

# 2018 Oratory Competition

Saturday, April 7, 2018

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

## Speech Category Descriptions

1. Graduation Commencement Speech
2. Persuasive Policy Speech
3. Commemorative Values Speech
4. Diversity and Inclusion Speech

### Graduation Commencement Speech

(open to graduating 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 once or twice.
  - 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 saying farewell and finishing with emotion. This is a momentous event.
- In addition to customary public speaking 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 customary public speaking 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 commemorative 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 appreciation in the audience for the positive or negative qualities of the subject. The speaker should go beyond simple description or biography and 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 customary public speaking 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

## **Diversity and Inclusion Speech** **(open to all Pitt undergraduates)**

- A speech on any aspect of diversity and inclusion in an informative, persuasive, or ceremonial form. The essence of informative speaking is the sharing of knowledge to create understanding. Your purpose is to explain to the audience some concept, experience, process, historical event, that relates directly to diversity and inclusion. The essence of persuasive speaking is to convince your audience to adopt your point of view, your perspective, your beliefs, and values about the topic. Your task is to choose a significant topic in diversity and inclusion, take a position, and try to persuade the audience to adopt that position by providing them with evidence and developing clean supporting arguments. A speech of praise, of honor, of a person, a thing, an idea, even an institution, in this case having to do with diversity and inclusion. The purpose of this speech is to arouse and inspire the audience about diversity and inclusion. In order to accomplish this, you should focus on the *values* by which you think diversity should be judged.
- There is only one category for Diversity and Inclusion, not three. The informative, persuasive, and ceremonial speech types will all compete against each other in the Diversity and Inclusion category.
- We recognize diversity and inclusion to encompass disability, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, familial status, sex, age, sexual orientation, veteran status, or gender identity and expression.
  - The Speech on Diversity and Inclusion is judged principally by the following criteria:
    - Is the delivery of high quality?
    - Is the content meaningful and interesting to the audience?
    - Are the arguments or information compelling and credible?
    - Do the tone and language reflect the purposes of the speech?
- The diversity and inclusion speech should be 5-8 minutes long.

# ENTRY FORM

Submit entry form by April 6, 2018  
to 1433 Cathedral of Learning or via email to [speaklab@pitt.edu](mailto:speaklab@pitt.edu)

## 21<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL UNDERGRADUATE ORATORY COMPETITION

**SATURDAY, April 7, 2018**

**9:30 am to 1:00 pm**

(SPEAKERS report to 1433 Cathedral of Learning by 9:30 am)

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

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

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

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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 (graduating Senior Communication Majors only)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Persuasive Speech on Policy  
\_\_\_\_\_ Ceremonial Speech on Values  
\_\_\_\_\_ Diversity and Inclusion Speech