

THE YALE DEBATE ASSOCIATION

Fall 2011 Newsletter

The YDA by
the numbers:

12

Tournament Wins

7

Top Speaker
Awards

28

Final Round
Appearances

14

Top Novice
Awards

Yale Debate Finishes Another Record Season



The YDA at the 2011 APDA National Championship.

For the third year in a row, members of the Yale Debate Association shattered American Parliamentary Debate Association records to win the title of College of the Year ("COTY"). This award is given every year to the college which consistently finishes in the top ranks of American tournaments, and is meant to recognize both the breadth of talent and continued success of a team. In the 2010-2011 season, Yale not only set the record for the highest number of COTY points ever accumulated in a single season, but dwarfed the competition in the process, ultimately winning more points than the second (Harvard), third

(Brandeis) and fourth (Boston University) place teams combined.

Individual members of the YDA also made a very impressive showing this season. Nick Cugini (CC '13) and Sabrina Ali (ES '11) finished a narrow second in the race for APDA Team of the Year ("TOTY", an award meant to recognize the consistent success of a single pair of debaters),

with the teams of Alyssa Bilinski (CC '13) and Kate Falkenstien (SY '12) as well as Robert Colonel (SY '13) and David Trinh (TD '12) finishing in the top 10. Additionally, three Yale debaters—Kate Falkenstien, Sabrina Ali and Nick Cugini ranked among the 10 best individual speakers in the country (Speaker of the Year, or "SOTY"). The novice debaters of the YDA were also a big part of the team's success this year, with Sesenu Woldemariam (BK '14) winning Novice of the Year ("NOTY"), and two other novices—Michael Barton (BK '14) and Zach Bakal (CC '14)—finishing among the top 10.

Record performance at the APDA National Championship

21

Debaters qualified for Nationals

Yale debaters set numerous records this year at the American Parliamentary Debate Association's National Championship, hosted by the United States Military Academy in West Point, New York. There, the team of Andrew Connery (PC '13) and Max Dovala (SM '13) made APDA history by becoming the first ever pair of sophomores to advance to the final round of the National Championship.

Other Yale debaters were also successful, reaching every stage of elimination rounds at the tournament. Robert Colonel (SY '13) and David Trinh (TD '12) reached the semifinal round, Sabrina Ali (ES '11) and Nick

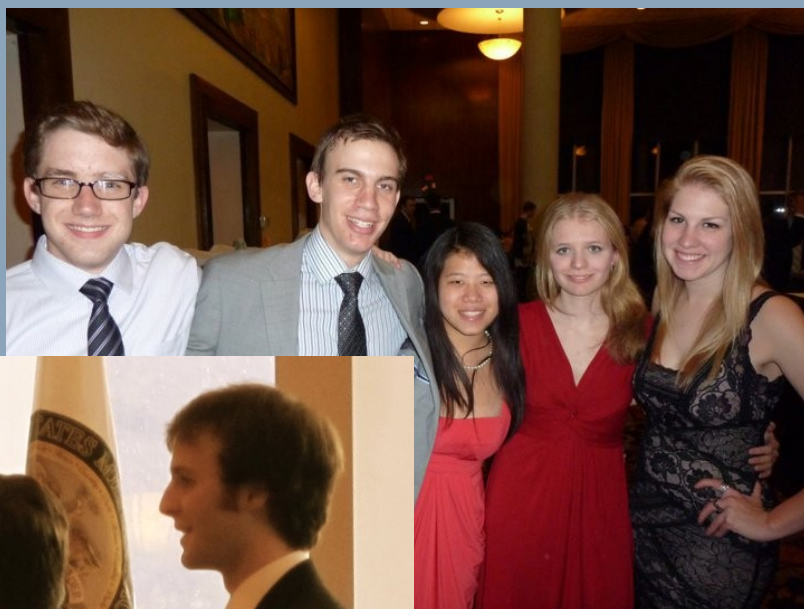
Cugini (CC '13) reached quarterfinals, and four other Yale teams finished in octofinals.

One of the reasons the YDA was so successful was the record number of debaters who qualified to compete at Nationals. 21 Yale debaters qualified for the National Championship, breaking the record that the YDA had set during the previous season (17). Ultimately, not only was Yale able to qualify more debaters than any other school, but since 7 of the 16 teams in octofinals were from the YDA, Yale put more teams in elimination rounds than any other single school brought to Nationals in total.

7

Yale teams advancing to elimination rounds

Right: members of the YDA at the tournament banquet.



