” of NIU Forensics once they have represented the university as a competitor at one tournament. This makes them members for the entire year. Each year that follows, one is considered a member once they have declared their intention to compete at some point during the season. For the purposes of Board elections students intending to transfer to NIU will be considered members when the Board elections are held at the end of the academic term.
- b. It is the intention of NIU Forensics to view membership as widely as possible. Other members may be recognized as active members once they have served Forensics in some capacity (including but not limited to participating in a public debate function, workshop, or interdisciplinary learning; and assisting in activities necessary to advance new or original programming initiatives) upon the recommendation of any member and/or faculty advisor, and after such recommendation is approved by the Executive Board (hereby referred to as “the Board”).
- c. In addition to “active membership” status, NIU Forensics will, from time to time, recognize “honorary members.” This will require the vote of at least five (5) board members.
- d. A student can be removed as a member upon sufficient rationale. All efforts shall be made to ensure the parties involved receive a fair and responsible hearing of their concerns. The process shall be as follows:
 - i. A member, coach, and/or the Faculty Advisor (the “Petitioner”) must petition the Board

to consider the actions of another member or members as “unacceptable,” either because the behavior violated the rules of the Constitution to an extent great enough to warrant expulsion, or because the behavior of the member violated an established code of conduct under the Student Judicial Code. This complaint must be given to the President and Faculty Advisor, who then shall provide the complaint to the person being charged with the unacceptable behavior (the “Respondent”) in person.

- ii. The President shall seek a written response from the Respondent and deliver the response to the Board. This response must be given to the President and Faculty Advisor in person, within five (5) days from the date that the Faculty Advisor provided the copy of the complaint to the Respondent.
- iii. Following the distribution of the petition and response, the Faculty Advisor will then consult the appropriate university official for guidance on the rights of the Petitioner and Respondent. The Faculty Advisor shall communicate the results of this inquiry to the Board.
- iv. A meeting shall be called between the Petitioner and the Respondent, chaired by the Faculty Advisor, to determine the appropriate protocol for adjudicating the matter, based on communication with the appropriate university official.
- v. If it is decided that a hearing of the Board is to be held in order to determine whether the Respondent will or will not be removed as a member, the vote required for removal shall be at least six (6) Board members, including at least two (2) members from the Respondent’s activity (competitive debate or individual events). All proceedings shall be open to all members and coaches, at all times.

V. Governance

a. Executive Board

- i. A minimum of two IE and debate members must be represented on the entire executive board.
- ii. Each board member shall hold an office, including four officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer) who shall be considered “officers” by the Student Association
- iii. The Board shall be charged with the overall administration of the program, with a concentration on policy formation and short and long-term planning for the organization, with the exception of “coaching decisions” which are deferred to the coaching staff as assembled under the authority of the Director of Forensics (See Section V, b).

b. Faculty Advisor and Coaches

- i. NIU Forensics shall continually seek the service of the “Director of Forensics,” within the Department of Communication (hereby referred to as “the Department”), as the Faculty Advisor. This is appropriate as he or she is the resident expert in forensics pedagogy and is institutionally positioned to provide leadership to a coaching staff that includes additional faculty members and graduate students associated with the Department (hereby referred to as “coaches”). This tradition of cooperation as existed since NIU Forensics became a student organization upon the founding of the Student Association in 1969.
- ii. The Director of Forensics and the coaches are a crucial component to the success of NIU Forensics and are to be respected as advisors and supporters of the long-term development of the organization. In light of this respect and appreciation, and in recognition of the unique expertise required to coach forensics, the members of NIU Forensics shall defer all “coaching decisions” to the Director of Forensics and coaches.

This association respects a tradition as well as a successful strategy for delivering high-quality forensics training to students regardless of academic major and/or career interest. In addition, this arrangement allows the members of NIU Forensics access to facilities managed by the Department, including a practice room, computer technology, and a consistency in personnel needed to maintain responsible relationships with university units such as the Transportation, Accounting, and Travel Offices.

