



# A New Model for Student Research

Unraveling Gender Bias in Argumentation and  
Analytical Speaking

Rich Kawolics  
Laurel School, Shaker Hts., OH



# Let's Begin with a Question:


True or False:

**Male-presenting speakers are more credible and more persuasive than female-presenting speakers; that's just the way it is.**

# Why Do We Criticize Women for HOW They Speak?

From the world of Speech and Debate



LD  OHSSSL State Final  
Octafinal round, Section F, Room MS705 (Sat. 1:00 PM)  
Judge: BD7 Goonmeet Bajaj  
Debaters: B67 B37 - FLIP FOR SIDES! BD7

AFF/Pro Team: B37 <sup>lauster</sup> Pts: 29 NEG/Con Team: B67 <sup>Ashraf</sup> Pts: 28  
The win goes to team B37 on the AFF side.

Reason for decision:  
Non Voting Issue - B37 is too aggressive during cross-x  
Aff wins b/c of her ideas of democracy as a long term goal (The neg actually wins the Lebanon argument). The Aff also wins the framework & b/c of this Neg falls short with protecting liberty of other Nations & how one size does not fit all. Also Aff also gets that the negative was unable to prove how the neg's democracy promoting demo. is inherent to poor implementation. Though the neg has not to say that from past experiences & etc he falls short b/c the Affirmative is not limited to direct intervention very very close debate Aff could have been less aggressive.  
Signature: Goonmeet Bajaj Affiliation: Beavercreek Neg was very  
not respectful

philly.com

The Inquirer  
DAILY NEWS

News — Think Tank

## Jane Austen's Pride & Presidents

Updated: JANUARY 27, 2016 — 1:27 PM EST

On the Democratic side, Hillary Clinton could step into the part of Augusta Elton of *Emma* without much preparation. Demanding to be the center of attention — even “Lady Patroness” — it is her wont to talk the loudest and the most, even when nobody is really listening. With a decidedly grating pitch and punishing tone of voice, Clinton lacks the elegance and grace of a Jane Fairfax — or a Nikki Haley or Michelle Obama.

In contrast, Bernie Sanders is almost universally endearing. He would make a fine Admiral Croft, from *Persuasion* (without the military attire or service, of course — the Vermont senator was a draft dodger), kind-hearted and genial, albeit a tad zany and zingy.



Straight from the Headlines



# Why Are Women Less Successful in Debate than Men?



Photo courtesy of [speechanddebate.org](http://speechanddebate.org)



# Session Plan

## Part I: The Research Program

- Creating the structure for student research into cultural phenomena
- Developing student interest and choosing the research team
- Managing work while following a winding path

## Part II: Findings and Outcomes

- Differing success rates for male and female speakers
- Societal perceptions of male and female speakers
- Troubling findings and future work

# Developing the Research Program

- Laurel School established the Laurel Center for Research on Girls (LCRG) in 2008.
- Consistent experience among debaters led many to assume a gender bias against female speakers.
- A schedule change in 2016-2017 created time for student project work.
- “Gender in Speech” was established as the first faculty-mentored, student-led research program within the new structure.
- The research program was advised by, but separate from LCRG.



# Research Objectives

1. Are success rates different between female and male speakers in interscholastic debate and analytical speech?
2. Are female and male speakers criticized differently for how they speak?
3. Has the participation level for female students in interscholastic debate and analytical speech changed over time?
4. Can we inform a larger conversation about socially-constructed expectations for speech and argumentation?
5. Can adult evaluators be trained to mitigate the effect of socially-constructed bias?



# Assembling a Team



Our Research Associates  
(most of them)

Katie, Bess, Sophie, and  
Lydia hard at work!





