

# 2015 Oratory Competition

## Saturday, March 28, 2015

Contact: [speaklab@pitt.edu](mailto:speaklab@pitt.edu)

### Speech Category Descriptions

1. Graduation Commencement Speech
2. Persuasive Policy Speech
3. Commemorative Values Speech

#### **Graduation Commencement Speech**

(open to Senior Communication majors only)

- In a graduation speech, you are representing your fellow graduating *Communication* majors and should reference that. Your aim is to thank the people who should be thanked, to stimulate excitement for the future, to motivate to action, to remember and reminisce, to raise emotion, and to say farewell.
- Tips for graduation speeches
  - Write an interesting (not shocking, not startling) introduction, one that makes people want to listen to you.
  - Be clear, interesting, organized and concise.
  - Remember that this is a speech to Communication graduates so reference the Department one or two times.
  - One effective general pattern of graduation speech uses the chronological approach: past (what we've shared), present (where we are now), and future (where we are going). This is a good way but not the only way to organize a speech like this.
  - Tell stories that your audience (fellow graduates, friends and families) can identify with, that they recognize as symbolic of shared experiences.
  - Talk about some major events and activities. But be careful of inside jokes. Graduates might get it but friends and family will be confused.
  - Talk about the values that the University has encouraged in you and why they should matter to fellow graduates.
  - Be inclusive. You are representing the entire Communication graduating class. So talk about yourself but not only yourself.
  - Don't say anything bad about anybody. This is not the time for that. Be appropriate. Be creative but not out of control.
  - Don't use many quotes and avoid clichés.
  - Write a summarizing conclusion. Sometimes it can be effective to reference in your conclusion something from your introduction. This imparts a sense of beginning, continuity and completeness, which is of course exactly the cycle your graduating class is experiencing.
  - Don't be afraid to take a chance saying farewell and finish with emotion. This is a momentous event.
- In addition to the general judging criteria, the graduation speech will be judged on these specific criteria:
  - Does the speaker eloquently represent the graduating class?
  - Does the speaker reference past shared experiences expressively?
  - Does the speaker offer an encouraging view of the future?
- The graduation speech should be 5-8 minutes long.

**Persuasive Policy Speech**  
(open to all Pitt undergraduates)

- The essence of a persuasive speech on policy is to convince your audience that a specific course of action should or should not be taken.
- Your task is to choose a significant policy dilemma, take a position, and try to persuade the audience to adopt your position by providing them with evidence and developing clear supporting arguments.
- Persuasive policy speeches may aim at either passive or active agreement.
  - If the aim is active agreement, the speaker should convince the audience to act in support of the policy by proposing recommendations for action that are as specific as possible.
  - If the aim is passive agreement, the speaker should convince the audience that the speaker's position is credible by affecting the way the audience thinks about the policy without encouraging them to take specific action.
- In addition to the general judging criteria, the persuasive speech on policy will be judged on these specific persuasive speech criteria:
  - Are the arguments credible?
  - Are the arguments reasonable?
  - Are the arguments compelling?
- The persuasive speech on policy should be 5-8 minutes long.

**Commemorative Values Speech**  
(open to all Pitt undergraduates)

- A ceremonial values speech is a speech of praise or blame, of honor or mourning of a person, a thing, an idea, even an institution. The speaker should work to heighten the appreciation of the audience for the positive or negative qualities of the subject. The speaker should go beyond simple description or biography to try to capture the essence of the subject, to identify and amplify the characteristics that make the subject a worthy topic.
- The most important tools for the commemorative values speaker are pathos, the emotional appeal, and style, the careful choice of words to communicate the spirit of the message. The speaker should strive for language that is not only clear, but also vivid, arousing, even inspiring.
- In addition to the general judging criteria, the commemorative values speech will be judged on these specific commemorative speech criteria:
  - Are the values and characteristics of the subject clearly explained?
  - Do the chosen words reflect the spirit and essence of the subject?
  - Is the tone and language vivid, arousing, and enthusiastic?
- The ceremonial values speech should be 5-8 minutes long

## ENTRY FORM

Submit to: Dr. Bannon, 1117 Cathedral of Learning or via email by  
March 27, 2015 to  
[speaklab@pitt.edu](mailto:speaklab@pitt.edu)

# 18<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL UNDERGRADUATE ORATORY COMPETITION

**SATURDAY, March 28, 2015**

**9:30 am - 12:30 pm**

(SPEAKERS report to 11<sup>th</sup> floor Cathedral of Learning by 9:30 am)

Sponsored by: The Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences  
Undergraduate Studies  
The Department of Communication  
The Communication Club

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

MAJOR: \_\_\_\_\_

YEAR AT PITT? \_\_\_\_FR \_\_\_\_SO \_\_\_\_JR \_\_\_\_SR

PRINT TITLE OF SPEECH (YOU MAY ENTER ONLY ONE SPEECH):  
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TYPE OF SPEECH: \_\_\_\_\_ **Graduation Commencement** (Senior Communication Majors only)  
\_\_\_\_\_ **Persuasive Speech on Policy**  
\_\_\_\_\_ **Ceremonial Speech on Values**