8

Yale debaters in the top 20 speakers



Left: Max Dovala (left) and Andrew Connery (right) during the final round.

Yale dominates the 2011 North American Championship

For the fourth time in six years, the Yale Debate Association emerged victorious at the North American Debating Championship. 70 teams from across the U.S. and Canada converged on Fordham University in New York city for three days of debate on topics ranging from the government's role in promoting the arts to mandatory paternity leave.

After six preliminary rounds of debate, Yale was already shaping up as the dominant team at the tournament, with both the top-seeded individual team and 7 of the 16 teams reaching octofinals. Yale would continue its success throughout elimination rounds, with four of the eight teams in quarterfinals, three of the four teams in semifinals and both of the teams in the

final round.

Ultimately, Nate Blevins (PC '12) and Pam Brown (SY '11) won the tournament, and Pam became the first –ever American woman to win the North American Championship. Also reaching the finals was the team of Alyssa Bilinski (CC '13) and Kate Falkenstien (SY '12). Kate was also named the top individual speaker at the tournament.

This was far from Yale's first successful showing at the North American Championship. The team of Andrew Rohrbach (TC '09) and Grant May (SY '10) won the tournament in 2009, and Matt Wansley (TC '07) and Dylan Gadek (DC '07) won in 2007 after Matt had won the previous year debating with Ben Eidelson (ES '08).



The YDA celebrates its victory following the finals of the 2011 North American Debating Championship

3 of 4

Three out of the four teams reaching semifinals were from Yale.

7

Yale teams advancing to elimination rounds

5

Yale debaters in the top 10 speakers

YDA the top American team at Botswana Worlds

Last December, 13 members of the YDA traveled to Gaborone, Botswana for the World Universities Debating Championship, hosted by the University of Botswana. Yale sent five teams and three adjudicators to the tournament, the largest of any American delegation.

Two Yale teams survived the nine intense preliminary rounds to reach the break. Nate Blevins (PC '12) and Pam Brown (SY '11) reached octofinals, and the team of Nick Cugini (CC '13) and Ben Kornfeld (DC '13) finished as the most successful American team at the tournament, becoming the first Yale team in three years to advance all the way to world semifinals. Making their accomplishment all the more

remarkable, the World Championship was only the second British Parliamentary-style tournament in which the pair of sophomores had ever competed. However, such success wasn't unfamiliar, since the pair had also reached the semifinals of their first BP-style tournament, the Oxford Inter-Varsity earlier in the season, where they only narrowly missed advancing to the final round.

Thanks to its strong performance, Yale was able to hold on to its position as the third-ranked team in the world (well ahead of the next American team, ranked 11th). The YDA hopes to continue this success at next year's Worlds, hosted by De La Salle University in Manila, The Philippines.

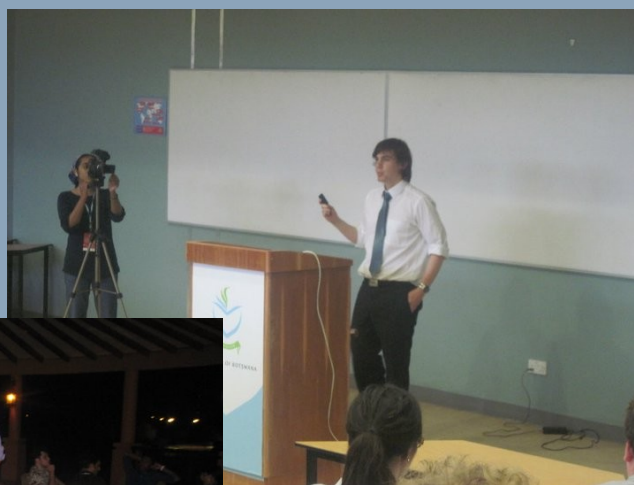
321

Teams competing at the World Championship

3rd

Yale's current rank in world debate (the highest of any American school)

Right: YDA sophomore Ben Kornfeld debating in semifinals.



Left: members of the YDA wait for the announcement of results from the quarterfinal round.

Yale debaters win first-ever Trans-Atlantic Championship

Five members of the YDA traveled to Paris last November to compete in the first-ever Trans-Atlantic Debating Championship hosted by the Institut d'Études Politiques de Paris ("Sciences Po"). Yale joined Princeton as one of two American universities competing in the English-language debates, along with delegations from the University of Cambridge and École Polytechnique, the reigning French national champions.

