

# Truman Forensics Still Going Strong

In the third competition of the season, members of the Truman Forensics Union traveled to the campus of Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, taking second place in debate sweepstakes and 4<sup>th</sup> in overall team sweepstakes. The team went head to head with numerous nationally competitive teams, including last year's national champions in both individual events and debate, Western Kentucky University.

In open parliamentary debate, a two-on-two style of off-the-cuff debating, Sophomores Christian Johns (Carthage, MO) and Elizabeth Hatting (Omaha, NE) were the champions after winning their final round against competitors from Rice University. Juniors Sarah Backhaus (Liberty, MO) and Dylan Clark (St. Louis, MO) advanced to the quarterfinal elimination round. Johns won a 2<sup>nd</sup> place speaking award, Backhaus received 4<sup>th</sup>, Hatting won 6<sup>th</sup>, and Clark received 10<sup>th</sup>. Speaking awards are based on the quality of public speaking that a debater displays, not necessarily how many rounds of debate they win.

In Lincoln-Douglas debate, a one-on-one policy style of debating, Dylan Clark advanced to the quarterfinal round of open competition, while Christian Johns advanced to octofinals. Sarah Backhaus, while not advancing, did receive an 8<sup>th</sup> place speaking award in this event. Not only did the varsity debaters do quite well, Truman was also able to debut new debate talent. In Novice Lincoln-Douglas, freshman Alex Clippinger (Kansas City, MO) advanced to the final round, taking second place. Freshman Susan Taylor (Liberty, MO) made it into semi-finals, while freshman Katie Koenig (St. Louis, MO) advanced to quarterfinals. Clippinger also took a second place speaking award and Koenig a 5<sup>th</sup> place speaking award.

In individual events, there were two tournaments taking place on the same weekend. In the first tournament, Freshman Jessica Petrie (Bellville, IL) placed 3rd in Impromptu Speaking and 3rd in Extemporaneous Speaking. Sophomore Andrew Grojean (Blue Springs, MO) placed 5th in both After Dinner Speaking and Prose Interpretation. Freshman Samantha Jones took 6<sup>th</sup> in Prose Interpretation, earning her another qualification for the National Championship Tournament at the end of the season. This year, that national championship will take place in Athens, Ohio, and will only include competitors that have proven themselves by advancing to finals at a large tournament. Students have to qualify each event that they have in order to participate in that event at Nationals.

The second individual events tournament saw Freshman Kyle LaVelle (Overland, MO) receive 6<sup>th</sup> in Impromptu Speaking – earning him a qualification for nationals. Jessica Petrie topped her Extemporaneous award from the day prior, receiving 2<sup>nd</sup> place. This brings the team's total qualification for nationals up to 13 – with well over half the competitive season still remaining.

Assistant Director, Russ Luce, commented, "This tournament was a success across the board. With competitors in the final round in both Parliamentary and Junior Varsity Lincoln Douglas debate as well as competitors in out rounds in both forms of debate and individual events, the team exceeded our expectations for this competitive

tournament. As this was our first time traveling as a full squad this semester, I think we showed the rest of the community the powerful bite that the Truman State University Bulldogs Forensics team carries.”

November will find the individual events competitors facing one of their toughest challenges of the season, the Bradley University tournament. The team travels to Peoria, Illinois the first weekend in November. “Nationals is tough because it is so large and has a certain quality of competition. However, the Bradley tournament is in some ways more competitive because the quality of competition is more concentrated. You have fewer rounds, up against the best of the best in the Nation, to prove yourself. We still have such a young individual events squad—all freshman and sophomores—and Bradley will certainly be an amazing learning experience for them...and I am confident that we will have a few break through performances there as well,” stated Director Kristi Scholten.

The same weekend that the Individual Events team travels to Bradley, the Junior Varsity debaters will be traveling to Central Missouri University to compete in Lincoln-Douglas, while the Varsity LD squad has been asked to participate in the Westminster Debate Society’s commemoration of Winston Churchill in Fulton, MO at the Winston Churchill Museum.

Anyone interested in competing in forensics should contact Dr. Kristi Scholten, DOF at [kscholten@truman.edu](mailto:kscholten@truman.edu).

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