



## News Release

March 29, 2019

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### Inaugural Regents' Cup Celebrates Free Speech at Arizona's Public Universities

Phoenix, Ariz. – The Arizona Board of Regents announces the inaugural Regents' Cup, a new debate competition celebrating free speech, civil discourse and democratic engagement among students from all of Arizona's public universities.

In honor of the historic tradition of debate at public universities that builds leadership and enriches public speaking skills, the Board of Regents will hold the first Regents' Cup Competition at the University of Arizona on Nov. 16, 2019. Winning student teams will receive scholarships as prizes in the debate contest.

This inaugural competition features reasoned debate during an era when free-speech issues on college campuses are at the forefront of the national conversation. Arizona's public universities are recognized as exemplars in free speech; Arizona State University, Northern Arizona University and the University of Arizona are all recognized with the highest "green light" rating from FIRE (the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education).

"Our universities are places where free speech is welcomed, where diversity of ideas and beliefs broaden horizons for students while contributing to their overall view of the world and learning experiences," said Regent Karrin Taylor Robson, who envisioned the competition. "The Regents' Cup will showcase freedom of expression in an atmosphere that is often missing from public debate today – one that is characterized by respect and civil discourse."

Regents' Cup participants will be judged for articulating different points of view in an environment where combatants remain friends. During the all-day competition, student teams will participate in rounds of civil dialogue, solutions debate and persuasive storytelling, sharing true stories from personal experiences.

"The Regents' Cup competition is a true point of pride for this board and an outstanding opportunity to showcase free speech at our universities," said ABOR Chair Ron Shoopman. "We eagerly anticipate the inaugural event and hope this becomes a celebrated and recognized event in the years to come."

The Sandra Day O'Connor Institute will recognize the Regents' Cup winning student team at a future event. "Civil discourse is a hallmark of Justice O'Connor's distinguished career," stated O'Connor Institute Chief Executive Officer Sarah Suggs. "We commend the Arizona Board of Regents for establishing the Regents' Cup Competition."

"Student participants will demonstrate their critical thinking skills while they are exposed to different ideas and opinions. This competition is designed to not only highlight our students' talents in these areas, but to honor the longstanding history of debate at our nations' institutions of higher learning – a history that expands individuals' worldview, reasoning skills and respect for others," said ABOR Executive Director John Arnold.

Applications are now open for undergraduate and graduate students from Arizona State University, Northern Arizona University and the University of Arizona to apply to participate in the Regents' Cup. For more information, click [here](#).

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