

Debate finds success at Cal-Berkeley tournament

Policy debaters gains spot at Tournament of Champions after Cal-Berkeley debates

by Da Hee Kim

On the weekend of Friday, Feb. 18 to Sunday, Feb. 20, the collaborative effort of New Trier Speech & Debate team led to a successful tournament at the annual Cal Invitational at University of California-Berkeley, with one Policy Debate team gaining a bid to the Tournament of Champions.

The Cal Invitational is a tournament on the National Circuit that hosts schools from all around the nation, making the invitational one of the more competitive tournaments that New Trier attends.

The Varsity Policy division was met with a host of high-performing Trevian debaters, including nationally ranked seniors Connor Warshauer and Celia Buckman, who swept their first seven rounds and advanced to the Octofinals.

The four main debate events - Congressional, Policy, Lincoln-Douglas, and Public Forum - are present at the invitational, all

of them having a large pool of competitors, according to Buckman.

"In policy, there are over 200 teams, coming from all around the country to compete," said Buckman. "The size makes it a really competitive tournament."

Buckman and Warshauer were also one of 16 teams to receive a full bid to the Tournament of Champions, an annual high school speech and debate National Championship tournament hosted at the University of Kentucky in April.

Those who have a certain amount of bids are eligible to attend, of which Buckman and Warshauer have eight.

New Trier's success in VCX continued with the policy debate team of sophomore Roland Kim and senior Jack Scullion, who went 4-2 in the preliminary rounds.

The duo was followed by the pairs of sophomore Bennett Blake and junior Jack Brown, sophomore Hannah Kadin and junior Marcus Nordenstahl, and juniors Natalie Ye and Charlie Hansell, who were all 3-3 in the prelims.

Ye appreciated being able to debate less common topics, as Policy debate typically involves arguing resolutions for policy changes within the U.S. government.

"My favorite part about this

tournament was debating people who read different arguments," said Ye. "It was refreshing debating arguments about philosophy rather than just relations between the US and China."

Like their Policy teammates, the Varsity Lincoln-Douglas debaters displayed exceptional performances, as well. Senior Caroline Martin went 4-2 in the prelims before advancing to the triples round, where Harvard-Westlake gained an edge.

Martin, who was the Open LD champion at last month's Dead Presidents Invitational, believes that the school's Lincoln-Douglas debaters have strong communication skills. "The Lincoln-Douglas team does a good job with communicating with our coaches and collaborating with other students," said Martin.

"However, it depends on the student and the type of debate."

Sophomore Lincoln-Douglas debater William Thornton shared a similar view on the cohesiveness of the group.

"Lincoln-Douglas is very good," said Thornton, "and everyone on the New Trier team has experience."

Behind Martin, there were many New Trier Lincoln-Douglas debaters with a 2-4 record in the prelims. Along with Thornton, sophomores Caity Kacena and Patrick Tolan and

senior Adam Peterson competed.

Like Ye, Tolan enjoyed many factors of his experience competing at the UC Berkeley campus.

"This is definitely a more fun and absolutely more difficult tournament than the local tournaments," said Tolan. "It felt competitive, but it was in no way stressful."

The Trevians also had three debaters in the Congressional division - sophomore Will Naviaux, junior Michael Kolovos, and senior Amber Malik - who were all within the 70-80 point range. The Public Forum divisions had no New Trier teams competing.

With the wide range of events and competitors, Speech & Debate coach David Weston explained that the competition at this invitational was noticeably top-tier.

"The tournament is able to host a large number of students in a large number of events," said Weston.

"They draw some of the top competitors from across the country - we debated teams from Washington, D.C. to Minnesota."

While New Trier competes at a variety of national tournaments like Cal, the debate team has experienced consistent performances no matter the type of event or tournament. These can be attributed to the team's

chemistry and work ethic, according to the debaters and coaches.

"A lot of the relationships are based on mentorship - our seniors make sure that the juniors and sophomores are building up the skills they need," said Weston. "Our sophomores and juniors will stick around after school, so that the freshmen are working with kids who understand a little more about debate."

On top of witnessing how well the students work together, Speech & Debate coach Aaron Vinson has seen how hard they work to achieve success.

"They have to research and write their own arguments, and they know that their performance is directly related to the work they put in," explained Vinson.

The debate team's immense work pays off in their results - teams like Buckman and Warshauer are currently ranked fifth in the national coaches' poll, and senior Congressional debater Lily Warner placed third of 155 competitors at this year's Barkley Forum at Emory University, in addition to having four TOC bids.

New Trier's next tournament is the ICTA JV Novice State Tournament and the Illinois Debate Coaches' Association JV Novice State Championship, from Friday, Mar. 10 to Sunday, Mar. 12.

Parents of New Trier opt out of Seminar Day, joins Project HOOD

Students travel to South Side for alternative service

by Emily Wong

On Tues., Feb. 28, while the school hosted its Seminar Day to bring attention to the issue of racial civil rights, a group of students chose to opt out of the event and go to the South Side of Chicago to participate in an initiative called Project HOOD.

Project HOOD is an organization started in 2012 by Pastor Corey Brooks, leader of the New Beginnings Church of Chicago. The acronym HOOD stands for "helping others obtain destiny."

According to Project HOOD's website, its mission is "to empower people with the guidance, information, and tools necessary to become peacemakers, problem solvers, leaders, and entrepreneurs in their communities."

Through programs including mentoring, entrepreneur school, and film-making, Project HOOD equips at-risk youth with the skills they need to succeed despite the unfortunate circumstances of where they start.