- iii. "Coaching decisions" are taken to be those decisions that involve judgments about skill-level and the potential to receive a meaningful experience within the intercollegiate competitive environment. Included are decisions regarding which students are prepared to travel to tournaments and which students should be partnered together for maximum competitive success.
- iv. The Director of Forensics and coaches will make decisions regarding what tournaments the students should attend, how much the organization should budget and spend for each tournament, and what initiatives should be sponsored to insure the organization's longevity as a place for the honing of advanced forensics skills, and present these decisions to the Executive Board for discussion to improve overall communication between the Executive Board and the coaching staff.
- v. This Constitution recognizes that coaches are under the exclusive authority of the Department, as supervised by the Chair, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the Director of Forensics of the Department.
- vi. Respecting the tremendous commitment of the Director of Forensics and the coaches, all members of NIU Forensics are to treat these advisors with a collegiality appropriate to an extra-curricular, educational setting.
- vii. Respecting the professional obligation of the Director of Forensics to abide by university rules and regulations for personnel matters, any concerns or complaints about the performance and behavior of coaches shall be directed to the Director of Forensics who shall consider the matter within the proper supervisory context of the Department (see section VI, c, i).

c. Duties of the Officers

i. President

1. The President shall chair all meetings of the board in which business is managed in a manner appropriate to the mission of the Board.
2. The President shall be responsible for interpreting the language of the Constitution.
3. The President shall be responsible for the overall coordination of the duties of all officers as well as those tasks to which the Board has committed.
4. The President shall represent the organization at all mandatory Student Association meetings, including but not limited to meetings related to organizational recognition, budgetary policy, and meetings of the Student Association Finance Committee. The President shall take personal responsibility for notifying the Board and Faculty Advisor of requests for information, important deadlines, meeting announcements, and organized philanthropic opportunities.
5. The President shall represent the organization by opening each event sponsored by NIU Forensics, to be substituted at suitable times by the Vice President or other appropriate officer.
6. The President shall make an on-going effort to greet and orient all new members of the organization, regardless of individual affiliation.
7. The President shall report to the Board the failure of any officer to accomplish

a duty associated with their position.

8. The President shall be responsible for the training of all new officers, especially the succeeding President.
9. The President shall attend the beginning portion of weekly staff meetings to act as a liaison between the executive board and the coaching staff, and meet weekly with the Faculty Advisor to continuously assess goals and plans.

ii. Vice President

1. The Vice President is primarily responsible for the recruitment of active members, a duty that includes but is not limited to the organization's presence at "welcoming" events at the beginning of the year, the arrangement of the annual "Organizational Meeting" to take place in early September, monitoring the orientation activities of the organization, how the organization is governed, and the management of concerns expressed by potential and/or new members. To facilitate such management, the Vice President shall meet each new member in order to inform them personally of opportunities available within the organization and how the organization can assist them in the accomplishment of their goals.
2. The Vice President is expected to develop and maintain initiatives to expose the student population to the services offered by NIU Forensics, and assist in recruitment efforts. The Vice President shall devise a "Recruitment Strategy" to be presented and approved by the Board prior to the annual "Organizational Meeting."
3. The Vice President shall assist the President in the duties of his or her office, including managing the meetings of the Board, coordinating the duties of all officers and tasks to which the Board has committed, representing the organization at all mandatory Student Association meetings, meeting frequently with the Faculty Advisor, opening events sponsored by NIU Forensics, and greeting and orienting new members of the organization.
4. The Vice President shall be the liaison between NIU Forensics and Pi Kappa Delta, including making the multiple resources of Pi Kappa Delta known to members of NIU Forensics, monitoring "levels" of Pi Kappa Delta rankings, and facilitating the initiation of new Pi Kappa Delta members. Formal notification of Pi Kappa Delta membership opportunities shall be provided to all members no later than the end of the first week of the spring semester.
5. The Vice President shall coordinate the peer-to-peer mentorship program for new members as well as manage social events.
6. The Vice President shall maintain cleanliness in the team room and remind others of proper team room etiquette.
7. The Vice President shall create a focus group for alumni with the coaching staff as well as a summer event.
8. The Vice President shall facilitate a national's workshop for alumni and current members before the national series in the spring semester.

iii. Treasurer

1. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the annual preparation and representation of the budget to the Student Association.
2. The Treasurer shall monitor the management of up-to-date records of all expenditures during the course of the season.
3. The Treasurer shall meet monthly with the Faculty Advisor to discuss the operation of the budget.

