Who We Are
- The John R. Park Debate Society (the speech and debate team) is sponsored by the Department of Communication and has been a campus organization since 1869.
- In 2017, the John R. Park Debate Society won the National Parliamentary Debate Association’s Season-Long National Championship.
- Utah’s Invitational Tournament, the Great Salt Lake Invitational, is one of the oldest and most distinguished tournaments in the Western United States.

What We Do
- **Competition**
  - **Lincoln-Douglas Debate** – We are a member of, and compete in tournaments sanctioned by, the National Forensics Association in Lincoln-Douglas Debate.
  - **British Parliamentary Debate** – We are a member of, and compete in tournaments sanctioned by, the United States Universities Debate Association (USUDA).
  - **Individual Events** – We are a member of, and compete in tournaments sanctioned by, the National Forensics Association (NFA).
- **Public Events**
  - **Public Debates** - Public debates are where intercollegiate debate started. We host a public debate each semester. Past debates have focused on locally relevant public issues, i.e. guns on campus, Utah liquor laws and public safety, immigration, and nuclear waste storage.
  - **Election Debates & Forums** – Part of our public debate programming is done in partnership with the Alliance for a Better Utah, including an ongoing legislative debate series.

High School Outreach
- **Volunteer Coaching** - Our students provide nearly 1,000 hours of support each year for local teams by judging at local tournaments and offering volunteer coaching for teams with limited resources.
- **High School Tournament** - Utah Forensics hosts the Beehive Bonanza. This tournament hosts teams from throughout Utah and around the country. Scholarships are awarded to top competitors.
- **Beehive Forensics Institute** - Utah Forensics hosts high school students and coaches from throughout the United States at the Beehive Forensics Institute. The Institute offers an intensive two-week program in which top college and high school coaches offer individualized training for high school speech and debate students.

Ways to Join (Choose one):
- **Email**: Contact the Director of Forensics, Dr. Michael Middleton (m.middleton@utah.edu).
- **Enroll in Forensics Practicum**: Enroll in COMM 3270 (fall) or COMM 4270 (spring) which runs concurrently with weekly team practice. These courses often fulfill Upper-Division CW and/or CEL credit requirements. See the most current schedule of classes for confirmation.
- **Attend Practice**: Practices are open to all students enrolled at the University. We meet on Mondays and Wednesdays from 6:00pm until 9:00pm in the Utah Forensics Squad Room, LNCO 2890.
Reasons to Join:

- **Research & Writing Skills**
  - Speech & Debate teaches students to develop and support sound claims, as well as to hone critical reasoning skills.
  - Speech & Debate teaches students to develop and deliver their ideas and arguments in concise ways.
  - Speech & Debate teaches students effective research practices.
  - Speech & Debate teaches students to “think on their feet” and to present their ideas with confidence.

- **Organizational Skills**
  - Speech & Debate teaches students to organize large quantities of information for effective retrieval and use.
  - Speech & Debate teaches students effective organizational skills through opportunities to judge and help administrate tournaments.
  - Speech & Debate teaches students to organize effectively team efforts to maximize team productivity.

- **Relationships**
  - Speech & Debate offers an opportunity to develop close advising relationships with faculty and instructors in the Department of Communication.
  - Speech & Debate offers an opportunity to travel and develop relationships with students at other campuses in the state and nation.
  - Speech & Debate fosters a sense of camaraderie among teammates that is rare in most college settings.

Some Notable Speech & Debate Participants:

- Kofi Annan, former United Nations Secretary-General
- Oprah Winfrey, talk show host
- Ann Richards, former Governor of Texas
- Stephen Breyer, Supreme Court Justice
- Harry Connick, Jr., Singer/Songwriter
- Bill Clinton, former President of the United States
- Karl Rove, former advisor to President George W. Bush, debated in UT
- Johnny Cochran, famed defense attorney
- Michael Stipe, lead singer of REM
- Ted Turner, founder of CNN