# The Process, Phase 1: Quantify Weekly Participation and Success

## GMU Patriot Games Classic Public Forum Debate

Competitor	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5	Totals	Results
<b>AC006</b> Ardrey Kell High School	<b>W</b> - BM005 - AFF EC4 Kathy Noe	<b>W</b> - HD023 - AFF ZZ74 Saurav Gehani	<b>W</b> - EC017 - Neg ZZ34 Asha Athman	<b>L</b> - JB035 - Neg ZZ12 Steven Perlamuter	<b>W</b> - DH012 - AFF HT5 Murali Gudavally	<b>4-1</b> 147	<b>7th</b>
Samhitha Sunkara Sam Wood	29.00	29.00	30.00	30.00	29.00		
<b>AC010</b> Ardrey Kell High School	<b>W</b> - JB051 - Neg DB1 Mike McCabe	<b>L</b> - EZ005 - Neg ZZ17 Zhane Perkins	<b>L</b> - BD008 - Neg ZZ48 Hunter James	<b>W</b> - CS015 - Neg ZZ31 Alex Durfee	<b>W</b> - EH038 - Neg ZZ78 Nick Martin	<b>3-2</b> 134	<b>83rd</b>
Anusha Chandra Stuti Shah	28.00	28.00	27.00	25.00	26.00		
<b>AC011</b> Ardrey Kell High School	<b>L</b> - BL022 - AFF B25 Craig Cummins	<b>L</b> - DT026 - Neg ZZ33 Noah Weinflash	<b>L</b> - JD015 - AFF BS2 Mark Matusiak	<b>W</b> - EZ001 - AFF ZZ95 Elizabeth Raymakers	<b>L</b> - BL024 - AFF HS4 Samantha Korman	<b>1-4</b> 129	<b>160th</b>
Ishani Deliwala Archana Jayasekar	24.00	28.00	25.00	27.00	25.00		
<b>AC022</b> Ardrey Kell High School	<b>W</b> - HY009 - AFF ED3 Katie Dunn	<b>L</b> - ER022 - Neg ZZ92 Henry Zelenka	<b>W</b> - BC005 - Neg ZZ33 Noah Weinflash	<b>L</b> - BV014 - Neg ZZ60 Damon Beirne	<b>W</b> - HA004 - Neg BD2 William Waddell	<b>3-2</b> 143.5	<b>40th</b>
Ankit Jajoo Avi Agrawal	28.00	27.00	29.50	30.00	29.00		
<b>AC023</b> Ardrey Kell High School	<b>L</b> - ED008 - Neg ZZ65 Sunita Ganesh	<b>L</b> - DV004 - Neg ZZ96 Zach Avis	<b>W</b> - HY009 - Neg JP5 Cheryl Bezis	<b>W</b> - CD007 - Neg ZZ2 Katie Lese	<b>L</b> - HC021 - Neg JB5 Preetham Chipadda	<b>2-3</b> 135.5	<b>107th</b>
Christian Brown Aleks Trivanovic	25.00	25.00	28.50	28.00	29.00		
<b>AC024</b> Ardrey Kell High School	<b>L</b> - JP013 - Neg DT6 Monty Crawford	<b>L</b> - BC005 - AFF ZZ5 Dustin Cone	<b>L</b> - JB047 - Neg ZZ75 Katlyn Weiser	<b>W</b> - BS014 - Neg ZZ26 Beverly Harp	<b>W</b> - HS011 - AFF ER2 Bruce Cunningham	<b>2-3</b> 137	<b>108th</b>
Michael Xing Callan Hazeldine	27.00	26.00	26.00	28.00	30.00		
	<b>W</b> - HS005 - Neg	<b>L</b> - JL023 - Neg	<b>L</b> - HZ004 - AFF	<b>W</b> - HT035 - Neg	<b>W</b> - JB045 - Neg		

# The Process, Phase 1:

## Participants Tracked Through Elims to Final Round

AC006 Samhitha Sunkara and Sam Wood (AFF) def. AT001 Polly Moser and Katie Gao (Neg) **2-1**  
JP012 Daniel Abdulah and Hannah Phan (Neg) def. JB035 Elisa McCartin and Rabhya Mehrotra (AFF) **2-1**  
JJ001 Drosos Kardulias and Alexander Thompson (AFF) def. JB036 Ari Neugeboren and Jason Grill (Neg) **3-0**

### Quarterfinal round

BL020 Michael Li and Rohan Patel (Neg) def. CS013 Eric Rachita and Matt Cope (AFF) **2-1**  
ES005 Dominic Schlossberg and Harrison Schlossberg (AFF) def. BC005 Krystyna Cios and Katie Fanz (Neg) **3-0**  
ER021 Emma Smits and Paul Snyder (Neg) def. AC006 Samhitha Sunkara and Sam Wood (AFF) **3-0**  
JJ001 Drosos Kardulias and Alexander Thompson (AFF) def. JP012 Daniel Abdulah and Hannah Phan (Neg) **3-0**

### Semifinal round

BL020 Michael Li and Rohan Patel (Neg) def. ES005 Dominic Schlossberg and Harrison Schlossberg (AFF) **4-1**  
JJ001 Drosos Kardulias and Alexander Thompson (AFF) def. ER021 Emma Smits and Paul Snyder (Neg) **3-2**

