Dear Students,

The Roland E. Latham Oratory Competition strives to promote the ability of Northeastern University students to formulate and express their views on social and economic issues that impact the African Diaspora. Below you will find detailed information on the competition, including the 2017 oratory topics. Please read carefully. Should you have any questions feel free to contact Deborah Mauristhene at d.mauristhene@neu.edu.

Date, Time, & Place of the Oratory Competition:
The competition will take place on Thursday, March 22, 2018 at 6PM in the Cabral Center at the John D. O’Bryant African American Institute.

Eligibility to participate in the Oratory Competition:
Northeastern students of all levels (both undergraduate and graduate) are invited to join the competition.

Signing Up to Participate in the Oratory Competition:
If you are interested in joining the competition, please sign up here no later than Tuesday, March 13th, by 2:00PM.

Structure of the Oratory Competition:
The competition will consist of three student categories: a first-year, upper-class, and graduate student category. Each student will have a maximum of seven minutes to discuss their topic in front of an audience of students, staff, and faculty. The competition will have three judges and a contestant's final score will be based upon the combined total of each judge’s score.

Judging Criteria for the Oratory Competition:
Contestants will be judged on the five following criteria: content, delivery, presentation, eye contact, and time limit. A description of what each entails is given below:

- **Content:** Introduce the topic. State a clear thesis on position of topic. Use adequate research and acknowledge sources. Present a clear smooth conclusion.
- **Delivery:** Enunciate clearly. Speak loudly and not too rapidly. Use emphasis appropriately and not excessively.
- **Presentation:** Organize the material in a logical manner. Indicate familiarity with subject. Display no distracting mannerisms.
- **Eye contact:** Maintain constant or adequate contact with the whole audience, including eye contact with the judges.
- **Time limit:** Speak within the 7 minute time frame.

Oratory Competition Prizes:
Prizes for the winners of the First-Year and Upper-class includes:

- 1st Place - $1000
- 2nd Place - $500
- 3rd Place - $250
Oratory Competition Coaches:
The Roland E. Latham Oratory Competition allows for each student competitor to seek the assistance of a faculty, staff, or student coach. This coach can work with the student competitor in developing their argument and aspects of their presentations. The use of a coach is not mandatory, however we strongly encourage you to work with another person during the creation of your argument and practicing the delivery. The staff at the JDOAAI are willing to work with you as a coach.

Annual Roland E. Latham Oratory Competition Questions, 2018:

Hollywood has been under fire most recently as women have started to come forward with allegations of sexual harassment/assault in the work place. In an era where Hip Hop moguls like Russel Simmons have also been brought to the limelight with charges, one is wondering who is going to be held accountable and what does accountability look like?

1.) Thinking about hip-hop and the “Me Too” movement created by Tarana Burke; discuss the significance and relevance of the “Me Too” movement and its impact on hip-hop. Who is accountable, and what role do men and women play in the hip-hop business with regard to the “Me Too” movement?

2.) Many have classified comedian Dave Chappelle’s recent comedic material as transphobic and offensive to the transgender community. Should comedians engage in politically fueled jokes that are perceived harmful and dangerous? Discuss your reasoning.

3.) On October 19, 2016, President Obama stated, “It is hard to think of any society in human history in which a majority population has said that as a consequence of historic wrongs we are now going to take a big chunk of the nation’s resources over a long period of time, to make that right.”

Based on President Obama’s statement, should African Americans continue to fight for reparations? Explain your reasoning.

4.) Many critics have coined the predominantly black casted movie “Black Panther” a game-changer. Explain why this film’s success is a defining moment for Black America.

5.) Is modern media to blame for the increase in racial tensions and escalating violence in the U.S.? Explain your reasoning.

6.) In a DACA meeting targeting people from Africa, El Salvador, and Haiti, President Trump stated “Why are we having all these people from s*hole countries come here?” The debate regarding immigration has escalated quickly with President Trump as he expressed that illegal immigration is a detriment to the longevity of America becoming great again; clearly indicating a divide between the democratic and republican party as well with regard to supporting and/or deporting those who have migrated to the United States of America seeking refuge.

