#### Debate’s benefits are contrived and wrong.

Hester ’13 Hester, Mike (well-respected policy debate coach). Note. November 22, 2013. <http://www.cedadebate.org/forum/index.php/topic,5407.msg11974.html~#msg11974>.

To whom it may concern, CEDA-NDT Debate is a hot mess right now. There are so many things wrong, it can sometimes seem like they're all related. Maybe they are (reference Homer Simpson's "one big ball of lies" explanation to Marge), but a delineation may still provide some guidance as to what we can change, what we may have to accept, and where (if anywhere) we may go from here... the foundation We no longer have one, and haven't for more than two decades. Fewer and fewer debate coaches are communication scholars, which is fine because Communication Departments don't consider us anything more than the bastard cousins who show up at the family reunion piss-drunk and demanding more potato salad. Our activity long ago (40 years?) lost any resemblance to a public speaking event attracting outside audiences. The problem is we vacated that academic space without being able to find a home anywhere else. Despite the pious assumptions of some with "policy" in mind, we are not a legitimate "research" community of scholars. The "portable skills" we currently engrain in our students via practice are: all sources are equivalent, no need for qualifications; "quoting" a source simply means underlining ANY words found ANYWHERE in the document, context and intent are irrelevant; and we are the only group outside of Faux News that believes one's argument is improved by taking every point of logic to its most absurd extreme. Simply put, 99.9 of the speech docs produced in debates would receive no better than a C (more likely F) in any upper division undergraduate research-based class. Comically, we are the public speaking research activity that is atrocious at oral persuasion and woefully in violation of any standard research practices. But this letter is not intended to bury Debate, even though it's hard to praise it in its current state. Before any peace treaty ending the Paradigm Wars can be signed and ratified, an honest appraisal of where Debate fits in the Academy is necessary.