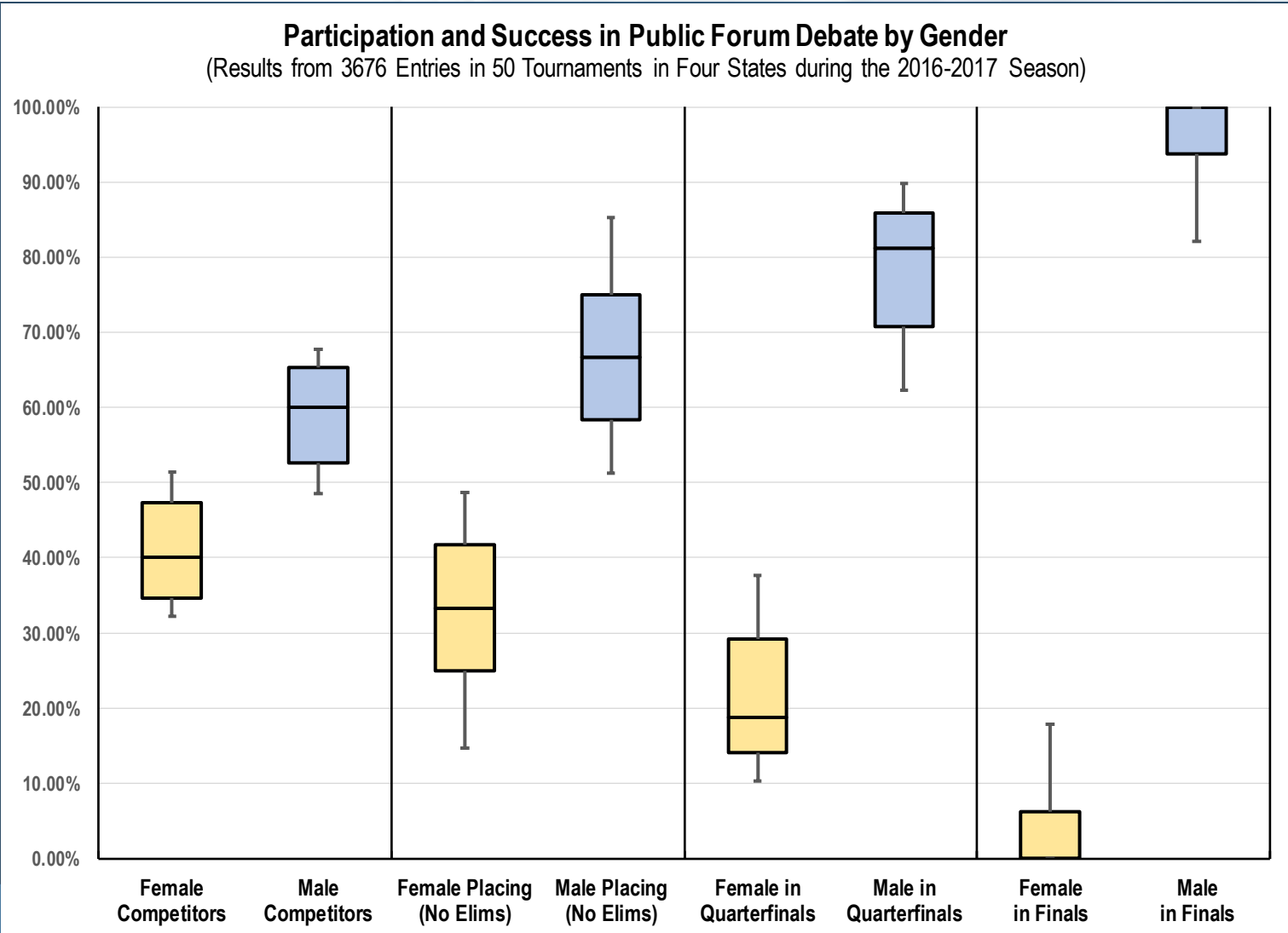
### Final round

BL020 Michael Li and Rohan Patel (Neg) def. JJ001 Drosos Kardulias and Alexander Thompson (AFF) **5-0**

Champion: **BL020 Michael Li and Rohan Patel**

# The Trend Quickly Became Clear

(published in *The Rostrum*, April, 2018)



