

These selections were very difficult to make and as I'm sure you could guess, we had many students apply to attend Hart House with us this year. We used a few different criteria to make this decision.

As a general rule, we try to allow anyone who is in grade 12 the opportunity to attend any tournament they sign up for with us, especially if they have been with us as a student for some time. This only applied to one student for this tournament, but this selection criterion is one that I implemented because I believe it is only fair that students in their last year who will not have additional opportunities to attend tournaments should be given some preference in registration.

Beyond that, numerous factors were considered. As always, for a tournament like Hart House, competitiveness, class participation and engagement were weighed heavily. While tournament results are important, I value just as highly dedication in class and progression during the rounds I watch you as a student. You debate in more class rounds than you do tournament rounds, and both places are important for improving as a debater. We also continued our policy of sending at least one junior team. However, the student pool for this application was very competitive and engaged overall, and as such numerous other factors had to be used to distinguish between students.

One such factor was the number of opportunities a student has had to attend other major tournaments. In particular, if you were selected to attend Queens this year with us, that made your chances of being selected to attend Hart House much less likely. It is my belief that students need to be given opportunities to prove their competitiveness at major tournaments, so if we always send the same batch of students we don't give other students a chance to prove their own debating skill. You can only evaluate competitiveness if students get some chance to prove themselves. There were only two students that attended Queens with us that will also be attending Hart House with us. Additionally considered was how many major university tournaments a debater registered for without being selected to attend.

Some very competitive students that signed up for Queens and were not selected were still left off this team list. In some ways, we are fortunate to have so many talented and motivated debaters, but on the other hand that does mean not being able to send some students who are excellent debaters to either Queens or Hart House. My sincerest apologies go to those students, and I will do my best to compensate for your non-selections at these two tournaments.

I want to be as clear as possible to parents and students that you should not view selection as a conclusive and final evaluation of debating skill or how I view you as a debater. Numerous students I had to leave off this list were very difficult to omit, but unfortunately, there is only so much you can do when you are limited to 5 team spots. Many factors go into making a decision like this, and I know many students will be disappointed they have not been selected to attend. I do as much as I can to try and ensure all of our students receive opportunities to learn and grow, and if you ever feel dissatisfied with a decision I have made or if you have concerns about your progress as a debater, I am always available to chat.

I hope that helps explain my decision-making process, and I look forward to seeing all of you in classes soon.

I wanted to take a moment to give an explanation for how we selected the teams and provide some context for this decision. 29 students applied to debate with Linked Key at Hart House (a very high number we are very grateful for), and because of new rules implemented by many university tournaments, we received only 5 teams (for a total of 10 spots). We anticipated more team spots, but unfortunately, they could not accommodate our request.

Hart House is probably the most competitive tournament of the calendar year, and so we decided to pick the teams based on a combination of who we thought would have the best shot of competing at the tournament and based on seniority. We also wanted to be fair to our junior debaters, so we assigned one of the five teams for juniors exclusively.

For those students that were not selected (which will, unfortunately, be the vast majority of students that signed up), this should not be viewed as an indictment of your debating skill and progression. We have incredible debating talent at Linked Key, and unfortunately limited spots to accommodate that talent. We will be providing opportunities for students unable to debate at HH in the months to come, so we haven't forgotten about the students that were left off this tournaments list.

If anyone has any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Criteria

Selection is based on a number of factors, including the *type* of tournament, the level of the student, their grade, competitiveness, tournaments attended et-cetera. Below I will list the criteria we use and why we chose them.

1. Type of Tournament

- a. The first thing to keep in mind is selection for tournaments isn't the same across the board. There are numerous tournaments in a given year, ranging from major competitive tournaments like Hart House or Harvard Worlds schools, as well as tournaments intended for junior or first time debaters like Northern or UCC pro am.
- b. For major competitive tournaments, we tend to prioritize competitiveness. I will list the criteria we consider for competitiveness as we go on, but its important to keep that in mind.

- c. For other tournaments, we take a variety of factors into consideration such as how many tournaments the student has attended, if they are prepared for tournaments yet et-cetera. Generally speaking we try to ensure that students who sign up for multiple tournaments get an opportunity to attend something.

2. Age/Grade

- a. Before describing some of the factors we consider under competitiveness, I should mention that in some circumstances we consider age/grade as well when considering who to attend students. There are one of two ways this plays into selection:
 - i. First is the grade 12 rule. Generally speaking, if we have a grade 12 that signs up to go to a tournament, we send them no matter what. The idea behind this rule is that if you are in grade 12, you will never have another opportunity to attend the tournaments you are signing up for.
 - ii. The second consideration is, all else being equal (so if we have three students in level 4 advanced and one student in level 4, and have to come up with two teams) we would pair the two older students together as a tiebreaker.
- b. Again, it's very important to note here that age is either used for the grade 12 rule, or as a tiebreaker. For competitive tournament selections we prioritize other criteria over age.

3. Competitiveness

- a. There are several factors that go into determining a student's competitiveness when looking at selections for tournaments. I will list them all below.
- b. The first consideration is a student's **level**. If you are a level 1, for all but the junior tournaments (and in some cases not even then) you would be unlikely to be selected to attend tournaments because you haven't learned all the basics quite yet. If it was a tournament like Hart House, we would prioritize higher levels over younger ones, as the tournaments are the premier competitive events of the year and it's a fair metric of distinguishing between students.
- c. The second consideration is a student's **previous tournament accomplishments**. Particularly in level 4 advanced and level 5, we have numerous students who are all quite talented, so as a means of distinguishing if we have a lot of students sign up, we look at their previous record as a debater at tournaments.

- d. The third consideration is **teacher review and in class performance**. This factor is only used if the other criteria are close, but can come into play in some circumstances.

4. Partners

- a. When determining partners, it is important to note that students have two options during the sign-up process. They can sign up individually or they can sign up with a partner.
- b. It's very important that students/parents are aware that signing up with a partner gives you **no selection advantage** during the process, and there is **no guarantee** your partner request will be awarded.
- c. The first part of our selection process is deciding which students, individually, we are selecting. After that is complete, and only then, do we consider team requests. If both students qualified, then we would respect their request to attend as a team.
- d. In the event a student did not sign up with a partner, we try to pair students first based on level, then on age, and finally considering previous experience as well as how compatible they think they'd be as teammates.
- e. It is important to remember that we are limited in who we assign as partners based on who signs up. Sometimes we get many level 5s and 4 advanceds, sometimes we don't. It's always hard to predict.

5. Extenuating Circumstances

- a. There is one additional factor that is considered during selection that all should be aware of: Namely, **reliability**.
- b. If a student has a history of withdrawing from tournaments at the last minute, not showing up on the day of the tournament, having to drop out because of severe internet issues on a consistent basis, these factors will influence selection decisions **heavily**.
- c. Ultimately we owe it to all our students to give them the best chance to compete, and it can be crushing to not be able to attend a tournament or have to debate by yourself due to circumstances outside of your control.