Discuss and analyze data reported regarding immigration in the United States and whether or not immigration poses a threat to the American system.
7.) Damon Young’s article, “Straight Black Men Are the White People of Black People” suggests Black men in the United States promote violence against Black women and refuse to acknowledge their complaints about misogynoir. Based on arguments such as these, do Black men oppress Black women? Discuss your reasoning.

8.) Do campus safe spaces promote diversity and inclusion among students; or, does it promote segregation? Explain your reasoning.

On Wednesday December 14, 2017, The Boston Globe published “Lost on Campus, as Colleges Look Abroad” (Dungca et al., 2017). The article focuses on the issue of race in institutions of higher education in the Greater Boston area. The piece notes that while global diversity has increased on local college campuses, domestic diversity has not kept pace. Most significant is the fact that enrollment for African American students in Greater Boston area universities was less than 7 percent in 2015, showing little to no improvement within the past 35 years (Dungca et al., 2017).

Further examining the issue of race on college campuses, “Lost on Campus, as Colleges Look Abroad” focuses on Northeastern University (NU), where reporters interview African American students about their experience of being an underrepresented minority on campus (URM). In addition to describing the feeling of isolation and loneliness, the interviewed students discuss confronting day-to-day racism, specifically racism from their peers.

9.) Discuss what you believe to be the factors, which contribute to low African American enrollment at NU, as well as other campuses.

Or

10.) Discuss what you believe to be the factors which enable African American college students to remain resilient and experience success, despite this lack of diversity and having to constantly navigate racial challenges on campus.

Legal scholar Kimberlee Crenshaw is credited with creating the term intersectionality, which describes the interrelatedness of various forms of oppression, such as race, gender, and class. She states:

“Black women can experience discrimination in ways that are both similar to and different from those experienced by white women and Black men. Black women sometimes experience discrimination in ways similar to White women’s experience; sometimes they share very similar experiences with Black men. Yet often they experience double-discrimination--the combined effects and practices which discriminate on the basis of race, and on the basis of sex. And sometimes they experience discrimination as Black women--not the sum of race and sex discrimination, but as black women (Crenshaw 1989:25).”

11.) Drawing from your own personal experiences or historical/contemporary examples, please discuss how Black women experience the multiple and/or simultaneous impacts of both race and gender.

The slow removal of confederate monuments throughout the United States has awakened some cities and universities, to further examine the legacies of the historic figures named or memorialized on or for public buildings, areas and monuments. Deadly riots are being sparked from the removal of these objects such as the Robert E. Lee statue in Charlottesville, and are compelling more communities toward the removal of all Confederate monuments to basements of historical societies. New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu recently hauled
down three public monuments to the confederacy and to white supremacy. “These statues were a part of …
terrorism as much as a burning cross on someone’s lawn; they were erected purposefully to send a strong message
to all who walked in their shadows about who was still in charge in this city.”

On the other hand, former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice criticized efforts to tear down southern
monuments to Confederate leaders because she doesn't believe in sanitizing history. She stated "I am a firm
believer in 'keep your history before you. I want us to have to look at those names and recognize what they did
and to be able to tell our kids what they did and for them to have a sense of their own history. When you start
wiping out your history, sanitizing your history to make you feel better it's a bad thing."

An accounting is happening across America of memorialized persons, they are being researched to uncover
previously unknown connections to unacceptable practices and ideals, such as slavery and Native American
persecution. Indeed, foundational figures like Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson have recently had their
names removed from the Democratic Party’s annual fundraising dinners, a move now under consideration in at
least five other states.² Proponents of this initiative argue that any party that seeks to identify itself with equality
and diversity cannot afford to be associated with these figures, past or present.

12.) Should we retain U.S. monuments honoring persons who engaged in atrocities such as the African Holocaust,
but take that time to discuss, grapple and educate the public with, and about our past, or do we strip honors
and monuments made to known racists and people of low personal character, then replace them with heroes
and heroines who were shamefully left out of public memory within their towns and community spaces?

For further question on The Roland E. Latham Oratory Competition, please contact
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