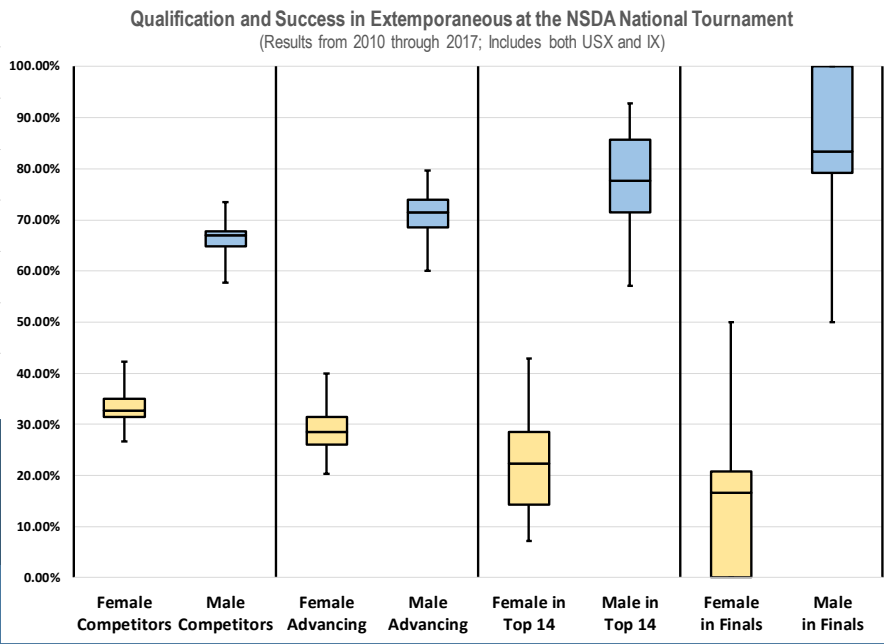
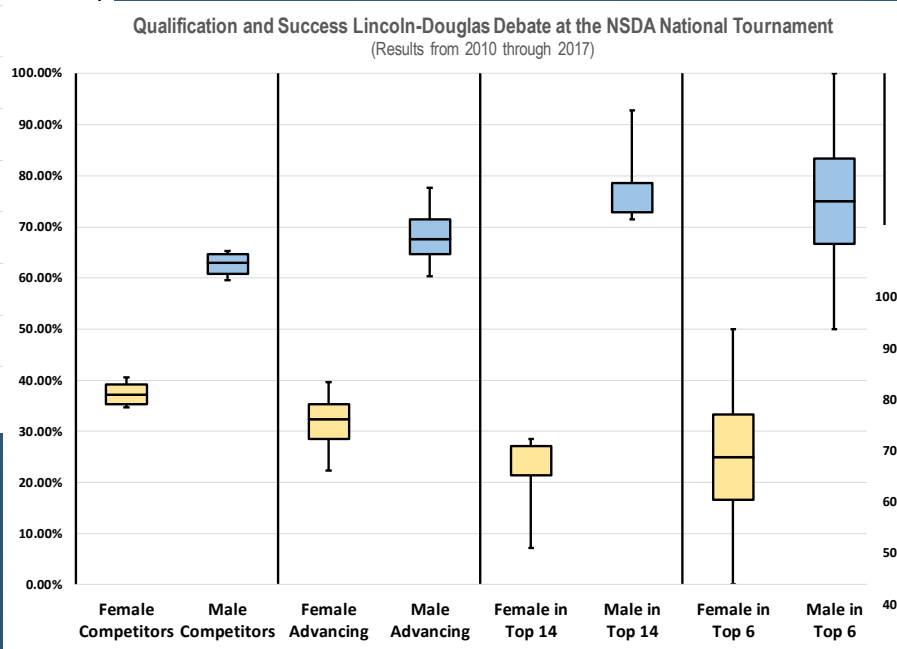
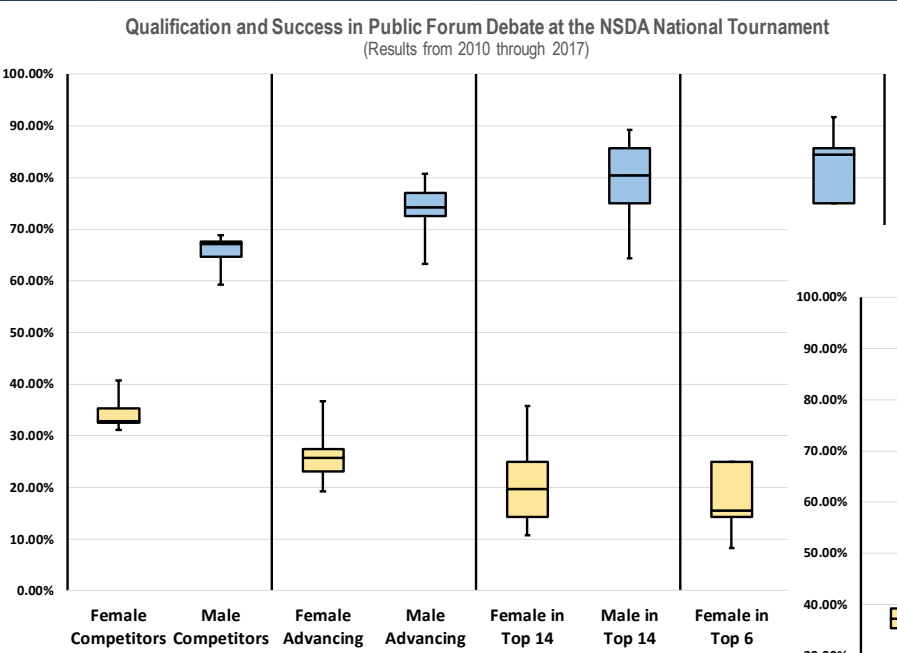
# Comparing Results in Different Types of Debate and Analytical Speaking

