

Princeton University Invitational

December 5 - 7, 2008

STUDENT CONGRESS Information Packet

For Contestants, Judges, and Coaches





Student Congress Tentative Schedule

Friday, December 5th

Noon - 230 pm	Registration	Whig Hall
400 pm	Congress Opening Session (E-Quad D221)	
6 pm	Congress Session I	

Saturday, December 6th

10 am	Congress Session II
230 pm	Congress Session III
7 pm	Supersession Announcement Agenda Setting Presiding Officer Election Supersession Judge posting

Sunday, December 7th

830 am	Judges' meeting for Elimination rounds
9 am	Supersession
Noon	Orders of the Day and Preferential Balloting
130 pm	Awards Ceremony

Official Procedural Rules

The rules contained herein are designed to promote procedural unity among the chambers. They are subject to change by the staff at any time, but they may **NOT** be altered or ignored through a suspension of the rules by the chamber.

--**DECORUM**: Each preliminary chamber is designated as a HOUSE or SENATE. A member of the House of Representatives is always referred to as "Representative," while a member of the Senate is always referred to as "Senator." The Presiding Officer of a House of Representatives is addressed as "Mister/Madame Speaker," while the Presiding Officer of a Senate is addressed as "Mister/Madame President." The Presiding Officer is responsible for enforcing proper decorum in the chambers.

--**LEGISLATIVE DAY**: A legislative day is one session; speaker order resets after each session.

--**RECOGNITION OF SPEAKERS**: The RECENCY system, as explained by the National Forensic League, is the required method for recognizing speakers at this tournament. Presiding Officers are required to use this form of recognition. Individual recency is to be used at all times; other systems are prohibited!

--**QUESTIONING**: A MANDATORY two minute questioning period follows all AUTHORSHIP, SPONSORSHIP, and SPONSORSHIP ON AMENDMENT speeches. The Presiding Officer recognizes legislators who wish to ask a question of a speaker; the speaker MAY NOT perform this function him/herself. Suspensions of the rules to create a PERMANENT questioning period or to ABOLISH all questioning periods are not permitted. Speakers have a right to refuse to yield to questions, except in the cases of AUTHORSHIP, SPONSORSHIP, and SPONSORSHIP ON AMENDMENT speeches. The PO has an obligation to rule "two-part," misleading, or irrelevant questions OUT-OF-ORDER.

Important note: this tournament DOES USE the National Forensic League's mandatory one-minute questioning period following each speech from the floor.

--**AGENDA ORDER**: Each chamber determines its own agenda order based on the legislation submitted by the schools. In addition, the minimum cycle rule as outlined below applies to all legislation debated by a chamber. Each Chamber must include two bills from each of the three categories among its first six bills on the docket.

--**MINIMUM CYCLE RULE**: Once a chamber adopts a B/R for consideration, opportunities for the authorship/sponsorship speech, the first negative speech, and a subsequent non-authorial affirmative speech are guaranteed. Motions to table the legislation or call the previous question are OUT-OF-ORDER until the chamber completes the minimum cycle.

--**LEGISLATION WITHOUT AN AUTHOR**: If the author of a bill or resolution is not present in the chamber, withdraws from the tournament, or waives the authorship speech, a SPONSORSHIP speech is in order. Sponsorship is determined by recency. The sponsor becomes accountable for the mechanics of the bill and **must** yield to two minutes of questioning from the chamber.

--VOTING: The PO determines the method of voting on each question that comes before the chamber, EXCEPT:

1. For final votes on legislation, amendments, and motions to appeal the chair, a recorded vote must be taken.
2. On all other votes, "voice voting" is acceptable. A recorded vote must follow if any member asks for a division.
3. When a member of the chamber moves for a roll call vote and the motion is agreed to by 1/5 of the chamber.

ALL simple majority votes are based upon the number of legislators PRESENT and VOTING in the chamber; therefore, the PO may not call for or count abstentions. For all votes requiring a fraction of the chamber to agree to a motion or question (2/3, 1/3, 1/5, etc.), the chair determines whether the chamber agrees with the motion/question using the number of legislators PRESENT in the chamber. Because of this system, the PO must track the number of legislators in the chamber at all times.

--AMENDMENTS: Legislators submit amendments to the PO in writing. A motion to amend is necessary to consider the written amendment; such a motion is in order anytime after the chamber completes the "MINIMUM CYCLE." Once the motion is made, the PO decides if the amendment is germane. The PO may consult with the Parliamentarian to make this decision. If the amendment is found NOT germane, the chair rules it OUT OF ORDER and the amendment process stops. If the chair rules the amendment germane, the chamber considers the amendment. In this case, the PO reads the amendment to the chamber. A 1/3 second of the members PRESENT in the chamber is required to debate the amendment. If the chamber votes a second, debate on the amendment commences immediately. There is no minimum cycle requirement for amendments, so legislators may make a motion to table or call the previous question on the amendment at any time. The first speech on the amendment is a SPONSORSHIP speech. The chair determines speaker recognition for the SPONSORSHIP speech on the basis of recency; the author of the amendment is NOT guaranteed the sponsorship speech. The sponsor accepts responsibility for the mechanics of the amendment and yields to two minutes of questioning. All amendment speeches receive a score and count towards recency. A majority vote is necessary for the chamber to adopt the amendment.