4. The Treasurer shall devise and implement strategies for generating revenue for the organization.
5. The Treasurer shall assist in the in-person fundraising efforts of the NIU Forensics Foundation officers and representatives.

iv. Secretary

1. The Secretary shall maintain a record of all business meetings of the Board, and shall make available to all members minutes of meetings no later than one week following the meeting. "Maintain" refers to the keeping of all records in a central, safe location.
2. The Secretary shall notify board members, coaches, and members of scheduled board meetings at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting by posting a notice on electronic mail, in writing on the Forensics Facebook page, and when appropriate by email.
3. The Secretary shall maintain an organized mailbox system in the Forensics practice room for all board members and the Faculty Advisor.
4. The Secretary shall maintain an up-to-date electronic mail list of all members and coaches and shall be ready to disseminate messages to the organization upon the request of members and coaches.
5. The Secretary shall receive declarations of interest for Board elections, and confirm such interest no later than 48 hours prior to the election. In addition, the Secretary shall issue ballots for the Board elections to all active members present at the election.
6. The Secretary shall be responsible for organizing the annual Forensics Banquet, including securing a site, issuing invitations, arranging the program, and generating awards.
7. The Secretary shall maintain a complete, up-to-date record of membership, including contact information for the school term and summer.

v. Public Relations Officer

1. The Public Relations Officer shall support all aspects of the program by providing notification to campus and local media news of competitive accomplishments and upcoming public debate activities. Resulting press releases, articles, and public commentary shall be collected and maintained for promotional use and history.
2. The Public Relations Officer shall support the Vice President in planning the annual "Organizational Meeting," with a particular emphasis on notifying potential members of the event through local media and advertising.
3. The Public Relations Officer shall spotlight organization accomplishments, such as upcoming important dates, alumni information, and sending tournament results to the Communication Department and NIU Today.
4. The Public Relations Officer shall manage public relations issues deemed important to the organization's performance, including relations with the Student Association, the Department, and the local community.
5. The Public Relations Officer shall collect and maintain an annual record of accomplishments and events, including photos and videotaping of events when it requires a collection of media coverage.
6. The Public Relations Officer shall be responsible for creating the t-shirt for NIU Forensics.
7. The Public Relations Officer shall be responsible for the administration and maintenance of all Forensics related social media accounts.

vi. Legacy Officer/Alumni Relations officer

1. The Legacy Officer shall be responsible for establishing, with the advice and consent of the Executive Board, the legacy of the Forensics organization for that year. They will additionally be responsible for preserving the overall legacy of NIU Forensics.
2. The Legacy Officer shall engage in an active effort to learn more about the history of NIU Forensics, taking advantage of opportunities to meet alumni, searching through possible historical texts that may contain information about the organization, and presenting these findings in a manner approved by the Executive Board.
3. The Legacy Officer will assist the President in preparation of the legacy presentation of all that NIU Forensics has accomplished for that year at the annual Forensics Banquet.
4. The Legacy Officer shall coordinate with the Department of Communications webmaster to continuously update the NIU Forensics webpage. The webpage shall include all current and relevant organizational information as well as a description of the organizational legacy. The Team Legacy Officer will also include major historical team competitive accomplishments as well as results of the current competitive season on the NIU Forensics webpage.
5. The Legacy Officer shall develop and maintain an up-to-date record of alumni contact information using a computer program suitable for frequent contact and mailing functions.
6. The Legacy Officer shall keep in contact with the alumni through newsletter and social media.