- Weekly outcomes in Lincoln-Douglas Debate and Extemporaneous Speaking are not as striking as for Public Forum Debate
- Qualification to higher-level (National) Tournament shows a clear disadvantage for female debaters in both Public Forum and Lincoln-Douglas.
- Qualification to higher-level (National) Tournament in Extemporaneous Speaking does not show a statistically significant disadvantage for female speakers.
- However, on a weekly basis, female participation in Extemporaneous Speaking is 10% below female participation in Debate.
- And once the female speakers make it to Nationals ...



# A Disheartening Picture for Female Competitors

(published in *The Rostrum*, April, 2018)



# Women in PF Face a Daunting Challenge

Female PF Debaters are Underrepresented and have Diminished Success at Nationals.

At 2019 Nationals	Qualifiers	Elims	On Stage
FF Teams	60	9	0
FM Teams	76	31	2
MM Teams	110	43	12

# The Cumulative Effect

Disproportionate Attrition at NSDA Nationals 2010 - 2018

International Extemp

US Extemp

Lincoln-Douglas  
Debate

Public Forum Debate

# The Cumulative Effect

Disproportionate Attrition at NSDA Nationals 2010 - 2018

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Male Competitors

Female Competitors



# The Cumulative Effect

Disproportionate Attrition at NSDA Nationals 2010 - 2018

International Extemp

US Extemp

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Public Forum Debate



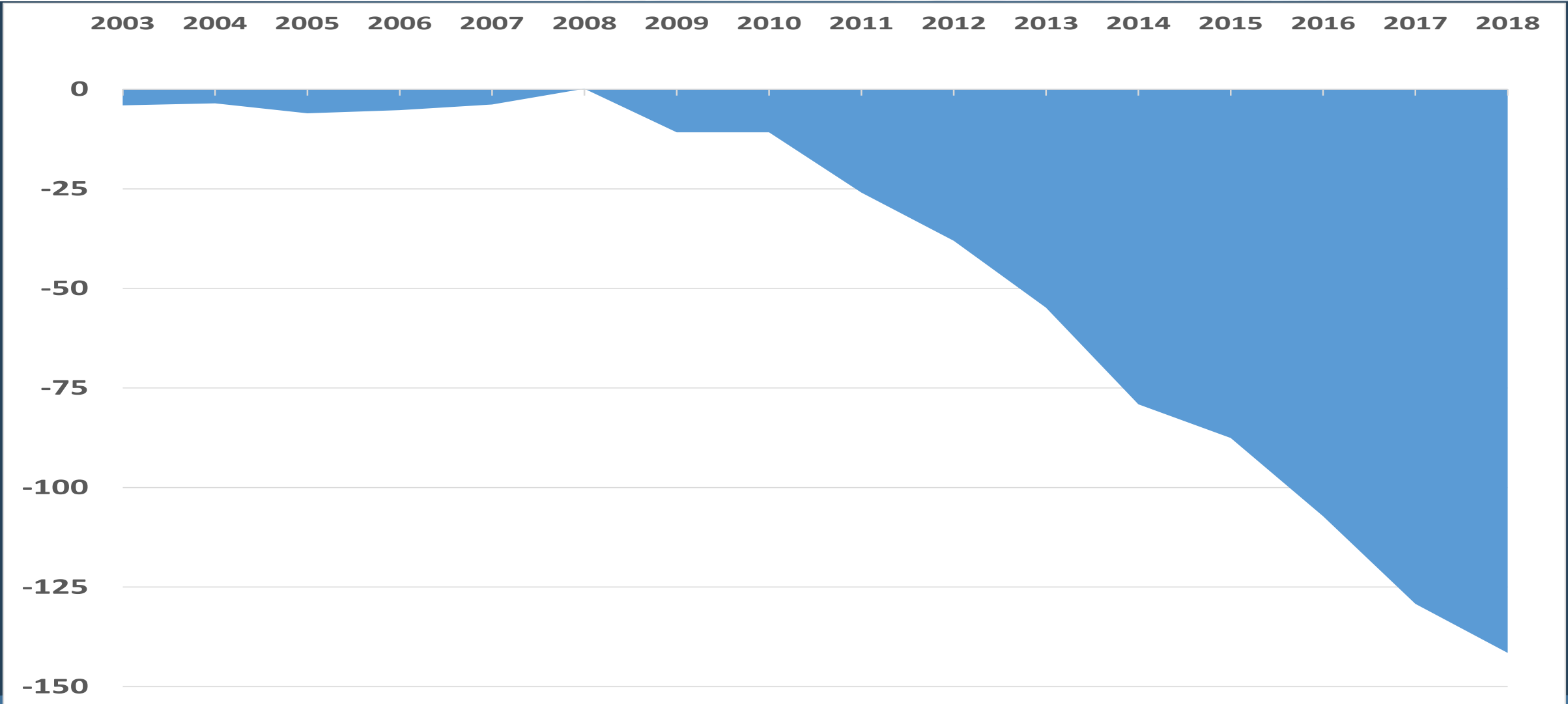
Male Competitors



Female Competitors

# What Happened in 2008?

Cumulative Deficit of Female Debaters in Elims Since the Beginning of PF



# Phase I Research Published in *The Rostrum*, April, 2018

## COMMUNITY

### Competing Standards:

A Critical Look at Gender and Success  
in Debate and Extemporaneous Speaking

*by Julia Lynn and Rich Kawolics*



*Our results show that over the past eight years—and perhaps longer—female competitors have been consistently and pervasively disadvantaged in Debate and Extemp competition.*

# So Why Do Girls Have Less Success in Debate and Extemporaneous Speaking?

The research suggests that perceived or actual differences in cognitive performance between males and females are **most likely the result of social and cultural factors**. ... [R]esearchers believe social context plays a significant role.

- Spencer, S.J., Steele, C.M., & Quinn, D.M., Journal of Experimental Social Psychology (1999)