Preliminary Competition Format

This year's Princeton University Student Congress features three chambers, designated the Webster, Calhoun, and Clay chambers. Each chamber may decide whether it will be a House or Senate, but once that decision is made, it is fixed for all three sessions.

There are three sessions of debate in the *Preliminary Competition*. Between the three sessions, there should be a total of at least nine hours of on-floor debate, including PO elections and agenda discussion. Each session will have one elected Presiding Officer. For purposes of this Student Congress, one complete session is a legislative day. Priority for speaking resets at the end of each legislative day. *Thus, all legislators will have zero speeches at the start of each session.*

Any member of the chamber may run for Presiding Officer but no legislator may serve in that office for more than one session. Elections are conducted by secret ballot, with a majority vote required to elect a candidate. Service as Presiding Officer counts as the first two speeches of the session for purposes of speaking priority.

Each chamber is evaluated by a *Parliamentarian* and one *Scorer*. The *Parliamentarian* remains in the chamber throughout the preliminary competition, while the *Scorers* rotate to different chambers throughout the tournament. The *Scorers* evaluate every speech that is given in a session, rating them on a scale of 1 to 6 (1 is low; 6 is high). The points awarded by a *Scorer* for a given speech can thus be used to determine NFL points for that speech. The *Parliamentarian* keeps notes on the overall performance of each legislator, but will not write formal ballots. The *Parliamentarian* will, however, write an evaluation for each Presiding Officer, awarding him/her up to 12 NFL points on the basis of his/her performance during a given session.

At the end of each session, the *Scorer* and the *Parliamentarian* will each independently nominate eight students for *Best Legislator* during the session. The first three competitors on the *Scorer's* nomination form and the first three *unique* (not appearing among the *Scorer's* top three) competitors on the *Parliamentarian's* nomination form comprise a slate that is revealed to the chamber.

A *preferential ballot* occurs concurrently, with each legislator in the chamber casting one vote. The *Parliamentarian* also votes on the slate of nominees, and his/her ballot is used to break any ties. The top finisher in the preferential ballot election in each session advances to the Supersession. Nine competitors thusly advance.

After each session, each *Scorer's* nomination form is converted into credits by the Tabulation Staff with the 1st place legislator receiving 8 credits, the 2nd place legislator receiving 7, and so on. Those students who were not ranked by the *Scorer* will receive zero (0) credits from that *Scorer*. The two students from each chamber who have earned the highest number of judge credits over the three preliminary Sessions, and has not advanced otherwise will advance to the Supersession. Six competitors thusly advance.

Finally, at the conclusion of the third session, each *Parliamentarian* ranks the top 10 students in the chamber on the basis of their overall legislative performance during the course of preliminary competition. The highest-ranking student on this record (*Parliamentarian's Preferential Rating*) who has not advanced from preferential balloting or judge credits will then advance to the Semifinal Round. Three students thusly advance.

Eighteen competitors will thus advance to the Supersession.

SUPERSESSION

Format and Rules

The Supersession is designated a Senate, and all preliminary session rules state apply to the Supersession.

Either three or five scorers and a Parliamentarian will evaluate the Supersession. Congress Honors will be determined as follows:

Each Member of the Supersession casts a preferential ballot ranking each of the eighteen members of the Supersession.

Each scorer and the parliamentarian casts a preferential ballot ranking each of the eighteen members of the Supersession. During the distributions of the preferential ballots, each scorer's ballot will count as either 3 votes (with 5 scorers) or 5 votes (with 3 scorers). The parliamentarian's ballot will break all ties during the distributions of the preferential ballots.

The tabulation staff will then redistribute the eighteen competitors' ballots and the three scorer's ballots (giving an aggregate total of 33 votes). Seventeen votes are thus required to earn a Congress Honors.

Elimination Round Topics

Topic Areas for Supersession Bills

Legislation for the Supersession will be posted at www.princetonclassic.org on or before 6 pm on Thursday, 4 December 2008. At least five pieces of legislation will be posted.

Topic areas from which Supersession legislation will be drawn from are:

- Treaties
- The Economic Crisis
- The Credit Crisis
- Iraq
- Pirates
- US debt

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Congress Director, William Cooper, at coachdeb8@gmail.com.