



The 37th Annual

DEAN ROLAND EARL LATHAM ORATORY COMPETITION

Oratory Questions

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1. As of Aug. 12, 2020, *NPR's* Camilla Domonoske discovered that, "Since George Floyd's murder, 59 Confederate symbols have been removed which is a significant increase over past years. In an updated report from the Southern Poverty Law Center, just 16 Confederate symbols were removed or renamed in all of 2019, but nearly 1,800 Confederate symbols remain on public land and 725 of those symbols are monuments."¹ Do you agree or disagree with the removal of these symbols? If you agree with the removal, how do you propose to remove the near 1,800 left? Or, if you disagree, how will ensure their preservation?
2. Momentum is building for the case for reparations for African Americans. For example, "The Asheville City Council voted 7-0 on a resolution to repair centuries of racial prejudice by unanimously voting to provide reparations, formally apologized to its Black residents for the city's role in slavery, discriminatory housing practices, and other racist policies throughout its history,"² reports *ABC News's* Ivan Pereira. In addition, "The U.S. Conference of Mayors released a letter backing a Democratic plan, the [Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act](#), to form a reparations commission to come up with a payment to 41 million black people for slavery,"³ states Paul Bedard, a *Washington Secrets* Columnist. Where do you stand on reparations for the descendants of African Americans? How would you administer funding to the community? If you are opposed to reparations, explain your reasoning.
3. In early April, "Dr. Anthony Fauci took time on a national stage during a White House coronavirus press briefing to draw attention into how African Americans death rates and intensive-care intubations were higher because of a greater prevalence of underlying medical conditions, like diabetes, hypertension, obesity & asthma,"⁴ Jake Lahut of *Business Insider* accounts. Furthermore, inequities in the social determinants of health, such as poverty and healthcare access, affecting [people of color] are interrelated and influence a wide range of health and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.⁵ To achieve health equity, barriers must be removed so that everyone has a fair opportunity to be as healthy as possible.⁶ What are the barriers to health care access blocking Black citizens from equal care and how will they be broken down?

¹ Domonoske, C. (2020, August 12). Report: 59 Confederate symbols removed since George Floyd's death. Retrieved August 13, 2020, from https://www.npr.org/2020/08/12/901771780/report-59-confederate-symbols-removed-since-george-floyds-death?utm_term=nprnews

² Pereira, I. (2020, July 16). Asheville city council approves reparations plan as Providence explores idea. Retrieved August 13, 2020, from <https://abcnews.go.com/US/city-council-asheville-north-carolina-unanimously-approves-reparation/story?id=71795059>

³ Bedard, P. (2020, July 15). Mayors back reparations that could cost \$6.2 quadrillion, or \$151M per descendant. Retrieved August 13, 2020, from https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/washington-secrets/mayors-back-reparations-could-cost-6-2-quadrillion-151m-per-descendant?fbclid=IwAR0CVhVuyQ7bQQkAu4WmFd9TwZOdjO_qzwjWs9Fog3sJPKZ69i_G2k1GZv0

⁴ Lahut, J. (2020, April 07). Fauci says the coronavirus is 'shining a bright light' on 'unacceptable' health disparities for African Americans. Retrieved August 14, 2020, from <https://www.businessinsider.com/fauci-covid-19-shows-unacceptable-disparities-for-african-americans-2020-4>

⁵ Social determinants of Health. (n.d.). Retrieved August 14, 2020, from <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-of-health>

⁶ Health equity considerations and racial and ethnic minority groups. (2020, July 24). Retrieved August 14, 2020, from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/health-equity/race-ethnicity.html>



4. Chris Quintana of *USA Today* asks, “The 2019 graduates of Morehouse had a gift from billionaire philanthropist Robert F. Smith, to pay their collective federal student loans off; but what about those of us without a billionaire? The national student loan debt stands at about \$1.6 trillion, according to data from the Federal Reserve System. Research shows Black students generally have higher amounts of debts as well as a higher default rate.”⁷ Do you think the government should forgive this collective student debt or should the borrower continue to be responsible for the educational loan? Please explain.
5. “Black journalists are calling for a new media landscape. After being hit hard by Covid-19 media layoffs, leading the reporting on racial disparities among coronavirus cases, enduring abuse from both police and publications while covering the George Floyd uprisings, and suffering the seemingly constant discrimination of white newsrooms. Black journalists are tired. To be a working Black journalist is to live in a perpetual state of exhaustion. The data here is by now familiar: A 2018 survey from the Pew Research Center found that 77 percent of newsroom employees are white and just 7 percent are Black,”⁸ Char Adams of *The New Republic* tells us. How do we forge a new journalistic environment to protect and support Black reporters, as well as encourage youth of color to pursue the craft to balance representation?
6. Mayor Walsh has declared racism a public health crisis in Boston. In an effort to combat it, Walsh moved less than 3% of the police department budget to other services. “At \$414 million per year, BPD is second only to Boston Public Schools in overall funding, dwarfing all other departments. As our [WBUR’s] analysis shows, that’s almost three times the size of the Cabinet of Health and Human Services and four times the size of the Public Health Commission. That’s worrying at the best of times, but during a global pandemic, it’s outrageous,”⁹ says WBUR’s Carol Rose. Did Mayor Walsh divert too much, too little or just the right amount of funding from the BPD to affect the public health crisis of racism in Boston? Please explain your reasoning and what you would do differently, if anything.
7. After the assassination of Dr. King, Black students presented Northeastern University President Asa Knowles, a list of 13 Demands, on May 3, 1968. The aims of the 13 Demands centered upon equal access to university resources, increased enrollment of Black students and faculty, financial support and creating afro-centric programs and curricula. The first of the thirteen Demands is stated thusly:
 - 1) We demand new academic scholarships for Black students by September of 1968; and by 1971, we demand that at least 10 percent of the incoming freshman class be Black.Now, it is 2020 and the Black student population at NU is 3.3%, down from 2019’s 3.4%. NU is indeed a PWI, a primarily white institution with its official centennial history, *Tradition and Innovation: Reflections on Northeastern University’s first century*, declaring “The university would strive to attain a 10% minority enrollment by 1971, a goal that was achieved by 1971, a goal that was achieved by the target date.”¹⁰ The truth is Black enrollment has never gotten close to 10% in Northeastern University’s entire history. In reality, 10% minority enrollment was not demanded, 10% Black enrollment was; how can NU be held accountable for 50 years of a broken word and moved to action to hit 10% Black enrollment?