# What is the Social Context of Debate and Extemp?

- **Structural Factor:** Are Debate and Extemp constructed in such a way that Male speakers have an advantage over Female speakers?
- **Activity Factor:** Do the language and protocols for argumentation inherently favor the Male norm over the Female norm?
- **Cultural Factor:** Do listeners hear male and female speakers differently and operate under a subconscious bias in evaluating speakers and debaters?
- In Phase 2 of our research, we examined more than 1,000 Public Forum Debate Ballots from 9 different open tournaments around the US.

# The Process, Phase 2:

## We Collected Debate Ballots from Tournaments Each Week

11/18/2017 SpeechWire Tournament Services

**Public Forum Debate ballot**  
Mentor Tournament - Nov. 18, 2017

Round 1 Sect. F - Room TBA - Judge 7 **Barry Rice** (Beavercreek) **C108**

Debaters: Kesav Kosana and Yash Kankariya (C52 - AA) vs. Stephen Kale and Henry Cregar (C41 - J)

Resolution: Resolved: USC should be required for all gun sales & transfers

Before **EVERY** round, flip a coin to determine the side and speaking order of the debate. The winner of the flip has the option of choosing either the side (Pro or Con) or the speaking order (1st or 2nd) in the round. The team that loses the flip makes the remaining choice, either side or speaking order. After this is determined, record the names of the competitors. Please note that the new arguments in the Final Focus are to be ignored. The Final Focus must be based on arguments and issues previously addressed in the debate.

PLEASE DO NOT FILL OUT THIS BALLOT UNTIL AFTER THE COIN TOSS HAS BEEN COMPLETED AND THE DEBATERS HAVE DETERMINED SIDE/SPEAKING ORDER. **ASSIGN SPEAKER POINTS FOR EACH STUDENT!**

Code <u>C41</u> Side <u>Con</u>	Code <u>C52</u> Side <u>Pro</u>
Speaker 1 <u>Stephen Kale</u>	Speaker 2 <u>Yash Kankariya</u>
Speaker 3 <u>Henry Cregar</u>	Speaker 4 <u>Kesav Kosana</u>

Team Points 24/25

29-30 = Outstanding  
27-28 = Above Average  
24-26 = Average  
20-23 = Below Average

Team Points 26/27

The better debating was done by the Pro side, code # C52. Low point win? No

Judge signature [Signature] School B-Creek

**Comments to debaters:**

Strong but 'anti-gun' as perceived  
allowed Pro to respond but were  
ineffective in countering/rebuttal.  
Focused extensively on individual incidents  
& could not counter the Pro overarching  
facts

**Comments to debaters:**

Strong rebuttal on 2nd round.  
Consistent use of reference details  
Allowed Con responses, but excelled  
at detailed rebuttal

