# NPTE Candidate Statements

## Kyle Dennis

After receiving some encouragement to do so, I’m going to run for the NPTE board. If you’re a member of an institution that holds an NPTE-membership vote, here’s what you’re getting with me—for better or worse.

**NPDA/NPTE:**
We should continue to find ways to differentiate the NPTE from the NPDA. These are two distinct organizations and we should treat them as such. We are at a point in our activity where we have two national tournaments out of habit, not out of any substantial pedagogical difference. We shouldn’t be afraid of creating distinct experiences in our activity.

**National Tournament Size:**
I believe that we should consolidate the size of the NPTE. I’d aim for a return to 32 teams. 54 teams or more is far too many for what current parliamentary debate numbers will sustain. Qualification to the NPTE is no longer an “honor”— it’s a given (no offense). At a smaller size, judging can get more precise, awards can be higher quality, and every round of competition will be more meaningful.

**Debates/Topics:**
The topic process needs significant revision. I’d be willing to take point on that. I mean no disrespect to anyone that’s ever served on the topic committee. Your work on the process has been tireless. But it’s been a mess for many years. It is not the fault of any one person. Sometimes, democracy isn’t always the best solution. One item I’d like to propose is financial compensation for unassociated folks to write topics— no last minute work, no public wordsmithing— we all get them at one time, before winter break. Test-run the topics at Mile High if that’s what it takes and then allow time for feedback to the topic writers. At present, we are pretending that a few weeks is enough time to properly prepare for topic debates. It’s not. Either we want in-depth debates about the topic or we don’t. I’d also like to see significant organizational movement towards pre-round disclosure of whether a team will defend the topic or not as well as well as an opportunity for teams to disclose content warnings, or other elements of their argument content, without going room-to-room between pairings and prep.

**Board accountability:**
We should reform the board. I don’t believe that folks who do not attend the NPTE with their squad should maintain seats on the NPTE board. I also happen to believe that national organizations should not share leadership. There should also be external membership-initiated methods to remove leadership from the board.

While I enjoy working with my colleagues, my primary goal isn’t to make friends. I’m here to create a high level educational experience for my students. I would like to, once again, make the NPTE the tournament where qualification is an elite experience that is significantly different from the open-entry NPDA. So, vote for me or don’t.

## Ben Mann

I would like to serve on the NPTE board out of a desire to improve accessibility for schools and their students, and I believe that the NPTE has the capacity to be an excellent tournament if major structural issues are addressed. In particular, I am interested in prioritizing the competitive and travel opportunities of community colleges, junior colleges and/or schools with limited resources. Additionally, I believe in supporting diversity among critics and addressing structural issues with topic research at the NPTE that often disincentivizes smaller programs. Lastly, I believe that we must put competitors first, including their roles as students along with physical/mental/emotional well-being. With a personal and advocacy centered background in disability and non-cis gender issues, I believe that I would be a good fit to sensitively engage with these concerns.

## Ashley Nuckles Cuevas

I am the current ADOF for PLNU and would like to throw my hat in the ring. As a competitor and coach, I have enjoyed and valued the NPTE, however, this tournament has begun to lose its appeal and attendance in recent years. I am running for this office because I want to work with others in this community to conceptualize and implement institutional changes in order for this organization to continue being relevant and viable. Specifically, this tournament can and should be decreased in terms of size of entry especially in light of the fact that it has failed to meet the maximum entry in years. Furthermore, I would like to help lead the discussion to resolve issues surrounding topic areas, release date, and resolutional phrasing. Although I love the idea of Topic Area Paper submissions I do not believe that we have had enough submissions to create the breadth of discussion that topic areas are meant to facilitate. Moreover, the limited amount of time to do adequate research greatly decreases the depth of discussion and strategy on the resolutions which defaults to most rounds being about projects rather than the topic. I love a great Kritikal debate, however, the current structure has only disincentivized the topic research which is supposed to be part of the primary distinctions between NPTE and other National Tournaments. I also believe that there are some areas for improvement in decreasing the cost of the tournament in addition to amending the schedule/structure. I would like to emphasize that I realize that I do not have all of the answers and would greatly appreciate collaboration and debate on these issues with fellow board members.

## Zach Schneider

I am also going to run for the NPTE board. I’ll keep my post relatively short – I am running because I care deeply about the NPTE, and I want to see it continue to exist and thrive into the future. Debate in general has given me so much, and for me, the NPTE was always the heart of my debate experience. I want to preserve and maintain that elite competitive experience for future generations of debaters.

If elected, I will volunteer to serve as the NPTE’s treasurer-secretary. As many of you know, I built the current NPTE website and have been responsible for maintaining the NPTE rankings for the past year and half. I have also gained significant experience with the general structure and function of the NPTE. I believe that sound management (financial and otherwise) is the backbone of a healthy organization, and I will do my best to pick up the mantle and ensure continuity for the NPTE going into the future.

## Adam Testerman

Hi folks,

I am also running for NPTE board.

I have three main reasons why I would appreciate your consideration:

1. I agree with Kyle’s sentiment about continuing to differentiate NPTE from NPDA. I would like to talk out limiting the number of entries to the tournament, so that the bid system is actually relevant. In the quest to expand the tournament, I feel that it’s lost some of its identity. A serious conversation about what role the NPTE should serve is due.
2. I’d like to do what I can to build a better sense of community amongst schools participating in the NPTE. I fear that some programs have become alienated from one another. I’d like to see us work cooperatively to bridge some divides and work together for the greater health of the community.
3. I’d like to see the NPTE (if not NPDA) work seriously on brining more folks into the community. I don’t see tension with encouraging new program participation and limiting tournament entries, but we could talk about reforming the bid process to seek entries from schools that have not attended previously, or in a number of years. I’m not sure about the capacity of the NPTE board to facilitate program outreach, but I think that’s something important for us to consider.

Thanks for your consideration!