The 2020 Vice Presidential Debate

The Commission on Presidential Debates
The University of Utah
Salt Lake City, Utah
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.

Co-Chairs
Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr.
Dorothy S. Ridings
Kenneth Wollack

Honorary Co-Chairs
Gerald R. Ford*
Jimmy Carter
Ronald Reagan*
George W. Bush
Barack Obama

Co-Chair Emeritus
Paul G. Kirk, Jr.

Board of Directors
John C. Danforth
Charles Gibson
John Griffen
Yvonne Hao
Jane Harman

Antonia Hernandez
Reverend John I. Jenkins
Newton N. Minow
Richard D. Parsons
Olympia Snowe

Executive Director
Janet H. Brown

Chief of Staff
Robin Goldman

* Deceased
National Sponsors

The following national sponsors have generously contributed to the 2020 presidential debates:

Anheuser-Busch Companies
Judy and Peter Blum Kovler Foundation
Crowell & Moring LLP
United Airlines, Inc.
Pentagram
State and Federal Communications, Inc.

The Commission on Presidential Debates owes special thanks to:

Susan Page
Washington Bureau chief, USA Today

Dr. Frank Newport
Senior Scientist, Gallup

National Press Club

United States Secret Service

Federal Bureau of Investigation
Department of Homeland Security
The Clemson University Media Forensics Hub
The University of Utah

The University of Utah is the state’s flagship research institution of higher education and health care. The campus is nestled in Salt Lake City, one of the most dynamic and fastest-growing—economically and culturally—metropolises in the U.S. More than 32,000 students enroll annually and have their choice of more than 100 undergraduate and 90 graduate degree programs from 18 schools and colleges.

Excellence in research and teaching reflects the values of Utah: An unparalleled work ethic and a spirit of entrepreneurship, collaboration, and community service. These qualities have enabled the U to innovate across many fields and pioneer new programs with social impact, generate pathbreaking discoveries, fuel critical research, and inspire innovative approaches to education.

In 2019, the Association of American Universities—an invitation-only, prestigious group of 65 leading research institutions—welcomed the U into its ranks. Membership in the AAU is marked by excellence in academic expertise and research impact, student success, and securing resources in support of core missions.

Additionally, U of U Health—ranked nationally in the top 10 for quality for 10 years in a row—serves as the only academic health care system in the Mountain West and provides patient care for the people of Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, and much of Nevada. The health care system sees approximately 2 million patient visits annually across its four hospitals and 12 clinics. The majority of the region’s physicians, nurses, pharmacists, therapists, and other health care professionals are trained on the campus.

The U casts an immense economic and societal footprint over the entire state, making it one of Utah’s largest and most important economic assets.

It is the University for Utah just as it is the University of Utah.

UNIVERSITY OF UTAH LAND STATEMENT

“We acknowledge that this land is the traditional and ancestral homeland of the Shoshone, Paiute, Goshute, and Ute peoples. Through this statement, the University of Utah recognizes and respects the enduring relationship that exists between many indigenous people and their traditional homelands. We respect the sovereignty of these tribal nations and affirm the University of Utah’s commitment to a partnership with tribes through research, education, and community engagement activities.”
Completed in 1930, Kingsbury Hall has been the starting place for many performing arts organizations like Ballet West and the Utah Opera. Quotes from Socrates, Aeschylus, and Walt Whitman adorn the stone above the main entrance. From left to right they read:

“PRAISED BE THE FATHOMLESS UNIVERSE FOR LIFE AND JOY AND FOR OBJECTS AND KNOWLEDGE CURIOUS.”
~ Walt Whitman, *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d*

“LEARNING IS EVER IN THE FRESHNESS OF ITS YOUTH. EVEN FOR THE OLD.” ~ Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*

“THERE IS ONE ONLY GOOD, NAMELY, KNOWLEDGE; AND ONE ONLY EVIL, NAMELY, IGNORANCE.”
~ Socrates, *Diogenes Laertius*

The 2020 Vice Presidential Debate is made possible through the partnership between the University of Utah’s Hinckley Institute of Politics and the Utah Debate Commission. The official debate website is debate2020.utah.edu.

The Hinckley Institute of Politics is dedicated to engaging students in transformative experiences and providing political thought leadership. Founded in 1965 by Robert H. Hinckley, whose vision was to “teach students respect for practical politics and the principle of citizen involvement in government,” the institute remains wholly committed to serving students. The Hinckley Institute maintains a world-class internship program, which places students in a broad range of industries around the world, organizes compelling forums with thought leaders, and provides political engagement opportunities for the larger community. Hinckley’s mission is preserved as students’ educational experiences continue to be enhanced and their pathways paved for impactful, meaningful futures.

The Utah Debate Commission was established in 2013. Its purpose is to educate voters about viable candidates for statewide and federal offices and their issue positions, promote a civil exchange of ideas among the leading candidates, and elevate the discussion of the most important issues confronting the state of Utah.
Thank you to the generous donors and collaborators supporting the University of Utah’s efforts to host the 2020 Vice Presidential Debate.

