



Letter from the President

“Training homeschool students to speak boldly and change the world for Christ.”

This is our mission. I am honored to be a part of this extraordinary community comprised of dedicated coaches, parents, students, and alumni from across the nation. Together, we are serving to accomplish this mission for the glory of God.



Speech and debate is arguably the most powerful activity impacting a student's ability to read, write, listen, speak, research and think critically. Since 2009, Stoa has been devoted to developing these skills and promoting the value of speech and debate to Christian homeschoolers. I find it interesting that even businesses recognize the importance of these skills. According to *Forbes Magazine*, the top three skills sought by employers include: 1) The ability to work in a team structure. 2) The ability to make decisions and solve problems. 3) The ability to communicate verbally with people inside and outside an organization. Stoa develops all of these skills in our students for the ultimate purpose of fulfilling our mission.

In light of that very mission, I am thrilled to tell you how Stoa leadership has been working hard to improve the organization's future by focusing on three key areas. First, Stoa IT is developing integrated software that will combine tournament registration, tabulation, ballot push and Speechranks into one platform. This new suite of software will make the entire tournament process from beginning to end much easier. Second, we seek to grow Stoa and serve our existing nationwide members by securing NITOC venues across the country. NITOC 2018, at the beautiful campus of Point Loma Nazarene University, has already been announced. Furthermore, I am thrilled to disclose that venues for both NITOC 2019 and NITOC 2020 are currently being negotiated. And third, the Stoa Board of Directors takes seriously its stewardship of membership fees. We are working hard to keep fees affordable while still running the organization according to its values and hosting a first-class national tournament each year.

In closing, I would like to personally thank you for being a part of Stoa and offering your time and talents to help accomplish our mission. Stoa is comprised solely of volunteers. At the club, local and national levels, we need you. So, spread the word about who we are and what we do. Together, we will train world changers for the glory of God.



Dave McKinley

Dave McKinley
Stoa Board President



2016-2017 Recap



States with Clubs



NITOC Competitors



Members



Tournaments



Financial Overview

2015-16

Income: \$217k

Expenses: \$208k

Net: \$9k

2016-17

Income: \$351k

Expenses: \$161k

Net: \$30k

2016-17 Tools



Stoa created a significant new judge and ballot tracking tool this year called StoaTrax. It was piloted in a handful of local

tournaments and was used to its full capability at NITOC 2017. Here is what one user had to say about it.

“Using StoaTrax at both Parent/Alumni Ballot Push and Community Ballot Push allowed us to have a real-time understanding of the diversity of judges in each room. This was especially helpful in outrounds. I was so happy to hear through the grapevine that competitors were very pleased with the balanced paneling of judges (Community/Alumni/Parent).

It was much easier to track the paneling process with StoaTrax than trying to do it manually.”

StoaTrax and associated tutorials will be made available for the 2017-18 tournament season. Watch for more details!

Clubsites

In March of 2016, the Stoa Board announced Clubsites, a website builder for local Stoa clubs. We partnered with our web developer, Keenly Interactive, to create a simple process that allows every club to build their own “Clubsite.” Coordination with the main Stoa website allows visitors to local Clubsites to have easy access to the most up-to-date information, event rules, descriptions, ballots and all things Stoa.

2016-2017 Highlights

NITOC 2017

The annual National Invitational Tournament of Champions is Stoa's premier event. The best speakers and debaters from across the nation gather to compete and close our season of competition. We were hosted by Union University at their beautiful Jackson, Tennessee campus where we focused on "Changing our World for Christ." We were blessed with good weather, excellent competition, amazing judges (in abundance-over 1000!!), informative vendors, supportive and caring campus staff, new and continuing friendships among students and parents, and a successful outpouring of connectedness and love within the community. An impressive 595 students representing 28 states came to compete this year. God truly enabled us to bless others and in return, be blessed.

Quotes from NITOC 2017:

"Behind the scenes NITOC is an army of servants working together and enjoying sweet fellowship!"

"Union University did a spectacular job of welcoming and accommodating the uniqueness of Stoa families!!"

"Stoa is a great place to practice Christian principles."

"It felt like a Stoa campus the whole week, but especially the last night. Walking around after awards and seeing kids and families out talking and playing was a great feeling of community."

Stoa Academy 2017

"Innovate, Educate, Articulate"

This was the theme of Stoa Academy 2017 held in July in Hayward, California. 114 attendees gathered for a two-day conference. Parents and coaches were inspired with ideas for coaching, running local clubs and hosting tournaments. We also had the privilege to honor Lars Jorgensen, the founder of Stoa, and hear testimonies from those who obeyed the call to start it all!

NITOC BY THE NUMBERS

	2016	2017
Apologetics	131	132
Cold Reading	n/a	225
Dramatic Interpretation	35	33
Duo Interpretation	48	50
Expository	54	52
Extemporaneous	129	129
Humorous Interpretation	40	35
Mars Hill	86	87
Monologue	138	109
Motivational	51	n/a
Open Interpretation	58	69
Original Oratory	110	142
Persuasive	65	71
Lincoln Douglas Debate	119	114
Parliamentary Debate	86	77
Team Policy Debate	123	125
TOTAL	1273	1450

