Student Congress Instructions

1. Prior to the tournament, students submit bills to be debated. You will receive a copy of these bills before the rounds start.

2. There will be an announcement of a meeting before the tournament begins. Please be there, as we will announce judge assignments and the schedule for the day.

3. Please go to your first assignment.

4. During the first round, the students will choose a Presiding Officer and set the order of bills to be debated (the docket). This should be done quickly so that the students may begin debating the bills.

5. The author of the first bill will give a 3 minute speech explaining why the bill should be passed. After the speech, there is a mandatory 2-minute questioning period as well as any time left of the speaker's 3-minute speech. The Presiding Officer will decide who will ask the questions.

6. After this speech, the Presiding Officer will choose a student to speak against the bill. After this 3-minute speech, there is a mandatory2-minute questioning period as well as any time left of the speaker's 3-minute speech.

7. Chambers may opt for Direct Questioning. In Direct Questioning, the PO chooses a questioner, and that person may ask questions for up to 30 seconds. Judges should consider the quality and brevity of the questions and the answers given by the speaker in making judgements.

8. After the first round of speeches, the Presiding Officer will choose speakers on alternate sides of the bills. These speeches are a maximum of 3 minutes. After this 3-minute speech, there is a mandatory 1-minute questioning period as well as any time left of the speaker's 3-minute speech. The speeches will go back and forth until the chamber votes to call the question (i.e. vote in the bill). The rules may NOT be suspended to add additional questioning time.

9. Each bill may be debated for only 1/3 of the session time. At the end of that time, there is an immediate vote on the bill; there is no need to call the question. After 3 speeches on the same side of a bill, there is an immediate vote; there is no need to call the question. After the first bill, the chamber will move on to the second bill and continue until either all the bills are disposed of or until time runs out.

10. This is primarily a debate. Thus speakers should refer to previous speakers and refute what they have said. While the first speaker for each bill may have a prewritten speech, the speeches following should NOT be prewritten, as they will not clash with the speeches that have gone before them.

10. This is also a congress. Thus, students should follow correct parliamentary procedure.

11. Judges should rarely need to speak. The Presiding Officer should run the chamber. If there is a problem, one judge should let the Presiding Officer know.

12. At the end of the rounds, please make a holistic decision. Which student best used a combination of speeches, questions, and procedure to make the best impression? Rank that student 1st. Rank the second best student 2nd, and so on. You will be told how many students to rank. DO NOT RANK ANYONE FROM YOUR OWN SCHOOL. If, in your opinion, you cannot rank the desired number, then only give ranks to as many students as you feel are worth a rank. Please also give the students a percentage. The highest percentage you may give is 100%, the lowest 75%.

13. Please be sure to consider the Presiding Officer in your evaluation. The job of the Presiding Officer is different from that of the other members of the chamber. A Presiding Officer must keep order in the chamber and choose speakers and questioners in an efficient and fair way. If the Presiding Officer does a good job, you will not notice her. In an efficiently run chamber, the Presiding Officer may seem invisible. Failing to consider the Presiding Officer hurts the PO's chances and makes it less likely that a congressperson will volunteer to be a PO in the future. Please consider the PO's activity in your judgment.

14. Students may use the internet during rounds. They may not communicate with anyone outside of the room. They may not access outlets for their computers.