Order/Time Limits of Speeches

# The Process, Phase 2:

## Every Ballot is Indexed and Relevant Information is Recorded

	Round	Section	Team 1	Team 1 Sp 1 Gender	Team 1 Sp 2 Gender	Team 1 Side	Team 2	Team 2 Sp 1 Gender	Team 2 Sp 2 Gender	Team 2 Side	Judge Gender	Team 1 Points	Team 2 Points	Winning Team
Mentor 2018	1	A	C26	M	F	PRO	C36	F	M	CON	F	24	26	C36
Mentor 2018	1	AA	C34	M	M	PRO	C05	M	M	CON	M	29	27	C34
Mentor 2018	1	AB	C21	M	M	PRO	C61	M	F	CON	F	26	28	C61
Mentor 2018	1	AC	C58	F	F	PRO	C33	M	M	CON	M	24	27	C33
Mentor 2018	1	AD	C17	F	F	PRO	C06	F	M	CON	M	27	28	C06
Mentor 2018	1	AE	C40	M	M	PRO	C67	F	F	CON	M	28	27	C40
Mentor 2018	1	AF	C23	F	F	CON	C27	F	F	PRO	F	29	25	C23
Mentor 2018	1	B	C55	M	M	PRO	C22	M	M	CON	M	26	25	C55
Mentor 2018	1	C	C44	M	M	PRO	C18	F	M	CON	F	26	27	C18
Mentor 2018	1	D	C10	M	F	CON	C48	M	M	PRO	M	25	27	C48
Mentor 2018	1	E	C19	M	M	CON	C24	F	F	PRO	F	25	24	C19
Mentor 2018	1	F	C41	M	M	CON	C52	M	M	PRO	M	25	27	C52
Mentor 2018	1	G	C56	F	F	PRO	C42	M	M	CON	F	25	27	C42
Mentor 2018	1	H	C09	F	F	PRO	C53	F	M	CON	M	26	24	C09
Mentor 2018	1	I	C66	M	M	PRO	C30	F	M	CON	M	25	27	C30
Mentor 2018	1	J	C08	M	M	PRO	C15	M	F	CON	F	25	26	C15
Mentor 2018	1	K	C03	F	M	PRO	C62	F	F	CON	M	26	27	C62
Mentor 2018	1	L	C47	M	M	PRO	C55	F	F	CON	M	26	28	C55
Mentor 2018	1	M	C28	M	F	CON	C63	F	F	PRO	M	29	22	C28
Mentor 2018	1	N	C12	M	M	PRO	C14	F	F	CON	M	24	27	C14
Mentor 2018	1	O	C22	F	F	PRO	C25	F	F	CON	F	25	28	C25

# The Process, Phase 2:

## Gender-Specific Information is Removed

11/18/2017

SpeechWire Tournament Services

**Public Forum Debate ballot**

Mentor Tournament - Nov. 18, 2017

Round 1 Sect. F - Room TBA - Judge 7 [redacted] (Beavercreek)

Debaters: [redacted] and [redacted] (CS2 - AA) vs. [redacted] and [redacted] (C41 - J)

Resolution: Resolved: UBC should be required for all gun sales & transfers

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Speaker 1 <u>[redacted]</u>	Speaker 2 <u>[redacted]</u>
Speaker 3 <u>[redacted]</u>	Speaker 4 <u>[redacted]</u>

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Judge signature [signature] School B-Creek

Comments to debaters:

Comments to debaters:

Strong but 'silly' arguments allowed Pro to respond but were ineffective in countering/rebuttal.

Consistent use of reference details allowed Con responder, but excelled at detailed rebuttal

focused extensively on individual incidents & could not counter the Pro overarching facts

Order/Time Limits of Speeches

Speaker 1 4 Min 3:26



# The Process, Phase 2:

## A Separate Team Logs Any Comment on Speaking Style

Tournament	Round	Section	Team	Speaker	Comment	Rating
Mentor 2017	4	L	C38	2 & 4	good way to take charge of crossfire. Dominated oppo.	+2
Mentor 2017	4	J	C28	2	very confident, easy to follow	+2
Mentor 2017	4	J	C28	2	during crossfire, should be listening or waiting until the other person finish	-1
Mentor 2017	4	J	C28	4	very strong and persuasive	+2
Mentor 2017	4	Y	C26	1 & 3	your are confident	+2
Mentor 2017	4	W	C48	3	slow down a bit, Spk 3	-1
Mentor 2017	4	K	C39	1	work on eye contact, overall good. speak up a bit	+0
Mentor 2017	4	K	C54	2	speak up and be more confident, be agresive	-2
Mentor 2017	4	O	C19	1 & 3	Needs to be careful to not have passion misinterpreted for aggression and lack of courtesy for opponent.	
Mentor 2017	4	P	C15	2	need to allow other participants to finish arguement	-2
Mentor 2017	4	X	C04	2	good speaking skills	+1
Mentor 2017	4	Z	C65	1	slow down and speak louder	-2
Mentor 2017	4	P	C62	4	don't get flustered	-1
Mentor 2017	4	Q	C56	1 & 3	weak stuttering	-2
Mentor 2017	4	Z	C33	2	be careful that you do not cross the line of arrogance in responding to quest	-2
Mentor 2017	4	V	C41	1	good tone and presentation	+2
Mentor 2017	4	V	C41	3	RUDE IN GRAND XFIRE	-2
Mentor 2017	4	V	C69	2	articulate	-1
Mentor 2017	4	V	C69	4	great/passionate/logical presenter, strong voice	+2

