



# Senior Speech Program: A guide for families.

Mr. Doug Hoverson



# The Speech

- Each senior will give a 4-6 minute speech to the entire school at formation sometime between mid-September and the end of April.
- This speech should be on a topic of importance that is suitable and interesting to a wide audience.
- The Senior Speech is a required class worth .5 semester credit. It is a graduation requirement.



# The Program

- Each senior and their advisor will meet to plan, draft and practice the senior speech prior to presentation. Mr. Hoverson will also help edit speeches.
- All speeches must be submitted to the advisor and Mr. Hoverson 10 days prior to their scheduled speech date. Failure to do so without acceptable reasons will result in the speech being postponed. The speeches will be sent back for required and recommended revisions and then final approval.



# Logistics

- Speech dates have been set (mostly at random).
- Students & families have some limited ability to change the date of the speech, but we want to avoid more than one speech per formation, and some days will not be available due to other events
- Speeches will be recorded and digital files will be provided to families



# Logistics

- Formation begins at 10:00 a.m.
- Family members should plan to arrive ten to fifteen minutes early, park in the main parking lot and go through Flynn Hall to Founders' Hall. Family and friends will view the speeches from the railing on the upper level of the court near the Senior Lounge.



# Logistics

- To change the speech date, seniors must send an e-mail to Mr. Hoverson which is copied to his senior advisor and parents. (dhoverson@cadets.com)
- Requests for changes will be granted provided the change is requested at least two weeks in advance (except for illness), alternative dates are proposed, and there is an available spot. Students will be asked to try to find someone to switch with if there is time to do so.
- Emergency changes will be on a case-by-case basis



# Goals for the speeches

- Each senior should give a speech which expresses their unique experience and viewpoint
- Speeches should be meaningful and interesting to a broad audience, and not simply directed to friends or family
- Speeches should have a clear theme and not just be a list of experiences



# Topics that are not original

- Lists of funny things classmates have done
- Lists of funny things you have done
- Family speeches without a unique or meaningful theme
- “When I first came to STA ...”



# Be original

- What is different about you?
  - What do you do that is different?
  - Where have you traveled? What did you learn?
  - What do you feel strongly about?
  - What should change? What should stay the same?
- 
- Ideally, while the speech may be from the senior's experience, it won't be just about him.



# Features to avoid

- Clichés (“I would be remiss if ...”)
- Inside jokes
- Ending with an irrelevant quote
- Ending with a list of unconnected thank yous



# Prohibited Content

- “Chirping” students or adults in the building
- Mentioning faculty members or students without express permission (except for obvious kind mentions)
- Profanity (including quoted material)
- Sexual or drug references



# Sensitive Content

- A senior proposing to speak on a matter of great sensitivity to them or their family (family illness, sexual orientation, self-harm, abuse or other things of a private nature) will be asked to have their family approve the speech at least 3 days in advance. The speech may also require additional administrative approval.



# Unauthorized Speech Changes

- Giving a speech that varies from the approved version (except for honest mistakes of omission or order) will result in an F on the speech. Any makeup opportunities will depend on a conference between the senior, his family, and the administration. Other consequences may be assessed.
- Unless the violation is at the very end of the speech, the student will be stopped and will not be allowed to complete the speech.



## Happy ending note:

- The senior speech is one of the highlights of the year for each senior and their family. It is a chance to show what they have learned and how they are growing in a challenging but rewarding way.
- Working with seniors on their speeches is one of the most fulfilling things I do at STA, and I am excited to work with your sons.