



The 2020 Presidential Debates

THE COMMISSION ON PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES



Belmont University
Nashville, Tennessee

THE THIRD PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

Joe Biden
Donald J. Trump

Belmont University
Nashville, Tennessee
October 22, 2020



THE COMMISSION ON PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES

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The Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD) was established in 1987 after two formal studies recommended the creation of a permanent, independent general election debate sponsor. Its primary purpose is to sponsor and produce debates for the United States presidential and vice presidential candidates and to undertake research and educational activities relating to the debates. The organization, which is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) corporation, has sponsored all of the presidential debates since 1988.

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BELMONT UNIVERSITY

As a two-time presidential debate host site, Belmont University is honored to welcome the candidates, campaign staff, media and other special guests to our campus for the final debate of the 2020 election cycle. In 2008, Belmont became the home to the first presidential debate to ever be hosted in Tennessee when then Senators Barack Obama and John McCain participated in the Town Hall Presidential Debate in the University's Curb Event Center.

Founded 130 years ago by two female schoolteachers, Belmont University sits on 93 historic acres two miles southwest of downtown Nashville. Its 8,400 students hail from every state and more than 36 countries and are drawn to Belmont to be challenged by the confluence of liberal arts and professional education in a Christian community of learning and service. The University's purpose is to help students explore their passions and develop their talents to meet the world's needs. With more than 95 areas of undergraduate study, more than 25 master's programs and five doctoral degrees, there is no limit to the ways Belmont University can expand an individual's horizon.

Campus Growth & Academic Accomplishments

Over the past two decades Belmont has experienced phenomenal growth in its enrollment, physical footprint and academic offerings. Since 2000, the University has grown from just under 3,000 students to more than 8,400 in recent years. The campus itself also expanded significantly with more than \$890 million in additions and renovations and is currently in the midst of three construction projects: a 1,700-seat performing arts center, an 830-space parking garage/tennis court structure and an athletic practice facility. Academically, the University has added numerous interdisciplinary programs, including new majors in Data Science, Public Health, Faith & Social Justice, Hospitality & Tourism Management and Architecture, among others.

But Belmont isn't simply growing... the University is growing successfully, creating strong programs that serve students' needs. For 12 years in a row Belmont has been recognized in U.S. News by its peers for its innovative approach to higher education, and in 2020, was named among the top 20 schools in the nation for its "strong commitment to undergraduate teaching." In addition, Belmont is consistently recognized by Billboard as a Top School for Music Business, and the University's nine-year-old College of Law recently posted the sixth highest bar passage rate in the nation for first-time test takers. A haven for self-starters and creative thinkers, Belmont is also home to a Top 20 ranked undergraduate entrepreneurship program. Best of all, the

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University is helping students achieve their dreams, boasting a 93% rate of placing students in jobs, graduate school or military service within six months of graduation.

National Attention & Civic Responsibility

It's often said that Belmont University is different by design, a unicorn of sorts in higher ed. When opportunity comes knocking, Belmont eagerly opens the door. This campus is known for consistently pursuing ways to defy the status quo and provide students—and the community at large—with phenomenal learning experiences.

The past 24 months are a tremendous example of what sets Belmont apart as the University acquired two world-class colleges of art and design, hosted an international Davis Cup tennis competition and served twice as the venue for the nationally broadcast “CMA Country Christmas” special. Nearly 800 Belmont students put their talents on display every year on the annual PBS broadcast of “Christmas at Belmont,” and the University served last year as a major sponsor of Ken Burns’ recent documentary on “Country Music.” Plus, we’ve recently partnered with alumnus Brad Paisley on a new nonprofit free grocery store to serve the hungry in our community.

Belmont’s desire to contribute to the democratic process through civic-minded community service also means this campus frequently hosts debates and critical conversations on local, state and national issues. Woven into the fabric of the Belmont experience is the concept that each individual’s greatest privilege is having the health, ability and resources to serve someone else, and our entire campus is extremely proud to serve this year by hosting the final 2020 Presidential Debate. Moreover, this opportunity offers us another means of fulfilling our mission to educate students “to engage with and transform the world.” Under the overarching theme “The Ideas of America,” our faculty will lead programming that tackles the critical issues facing our nation and the world, promoting exceptional educational experiences to benefit our students and all of Middle Tennessee.

We are thankful for the support of the state of Tennessee, the city of Nashville, our campus community, our volunteers and, of course, our debate sponsors in making this evening’s event possible.

