

Blue Raider Debaters Alumni News

Middle
Tennessee
State University

08/01/2014

What We've Been Up To!

Fall of 2013 was busy for the Blue Raider Debaters! The team started off early by collaborating with the American Democracy Project to hold a mock debate about the American DREAM Act. Senior Lucas Osborne and freshman Elizabeth Bickel defended the advantages of the DREAM act, while senior William Phillips and freshman Chris Wysocki presented the potential harms. Sophomore Stephen Duke moderated the questions and afterwards an audience Q&A took place. Bringing awareness to campus about current events that impact students is a main goal for the Blue Raider Debate team and we try to collaborate with a variety of organizations to spread the good spirited message of debate to MTSU.

Late September the team traveled down to the University of North Georgia for the Chicken and the Egg Debate. As always October was the busiest month for the Blue Raider Debaters. We started the month off early by traveling to Walter State in east Tennessee. The next week we traveled down to Atlanta, Georgia, to participate in the Morehouse King Classic debate. The end of the month the team traveled down to the Florida-



Lucas Osborne and William Phillips American DREAM act

Georgia line for the Valdosta State tournament. For the final trip of the Fall semester we traveled to Jackson, Mississippi the first week of December.

The Blue Raider Debaters also hosted our annual Memorial Pejaver Debate tournament the first of November. This was a swing tournament with Union University. We hosted a variety of formats such as Parliamentary debate, Team IPDA, and Individual IPDA. On top of hosting our own tournament, we hosted the Momentum Homeschool Debate League's fall tournament. The team highly values encouraging debate programs for the youth as debate teaches critical life skills. (cont.)



Inside this issue:

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------|---|
| <i>What We've Been Up To (cont.)</i> | 2 |
| <i>Canned Cases: MTSU Food Pantry</i> | 2 |
| <i>Alumni Spotlight: Menzo Fassen</i> | 3 |
| <i>Student Spotlight: Alex Lempin</i> | 3 |
| <i>IPDA NATIONALS</i> | 4 |
| <i>What do you think of hosting IPDA Nats?</i> | 4 |
| <i>Questioning the "Affordable Care</i> | 5 |
| <i>A Message From the Director of Foren-</i> | 6 |
| <i>Message From Our Captain</i> | 6 |
| <i>Contact Info. And Mission statement</i> | 7 |



Volunteer Classic 2013, University of Tennessee Knoxville

What We've Been Up To (cont.)

The team has been excelling both on and off campus thanks to the tireless efforts and dedication of Coach Dr. Patrick Richey. In the three short years under his direction, the Blue Raider Debaters has greatly expanded in numbers, notoriety, and has brought MTSU back as a new headstrong force on the debate circuit. The team bringing IPDA Nationals to the MTSU campus is a true testament to how far the team has come under Dr. Richey.

Please visit the debate team webpage at www.mtsu.edu/debate news to see individual accomplishments!! There are many!!!! By Hailey Lawson

“Canned Cases”



STUDENT FOOD PANTRY
MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

“Due to an increasing number of hungry students on campus, the MT One Stop and the Student Government Association started a student food pantry in Fall 2012 for MTSU students who are unsure where their next meal is going to come from.”

(MTSU FOOD PANTRY)

In order to support this worthwhile cause the MTSU Debate team, with permission from MTSU housing, has posted signs and put boxes at all of the resident dorms at the end of each semester. In both the fall of 2013 and spring 2014 the team was able to collect around 13-15 large boxes of food. We understand the needs of our fellow student body and look to support them in any way that we can. We will continue this effort in future semesters and hope to see this program grow in order to help our fellow peers in need.



Food Pantry Drive, Spring 2014

Alumni Spotlight: Menzo Fassen

Menzo Fassen is not only an MTSU alumnus, but also a past MTSU debater. Although MTSU debate has gone through some major changes over the years, the skills and knowledge Dr. Fassen acquired from his experience, are still available in MTSU's current debate program.

Dr. Fassen began his involvement with MTSU debate in the spring of 1994 and even then the team was a melting pot of all majors. He was a Psychology major with a desire to act and no past debate experience. Dr. Fassen describes his first experience with debate as intimidating, however, he goes on to say "...I jumped into the activity and never regretted a moment." This is a common first impression of debate. Many students seek out debate in order to work on their public speaking skills and the thought of their first tournament is terrifying. However, many soon develop these skills and are even able to use them in other aspects of their lives, like Dr. Fassen who admits that without debate, the speaking

skills he needed to act would not have been developed. Dr. Fassen also states that along with speaking skills debate helped him develop his critical thinking skills and the ability to look at arguments in a more in-depth way.