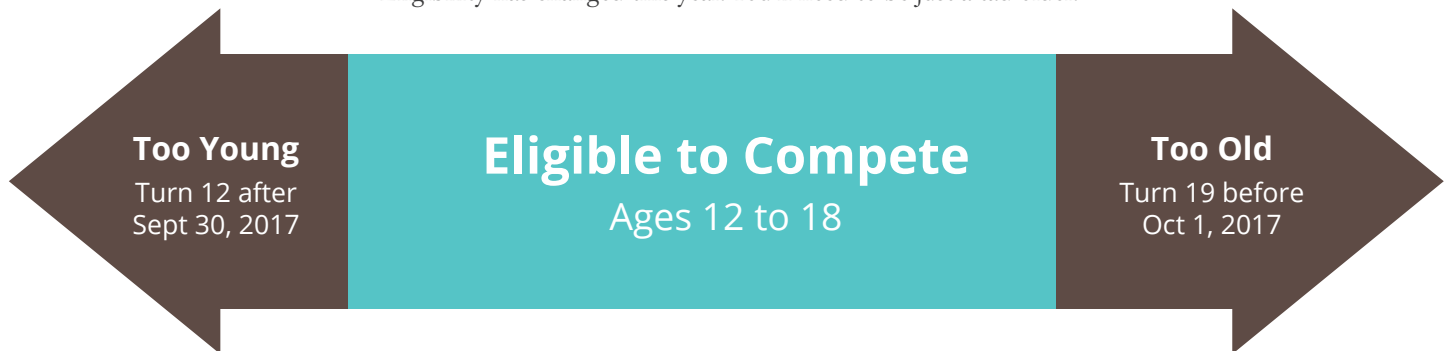
Training

The Stoa Board of Directors values local control and regional diversity. It is one of the characteristics that sets Stoa apart from other speech and debate leagues. However, the board also sees the value of providing training at the national level. So, in addition to our annual Stoa Academy, we are ramping up our library of training material. We are pleased to release two new videos: "Interpretation: Why, Where & How" and a LexisNexis tutorial. More to come in 2017-18! Look on stoausa.org under For Members and Links and Publications.

What's New for 2017-18

Eligibility

Eligibility has changed this year. You'll need to be just a tad older.



Rules

The new rules are up! Take a look at:

stoausa.org/speech-event-documents
stoausa.org/debate-event-documents

- Stoa members have voted and our new wildcard is Demonstration Speaking! Check out the rules so you can be one of the first to try this new event!
- Cold Reading continues as our second wildcard for one more year. It was the most popular event for 2016-2017 with a total of 225 NITOC competitors.
- Open Interpretation changed from a ten minute event to a six minute event and opened the door for narrative storytelling, single voice monologues, thematic compilations, or self-written pieces to be entered in this category.



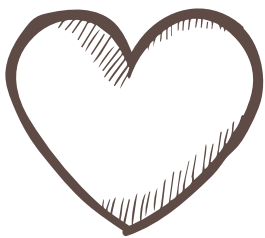
Goals for 2017-18



2017-18 Tools

Stoa IT is working hard to create new software that will streamline tournaments from beginning to end. Soon, we will begin pilot testing a new registration tool (replacing Flowpad), a new tabulation tool (replacing JOY), and a new Speechranks website. Best of all, there will be a central database that ties all three tools together. The end result will be a vastly improved user experience for Stoa tournament directors and club leaders, as well as parents and competitors. Our goal is to run the full suite of tools at NITOC 2018 and roll out to the entire membership for the 2018-19 season.

The board is grateful to Pascal Belloncle for leading this effort. He is personally architecting and coding large portions of the tool suite. However, the final coding and testing may need to be outsourced, requiring significant expense. The board will continue to focus on fundraising to cover the cost of this endeavor.



You can support Stoa instantly by making a donation of any amount and encouraging others to do the same.

The majority of Stoa funding comes from annual membership registration. NITOC also generates funds, but our hope is to keep fees as low as possible as we know that travel and lodging costs are significant for families. Another source of funding is our growing list of vendors and sponsors, supporters we continue to pursue with enthusiasm. Finally, individual contributions are key for Stoa. They help keep membership registration and NITOC fees low, fund the creation of exciting resources such as our improved website, an upcoming speech orientation video, and other exciting IT innovations on the horizon.

stoausa.org/donate

Impact

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I have two children with autism; spoken and written words are a part of their struggle. We pressed on into our first tournament. I was anxious about how their speeches would be received because of their language difficulties. I was moved to tears by the compassion and encouragement of the judges, coaches and especially the students. I saw them giving hugs, encouraging pats on the back and most of all, prayer. They prayed for one another in the halls before their competitions! I was so impressed by the Godly emphasis throughout all the tournaments we attended. Stoa's commitment to the greater goal of "changing the world for Christ" has helped to undergird our family's commitment to the same. We are so very grateful for Stoa's influence in our homeschool life!

VICTORIA B. — Stoa Parent

“

I had the great opportunity of spending five years competing in speech and debate. I am continually thankful for the coaches and parents that poured their wisdom and time into my life and the lives of my teammates and fellow students. The skills that I learned in junior high and high school have helped shape me into the person I am today.

EVAN S. — Stoa Alumnus

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My husband and I were honored beyond words to be included in this (NITOC) tournament! We both were SO very, very impressed with all the students and with all of YOU from this great organization.

MAGGIE F. — Community Judge

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Key Contacts

You can contact us any time, and we will help. That's why we volunteered.

Stoa Board

stoa.board@stoausa.org

Add a Tournament

calendar@stoausa.org

Speech Committee

speechcommittee@stoausa.org

Debate Committee

debatecommittee@stoausa.org

*More information available at: **StoaUSA.org***

