



# The 2020 Vice Presidential Debate

THE COMMISSION ON PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES





The University of Utah  
*Salt Lake City, Utah*



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# THE VICE PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

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Senator Kamala Harris  
Vice President Mike Pence

The University of Utah  
*Salt Lake City, Utah*  
October 7, 2020



THE COMMISSION ON PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES

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# 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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## **National Sponsors**

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

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## **The Commission on Presidential Debates owes special thanks to:**

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# THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

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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.”



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# THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

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## KINGSBURY HALL

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*

## DEBATE PARTNERSHIP

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](http://debate2020.utah.edu).

## HINCKLEY INSTITUTE OF POLITICS

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.

## UTAH DEBATE COMMISSION

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.

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# UNIVERSITY OF UTAH SPONSORS

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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**

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**Major Donor Sponsor**

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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.

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John Callahan, Staging Coordinator

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Joe Flanagan, Production Carpenter

## *CPD Interns*

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Health Security Research  
Elam Miller, Production &  
Website Development

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.

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## **Professional Services**

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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	Colby College
Allegany College of Maryland	Columbia State Community College
American Association of State Colleges and Universities American Democracy Project	Comal County Democratic Party
Arizona Students Association	Connecticut College Camels Vote
Arkansas Tech University	Consumnes River College
Atlantic Council of the United States	Cottey College
Ball State University	Dixie State University Institute of Politics and Public Affairs
Bellevue College	Duke University Polis: Center for Politics
Borough of Manhattan Community College	East Carolina University
Bowdoin College	Elon University
Brigham Young University	Emerson College Political Communication Program
Brown University Taubman Center and Swearer Center	Emory University Emory Votes Initiative
California University of Pennsylvania	EXPLO
California State University East Bay	Fairfield University
California State University Northridge	Fayette Democratic Women
Carter County Drug Prevention	Florida Memorial University
Central Arkansas Library System	For the People
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Furman University  
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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  
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Jacksonville State University  
James Madison  
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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  
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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  
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The Voice of Vietnam  
The Weekly Spar  
Tougaloo College  
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Tulsa Debate League  
Tunisia The Munathara Initiative  
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University of California Los Angeles  
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University of North Texas Debate Team	Vanderbilt University Debate Team
University of Richmond	Virginia Wesleyan University
University of South Carolina Beaufort Communication Studies Program	Wabash College
University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee Campus	Washington State Debate Coalition
University of South Florida St. Petersburg	Washington University in St. Louis
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	Wichita State University
	Widener University
	Winona State University
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	Wright College
	Yavapai College

For the current list of participants and to join, please visit  
[www.debates.org/debatewatch](http://www.debates.org/debatewatch)

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# THE COMMISSION ON PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES

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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](http://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](http://www.debates.org)