Since his involvement in debate as an undergraduate, Dr. Fassen has kept up his ties with the debate community by judging for college and high school tournaments. He says that "it is (his) way of giving back to the debate community and making it possible for others to participate in a worthwhile activity." Dr. Fassen is currently a mental health therapist in Clarksville, TN. He is also heavily involved in community outreach programs that train groups on mental health and substance abuse. Dr. Fassen is a researcher in his field and claims that debate knowledge has helped him many times in the past while discerning mountains of research.

Dr. Fassen encourages current debaters to enjoy their time in college and to enjoy the opportunity that de-

bate opens up to them. He inflects that debate offers a unique college experience where the students are involved not only in the on goings of their society, but also more involved in their own ability to think about the world. Above all, he says that debaters need to remember to have fun and that the tournament are only half of the experience available to them.

By Michaela Edwards, MTSU Debate Co-Captain



Student Spotlight: Alex Lempin



"The reason that I like debate is because I'm naturally argumentative and I really like arguing and communicating my thoughts. I really like that it's formal and that there is a clear winner or loser so you aren't just arguing mindlessly.

I personally love the MTSU debate team because it's a very diverse group of people. I love all of the people on the team. They are very nice, open minded, and intelligent. I always feel comfortable with the team. Debate in general enriches my life. It enhances my critical thinking skills. It helps me argue and communicate what I am trying to say effectively which is useful in

every aspect of life. Debate teaches me how to make what I say important by impacting my ideas. If I'm trying to win a round I'm trying to make my voice heard and trying to show that I am right. Debate is beneficial because it helps me think quickly. I just love debate in general. I know it will help me later on in life no matter what path I choose to follow."

Alex Lempin is a new face to the debate team. Alex is a freshman and a philosophy major. He is thinking about teaching after he graduates college.

IPDA NATIONALS

MTSU debate has had a rich history over the last 100 years, winning numerous prestigious awards and traveling across the country to support debate nationally and internationally. This year MTSU debate added to accolades by hosting The International Public Debate Association's (IPDA) National Tournament. Not only is this the first national debate tournament that the Blue Raider Debater's have hosted in well over a decade, it was also the largest national tournament that IPDA has ever supported. Over 300 debaters plus coaches and supporters, from 33 schools all over the nation, made their way to MTSU in order to participate in this historical event.

This event was the largest of its kind and took support from not only a devoted team, but also the MTSU academic and campus community as well as numerous Middle Tennessee community partners. The event was possible with donations from kind sponsors such as, College of Law: Belmont University, MTSU College of Graduate Studies, Liberal Arts, Honors College, Mass Communication and Library Sciences, Reveille Joes Coffee Co, National Health Care Corporation, Without Warning: Fight Back, and Ascend Credit Union.

The tournament was held on campus Thursday April 10th through



Sunday April 13th, 2014. This tournament hosted two forms of debate, IPDA and Team IPDA, as well as an academic conference and governing business meetings about the IPDA community and the future of debate. The tournament was housed in the Mass Communications building. Standing at any of the doors, all that one could view was a sea of intellectual minds in suit jackets and dress shirts discussing politics, pop culture, foreign policy, and philosophy, just to name a few topic areas. People brought together with differing opinions and interest but with one goal, to talk about them and to learn new things in a critical and constructive manner. This is the essence of debate.

Every hour the debaters would disperse across campus, off to a round in the College of Education if the debaters were lucky, in the Midg-et building if they were not. If some-

one were to sit in on a round that person would hear some of the best minds in the nation come head to head to discuss ideas and philosophies. For four days the debaters relied on their own intellect and the support of their teams to move up through the ranks and then compete in sudden death elimination rounds to crown a champion. On Sunday a banquet and awards ceremony was held to recognize all of the hard work that the teams had put in during the tournament as well as over the year. One last debate took place on stage between a debater from the University of Tennessee Knoxville and a debater from Whitworth University (WA) where UTK emerged victorious, drawing positive attention to the state's strong tradition in the debate community.

While the IPDA National Tournament might have been held in April 2014, for the team the tournament started in February of 2013 when MTSU was selected as the host school. Hosting a tournament of this size and prestige took a lot of organizing, patience, and campus and community support. Following the leadership of Dr. Patrick Richey, Director of Forensics at MTSU, the team was able to successfully finance and run this prestigious event.

By Michaela Edwards, MTSU Debate Co-Captain

What did you think of hosting IPDA Nats?

