

Arguments and Debates

11.225

Session 6

What is an Argument?

- Is it about:
 - Winning?
 - Asserting your position?
 - Convincing someone else?
 - Listening?
 - Speaking?
 - Finding the truth of the matter?


The Three Bases of an Arguments

- Based on credibility
- Based on logic
- Based on emotional draw

How do you Debate?

- Deliver your point of view and sit down?
- Deliver your point of view and stand firm?
- Deliver your point of view and listen?
- Deliver your point of view, listen and understand?
- Deliver your point of view, listen, understand andnooooooooooooo.... Change?

Arguments/Debates

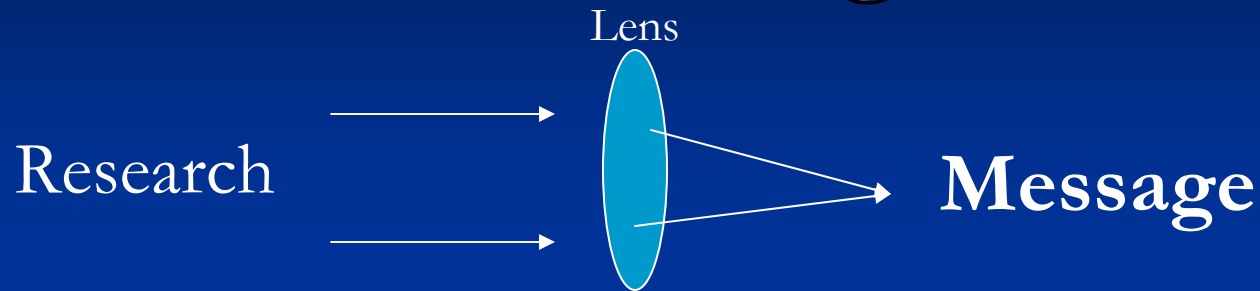
- A chance to learn
 - A chance to match wits
 - A chance to have an impact on the listener
 - A dialogue out loud
 - Statements
 - Questions
 - Answers
- 
- A diagram consisting of three lines that originate from the right side of the sub-list items 'Statements', 'Questions', and 'Answers'. These lines converge towards the right, pointing towards the text 'New Ideas'.

New Ideas

Debate Obstacles

- Fear of your opposition
- Tenacity to one view
- No clear, concise message
- Lack of a willingness to consider another view
- Do you consider change to be failure?

