

The University of Southern California

Applying for the Trojan Debate Squad 101

What is the Trojan Debate Squad?

The Trojan Debate Squad (TDS) is USC's oldest chartered student organization. Housed under the Annenberg School of Communication, the TDS is a Policy Debate Team competing on the NDT/CEDA Policy Circuit.

How big is the TDS?

The TDS currently has about 25 debaters, but this varies from year to year! Any admitted USC student can join.

How do I get more information about the TDS?

Visit our website! You can schedule a Zoom with a current member, meet a current member on campus, read about our members, and more! Fill out [this interest form](https://forms.gle/DroRyGSq3VtzGS5a7) [https://forms.gle/DroRyGSq3VtzGS5a7], and we will reach out to you!

What is the scholarship process?

The TDS offers a limited number of scholarships. To apply for a scholarship, you must have been admitted to USC. The scholarship application will open during the Fall semester. Fill out the interest form, or keep an eye on our website to see when it is posted!

I've gotten into USC! Now what?

Congrats! If you are visiting campus, you are welcome to stop by and meet some members of the team! We are happy to give you a tour, talk about academics, or talk about debate! While our members all love debate, they have a variety of interests and can give advice on a wide variety of topics!

Frequently Asked Questions

How many hours a week do debaters spend on debate?

The actual time commitment for each debater varies depending on a number of factors. However, to be successful, we recommend about 20 hours of work a week.

How are partnerships decided?

Partnerships are decided by a number of considerations, but ultimately come down to a combination of coach and debater input. Preseason interviews, practice debates, and conversations are all factors.

Do students pay for tournament attendance?

No! All travel, hotel, and meal costs are covered by the team.

What is the team's usual travel schedule, and what tournaments can debaters attend?

The team will typically attend a number of tournaments. First of all, the “Majors:” The Northwestern Season Opener (September), The University of Kentucky Tournament (September), The Gonzaga Tournament (October), the Shirley at Wake Forest (November), The Georgetown Tournament (January), and the Texas Open (February). Additionally, the team will attend “local” tournaments held in our district (debate district 1). Finally, the team may decide to attend other online tournaments as needed. Tournaments will typically be attended in person, though there are a number of online tournaments the team may attend. Travel decisions are made via conversations between partnerships and coaches, but debaters can attend anywhere from one tournament a semester to all of them!

Do I have to be an Annenberg major to join the team? Are there suggested majors?

No! The TDS has a diverse array of majors represented from Political Science to Computer Science, Engineering, and everything in between!

When is the preseason?

The TDS will hold a preseason prep week the week before classes start. We understand that certain days may hold orientation obligations, and we work with each debater to ensure they don't miss any important events!

Does debate have control over admissions?

No – USC Debate has no direct control or influence on the admissions process. Historically, however, mentioning debate in applications has been a good way of framing why students are a good fit for USC, and allows you to demonstrate skill and commitment to research.