vii. Public Advocacy Officer

1. The Public Advocacy Officer shall be responsible for the advancement of the advocacy function of the organization. This shall be done through devising, coordinating, and implementing a consistent program of philanthropic activities.
2. The Public Advocacy Officer shall survey current members to determine the interest level of involvement in various causes and programs. The Public Advocacy Officer shall then work on finding events and organizations that NIU Forensics can partner with to further the advocacy of those causes and then be responsible for the facilitation of that partnership between the selected organizations and NIU Forensics.
3. The Public Advocacy Officer shall manage the process of granting a programming even the right to claim to be “sponsored by NIU Forensics.” The “Process of Sponsorship” shall be conducted as follows:
 - a. The Public Advocacy Officer shall bring to the Board a proposal that includes:
 - i. The topic of the event.
 - ii. The proposed format.
 - iii. The level of requested involvement of the Board and members of NIU Forensics.
 - b. Board members shall be given a specific time by which they must decide (at least 24 hours) whether they each approve or disapprove of the concept.
 - c. If a board member fails to respond to the concept within the specified amount of time, they shall be recorded as having voted for

sponsorship.

- d. Four (4) members of the Board must approve the concept to receive the “sponsorship” of Forensics.
 4. Once an event is “sponsored by NIU Forensics,” it is the duty of the Public Advocacy Officer to coordinate the contribution of Forensics to the planning and implementation of the event, including a program of promotion. This coordination shall involve the formation of a “team” of Forensics members and coaches likely to assist in the successful development of the event, as well as to work in partnership with students associated with other organizations responsible for the event.
 5. The Public Advocacy Officer shall assist in the management of tournaments held on-campus for both competitive debate and individual events.
- d. Conditions of Service
- i. The President and Vice President
 1. The President shall, in association with the Vice President and the Faculty Advisor, monitor the progress of officers in the accomplishments of their duties.
 2. The President shall be considered the overall coordinator of the activities of the officers
 - ii. Board Service Obligation
 1. In the event that a board member refuses to assume a position for which they are elected, and in the event that no settlement can be reached whereby an amiable alternative can be negotiated, the board member unwilling to serve in the position shall resign.
 2. In the event of such a resignation, the President shall hold an election, following the election procedure, for the vacant position.
- e. Eligibility for Election
- i. Active Members are the only members eligible for nomination for an executive board position with an exception of the transfer student rule.
 - ii. The transfer student rule: Students, with forensics experience, who seriously commit to the NIU Forensics team and are in the process of transferring from another two-year or four-year university, may run for a board position.
 - iii. The student will be notified by the board to either accept or reject this nomination. The nominee will be required to speak for themselves at the election.
 - iv. Prior experience will be used when determining the ratio of the executive board.
- f. Election of the Executive Board
- i. The election shall be run by the President and the Vice President, and in necessary times, the Secretary.
 - ii. To be on the ballot, nominations will be required 48 hours in advance of the date of the election. Nominations shall be sent to the secretary who will then post a current list of nominees at least one week prior to the election. Write-ins will be accepted on the date of election in the case that there is not a nomination for a position or in the case that a nominee is running unopposed.
 - iii. The election should occur no later than the first week of May.
 - iv. The secretary shall create a ballot of all candidates running for each position and prepare them for the night of the election. The election shall start with the announcement of each candidate for President, followed by a brief speech from each candidate, and then each active member of the forensics team will cast a secret ballot. Afterwards, the officers in charge will count the votes and announce the winner

immediately.