Most of the New Trier students who joined up with Project HOOD were connected to a group called Parents of New Trier, who were concerned about bias in the content of the program.

"The racial seminar as it was designed and executed was neither balanced nor inclusive," said parent Jasmine Hauser.

The group started a website to educate others about their issues with Seminar Day and to bring in speakers with a variety of perspectives on the topic of inequality.

When they were unable to get any of their speakers into Seminar Day, they decided to create an alternate option for students who wanted it.

Students started at the New Beginnings Church in Chicago, learned about the background of the South Side, toured the area, and

had lunch with students from an alternative school nearby.

While Seminar Day was titled, "Understanding today's struggle for racial civil rights," Brooks found the emphasis on race to be detrimental to the process of achieving civil rights.

In a Chicago Tribune article Brooks wrote about Seminar Day, he said, "'Race dictates everything' appeared to be the aim of New Trier's scheduled workshops."

He expressed his desire to shift the focus to economics, saying, "Discrimination is alive and well, but it is economic discrimination."

Instead of exploring the idea of systemic racism, Brooks and the Parents of New Trier thought it would more helpful to take the day to introduce students to others whose backgrounds might contrast with theirs.

According to the Parents of New Trier website, "Peer review studies increasingly show that diversity programs like this create more harm than they do good, because they reinforce racial stereotypes and resentments. In contrast, activities or working with people from different racial backgrounds can enhance relationships."

This view is what caused them to place an emphasis on seeing the South Side and its community in person.

Jasmine Hauser found that their time with the students confirmed the belief that economic distinctions play a larger role in inequality than race. "All of the kids --who happened to be black-- emphasized that racism is not the primary issue that affects their community, rather it's educational and economic opportunity," she said.

Although senior Olivia Hauser wasn't entirely against the idea of Seminar Day, she didn't think that it did an adequate job of approaching the issue constructively.

"I think this day should probably include some black students or students of a different color from another school coming in and us interacting with them and learning how to become friends with them,"

she said.

Senior Addison Downs also chose to participate in the project instead of Seminar Day.

"I saw a small bias in the opinions that were being voiced and thought that I could get more out of the day by participating in Project HOOD," he said.

Downs acknowledged the benefits of Seminar Day's discussion, but he thought that the project would give him a better idea of the challenges faced by those in other communities. He was bothered by the vast disparity between the lifestyles of those in the North Shore and those on the South Side.

"It seems crazy that here in Winnetka we spend \$25,000 on water bottles and even more money on the Seminar Day, when 10 miles away they are going through all these problems," he said.

Olivia Hauser was also skeptical of the impact that could be made solely through words.

"People could easily say, 'This is what I believe. This is what I'm going to do,' but there's no action necessarily," she said. "Why don't we discuss it and then act on it with these kids?" said Hauser.

Senior Max Kanter, a student who helped organize Seminar Day, agreed that the issue of inequality must be solved using both words and actions.

"Simply discussing the issue won't solve racism and solely acting won't solve racism," he said. "Students, parents, and staff need to be able to engage in conversations and then commit themselves to benevolently productive actions."

Junior Arielle Imber, a student who led a session at Seminar Day, was also supportive of the Parents of New Trier's decision to participate in Project HOOD.

"I'm glad those who participated did something productive and meaningful as an alternative to Seminar Day," she said. "Still, it would have been really valuable to have their voices as part of the discussion, too".

Community Views on Seminar Day

Continued from page 1...

Furthermore, Hart said, "The irony is, that the people here who are saying 'we're for open minds, and we're for inquiry' are actually trying to shut us down, and are adamant that no speakers be added, that no other viewpoints be included."

While much of the arguments mostly regarded the seminar day, many used it as a platform to discuss systematic racism and the general issue of race in this primarily homogenous community.

"When my children were small, my oldest daughter was blonde with blue eyes like my white husband. I was assumed many times, by fellow parents, to be the girl's nanny. I would never equate these encounters with the struggles for racial rights, but these experiences have given me and my husband a small window into the lives of people who don't fit into the majority description."

Parent Ami Campbell said. "Seminar Day is a chance for our kids to look more closely through that window, and what they see might not be comfortable, or pretty, or easy for them to understand. But at least they're seeing the experience that others have."

From a student's perspective on racism within the school, some believe it's nonexistent. While

Hauser recognized that racism and discrimination do exist around the world, she believes "there is no racial problem within New Trier."

Pastor Corey Brooks from Project HOOD/New Beginnings Church described the day as a form of "indoctrination." He believed the real problem was that "we are too focused on race. We are not treating everyone as individuals. I would urge the board to encourage students to look at people for who they are, not for what they appear to be on the outside."

However, many believe the community needs to focus more on race, integrating discussion of the issue into everyday classes.

Campbell doesn't believe the single day will be instantly transformational. "I'm not going to pretend that a single-day Seminar would click the kids completely, but if the students walk away with the germ of an idea then Seminar Day will have succeeded."

Imber left the crowd on the following note as she addressed the parents directly. "Parents, if your student learns nothing about civil rights next week, I hope this will at least be an example of a meaningful and respectful exchange of ideas. If you're opposed to the Seminar Day program, send your kid anyway. Send them with the intention of learning how to engage in civil discourse, how to be a responsible citizen, how to voice their opinions in a way that will be heard."

CARD WARS

Does your Advisery have what it takes to build a home?

Donate a gift card worth at least \$10 to the online auction for Habitat

The advisery that collects the most gift cards will win an epic prize.

Contest ends March 24



Ask your mom, dad, grandparents, neighbors, & bosses to donate as well!