



GROVE CITY COLLEGE

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College Debate Team brings home two national championships

GROVE CITY, Pa. – The Grove City College Debate Team closed out the second half of its season in dominant fashion by winning two national championships and securing its place as the most successful debate team in the College’s history.

Head Coach Dr. Jason R. Edwards, a professor of history and humanities at Grove City College, credited student leaders for the team’s successful season. “They represent the Grove City College mission extremely well. I am proud to be their coach and thank them for their effort,” he said.

The team secured its second national championship of the season over the weekend of March 20 to 22 in Denver, Colo., in the National Christian College Forensic Invitational, where they competed against the nation’s top Christian schools. That win follows a national championship in the Pi Kappa Delta National Tournament earlier in Athens, Ohio. In that tournament, College debaters defended the title they won last year, securing a back-to-back championship in the prestigious event.

In Denver, the team won the Invitational’s Quality Award, reflecting overall points won per entry. Presenting the award, an official noted that the team’s results were “ridiculous” and joked that since their point average was so high they might consider “banning Grove City College from the competition.”

“This team becoming the most successful Grove City College Debate Team in school history is a direct result of the work invested by senior captains Scott Alford and Mark Mariani. They put in countless hours and sacrificed personally for the team,” Edwards said. “They were handed the reins of a healthy team, but made it even stronger and built up a strong foundation of underclassmen to carry on the tradition.”

After a successful fall campaign, the team opened the second half of the 2014-2015 season with 10 students traveling to the nation’s Capital to compete in a Valentine’s weekend competition at the American Enterprise Institute, debating resolutions about real world tensions over values and capitalism. Against a nationwide field, Grove City College took home the tournament’s most prestigious prize: the overall sweepstakes award.

Next, Grove City College fielded a small squad of three teams in competition at Bowling Green State University over spring break and posted an unblemished record of 13-0. The team captured the overall debate sweepstakes trophy for the tournament, which featured resolutions regarding the veto of the Keystone Pipeline project, the looming threat of ISIS, U.S. drug policies and immigration reform.

At the Pi Kappa Delta tournament in Athens, the team of captain Mariani and junior Drew Brackbill secured victory. Far from having the largest contingent in the competition, the College fielded three varsity and two novice teams over the three-day tournament. Each team placed.

The team entered the semifinals with all three teams still alive, forcing team captain Alford and junior Ryan Brown to square off against a higher-ranked team from the College comprised of sophomores Josiah Vehrs and Zechariah Voell.

Edwards advanced Vehrs and Voell, resulting in Alford and Brown securing a tie for third place. On the other side of the bracket, the top-ranked GCC team of Mariani and Brackbill suffered a heartbreaking upset, which left Vehrs and Voell to take on Grand Canyon University in the finals. They won in an extremely rare 5-0 decision. As individuals, Brackbill won fourth place, Brown won fifth place and Voell won 10th place for best speaker award.

Dr. Andrew Harvey, associate professor of English, and Dr. Michael Coulter '91, professor of political science and humanities, served as assistant coaches throughout the year, traveling with and coaching the team.

Cutline for attached photo: Grove City College debaters are seen at the National Christian College Forensic Invitational in Denver, Colo. Back row, left to right: Mark Mariani, Drew Brackbill, Ryan Brown and Scott Alford; front row, left to right: Joshiah Vehrs and Zechariah Voell.

This release is available for download at www.gcc.edu/news, where subscribers can also sign up for RSS feeds. Media may contact Ross Wyszomierski at rbwyszomierski@gcc.edu or 724-450-4002 for further details. This email address and phone number should not be used in print.

Grove City College (www.gcc.edu) is a highly rated, private liberal arts school that offers a high-quality education in a thoroughly Christian environment for about half the cost of other schools. Founded in 1876, the College is committed to the principles of faith and freedom, a pioneer in independent private education and accepts no federal funds. It offers its 2,500 students degrees in more than 50 majors in the liberal arts, sciences, engineering and music on a picturesque 188-acre campus north of Pittsburgh. It is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and routinely ranked among the best colleges and universities by Princeton Review, U.S. News & World Report and others. Consumers Digest calls Grove City College a Top Value and Money magazine lists it among the Best Schools for Your Money. It is one of the Top Conservative Schools in the country, according to The Young America's Foundation and a Christian College of Distinction.