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Stage Manager

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Volunteer

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CPD Interns

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Health Security Research
Elam Miller, Production &
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Pool coverage of the October 22, 2020 debate
provided by Fox News and CBS News Radio.

Special thanks to Herman Miller for providing the Aeron Chair seating onstage.

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DebateWatch2020

In 1992, the CPD organized focus groups around the U.S. to watch the debates, turn them off immediately after they ended and discuss what people had learned. The focus group participants unanimously said how valuable it was to talk about the debates in a civil way without being dismissed or criticized by those with different views. Thus was born DebateWatch, a voter education program established in 1996 which we have reinvigorated in 2020. DebateWatch is designed to bring people together to watch a debate, then turn it off at the end – before media commentary – and discuss what they saw and heard. Hosting a DebateWatch provides a communal viewing experience for participants. The goal is not to say who won or lost, it is to share views with those who may agree and those who don't. It is to listen respectfully to others' opinions. DebateWatch is a way to incorporate a town meeting into each debate. We have invited civic groups, libraries, and educational institutions, in particular, to join DebateWatch2020. Our 2020 participants represent all 50 states.

Agnes Scott College	Central Arkansas Library System
Allegany College of Maryland	Centre College
American Association of State Colleges and Universities American Democracy Project	Chapman University
Alpha Phi Alpha Kappa Phi Lambda Chapter	Colby College
Arizona Students Association	Columbia State Community College
Arkansas Tech University	Comal County Democratic Party
Atlantic Council of the United States	Community Adaptation
Ball State University	Connecticut College Camels Vote
Bellevue College	Consumnes River College
Borough of Manhattan Community College	Coffey College
Bowdoin College	Dixie State University Institute of Politics and Public Affairs
Brigham Young University	Duke University Polis: Center for Politics
Brown University Taubman Center and Swearer Center	East Carolina University
Cacique2020	Elon University
California University of Pennsylvania	Emerson College Political Communication Program
California State University East Bay	Emory University Emory Votes Initiative
California State University Northridge	EXPLO
Carter County Drug Prevention	Fairfield University

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Fayette Democratic Women
Federation of American Societies for
Experimental Biology
Florida International University
Florida Memorial University
For the People
Fork Union Military Academy
Freeman Holdings LLC
Furman University
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The Graduate School of Political
Management
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Scientology Club
Georgetown Debate
Gonzaga University Debate Team
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Honors College
Howard Payne University
Speech and Debate Team
Illinois Institute of Technology
Illinois State University
Indiana State University
Indiana University East
Indiana University Kokomo
Indiana University North
Indiana University South Bend
Indiana University Southeast
Indiana University Debate Team
Indiana University Purdue
University Indianapolis
Iowa State University Carrie
Chapman Catt Center for Women &
Politics
Jacksonville State University
James Madison
Center for Civic Engagement
John Carroll University
Arrupe Scholars
Johnson County Community College
Junior State of America Norfolk
Senior High Chapter
Keene State College
Knox College Department of Political
Science and International Relations
Lewis & Clark College
Lincoln University
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Los Angeles Metropolitan
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Metropolitan State University of Denver
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Middle Georgia State University
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Mills College
Mississippi Votes
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NewsTalk 107.9 Idaho Falls/Pocatello
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North Carolina Wesleyan College
Northern Illinois University
Oakland University
Ohio Debate Commission
Ohio University
Oklahoma City University Student
Civic Engagement Committee
Otterbein University
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Civic Engagement
Rutgers University Center for Youth
Political Participation
Rutgers University Newark
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Salem State University
Salisbury University Institute for
Public Affairs and Civic Engagement
Salt Lake Community College
Sam Houston State University
Singapore US Embassy
Snow College
Sound of Hope Radio Network
South Dakota State University
Southern Methodist University
Speech and Debate Program
Southern Oregon University
Southern University Law Center
Southern Utah University Leavitt
Center for Politics and Public Service
Spectra at Jungle Island
Stony Brook University Center for
Civic Justice
Suffolk County Community College
Telemundo News
Tennessee State University
Tennessee World Affairs Council
The Dispatch
The Power Coalition for Equity and
Justice
The Reed's Debate Circle
The State University of New York
Brockport
The State University of New York
Cortland
The University of Mississippi
The University of Texas
The LBJ School
The Voice of Vietnam
The Weekly Spar
Tougaloo College
Towson University
Trinity University
Tulsa Debate League
Tunisia The Munathara Initiative
University of Alaska at Anchorage
University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff
University of California Los Angeles
University of California San Diego
University of Central Arkansas
University of Central Florida
Volunteer UCF
University of Central Missouri
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Speech and Debate Team
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University of North Texas
Debate Team
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Virginia Wesleyan University
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Washington State Debate Coalition
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Waverly High School
Wayne State Forensic Union
Weber State University
Wesley College
Wesleyan University
Western Carolina University
Western Kentucky University
Western Michigan University WeVote
Wheaton College
Wichita State University
Widener University
Wigle Inc.
Winona State University
Worcester State University
Wright College
Yavapai College