Step 1 = Research, Perspectives, Message

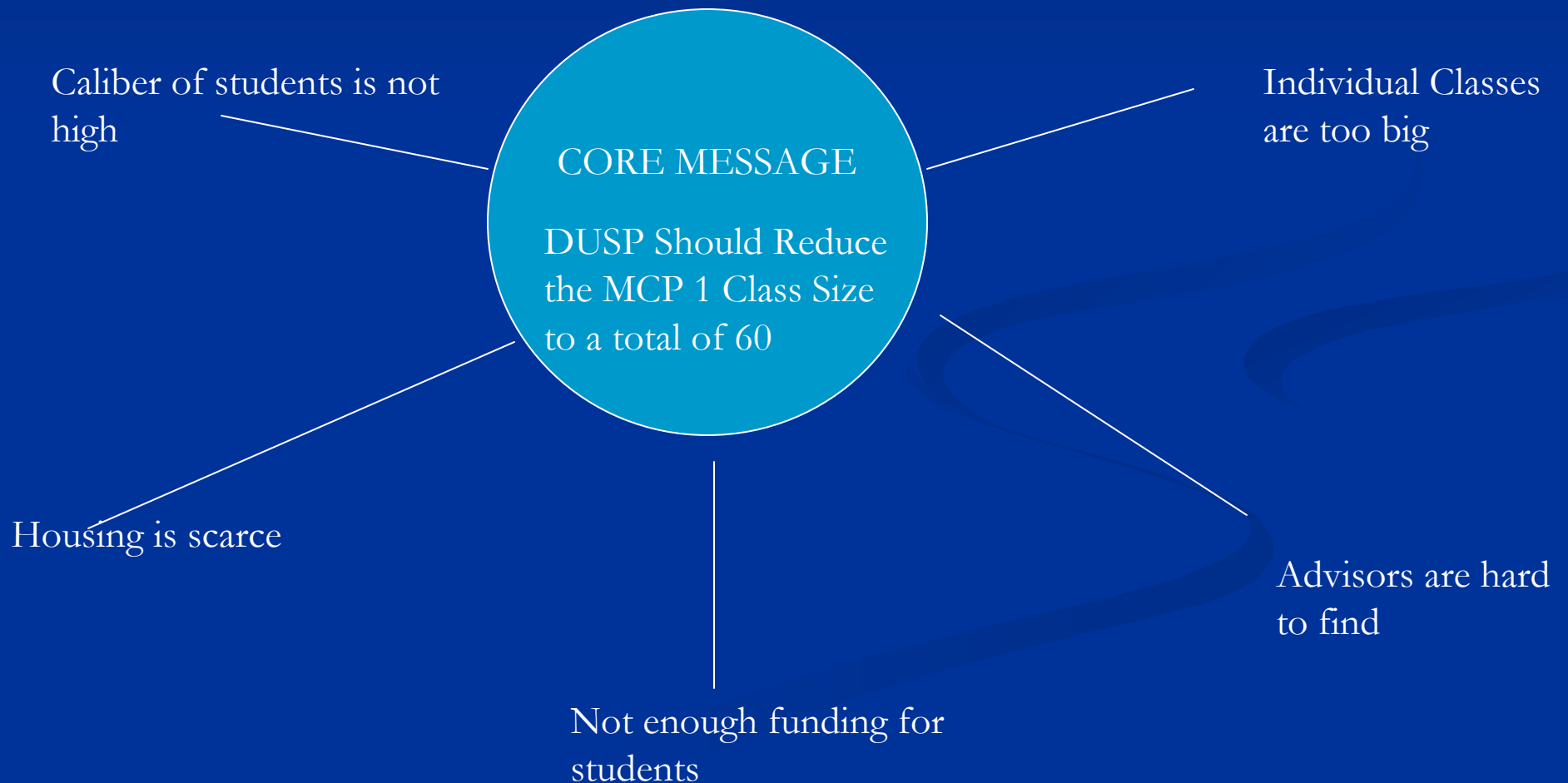


- Know your Material
- Know who your audience is – what do they know?
- Know who you are – what is your bottom line?
- Know your opponent – what is his/her bottom line?
- Find your message as an individual
- Find your message as a group

