



SCHOOL of COMMUNICATION



Patrick Waldinger

Assistant Director of Debate &
Lecturer

Going into his fourth year at the University of Miami, Patrick Waldinger is assistant director of debate and lecture in the School of Communication.

Before UM, Patrick served as debate coach and lecturer in communication at Boston College for eight years. His debate team won 20 tournaments, including the 2009 Junior Varsity American Debate Association competition, and he qualified seven teams for the National Debate Tournament (NDT).

Patrick has always had a fervor for communication and began debating his freshman year of high school. “[It] was sort of a natural fit, debate has always been housed in communication programs. Having the ability to argue and speak is really important. Communication and debate go hand in hand,” he says.

Patrick received his bachelor’s degree in political science at The Catholic University of America in 2003, where as an undergrad debater he won several tournaments and was a two-time qualifier to the NDT. Patrick went on to receive his master’s degree in communication at Wake Forest University in 2005.

Passionate about his work and dedicated to his team, Patrick says he wants the best for them, win or lose. “It’s always challenging because everybody works so hard from the other side, you’re always challenged by the other students and other coaches from the other schools,” he says. “They are always trying to perform at their best, and so it’s difficult to have to react to their arguments.”

A mentor and coach, Patrick enjoys being a support system. “[A] big issue is school pressure students have,” he says. “Students want to do debate they always like it, and they really enjoy the competitions. But they also have to study and get grades.” There is a balancing act, juggling work and extracurricular, a challenge that can be overcome with hard work and smart students.

Now nationally ranked, the UDebate team was the 2014 runner-up at the American Debate Association National Championship Tournament (ADA). In his time at UM, Patrick has helped lead the debate team to victory in such tournaments, as the Georgia State Debate Tournament, the Henry Clay Debates at the University of Kentucky, the intra-Florida Sunshine State Showdown, the University of Indiana Debate Tournament and the Southeast Region of the Cross Examination Debate Association (CEDA).

Patrick’s relationship with UM began in 2010, where he worked at UM’s Hurricane Debate Institute in the summer. Working with middle school through high school students, Patrick taught debating skills and help them form arguments in formal debate settings. He still spends his summers teaching the camp, and has also taught at the Capitol Classic, the Wake Forest Debate Workshop, Spartan Debate Institute and the Harvard Debate Council, each important debate training grounds.

Now treasurer of the ADA, Patrick was formerly its topic representative and one of nine selected to determine the policy debate topic for the year for the entire country. In 2016, he helped select the topic of “Reducing Military Presence in Africa, Middle East or Northeast Asia.” In 2018, Patrick will also become president of the CEDA, the largest intercollegiate policy debate association in the United States.

Patrick believes if he were not part of the UM faculty, he might have pursued a career in politics. “Debate and politics go hand and hand,” he says. Or he might have been a lawyer. “Some people call that professional debate.”