

Dear President Scholz, Provost Long, Sr. Vice President Moffit,
Vice President Kindle, and University Trustees,

We are a united group of **over 150** Oregon high school debate and mock trial coaches, students, parents and volunteers, representing **54 high schools** across Oregon.

We are writing to urgently request that you protect this year's UO Forensics competition calendar, including the high school competition, and that the university coordinate with alumni to ensure the long-term success of UO Forensics in a new departmental home with professional leadership, logistical support, and coaching. As educators, students, and parents operating in budget-limited schools, we understand the budgetary challenges we all face but we also appreciate the outsized role of a strong forensics program in producing a pipeline of bright students that otherwise might not consider Oregon. Forensics is an investment in the future of our students and in the university.

In just the last 20 years, hundreds of high school debate team and mock trial members have gone on to attend the University of Oregon, and for many, the Clark Honors College. **On the debate side alone, nearly 400 high achieving students annually visit the UO campus.** Among those who have enrolled at U of O are national debate champions and team captains, UO Stamps & Presidential scholarship recipients, Pathway Oregon recipients, research fellows, as well as Truman and Goldwater Scholarship recipients. They pursue degrees in nearly every major.

UO also attracts highly-qualified students from mock trial programs. In recent years, the UO Mock Trial team has attracted extraordinary students from schools including West Linn, St. Mary's, Franklin, Sunset, Jesuit, David Douglas, Westview, Grant, Village Home, and South Eugene. These students have become program presidents, cabinet members, team captains, and award-winning competitors. During the 2023-2024 season, Rohan Menon (a Westview grad) and Devika Narendra (from St. Mary's) captained UO Mock Trial's A Team, leading them all the way to Nationals for the first time since 2016. At the tournament, Narendra was one of the highest-ranked attorneys in the country. She was joined in earning All-American status by Ben Snead (a Grant high grad) and Miranda Stone (Westview), who received awards as witnesses. For the 2024-2025 season, Narendra led the team back to Nationals *yet again*, cementing UO Mock Trial as a top

program on the West Coast. **We want these kinds of opportunities and achievements to remain available to students in future years.**

Moreover, UO's high school debate tournament provides Oregon students the opportunity to compete with students from across the nation. The UO high school tournament has recently attracted teams from Hawaii, California, Washington, Utah, Texas, Florida, Nebraska, Louisiana, and Arizona. **The UO tournament's tradition of attracting many out of state students gives Oregon students a unique learning and competition experience, and showcases the university to these out of state students.**

Former Vice President of Enrollment Management Roger Thompson once shared that the single greatest predictor of a high school student enrolling at the university is a campus visit. The UO Forensics tournament provides that visit for hundreds of our state's and nation's most high achieving students *annually*, and has done so since the 1930s. Students who attend this tournament are high achieving, with many going on to apply to U of O. Many have 4.0 GPAs, serve as Eagle and Gold Award Scouts, have started their own businesses, are active in volunteer projects, and have rich knowledge in the arts, sciences, civic engagement, and public speaking. These students also come from diverse racial, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds.

When these high-achieving high school students consider where to attend college, the size and success of UO Forensics is a major factor in their decision-making. A program with the size and success of UO Forensics requires professional leadership, coaching, and logistical support to preserve its quality. The number of tournaments at the collegiate level, the sophistication of the material, and the logistics involved in travel and tournament hosting at this scale require professional oversight. Transitioning to a student club is not feasible. The size of the program would shrink dramatically, problems would develop in tournament quality and scope, and the longevity of the program would be threatened. Alumni would be reluctant to contribute to a volatile club that fails to provide the experience they enjoyed. *For these reasons, the majority of the Big 10 Universities have professional leadership of their forensics programs, including Minnesota, Wisconsin, Indiana, Iowa, Nebraska, Northwestern, Penn State, Purdue, USC, Michigan, Michigan State, and Rutgers.* The U of O has provided professional leadership of its Forensics program since at least the 1940s under Robert Clark himself.

Given that tournament registration deadlines and travel arrangements cannot be further delayed, we respectfully request a response as soon as possible to ensure hundreds of students at both the college and high school levels can participate in fall-quarter competitions. Several tournaments have registration deadlines imminently.

Resources exist for supporting forensics at least for this year as the ASUO is eager to honor its substantial commitment and significant fall planning has already been completed. The actual, marginal budgetary savings hardly compensate for the irreparable damage of this decision on the UO forensics program, over 50 Oregon high schools, and hundreds of high school students. ***It is in the interest of the university to reinstate these tournaments without delay.*** A profound number of students benefit by maintaining these tournaments, and so too will the reputation of the university.

We hope that all university stakeholders and the greater forensics community will collaborate to support the success of UO Forensics for decades to come.

