



Debate at the University of Miami: Backgrounder 2017

About the team

University of Miami's UDebate is a nationally ranked team of diverse students passionate about igniting lively, intelligent debate.

The team is a co-curricular activity sponsored by the School of Communication for any undergrad student at any class level, regardless of experience. Many, including President Anna Ivanova, are students outside the School of Communication. Debate aims to develop public speaking and critical thinking skills.

Each academic year the team travels nationally to compete in intercollegiate tournaments. The team also helps judge local high school debate tournaments, participates in local tournaments and organizes on-campus discussions. Five students are chosen to serve on the debate executive board and help recruit members who organize campus discussion and social events for the team.

UM faculty members serve as coaches and lecturers: David Steinberg, Debate Director; Patrick Waldinger, Co-Director; Oliver Brass, Assistant Debate Coach; and Randall Martinez, Assistant Debate Coach.

A brief history

UDebate began in 1926, when Ruth Bryan Owen introduced UM to debate and coached the first team at the recently founded university. The daughter of famed lawyer and politician William Jennings Bryan Owen was the first woman in the South elected as a U.S. Representative and, in 1933, the first woman appointed as a U.S. ambassador. In 1992, she was inducted into the Florida Women's Hall of Fame.

UDebate was a founding member of the National Debate Tournament in 1947, an important championship for collegiate policy debate.

UM was also a founder of the Cross Examination Debate Association, the largest intercollegiate policy debate association in the United States. UDebate Director David Steinberg was president of CEDA in 2016, and in 2018 Patrick Waldinger, co-director, will be president.

Meet Some Members

Debate Team President Anna Ivanova began as a novice, without debate experience. Ivanova began as a freshman in 2013 and is now a Junior Varsity Debater in Policy debate. The senior neuroscience and computer science major says most of her friends are part of UDebate and that it's been an invaluable component of her college experience.

"It's a great extracurricular activity that broadens your horizons, allows you to travel throughout the country and create meaningful friendships during your trips," says Ivanova. "It is free to join, fun and definitely worth the time!"

Freshman Julia Lynch joined UDebate at the beginning of fall semester 2016. An undeclared business major, pre-law, Lynch debated in Public Forum Debate, two-person team against two-person team. High School is similar to Policy debate. She loves policy debate at UM because it gives her a competitive outlet with an academic focus that allows her to travel for competitions.

"Debate can be somewhat intimidating at first because it's complex and not always intuitive, but at the end of the day it's pretty amazing to see very in-depth arguments and thinking come together," Lynch says.

Recent Achievements

UDebate is ranked 17th nationally by the Cross Examination Debate Association and third in the Southeast Region.

In November 2016, UDebate won the American Debate Association Fall Championship at Clarion University, Pennsylvania. The team of Julia Lynch and Adam Kozloski took the first place in the Novice Division. Julia was also named top individual speaker in the tournament.

In 2014, UDebate was runner-up at the American National Championship Tournament.

UDebate Structure

Students participate in policy debate, British Parliamentary debate or both.

Policy debate is the more time-consuming, and broken into four levels.

- The open level, while competitive, is open to any school from the least known to Ivy League.
- The novice level is for students beginning debate with no experience.
- Junior varsity is open to students with two years of experience.

- Varsity is for the most experience debaters. Policy debate is more technical and research-driven. Each academic year, colleges are given one policy debate topic to argue for the entire year.

British Parliamentary debate relies more on presentation than substance and is more accessible to the lay person. Two-person teams argue in favor or opposition to a motion. Four teams participate and are ranked after the competition. Debaters must be knowledgeable on various issues as there are only 15 minutes allotted to prepare for a motion.

To join

For more information and how to join UDebate check out <http://debate.miami.edu/about/>, with additional information on UDebate faculty. If you'd like to join, please contact Director David Steinberg at dave@miami.edu.



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