- v. The election shall proceed down the chain of command starting with the Vice President, and descending to Secretary, so on and so forth.
 - vi. After the elections, the ratio rule will be applied to the elected board. If the ratio determines that either I.E. or debate is misrepresented, a student member from that respective event will be nominated and elected by active members of the forensics team.
 - vii. The election will conclude once a new board is established and the ratio of individual event activities and competitive debate is appropriate.
 - viii. Members elected at large shall have all the authority of an officer, without a specific assigned task. These roles can be determined by the newly elected board.
- g. Removal of an Officer
- i. Officers can be removed from the Board by a vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Board, including at least two (2) members from the officer's activity (competitive debate or individual events).
 - ii. Officers are removed if they receive 3 "censures" for failure to assume responsibilities for tasks to which the Board has committed (see Section V, i, iii, 3).
- h. Vacancy
- i. In the event that a vacancy on the Board occurs for any reason, the President shall appoint another member to the Board from either the competitive debate or individual events membership, in accordance with the rules of the Forensics Constitution.
 - ii. In the event that a vacancy on the Board occurs for any reason, the corresponding vacancy in officer position shall be filled by either the newly appointed member of the Board, as an automatic condition of the appointment, or by an existing board member, provided it is the will of the existing board member to change positions. The President may make this decision at his or her discretion, in accordance with the rules of the Forensics constitution.
 - iii. The coaching staff shall be responsible for holding an election and counting the ballots in the event that the Vice President must succeed the President.
- i. Conduct of Business
- i. Meetings
 1. The President, independently or upon the recommendation of board members and/or the Faculty Advisor, shall call meetings in order to discuss issues pertinent to the mission of NIU Forensics.
 2. The President shall be required to conduct at least one business meeting of the Board per month. Meetings can be called more frequently upon the determination of the President.
 3. The President may be compelled to call a meeting when at least four (4) members of the Board demand such a meeting.
 4. The Secretary shall make reasonable attempts to notify all board members and the Faculty Advisor of any scheduled meetings at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting.
 5. Quorum shall be said to exist, for majority-based decisions not requiring a specific minimum vote, when at least four (4) board members are present. Quorum is not needed for informational exchange.
 6. All meetings shall be open to the active members, the Faculty Advisor, and coaches.
 7. A member is able to miss three executive board meetings a semester with an unexcused absence, with five in the academic year. In the event that a member has an excused absence, they are to clear it with the President or Secretary at

least one (1) hour before the meeting was scheduled to begin. The member must also provide a reason for their absence. Acceptable reasons include work, class, other extra-curricular activities, medical emergencies, family obligations, vehicle issues, and other unforeseen circumstances. After a member has accumulated a total of three excused absences within a semester or five in the academic year, a discussion will be held with the president and that member regarding the status of their position.

ii. Rules of Order

1. All business meetings shall be chaired by the President, who shall conduct the meetings in accordance with the current version of Roberts Rules of Order. All members of the board, members of NIU Forensics, the Faculty Advisor, and coaches shall be permitted to address any item up for discussion.
2. The interpretation of the language of the Constitution is the expressed duty of the President, but may be challenged by any board member (“challenge of the Chair”), requiring a vote of at least five (5) members to overturn the Chair’s interpretation, at which time the counter-interpretation shall prevail.
3. The President is required to structure the meeting in such a way that allows for a “report” from all officers, and the Faculty Advisor. Time must also be provided for questions and comments from board members, active members, the Faculty Advisor, and coaches. Officers and the Faculty Advisor are required to differentiate between an “information item” and an “action item” for the Board’s consideration. An information item requires no action, or vote on the part of the Board. An “action item” requires a vote to be registered.
4. During considerations of “action items” a tie empowers the Faculty Advisor to issue a vote. If the Faculty Advisor chooses to abstain, the issue is tabled until either side wishes to bring the matter to the Board for reconsideration.
5. Once the President calls a question to a vote, Board members must abide by the results of the vote. A matter, however, may be reconsidered in a new vote.
6. The Secretary shall keep minutes of the business meetings, with a degree of accuracy that allows active members not present at the meeting to learn what was discussed and decided at the meeting. These minutes must be completed within one week of the meeting.

iii. Accomplishment of Tasks

1. The Board shall make arrangements to have specific board members, the Faculty Advisor, and/or other members of NIU Forensics assume responsibilities for tasks to which the Board has committed.
2. The President shall, in association with the Secretary and the Faculty Advisor, record and monitor the progress of those who assumed responsibility for a task to which the Board has committed. The President shall be considered the overall coordinator of all tasks to which the Board has committed.
3. The Board shall use a method of “censure” to communicate their collective displeasure with the performance of a board member who fails to assume responsibility for tasks to which the Board has committed. Board members may “move to censure” another member of the Board, by either making the motion themselves, or by asking the President to make the motion and to outline the particular complaint. The President must keep the identity of the complaining board member confidential if such confidentiality is desired. Once a motion to censure is made, the Board must all for debate of the motion and must take a vote. An affirmative vote of five (5) board members is

required to accomplish a censure.

