New Leadership for MSU Debate Team

Major transitions among both the coaching staff and the members of the Debate Team will provide new challenges and opportunities during the upcoming season. Most notably, James Roper’s retirement after serving for nearly 20 years as the Debate Team Director marks the end of an era. Two other coaches, John Sullivan and Jason Russell, left to pursue other academic and professional opportunities. In addition, the absence of last year’s seniors – Matt Blair, Steven Donald, Aaron Monick, and Alison Woidan – will be felt.

Former Debate Team member and coach Jason Trice was selected as the new Director of Debate. Trice acknowledged with appreciation that, “James, John, Jason and the graduating members were integral to the success of the Team and will be missed dearly by their MSU debate family.” William Repko, a four-year veteran of the team, was also selected as the new head coach.

Record Number of Students Attend

Researching and honing communication skills are not the usual activities that high school students enjoy during the summer, but then the Spartan Debate Institute is not your typical summer camp. In its ninth year, the Spartan Debate Institute (SDI) attracted 220 high school students from 23 states to the MSU campus. These youth get a preview of college life by living in the MSU dorm while learning about the upcoming privacy topic.

Thanks in part to donations from the East Grand Rapids High School Debate Team the MSU Debate Team keeps costs affordable to make this experience available to teenagers representing diverse economic and social backgrounds.
Leadership from page 1

MSU coaching staff, has been appointed as the Head Coach. Michael Eber, ranked 5\textsuperscript{th} nationally as a Debater for the University of Kansas, and Alison Woidan, an outstanding Spartan debater, will be joining the coaching staff for the first time.

The Debate Team has more new incoming first year students than returning debaters for the first time in recent history. None of the five returning debaters are seniors.

With such a young Team some might call this a rebuilding year, but not according to Head Coach Repko. “We have an extremely talented group of young debaters that I refuse to sell short. Even in a `rebuilding year' we consistently field teams that compete with the very best.” Repko doesn’t mind, however, if the competition believes this is a rebuilding year for MSU. He says, “Let them underestimate us at their own peril.”

MSU’s Team has already received some positive pre-season assessments that seem to confirm Repko’s confidence. Two of MSU’s teams received invitations to the Las Vegas Round Robin. Only twelve teams were invited, and MSU was one of only two Universities to receive bids for two teams. The teams of Austin Carson and partner Calum Matheson and Anjali Vats and partner Joe Seigmann will represent MSU at this event. In addition, Carson and Matheson were invited to the prestigious Kentucky Round Robin, which invites only nine teams.

The collegiate debate topic for the upcoming academic year focuses on United States development assistance policies toward the Greater Horn of Africa. The Team has been researching and refining arguments since mid-June to prepare for these tournaments where they will face opponents from Harvard, Emory, Berkeley, Dartmouth and more.

SDI from page 1

cultural backgrounds. SDI helps students learn how to resolve differences through discourse rather than violence. Director Trice noted that parents of the students often tell him that SDI helps direct the students’ energies during the long summer days.

The SDI has expanded significantly since the first year when 43 students attended. It now includes two-week and three-week sessions for students as well as a one-week clinic for high school coaches. The Coaches Clinic attracted 17 coaches from four states.

MSU coaches and debaters make up only a fraction of the 36 member staff. The SDI hires a few varsity college debaters from schools such as Emory and Kansas as well as prominent coaches from other colleges and high schools around the country. The strength of the staff has undoubtedly been one of the reasons the SDI attracted an ever-increasing number of students from around the nation.
MSU Debate Team Makes History

MSU’s two-person team of Steven Donald and Aaron Monick were finalists at both of the intercollegiate policy debate national championship tournaments. This accomplishment is unprecedented in the history of collegiate debate in America.

Donald and Monick were the top seed at the national tournament sponsored by the Cross Examination Debate Association (CEDA) and were undefeated until the final round, where they lost to West Georgia University on an extremely close decision (5 judges to 4).

Donald & Monick were the 4th seed at the National Debate Tournament (NDT) based on their performance throughout the year. They lost to Emory University on another close decision (3 judges to 2) in the finals of the NDT. Winning one additional judge on each final round panel would have yielded two national championships for MSU.

Donald & Monick’s cumulative performance at the two tournaments exceeded even that of the winners of each tournament – West Georgia and Emory each lost in the round of sixteen at the tournament they did not win. Donald and Monick performed better overall at the two national championships than any other team, not just this year, but any year in debate history.

Other two-person teams from MSU also had excellent performances. Matt Blair and Austin Carson reached the sweet sixteen at CEDA Nationals; as did Alison Woidan and Anjali Vats. This year is the first year MSU has qualified three teams for the sweet sixteen at this tournament. No other university qualified as many teams for CEDA’s sweet sixteen this year.

Woidan & Vats, as well as Blair & Carson qualified compete at the NDT based on their cumulative performance throughout the year. MSU was one of only six universities to qualify three teams to compete at the NDT.

This past year, the topic focused on US economic sanctions policies towards the countries of Cuba, Iran, Iraq, North Korea, and Syria. Other competing universities include Harvard, Dartmouth, Emory, Michigan, Northwestern, Wake Forest, Redlands, and many others.

Debate teaches research, critical thinking, and communications skills, while exposing students to many of the important social issues of our time. The success of The MSU Debate Team at the highest levels of intercollegiate debate represents the strength of co-curricular programs available through MSU’s Honors College.
MSU Debate Team Wants You

Whether you are a former Debate Team member, Coach, parent of a Debater, or a friend who strongly believes of the importance of debate in our society, your support is needed to enhance the MSU Debate Team efforts.

Recent successes have opened the door for MSU to participate in additional invitationals. We have included a list of upcoming events that MSU Debate Team will attend, and we invite our friends across the country to join us. Please contact us at (517) 432-9667 if you are interested in attending a tournament. We are seeking contributions to help with travel expenses as well as scholarships to continue attracting top-notch students to the program.

To find out how you can support the Debate Team Endowment Fund, please contact Cara Boeff, Development Officer, at (517) 355-2326. We have also included an envelope for those interested in making an annual gift to Debate Team efforts.

TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE – FALL 2000

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