**Community Co-chairs**
A. Scott Anderson  
Kem C. Gardner

**Major Donor Sponsor**
Kem and Carolyn Gardner

**Corporate Sponsor**
Zions Bank

**Additional Donor Partners**
Sorenson Legacy Foundation  
Christian K. and Marie Gardner  
Roger and Sara Boyer - The Boyer Company

**Additional Corporate Partners**
Mountain America Credit Union  
O.C. Tanner

The University of Utah would like to thank the State of Utah and the Utah Legislature for their generous support of the Vice Presidential Debate.
The Commission on Presidential Debates

Executive Producer
Martin Slutsky

Co-Executive Producer
Tammy Johnston

Senior Advisor
Peter Eyre

Producer
Rory Davies

Director of Security
Robert O’Donnell

Associate Producer
Moira Kelly

Chief Information Security Officer
VJ Rao

Campaign Liaison &
International Projects
Matt Dippell

Technical Services
Shipley Landiss,
Senior Technical Manager
Larry Boshers, Technical Manager

Special Projects &
Debate Hall Logistics
Jean Cantrell, Director
Daniel Felton, Deputy Director
David James, Deputy Director
Elizabeth Loudy,
Assistant House Manager

Media
Shelby Sundling, Director
Blanca Margarita Sanchez,
Deputy Director
Jeff Kent, Still Photographer Liaison
Hope Wigginton, Communications & Research Coordinator
Betsy Arseneau, Manager

Operations and Logistics
Aya Estrin, Director
Louisa Keil, Production Coordinator
Allison Bishop, Coordinator

CPD Photographer
Mark Abraham
Pool coverage of the October 7, 2020 debate provided by NBC News and CBS News Radio. Special thanks to Herman Miller for providing the Aeron Chair seating onstage.
The Commission on Presidential Debates

Professional Services

Lewis K. Loss, Esq.
Dykema Gossett PLLC

Steven Adair, Sean Koessel
Volexity, LLC

Morgan | Wingate P.C.

Grace Guggenheim
Guggenheim Productions Inc.

Spectrum Printing & Graphics

Stephen Harty
Wheels Up

Cleveland Clinic

Gramercy Tech
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
Allegany College of Maryland
American Association of State Colleges and Universities American Democracy Project
Arizona Students Association
Arkansas Tech University
Atlantic Council of the United States
Ball State University
Bellevue College
Borough of Manhattan Community College
Bowdoin College
Brigham Young University
Brown University Taubman Center and Swearer Center
California University of Pennsylvania
California State University East Bay
California State University Northridge
Carter County Drug Prevention
Central Arkansas Library System
Centre College
Chapman University
Colby College
Columbia State Community College
Comal County Democratic Party
Connecticut College Camels Vote
Consumnes River College
Cottey College
Dixie State University Institute of Politics and Public Affairs
Duke University Polis: Center for Politics
East Carolina University
Elon University
Emerson College Political Communication Program
Emory University Emory Votes Initiative
EXPLO
Fairfield University
Fayette Democratic Women
Florida Memorial University
For the People
Fork Union Military Academy
The Commission on Presidential Debates

Furman University
George Washington University
The Graduate School of Political Management
Georgetown Debate
Gonzaga University Debate Team
Grinnell College Rosenfield Program/PPPE
Heidelberg University
Hofstra University
Houston Community College 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
Lipscomb University
Lone Star College Montgomery Center for Civic Engagement
Lone Star College North Harris
Lone Star College Tomball
Lone Star College University Park Center for Civic Engagement
Los Angeles Metropolitan Debate League
Loyola Marymount University
Marietta College
Menlo College
Mercer University Center for Community Engagement
Metropolitan State University of Denver
Michigan State University
Middle Georgia State University
Middle Tennessee State University
Mills College
Mississippi Votes
Missouri State Department of Communications
National Press Club
New Mexico First
New Mexico Tech
NewsTalk 107.9 Idaho Falls/Pocatello
Notre Dame High School
North Carolina Wesleyan College
Northern Illinois University
Oakland University
Ohio Debate Commission
Ohio University
Oklahoma City University Student Civic Engagement Committee
Our Lady of the Lake University
Oxford to the Ballot Box a
Yoknapatawpha Arts Council Project
Penn State University Brandywine
Rosemont College
The Commission on Presidential Debates

Rutgers University Camden Office of Civic Engagement
Rutgers University Center for Youth Political Participation
Rutgers University Newark
Sacred Heart University Pioneer Vote
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
The Power Coalition for Equity and Justice
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
University of Central Oklahoma Speech and Debate Team
University of Cumberlands Debate Team
University of Georgia Georgia Debate Union
University of Illinois Chicago
University of Iowa HawkVote
University of Kansas Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics
University of Mary Washington Debate Team
University of Maryland Baltimore County
University of Miami
University of Minnesota
University of Montana Max S. Baucus Institute Department of Public Administration & Policy and Alexander Blewet III School of Law
University of Mount Union Regula Center
University of Nebraska at Omaha
University of Nevada Las Vegas Debate Team
University of New Hampshire Carsey School of Public Policy
University of North Alabama & Alumni, Political Communication Course
University of North Carolina Greensboro
University of North Carolina Pembroke
University of North Texas  
Debate Team
University of Richmond
University of South Carolina Beaufort  
Communication Studies Program
University of South Florida  
Sarasota-Manatee Campus
University of South Florida  
St. Petersburg
University of Utah
University of West Georgia
University of Wisconsin Parkside
University of Wisconsin Superior
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Tommy G. Thompson Center  
on Public Leadership & Elections Research Center
US Constitution Party of Virginia
Utah State University
Utah Valley University
Vanderbilt University
Vanderbilt University Debate Team
Virginia Wesleyan University
Wabash College
Washington State Debate Coalition
Washington University in St. Louis
Washington Urban Debate League
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
Winona State University
Worcester State University
Wright College
Wright College
Yavapai College

For the current list of participants and to join, please visit
www.debates.org/debatewatch
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,
The Commission on Presidential Debates

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Argentina</th>
<th>Guatemala</th>
<th>North Macedonia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>Panama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>Paraguay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>Peru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curacao</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Republic</td>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>South Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Congo</td>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>Timor Leste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Onward!”
Jim Lehrer, 1934-2020