The tournament was conducted in the unique "Paris 5" style, in which two teams of five debaters each debate a motion released well in advance of the competition. Yale was represented by

Meredith Potter (SY '13), Nate Blevins (PC '12), Naz El Khatib (SY '12), Max Dovala (SM '13) and Kristin Briggs (TC '11).

The YDA won both of its debates on unanimous decisions from the judging panels, first defeating Cambridge in the semifinal, arguing in favor of the motion "This house believes the British Empire still rules the world" before besting École Polytechnique in the final round, arguing against the motion "This house believes Obama should not care about Europe." The finals were observed by more than 300 members of the public and judged by diplomats from the US, UK and France.

3624

Miles traveled by the Yale debaters to reach Paris.



Clockwise from above: the Yale delegation poses with their trophy after finals; the audience which came to watch Yale debate École Polytechnique in the final round; YDA members prepare for the semifinals against Cambridge.



300

The number of observers who came to watch the final debate.



Yale meets Princeton, Harvard for Triangular Debates

In a continuation of one of the YDA's longest-standing traditions, six Yale debaters met with their counterparts from Princeton and Harvard for the 103rd annual Triangular Debates. Dating back to 1908, Triangulars have long been a forum for debaters from the nation's top schools to discuss current issues.

For the 2011 iteration of the debates, Yale debaters Sabrina Ali (ES 11), Pam Brown (SY 11) and Kristin Briggs (TC 11) debated a team from Harvard over individual rights vs. collective norms. Meanwhile, Jonathan Eng (JE 11), Kate Falkenstien (SY 12) and Marc Wallach (CC 12) traveled to debate at Princeton, arguing in favor of a multi-polar world order.

The Third Annual Yale-Howard Debates

As part of its continuing work with the NAACP of Connecticut, the YDA took part in the third annual "Great Debate," pitting two teams of three debaters each against their counterparts from Howard University in Washington DC.

While in previous years the event had been hosted at Yale, 2011 marked the first time that a second debate between the schools was held on Howard's campus. For the first Debate, held in New Haven, YDA members Vinay Presad, EB Saldana, Sam Ward-Packard and Michael Barton debated the use of prison labor.

At the second debate in Washington, YDA members Kate Falkenstien, David Trinh, Nick Cugini and Aaron Hakim argued against the use of charter schools in public education.

The YDA would especially like to thank the NAACP of Connecticut, its president Scott X Esdaile and Howard University for their hard work, hospitality and support in making these debates possible.



Left: three debaters representing Yale at the debate hosted by Howard.

Above: Aaron Hakim (PC '13) speaks during the debate.

103

The number of times the Triangular Debates have been held.

1,000+

Observers came to watch each of the "Great Debates"

Yale High School Invitational

The Yale Debate Association hosted its 19th annual High School Invitational last September. The tournament takes place as part of the National Forensic League (NFL) for high school students and features competition in over a dozen events ranging from dramatic interpretation and monologues to policy debate. This year, Yale hosted over 1,800 high school students from over one hundred schools. Since its inaugural year in 1992, the tournament has become one of the

most prestigious high school competitions in the country.

This tournament was only possible thanks to the hard work of its staff. Tournament Director Marc Wallach, along with assistant TDs Andrew Connery, Josh Kalla, Meredith Potter, Max Dovala and Robert Colonel put in countless hours of work to ensure that the three days of competition, spread out over nearly half a dozen sites around New Haven ran smoothly.

The Osterweis Debates

More than 100 high school students from across Connecticut came to Yale's campus in April for the annual Osterweis Tournament— a charity tournament hosted by the YDA in honor of its former coach, Rollin G. Osterweis. Over the years, the Osterweis Tournament has become a staple of the Connecticut debate circuit, becoming a de-facto state championship due to its large size and its falling at the end of the debate season.

The 2011 tournament continued

the tradition of previous years, not only bringing in debaters from around Connecticut, but also from the New Haven community, as teams coached by YDA members as a part of the New Haven Urban Debate League also participated. Thanks to the work of tournament director Alyssa Bilinski and assistant directors Eric Brooks and Sam Ward-Packard, more than 100 high school students were able to share in this valuable educational experience at no cost to them or their schools.

The 2010 Yale Inter-Varsity

The Fifth Yale Inter-Varsity represented one of our largest ever, with 300 students from more than 40 universities attending .

Despite only having been held for the past five years, the Yale IV has already been established as one of the most prestigious competitions in the world. Held in the British Parliamentary format (the same style as the World Championship), it provides an

opportunity for many schools to practice the unfamiliar style without the cost of traveling overseas.