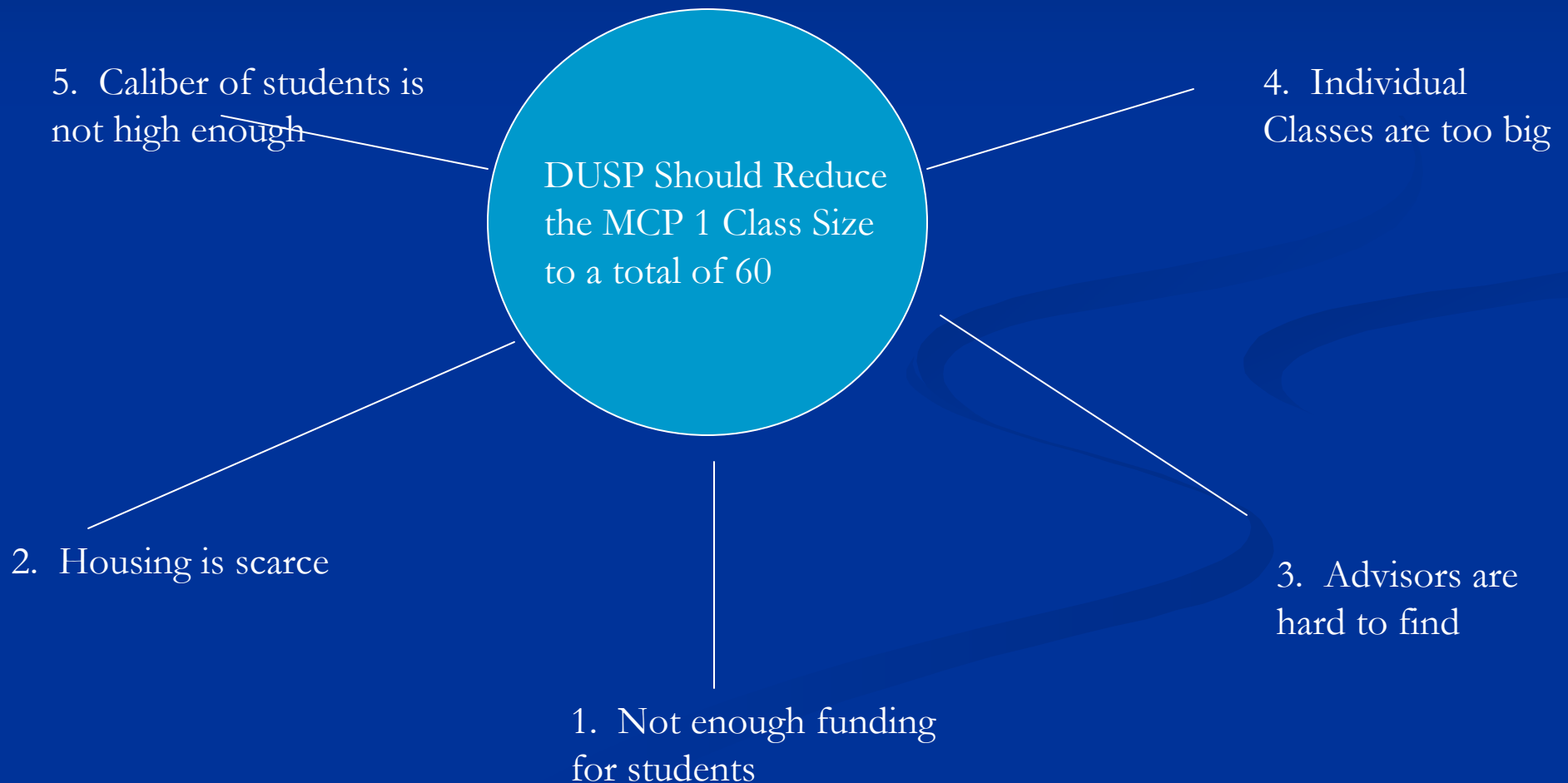
Step 2 = Play with Your Message

- Are there faults in the logic of your message?
- Are there faults in the evidence supporting your message?
- Are there gaps in information that need to be filled?
- Are you convinced by what you say?
- What are your assumptions?
- What are your opponent's assumptions?
- Are there other assumptions? Different starting places?

Map Your Argument



Decide on Point Hierarchy



List Counter Points

DUSP Should Reduce
the MCP 1 Class Size
to a total of 60

5. Caliber of students is
not high enough

4. Individual Classes
are too big

Counter: more diversity, more
experience, better discussions,
more networking opportunities

3. Advisors are
hard to find

Counter: Forces students
to sell themselves better, to
try harder to impress, to
focus on who they really
want to work with.

2. Housing is scarce

1. Not enough funding
for students

Connect the Points

DUSP Should Reduce
the MCP 1 Class Size
to a total of 60

5. Caliber of students is
not high enough

4. Individual Classes
are too big

Faculty are
constrained

3. Advisors are
hard to find

Research assistant positions
are hard to get

2. Housing is scarce

Paying for school is not
our only concern

1. Not enough funding
for students

Revisit Your Core Message

DUSP Should
NOT Reduce
Class Size

- DUSP Should NOT decrease class size
 - DUSP needs the extra tuition funds -- \$300,000/yr!!
 - DUSP needs a variety of views from around the world
 - Larger numbers = more power at MIT
 - Larger numbers = more active research

Step 3 = The Strategy

The 12 minute presentation

- Intro – quick intro/deliver core message 2-min.
- Body – deliver no more than 3 supporting points – 7 minutes
 - Most important point first
 - Provide at least 1 or 2 details on one or two points
- Conclusion – Repeat Core message - 2 minutes
- Have no more than 7 slides

The Critique

- Intro – 20 seconds
 - Tell the Audience you are glad to review your colleague's work and that you will be brief – be respectful of differing opinions
 - Highlight no more than 1 or 2 criticisms
- Body – 2 minutes – could use a back up slide if you are fast and planning ahead
 - Deliver only 1 or 2 important criticisms
 - Provide at least 1 detail, if possible
- Wrap up – 30 seconds
 - Repeat main points
 - Connect back to your core message

The Rebuttal - 3 minutes

- Strategy A – if you have a strong response
- Acknowledge 1 of 3 critical points (10 seconds)
- Say what problem with critical point (3 minutes)
 - Logical Problems
 - Credibility Problems
 - Emotional Argument Problems
- Back to Core Message

- Strategy B- if you have a weak response
- Acknowledge one point
- Give an alternative view
- Bring audience back to your core message and say why it is stronger.

Persuasion

- Connect your message to you – who you are and why what you say matters
- Narrative to make themes come alive
- Address the specific concerns of your audience
- Address counterpoints in your talk
- Be serious – but don't be afraid to smile