"I think it's a great honor that MTSU was chosen to be host of a national tournament. It shows that the efforts of the debate team have not gone unnoticed, and it helps establish our presence on campus." – Alex Lempin

"I love the fact that MTSU is hosting it because it gives us a chance to meet people from around the country." - Stephen Duke

"It will be really interesting to see who comes and what people I will meet." – Colonial Geiger

"I'm excited for MTSU to host nationals because I think the MTSU debate team is strong and hosting means we can become the face of debate in Tennessee." – Hailey Lawson

"IPDA Nationals is going to bring so many new faces to MTSU!" – Chris Wysocki

"IPDA Nationals offers opportunity not only for the MTSU debate team to become known across the nation, but also for schools across the U.S. to see what MTSU can



Blazer Classic, Valdosta State University, Fall 2013

Questioning the “Affordable Care Act”; Mark Hall, MTSU Debate Alumnus

On October 7th Mark A. Hall came to MTSU to give a lecture on the Affordable Care Act. His lecture, “Should the Young Subsidize Health Care for the Old and Other Obamacare Conundrums of Social Justice?” was sponsored by MTSU College of Liberal Arts and the MTSU Honors College. Mark Hall is an MTSU alumni and was active on the MTSU debate team during his time at MTSU. During his time at MTSU Mark hall was a political science major and he graduated with a degree in the honors program in 1977.

Since leaving MTSU, Mark Hall received his law degree and the University of Chicago and completed the Robert Wood Health Foundation Health Finance Fellowship at Johns Hopkins University.

Hall is the Fred D. & Elizabeth L. Turnage Professor of Law at Wake Forest University School of Law. Hall’s main focus is health care law, and closely followed the unfolding of the Affordable Health Care Act becoming law. Hall even spoke in front of congress, weighing in his own expertise on the health care bill and how it would affect every American citizen.

Current members of the Blue Raider Debaters went out to support Hall as a former MTSU debate alumnus. “It’s great to see the new faces of the team” Hall stated after the lecture.

Hall’s lecture covered the many myths of healthcare law,



demographic information of the average American and their health care costs, an in depth look at who would really be affected by the Affordable Healthcare act, and why this impacts all citizens.

The Blue Raider Debaters appreciate Hall coming back to MTSU to inform the campus on the intricacies of the Affordable Health Care act.

By Hailey Lawson

A Message From the Director of Forensics

I want to first and foremost thank all the members of the Blue Raider Debate team for the unbelievable amount of hard work they committed to the team this season. It is unbelievable that the team went from dormant three years ago to having an extremely successful season capped off by hosting the largest IPDA Nationals tournament in history!

From team Captain Hailey Lawson and Nationals coordinators Michaela Edwards and Chris Wysocki to novices and judges, every person played an important part as a team to insure success. Boise State has big shoes to fill if they want to live up to the quality tournament the MTSU's debaters hosted.

The team was also a formidable challenge on the debate circuits. The team won sweepstakes at 6 of 8 tournaments. Individual successes included two tops seeds at tournaments, a tournament champion and a runner up, as well as multiple first place speakers. The team finished the season with Marquwan Fultz and Alvin Loyd breaking at Nationals into the out- rounds.

The team as a whole placed in the top ten in all three divisions of IPDA for the year as well as Team IPDA. I am proud of the team for their on campus activities including debates and food drives for MTSU

students in need. We say good bye to seniors:

Dale Sikkema and Lucas Osborne this year and thank them for their dedication to the team. Next year will be hard to live up to this year's standards, but with the new leadership, I believe they are up to the task. Again, I am proud to coach such a diverse group on talented young adults!

- Coach



A Message From Our Captain

This was a great year for the MTSU Blue Raider Debaters and I am very proud of all the team has accomplished.

From taking home sweepstakes trophies and individual successes to hosting IPDA nationals ,this past year has shown how much the team has grown.

I am excited for the next year of MTSU debate and I can't wait to see all that we can accomplish in the future.

With great thanks, your team officers.



2013-2014 Team Officers

Hailey Lawson—Captain
Michaela Edwards—Co-Captain
Van Ramsey—Secretary
William Griffen—Treasurer
Tearniye Covson—Historian

In Remembrance

The MTSU Speech and Theatre Department would like to extend our condolences to the friends, family and colleagues of Gregory Dean Simerly. The former coach of the MTSU debate squad passed away July 19, at the age of 53. Greg was an MTSU alum and spent his career supporting the debate community.

Per Greg's request, no services were held.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to UT Medical Center Knoxville, 2121 Medical Center Way, Suite 110, Knoxville, TN 37920. Please memo in memory of Gregory Simerly.

Middle Tennessee State University Debate Team

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debate](http://www.mtsu.edu/debate)

VENERATIO PRO VICTORIA!

The mission of MTSU debate is to make you a better thinker, scholar, and speaker. Through well-rounded and balanced argumentation, you also will become a better citizen. The ultimate goal of this team is not victory in the round, but victory in life. Victory in life will bring many victories in rounds. The team looks to the past for guidance for a better future.



IPDA Nationals, Middle Tennessee State University, April 2014