The 2010 Inter-Varsity was overseen by tournament director Kate Falkenstien and assistant directors Anna Moore, Aaron Hakim and Michael Magdzik. YDA alum Steven Kryger (SM 10) served as the Chief Adjudicator for the event.

1800

High School debaters attended the 2010 Yale Invitational

100

Connecticut High School students competing at the 2011 Osterweis Tournament

The 2010-2011 Novice Class

11

Top novice team
awards won.



Alex Bae

Branford College 2014
Potomac, MD

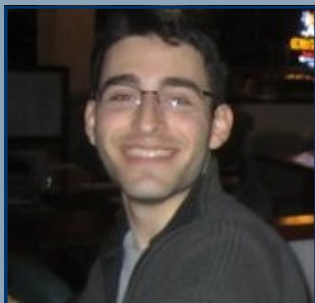
Michael Barton

Berkeley College 2014
Glendale, NY



Zach Bakal

Calhoun College 2014
South Barrington, IL



Eric Brooks

Davenport College 2014
Hewlett, NY



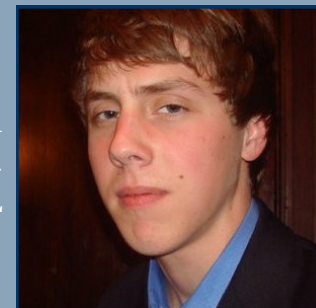
Claire Daviss

Morse College 2014
San Antonio, TX



Dan Gordon

Ezra Stiles College 2014
Glenview, IL



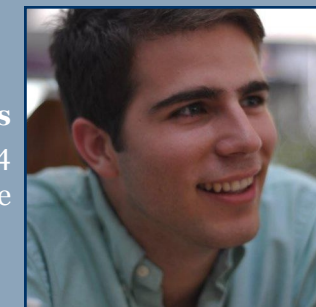
Nikita Lalwani

Morse College 2013
Scarsdale, NY



Filippos Lekkas

Calhoun College 2014
Athens, Greece



14

Top novice speaker
awards won.

100

Percent of the
2010 novice class
that won awards
during the season.

The 2010-2011 Novice Class



Vinay Nayak
Davenport College 2014
Oak Brook, IL



Vinay Prasad
Calhoun College 2013
Chagrin Falls, OH



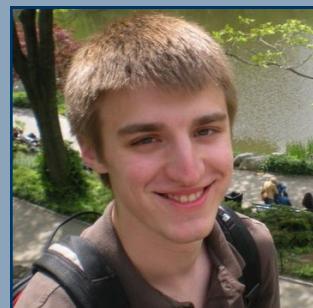
EB Saldaña
Ezra Stiles College 2014
Louisville, KY



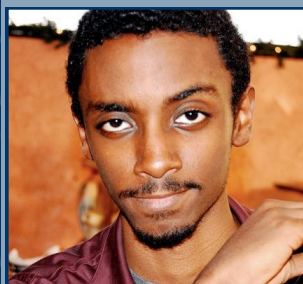
Michael Sherman
Pierson College 2014
Phoenix, AZ



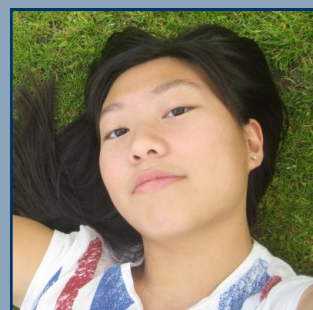
Shivani Vohra
Davenport College 2013
Dallas, TX



Sam Ward-Packard
Saybrook College 2014
Lake Geneva, WI



Sesenu Woldemariam
Berkeley College 2014
Missouri City, TX



Joanna Zheng
Trumbull College 2014
Sandy, UT

69

Total novice
speaker awards
won.

30

Total novice team
awards won.

The 2011 Executive Board



The 2011 executive board of the YDA (from left to right): Andrew Connery (PC '13), Kate Falkenstien (SY '12), Nate Blevins (PC '12), Nick Cugini (CC '13) and Marc Wallach (CC '12)

President: Kate Falkenstien.

Kate is a senior in Saybrook College from Lawrence, Kansas. She is majoring in Psychology, and in her free time enjoys pop music, baking, and reality television. Before she was president, Kate directed the Yale IV in 2009 and 2010. She has broken at the National and North American championships, and is excited to foster the team's continuing competitive success during her term as president.

