



FY27 SFAC One-Time Request - B

Speech & Debate

10/20/2025

1. Executive Summary

In the last five years the University of Houston has made a name for itself in the space of competitive Debate as a reliable national host. Having hosted the 2023 Cross Examination Debate Association National Tournament, the 2025 American Debate Association National Championship, and the pending 2026 National Debate Tournament along with its “regular season” High School and College tournaments, multiple schools have come to appreciate and respect UH’s facilities, easy access to lodging, and nearby national airports. As part of this process we are seeking to leverage this experience into other forms of debate where UH has not, previously, had a footprint in hosting.

As a result, in partnership with the Institute of Global Engagement, we want to explore hosting novel forms of Models Debate Conferences. We are currently looking at hosting three new Models Conferences including, but not limited to:

- a Model OPEC conference to synergize with Houston’s petrochemical industry, our Model Arab League expertise, and the evolving nature of climate discussions;
- a Model NATO conference to build on UH’s growing interest in National Security Law and diplomacy;
- a as yet-unspecified fictional Models conference which will explore separating abstract notions of diplomacy from role-playing as countries;

This will dramatically increase UH’s footprint in the Model Debate sphere and also increase the number of programs that UH Debaters are able to attend. It will also let UH Models Debaters explore the nature of developing new formats of debate from scratch, a challenge otherwise inaccessible to most debaters.

As such, the program is asking SFAC for a supplemental one-time increase for the 2027 Fiscal Year of \$15,000. While this amount does not cover the entire cost of hosting the three conferences we would like to develop it would substantially off-set the additional costs of at least two conferences and would let us easily off-set the costs of the third by having it trade-off with a conference we would otherwise travel to.

2. Rough Budget Breakdown

Based on past events and external consultations, this is the rough cost of hosting a conference that would not be off-set by hosting fees.

Cost Center	Amount
Speaker and Field Expert Support	\$2,000
Food for competitors and awards banquet, supplemented	\$3,000
Extra Judging + Administrative Costs	\$2,000

This means each conference will cost **~\$7,000**. With \$15,000 supplemented to our budget we will off-set the additional costs of two conferences, leaving only \$6,000 to be off-set from the existing budget, which is a reasonable trade-off.