For the current list of participants and to join, please visit
www.debates.org/debatewatch

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International

Supporting the Global Movement for Candidate Debates

Given their central role in the elections, presidential debates in the United States are watched by audiences worldwide. Increasingly, other countries – particularly emerging democracies – believe that starting their own debate traditions will strengthen their elections and democracies. Often, they seek help in initiating debates. For more than 30 years, the CPD has responded to requests for assistance in a growing number of countries as they try to identify unbiased debate sponsors, choose substantive formats and impartial moderators, ensure fair and sound TV, radio and internet broadcasts, negotiate with candidates and the media, and engage citizens in the political life through debates.

The benefits of debates are many. To cite only two examples: Debates can also help voters make more informed choices at the ballot box. After the first ever 2014 presidential debates in Malawi, citizens reported that elections that year were more substantive and focused on issues that mattered to them personally. Debates also provided a useful side-by-side comparison of candidates and motivated them to vote. Similarly, in El Salvador, a media analyst noted in 2019 that one of the nation’s first presidential debates “...marked a milestone in [the country’s] nascent democracy...due to the clash of ideas and the presentation of the candidates to millions of compatriots in and outside of the country.”

Debates help promote peace and reconciliation in tense election environments. As an African debate participant stated, “The greatest thing about this debate is to see Liberian presidential candidates sitting here and talking to each other and trying to convince voters rather than being in the bush and shooting at each other.” Debates can provide an opportunity for candidates to publicly commit to peaceful elections. This includes agreeing to accept election results or using legal channels to resolve election disputes -- as occurred in Ghana, Kenya and other nations -- rather than calling supporters to the streets.

The CPD, in partnership with the National Democratic Institute (NDI), helps debate sponsors around the world share their expertise and assist each other, both in organizing debates for the first time and improving on past debates. The support draws on CPD and NDI collective experience with more than 425 debates in 45 countries at all levels of elected office. The underlying conviction is that there is no single best way to organize candidate debates and that countries should choose approaches that best fit with their culture and politics. CPD-NDI initiatives have included long-distance and in-country consultations with debate groups as well as multiple international symposiums in Washington,

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D.C., Mexico City, Mexico and Skopje, North Macedonia that brought together debate groups from around the world for the first time. Symposium participants have discussed practical issues such as establishing public criteria to determine which of dozens of candidates should be invited to debate; creating informative debate formats; producing debates; and working with the media to generate public support to encourage candidates to debate. The symposiums resulted in the creation of the 38-nation Debates International network and regional debate networks that foster ongoing conversation and consultation among members to tackle common challenges. Network resources include the Debates International on-line information center (www.debatesinternational.org) and Organizing and Producing Candidate Debates: An International Guide posted at the site.

To foster these international exchanges, the CPD and NDI have also hosted Debates International network members at U.S. presidential debates at Hofstra University (2012) and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (2016). The visits provided a first-hand look at the debate hall's production elements, media filing center, and wide-ranging educational programs at the universities to engage students and the community in debates. The international visitors shared their own recent debate experiences with each other; in addition, they met with students, faculty and the media. The impact of Covid-19 on global travel will prohibit holding the international visit in 2020. A gathering in Washington, D.C. is planned for 2021. The CPD expresses its deep appreciation to the Howard G. Buffett Foundation for making the international debate exchanges and programming possible.

Debates International Network: Participating Countries

Argentina	Guatemala	North Macedonia
Brazil	Guyana	Panama
Canada	Haiti	Paraguay
Chile	Honduras	Peru
Colombia	Jamaica	Philippines
Costa Rica	Kenya	Serbia
Curacao	Lebanon	Sierra Leone
Democratic Republic of Congo	Liberia	South Korea
Dominican Republic	Malawi	Timor Leste
El Salvador	Mexico	Trinidad and Tobago
Ecuador	Nepal	Tunisia
Ghana	Niger	Uganda
	Nigeria	United States

“Onward!”

Jim Lehrer, 1934-2020





www.debates.org