Thank you,

Kris Igawa, President, Oregon High School Speech League, Coach, Beaverton High

With Oregon coaches:

Owen Adams, coach, South Eugene Highschool, UO '27
Ameena Amdahl-Mason, coach, Clackamas High School
Josh Alper, coach, Rex Putnam HS
Dylan Amo, coach
David Barringer, coach, Oregon City High School
A. Jane Berry-Eddings, coach, Sprague
David Blommendahl, coach, Douglas McKay
Molly Bruins, coach, St. Mary's School
Caroline Campbell, coach, South Medford High School
Nathan Christ, coach, Milwaukie High School
Joel Clements, coach, Mountain View High School
Mallory Copeland, coach, Franklin HS
Michael Curry, coach, Sprague High School

Shelby Dallas, coach, Neah-Kah-Nie High School
Benjamin Dodds, coach, Willamette, UO '10
June Gerst, coach, Century
John Patrick Gonzales, coach, Cleveland High School
Brian Halberg, coach, Franklin
Ben Harrison, coach, Lincoln High School
Kentin Hosley, coach, Tigard High School
Jeremiah Hubbard, coach, Mountainside High School (Beaverton), UO '01
Joel Jacobs, coach, Eugene South
Amy Jack, coach, Sherwood
Jamaica Jones, coach, Sam Barlow High School, UO '11
Katie Kantrowitz, coach, Silverton High School
David Kargol, fmr. coach, Summit High School
Matt Kellogg, coach, West Linn High School
Kendall Lawless, coach, North Eugene High School, UO '94
Jennifer LeSieur, coach, Adrienne C Nelson High School
Sarah Liddell, coach, Tualatin High School, UO '98
Macie Mackey, coach, Sunset
Brian Malan, coach, Gresham High School
Ann McDonald, coach, Hood River Valley High School
Linda McKinley, coach, Roosevelt High
Aidan Muth, coach, Centennial High School
Anesh Nath, coach, Adrienne C. Nelson
Thu Ngo, coach, Liberty High School, Hillsboro, OR
Erich Paetsch, coach, South Salem High School
Matthew Parker, coach, Cleveland High School
Ashley Pearson, fmr. coach, Bandon High School
KC Perley, coach, Corvallis and Crescent Valley High Schools
Bryce Phillips, coach, Adrienne C. Nelson High School
Kieran Rezvani, coach, South Eugene, UO '28
Steve Root, coach, LaSalle Catholic College Prep
Robyn Rose, coach, Lake Oswego Senior High School
Josh Scheirman, coach, Marshfield High School
Valerie Schiller, coach, Reynolds High School
Kyla Schmitt, coach, South Eugene High School, UO '25
Aaron Slick, coach, Wilsonville High School

Lawrence Smith, coach, Oregon City High School
Michael Sugar, coach, West Linn High School
Kristen Sullivan, coach, Crater HS
Shawn Swanson, coach, Roosevelt High School
Courtney Walsh, coach, McMinnville HS
Rachel Wilczewski, coach, Parker School (Hawaii), UO '85-87
Jen Winchell, coach, West Albany High School
Katie Wilson, coach, Lakeridge High School
Beau Woodson, coach, Lakeridge High School

And the following students, parents, and volunteers:

Ayeh Akhavan-Heidari
Zoe Anderson
Joan Arbor
Megan Bauer, UO '13
Harkin Baxter
Lawrence Burke
Laura Chen
Saleen Chenevert
Anwesha Chowdhury
Sumit Chowdhury
Ona Clarke-Sprague
Billie Cleek
Hazel Cone
Katherine Corso
Cecilia Cox
Aidan Crisp
Michael Crotty, UO '13
Levi Curran, UO '07
Amelia Deckert, UO '28
Ysabel Delisi
Nathaniel Dixon
Amanda Dunbar
Quinn Earle
Justin Evers
Shannon Evers, UO '98

Lindel Evers, UO '99
Sarah Foster
Ayn Frazee
Joseph Gantt
Sarah Gillen
Mary Goldberg
Leo Greaves
Kishori Griffin
Sonan Gudina
Jan Hallock, UO '09
Jamie Hallock, UO '09
Russell Hanes
Tate Hartman
Craig Hermann
Emmi Hildreth
Ryleigh Ho
Kyle Hull
Keli Hull
Leo Ibser
Vibhav Javali
Jennifer Kohnen
Alaina Kuehn
Elise Kuhlman
Anna Lewis
Christine Lewis
Julia Lim
Emma Lindquist, UO '25
Pinki Mallick
Emilia Marshall
Sydney McFarland
Sara McKinnon
Sophia Megy
Nadya Megy
Benjamin Miranda
Gus Murino-Brault
Katie Murray

Isabella Neely
Lily Nishan
Brianna Nizic
Leah Nosce
Shannon Osinski
Valerie Ostrovsky
Shannon Parker
Erica Perez
Ayden Phan
Mintara Pituk
Marleigh Poteet
Ian Ritorto
Carly Ritorto
Asia Rivera
Michelle Rivera
Brooke Sanborn
Cleo Sandler
Claire Satran
Anna Smith
Alexandria Smith
Luciana Smith
Gina Spanu
Andrea Stanislowski
Nicole Stanislowski
Jenna Stephens
Freya Stillinger
John Sugar
Soumya Tadepalli
Jackson Taylor
Linda Trombley
Lily Vaughn
Alexa Vazquez
Susan Ward
Jake Weigler
Cassidy Wells
Bella White

Olive Wilkinson
Simone Wilson
Lindsay Wooster
Johanna Wu
Abbie Wu
Lily Yao
William Zenoniani
Justin Zou