VI. Civility

a. Discrimination

- i. All members of NIU Forensics agree to abide by the University's commitment to equal treatment in matters related to the allocation of resources and opportunities. At no time will the organization tolerate discriminatory behavior on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, marital status, national origin, disability, status as a disabled or veteran, political views or affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other factor not related to scholarly performance.
- ii. Members suggesting that nay resources associated with NIU Forensics be restricted on the basis of any of the above factors, suggesting that any member or coach should be treated differently on the basis of any of the above factors, or treating anyone in a hostile way on the basis of any of the above factors (whether directed at another member or any person while representing the university) may be asked to leave the organization and/or be reported to the proper university authorities.

b. Conduct

- i. Recognizing the contentious environment of competitive argumentation and debate, as well as the creative freedom required in the preparation of public address, limited preparatory, and oral interpretive speech activities; the members of NIU Forensics respect the fact that, on occasion, less than thoughtful speech might arise. However, the members of NIU Forensics consider hostile speech intentionally directed toward individuals as unacceptable.
- ii. Members responsible for hostile speech directed toward another member or coach may be asked to leave the organization and/or be reported to the proper university authorities.

c. Grievance

- i. Members may, from time to time, have grievances to report to the Board. A grievance concerns a complaint about the behavior of another member, coach, or decision-making group within the organization. This process should involve the following steps (in order), each which might by followed by an amendable solution:
 1. A preliminary, informal meeting with the President and/or the Faculty Advisor. One may wish to share their concern with a coach, who may then be empowered to bring the concern to the Faculty Advisor.
 2. A formal meeting between the disputing parties, facilitated in a manner agreeable to those involved.
 3. A scheduled meeting of the Board and the Faculty Advisor wherein the matter is discussed with disputing parties present. In most cases the Board will be asked to render a judgment on the matter. This judgment will be considered the organization's final decision.
 4. A meeting with an appropriate outside party, depending on the nature of the issue. This process should involve the Faculty Advisor who will assist in making contact with the proper university official.
 5. If there are any concerns or complaints about the behaviors or actions of the Director of Forensics, respecting the professional position of the coaching staff, the complaints should be directed to the Director of Individual Events or the Director of Debate. If the concerned party does not feel their views are adequately addressed, the complaints or concerns may be directed to the Department Chair.

d. Public Expression

- i. No member of NIU Forensics shall represent the organization in any public expression without the expressed consent of the Board. This includes letters to the media, press releases, interviews, etc. Care should be taken to separate one's personal opinion from a position of the organization. This excludes the necessary day-to-day communication needed to administer the program, and settle problems arising during the transaction of materials and services needed to manage a competitive travel schedule. Additional leeway is granted to the Public Relations Officer and/or his or her designee, the President, and the Faculty Advisor, who shall agree to use careful judgment in deciding what is and is not acceptable to express on behalf of the organization.
- ii. Recognizing that one is representing the university when traveling off-campus to competitive tournaments, engaging in public criticism of members of other debate or individual events teams while representing the university is unacceptable behavior. This includes public criticism of a specific judge for any matter at all (including on-line communication.)

VII. Amending Procedures

- a. Any changes to this constitution must be presented before the Executive Board and all active members, board members, coaches, and the faculty advisor may be allowed to express their approval or disapproval for the proposed amendment.
- b. Amendments to this Constitution must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of all Board members, regardless of whether they are present, abstain, or vote.