



Intercollegiate Advocacy and Dialogue Competition: An Exploration of Confederate Memorialization in the Southern United States

Lord, History is weary
of her unspeakable liaison with Time,
for Time and History have never seen eye to eye:
Time laughs at History
and time and time and time again
Time traps History in a lie.

✍ James Baldwin, "Staggerlee Wonders," (1983)

We are in a unique moment. The quiet whispers about the history of the Confederacy and its memorialization have exploded into a national conversation.

We are in a moment when previous arguments from historians and activists about the need to free the history of Confederate monuments from the clutches of time's proclivity for revision are receiving new and more public hearings. Many scholar-activists forward that we should not allow the passage of time to elide or reinterpret when and why the nation constructed statues and monuments honoring soldiers fighting to preserve the norms, values and institutions of the Old South. In *Begin Again* (2020), Eddie Glaude Jr., Princeton's Professor of African American Studies, poignantly wrote that the "Confederate monuments question makes plain that the history we tell ourselves is a key battleground for the country's future" (pp. 70-71). If Dr. Glaude is correct, the current national conversation about Confederate memorialization will inform the next phase in our nation's struggle to understand our shared history and the situatedness of our relationships, practices, and policies.

With the debate about Confederate memorials reaching a fever pitch and precipitating in the spontaneous removal of some monuments, we are writing to cordially invite Emory University to join us as we enter into this "key battleground" that will inform all of our futures.

On behalf of the debate programs at Emory University and Vanderbilt University, in partnership with the National Center for Civil and Human Rights, we invite you and your students to participate in a unique intercollegiate experience. The competition provides students an opportunity to explore the history of Confederate monuments and their influence on contemporary social and political culture such as race relations, cultural identity, and policy formulation.

Intercollegiate Advocacy and Dialogue Competition: An Exploration of Confederate Memorialization in the Southern United States is a **three-part program** that features a writing component encouraging students to research the history of Confederate monuments in their state and draft a "**Letter to the Editor**" to a newspaper of their choice. The letter should explore the history of Confederate memorialization and address how their communities should respond to our current moment of reckoning as the nation publicly struggles to understand and contextualize the valorization of the Confederacy 155 years after the Civil War. Submission of the letter for publication is not required to participate in the competition. **The second part of the program invites a select number of teams to present their letters** and recommendations to a panel of judges that includes activists, scholars, journalists and educators. **The program concludes with an Evening of Dialogue**, a virtual public event, featuring student representatives from 5 schools and Nicole Moore, Director of Education at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights. Our Evening of Dialogue culminates with an awards ceremony honoring the participants at each phase of the competition.



The competition will unfold over the following dates:

📅 **October 2, 2020 - Letter to the Editor submission**

One letter per school

Maximum of 750 words

Each letter should explore the history of Confederate memorialization in their state

Each letter should include a proposal for action in regards to the memorials in their state

Letters will be judged through a blind evaluation process

Submissions should be sent to: Candice Williams, candice.marie.williams@emory.edu

📅 **October 17, 2020 - Oral Presentation and Defense**

8-10 schools will be invited to virtually present their letters to a panel of judges

Up to 5 students may represent each school

10 minutes to present letters and expound on the efficacy of proposals

10 minutes to answer questions from the panel of judges

📅 **October 22, 2020 (6p-7:30p) - Evening of Dialogue**

5 schools will be invited to participate in a 1.5-hour public conversation on Confederate memorialization

2 students will be invited to represent their school

Evening of Dialogue hosted over Zoom. Open to the public

Awards Ceremony

How to Enter

Thank you for considering joining Emory University, National Center for Civil and Human Rights, and Vanderbilt University for *Intercollegiate Advocacy and Dialogue Competition: An Exploration of Confederate Memorialization in the Southern United States*. Please inform us of your intent to participate by emailing intercollegiateadvocacy@gmail.com

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,

John Koch, Director of Debate, Vanderbilt University
Ed Lee III, Senior Director, Alben W. Barkley Forum for Debate, Deliberation, and Dialogue
Nicole Moore, Director of Education, National Center for Civil and Human Rights
ML Sandoz, Director of Forensics, Vanderbilt University
Candice Williams, Assistant Director, Atlanta Urban Debate League