General Thoughts: I have always set the goal of grounding my decision in information conveyed during the debate round. I do not believe that outside opinions, knowledge, etc. should influence a judging decision. What that means to you is that I will try very hard not to just trump some argument you think you are winning with my own personal opinion about the argument. My default perspective is policy making. I believe the affirmative should propose a plan of action that is consistent with the resolution. If you want to have the debate decided from an alternate perspective, you must define that perspective, and explain how I am to make that decision. For instance, if you want me to endorse your performance, you must define how I am supposed to do that. I am extremely concerned about fairness in debate, so I suggest you consider what the other teams ground is within your new perspective. Failure to sufficiently define your “framework/perspective” will result in what you will probably consider an undesirable result. Try very hard to not carry too many assumptions into the debate round. I have not seen you last few debates against a particular team, or issue. So keep in mind that if you just assume that an argument is a game winner versus a position, you may find that I did not also hold that assumption. You will need to get me up to date with why you now hold that assumptions. Why is it a game winning arg? Don’t assume that I already agree that “Speech Acts” are more important, or that “you can’t predict the future” is a given truth. If you believe in one of those arguments, you will need to persuade me that your belief is justified, and is one that I should share.

Topicality: I will vote on topicality. I think having a guide for predictable discussion is good. I think topicality debates hinge on the question of whose interpretation of the resolution provides for a better debate topic/experience. If your violation and argumentation does not provide an answer to that question, then figure the answer out.

Counterplans: I’ll evaluate any counterplan presented. I begin from a bias that net benefits is the most meaningful competition standard, and perhaps only standard. But you can argue other standards, and you only have to defeat your opponent’s arguments, not mine. As to other theory questions with counterplans, it will depend on who does the best job defending/indicting a particular theoretical practice used in the debate.

Evaluation of Argument – Communication based perspective
I believe that debate decisions (by judges) should be based on what the debaters did in the round. I think it is a debater’s obligation to communicate ideas to the judges during the debates, not spew them forth to be evaluated by the judges after all the talking is done. I expect that argument evaluation will happen during the debate and that you will engage the other team’s argument and discuss it. I will reward debaters that communicate their ideas by holding their opponent to a standard that requires they refute your argument.

I believe that good communication should be rewarded. If you make a well-reasoned and explained argument in the early part of the debate, then your opponent will be responsible for answering your complete argument. If they don’t, the aspects they don’t address will become “certainties” in my judging perspective. Conversely, if you do not make well reasoned and explained arguments early in the debate, then when the argument does get explained, I will allow your opponent to answer it at that time. This system also relates to which evidence I may call for after the debate round during my decision making process. If the evidence was not read in a manner that allows me to comprehend the ideas within the evidence, and you never get around to explaining the arguments made in the evidence and why I should believe them, I will most likely not look at that evidence to find the explanation. If you want to hinge the resolution of a particular issue (or the whole debate) on some evidence, be sure that it was effectively communicated at some time during the debate round (preferably before the last rebuttal)

Debating and Evaluating Theory Issues
Theory issues are difficult to evaluate, because they are a yes/no question. If you wish to win a theory objection, you must deal with all of your opponent’s defenses, and provide reasoning explaining why a particular theory position is destructive to quality debate. This is not meant to scare you off of theory debates, just to encourage you to be thorough and complete when discussing this issue.