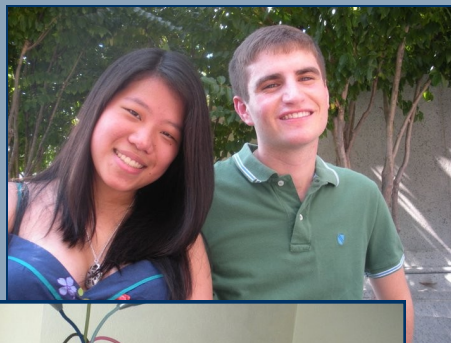
Treasurer: Andrew Connery. Andrew is a junior in Pierson College from Norman, Oklahoma majoring in Political Science with a focus in American Politics. He has been involved with debate since high school, where he competed mainly in Policy debate and US extemporaneous speaking. Before serving on the board, Andrew served as an Assistant Tournament Director to the 2010 Yale High School Invitational and as the team's Facilities Coordinator.

Director of Development: Nate Blevins. Nate is a senior in Pierson College from Cleveland, Ohio majoring in Political Science. He has been debating since he was a freshman in high school, where he competed in Student Congress and Extemporaneous Speaking. Since joining the YDA, he has traveled around the world to compete, served as director of the Osterweis Debate Tournament and now coordinates alumni relations and sponsorships for the team.

Tournament Coordinator: Marc Wallach. Marc is a Calhoun College senior from New York City majoring in Political Science. He enjoys playing basketball and guitar, reading philosophy, and learning about finance and investment. He has served as Tournament Coordinator on the 2010 Executive Board, the Director of the 2010 Yale High School Invitational, and an Assistant Director for the High School Invitational in 2009.

Director of Membership: Nick Cugini. Membership Director: Nick Cugini. Nick is a junior in Calhoun College from Houston, Texas, majoring in Political Science. Nick went to Cypress Ridge High School, where he competed in extemporaneous speaking and student congress. Before serving as Membership Director, he served as co-director of the 2010 Osterweis Debate Tournament. This year, Nick is responsible for recruiting and training the new novice class and for organizing the team's social events.

The YDA Family



Clockwise from above: the women of the YDA at a team dinner at Miya's; two team members over the summer; team members relax during Spring Fling 2011.

Though the YDA has always placed a high value on succeeding in competition, the bonds of friendship formed on the team have proved to be among its most enduring traditions. From movie nights and team dinners to long car rides to debate tournaments and down-time in between rounds, team members spend plenty of time with each other, and in the process come to form some of their closest friendships. To borrow the words former professor of history George W. Pierson used to describe Yale, the YDA is "at once a tradition, a company of scholars, and a society of friends."



Counterclockwise from above: YDA karaoke night; members of the team before executive board elections; team members together on Halloween.

The YDA offers its sincere gratitude to all those who have supported the team.

John Chester Adams Level: \$1000-\$1999

Miles Gersh
Deborah Rhode
Stephanie Vardavas

Triangulares Level: \$500-\$999

Adam Jed
Peter Rohrbach
David Yergin

Championship Level: \$250-\$499

Raymond Agran
Marvin Chatinover
Adam Chilton
Jay Cox
Orin Kramer
Jeffrey Kulkarni
Sarah Marberg
Krista McGruder
Frederick Meyer
Stephen Neuwirth
Steve Umin

General Donor Level

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Paul R. Bardack
Anthony Brett
Michael Calhoon
Perry Dane
Eric Fishman
Austen Furse III
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William Kilborne
Charles A. Krause
Meir Kryger
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Richard Ruback
Richard Seeborg
Peter H. Seed
Joe Smith
Stephen Susman
Andrew Towne
Jerry Vildostegui
Brian Weinstein
Stephen Wilson
Aaron Zelinsky
Samuel Zurier

Yale Debate Alumni



The class of 2011— our newest debate alumni

The Yale Association for Debate Alumni (“YADA”), founded at the YDA centennial in 2008, was created to help debate alumni, old and new, stay connected with one another and stay updated on the team’s current activities. If you’re interested in joining or would simply like more information, visit yaledebate.org/alumni or email nate.blevins@yale.edu.

The YDA class of 2011

Sabrina Ali is now working at Credit Suisse in New York City.

Kristin Briggs is a management associate at a hedge fund in Connecticut.

Pam Brown is working for the US government in Washington DC.

Jonathan Eng is working as an associate product manager at Google in California.

We’d also like to thank our coaches for their indispensable help this past season.



David Kimel
Head Coach



Andrew Rohrbach
Assistant Coach



Adam Chilton
Assistant Coach



Alex Worsnip
Worlds/BP Coach