⁷ Quintana, C. (2019, May 20). Robert F. Smith paid Morehouse student loans. What about those of us without a billionaire? Retrieved August 14, 2020, from <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/education/2019/05/20/student-loans-robert-f-smith-morehouse-college-billionaire-commencement/3741079002/>

⁸ Adams, C. (2020, June 19). Where do Black journalists go from here? Retrieved August 14, 2020, from <https://newrepublic.com/article/158238/black-journalists-go-here>

⁹ Rose, C. (2020, June 10). We need to talk about Boston’s Police budget. Retrieved August 14, 2020, from <https://www.wbur.org/cognoscenti/2020/06/10/boston-police-department-budget-george-floyd-carol-rose>

¹⁰ Baker, B., Rhoads, L., & Boston Library Consortium. BLC/OCA Digitization Project. (1998). *Tradition and Innovation: Reflections on Northeastern University’s first century*. Boston [Mass.]: Northeastern University Publications.



8. “Transgender women of color led the uprising at the Stonewall Inn 51 years ago Sunday, but they were never put at the center of the movement they helped start: one whose very shorthand, “the gay rights movement,” erases them. Although active in the Black Lives Matter movement from the beginning, they have not been prioritized there, either. At no point have Black trans people shared fully in the gains of racial justice or LGBTQ activism, despite suffering disproportionately from the racism, homophobia and transphobia these movements exist to combat.
But now, as the two movements are pulled together by extraordinary circumstances — the protests sparked by the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery; the killings of two Black trans women, Dominique Fells and Riah Milton, shortly after a Black trans man, Tony McDade, was killed by police; a pandemic that has disproportionately affected people of color; an economic crisis that has disproportionately affected trans people; and a Supreme Court decision protecting gay and trans people from employment discrimination;”¹¹ how do we uplift, elevate and help our Black trans sisters achieve whole-hearted acceptance, clear visibility and above all, equality in the Black lives Matter Movement?
9. Just this July, “The Massachusetts House of Representatives passed a sweeping police reform and accountability bill that seeks to certify all law enforcement officers in the state and curb the use of force tactics by police. The bill, representing the House’s attempt at addressing calls to counter systemic racism and force changes within law enforcement. Carol Rose, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Association of Massachusetts, said the bill “does not reflect the fierce urgency that deadly police violence against Black people demands. Instead, it reflects the depth of entrenched opposition to necessary police reform.” However, the legislation does ban the use of facial technology, chokeholds, and regulates the use of tear gas and rubber bullets unless officers have no other options to protect public safety.”¹² The Washington Post has calculated “Since 2015 to August 27, 2020, 35 people have been fatally shot by Massachusetts police officers.”¹³ Has the Police Reform Bill gone far enough to truly affect positive change in Massachusetts, or did the bill go too far in restricting the actions and privileges of law enforcement officers? Please explain.
10. Not long after the murder of George Floyd, “Two petitions on Change.org have drawn more than three million signatures as of June 15, 2020. The first, petitioning Congress to [‘Make the KKK illegal’](#) and the second change to ‘Change KKK status into Terrorist Organization.’”¹⁴ Unfortunately, “The United States faces a growing terrorism problem that will likely worsen over the next year. Based on a Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) data set of terrorist incidents, the most significant threat likely comes from white supremacists...”¹⁵ With public opinion moving toward disbanding the Ku Klux Klan, known as a domestic extremist organization, do you agree that the group should be labeled a domestic terrorist organization or keep its designation as it is? Please explain.

¹¹ Paz, I. G., & Astor, M. (2020, Jun 27). Black trans women seek more space in the movement they helped start [with graphic(s)]. New York Times Retrieved from <https://link.ezproxy.neu.edu/login?url?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.neu.edu/docview/2417820552?accountid=12826>

¹² Van Buskirk, C. (2020, July 25). Mass. House of Representatives approves policing reform bill. Retrieved August 17, 2020, from <https://www.wbur.org/news/2020/07/25/mass-house-of-representatives-approves-policing-reform-bill>

¹³ Tate, J., Jenkins, J., & Rich, S. (2020, January 22). Fatal Force: Police shootings database. Retrieved August 27, 2020, from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/investigations/police-shootings-database/>

¹⁴ Kirk, B. (2020, June 15). Over 3 million people sign petitions urging U.S. government to declare KKK a terrorist group. Retrieved August 17, 2020, from <https://www.newsweek.com/over-3-million-people-sign-petitions-urging-us-government-declare-kkk-terrorist-group-1510919>

¹⁵ Jones, S., Doxsee, C., & Harrington, N. (2020, July 30). The escalating terrorism problem in the United States. Retrieved August 17, 2020, from <https://www.csis.org/analysis/escalating-terrorism-problem-united-states>



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