Appendix 7: Suggestions For a Successful Debater

Analysis
1. The debater should seek the most thorough knowledge of the topic and the most complete evidence to support [her or] his arguments.
2. The debater should choose arguments that are important enough to have a great deal of readily available evidence behind them.
3. The debater should not be afraid to use the “standard” case that many other teams are using. Often it can be refined or intensely developed during the season to become the best case. Non-thinking teams frequently are lulled into a false sense of security by what they think is a standard case but which is really capable of important refinements.

Organization
1. Choose the pattern of organization that best fits the analysis.
2. Carefully check the feedback of judges to see how effective the organization is.

Presentation of Arguments
1. Affirmative
   a. The affirmative should actively support its burden of proof.
   b. The affirmative should remain on the offensive.
   c. With few exceptions, the affirmative should narrow the range of arguments in the debate.
2. Negative
   a. The negative should actively support the presumption that goes with the present system.
   b. The negative should try to become the offensive team and put the affirmative team on the defensive.
   c. With a few exceptions, the negative should try to expand the range of arguments in the debate.

Refutation and Rebuttal
1. The debater should listen carefully to the opposition’s arguments. It does little good to argue against an argument that has been mis-interpreted.
2. The debater should state the argument [she or] he is attacking and indicate to the judge why [she or] he is attacking it.

3. The debater should state [her or] his counterargument.

4. The debater should present the evidence for [her or] his counterargument.

5. The debater should lend perspective to the development by showing how it affects the debate.

6. The debater should realize that it is possible for the opposition to tell the truth; [she or] he should not contest obviously valid arguments. Instead, [she or] he should analyze the relationship of the argument to the larger case or should move on to arguments that are contestable.

**Delivery in Debate**

1. The debater should realize that the debate takes place in the mind of the critic.

2. The debater should highlight important arguments by wording them in an interesting and memorable way.

3. The debater should forecast [her or] his attack.

4. The debater should erect signposts as [she or] he goes along to help the judge know where the speaker is in [her or] his case.

5. The debater should provide a brief summary and perspective at the end of the speech.

6. The debater should avoid all speaking mannerisms that detract from [her or] his delivery.

7. The debater should avoid debate clichés. [Her or] His language should be appropriate to the material and an expression of [her or] his own personality.

8. The debater should avoid sarcasm or other personal attacks on the opposition.

9. The debater should maintain poise throughout the debate. [She or] He should not talk or be rude during [her or] his opposition’s turn at the speaker’s stand.