# Some Eye-Opening Findings from Phase 2

- In an average tournament, 20% of female debaters will be criticized for how they speak, vs. 9% of male debaters.
- Two specific criticisms – Aggression and Emotion – are directed at female debaters far more often than at male debaters.
- When female debaters are criticized for Aggression vs. male debaters, the female debaters lose 90% of the time.
- Decisions from female judges seem to be more closely tied to their ballot criticisms than those for male judges. (More analysis in this area is needed.)

# Digging Deeper into Judge Behaviors

Data from a 2018 National Circuit Tournament with 120 PF Judges and 1000 PF Ballots.

## By Judge Gender

F Wins per 100 F Competitors

Female

47

Male

36

## By Judge Age and Gender

F Wins per 100 F Competitors

F Over 25

46

F Under 25

49

M Over 25

F Wins per 100 F Competitors

38

M Under 25

31

# Digging Deeper into Judge Behaviors Part II

Data from a 2018 National Circuit Tournament with 120 PF Judges and 1000 PF Ballots.

## Judges with No Camp Experience

F Wins per 100 F Competitors

Female

50

Male

38

## Judges with Camp Experience

F Wins per 100 F Competitors

Female

35\*

Male

30

\* Small sample size limits statistical confidence.

# An Indictment of Debate Culture and a Pivot to Advocacy

- Public Forum Debate began (2002) with a lay focus resulting in a high degree of gender parity.
- As Summer Institutes and the National Circuit gained influence, norms favoring socially-constructed male behaviors began to emerge.
- Over time, Public Forum was reconstructed by these institutions leading to a pervasive, systematic disadvantage for female-identified participants.
- The current practice in Public Forum Debate not only creates a significant bias against female-identified participants but includes a culture lacking boundaries between young male judges and competitors and creates an unsafe, misogynistic environment that further harms female-identified participants.
- Most recent data (September-October, 2019) indicates a possible decline in female participation in Public Forum Debate.



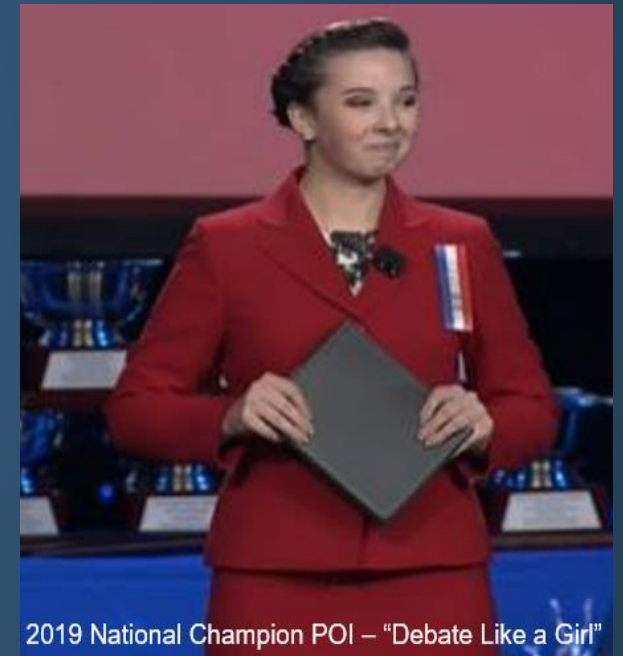
# And Finally ... A Movement?



HOME ABOUT MEET THE TEAM BLOG ▾ HALL OF FAME HALL OF SHAME MENTOR PROGRAM ASK MERCHANDISE  
COACHING DATABASE APPLY RELATED WEBSITES ONLINE DEBATE WORKSHOP WHAT CAN WE DO BETTER?

BEYOND RESOLVED

CONNECT. DEBATE. EMPOWER.



2019 National Champion POI – "Debate Like a Girl"