

Post Register

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Word wizards: CEI debate team ties for national title in D.C.

By David Pace | Post Register | 06.08.23



CEI students Liberty Madsen and Gabe Clark and their coach Jill Kirkham, Ph.D., display awards from the Phi Rho Pi National Tournament in Washington, D.C. Courtesy photo Jill Kirkham

College of Eastern Idaho’s debate team, in its inaugural year, tied for a national title at the Phi Rho Pi Annual National Tournament held in April in Washington, D.C.

Two students competed at the national level, Liberty Madsen and Gabe Clark.

“This was my first year ever competing in collegiate debate,” Madsen said. “... It was an incredible experience just being able to meet so many open-minded people who are willing to have difficult conversations and to do so amicably, which I find is pretty rare nowadays.”

Madsen earned a silver award and Clark received a bronze award.

The duo competed against students from more than 50 community colleges and both progressed to the elimination rounds, a CEI press release said. More than 165 debaters participated in the event.

Phi Rho Pi, which dates to 1927, is the National Junior and Community College Forensic Association and Honor Society.

As a team, CEI tied for the gold award in the Hindman Division for Debate Sweepstakes — the first national debating title that the community college has received.

Each debate lasted about 30 minutes with “13 minutes of speaking time for each person including cross-examination,” Madsen said.

The final round consisted of 32 competitors. Whoever lost received a silver award, and the winners earned gold.

In the finals, Madsen argued the affirmative that “technology was necessary to achieve quality of life.” She also debated about different systems of medicine, the impact of social media on teenagers and whether Hulu was better than Amazon Prime.

“A large part of (International Parliamentary Debate Association) relies on your persuasive abilities and in honing in that ability, I know now that I can persuade people to hear my point of view and to see why sometimes their views might sometimes be more harmful than they initially realize — especially with political things,” Madsen said.

The debaters were judged for argument cohesiveness, logic, structure and speaker points, she said.

CEI’s debate team was founded by Clark with professor Jill Kirkham, Ph.D., as the adviser in September.

“A lot of the other colleges — even community colleges in Idaho — have fully fledged programs, but CEI is just a club that Gabe and Dr. Kirkham started and I joined,” Madsen said. “... Through their coaching and leadership, I was able to excel to this level on a national level, which is still kind of surreal, even now.”

Beyond CEI’s team performance, Clark also was nominated for the Warren-Dahlin Fellowship Award. Coaches from throughout the region selected him for his role starting the debate team at CEI and exhibiting “qualities of fellowship and excellence,” the release said.

“Apart from his charismatic ability to start a team from nothing, Gabe is a very successful competitor and is exceptionally kind to everyone — leading the team by example with acceptance and inclusion,” the tournaments’ organizers said during an awards assembly.

Kirkham, a social sciences professor and “former national collegiate debate champion herself,” traveled with the team and guided them to success, the release said.

“The success of the students this past year is a testament to the transformative power of speech and debate,” Kirkham said in the release. “I saw students gain confidence in themselves, strive to be more informed civic citizens, and build friendships with each other and their competitors. Each member of the whole debate team was essential to the team’s overall achievement this year.”

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https://www.postregister.com/news/local/word-wizards-cei-debate-team-ties-for-national-title-in-d-c/article_6abf7338-056c-11ee-a623-9f109d2b9824.html

Note: This story appeared on the front page of the 06.08.23 e-edition of the Post Register:

Word wizards

CEI debate team ties for national title in D.C.

Word Wizards
The College of Eastern Idaho debate team, in its second year, won a national title at the 2023 National Forensic Association National Forensic Debate Competition in Washington, D.C. The team, coached by Professor Johnathan Clark, defeated the University of Utah in the final round. The team's success was a result of their hard work and dedication to the sport. Clark said, "It was an incredible experience for them, and we are proud of their achievement. They have shown that they are capable of competing at the highest level." The team's success was a result of their hard work and dedication to the sport. Clark said, "It was an incredible experience for them, and we are proud of their achievement. They have shown that they are capable of competing at the highest level."



CEI students Emily Washburn and Lacie Clark and head coach, Dr. Johnathan Clark, celebrate their national title win at the 2023 National Forensic Association National Forensic Debate Competition in Washington, D.C.

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Breaking down U of I's plan to buy online university

The University of Idaho is planning to buy an online university, a move that has sparked controversy. The plan is to purchase the University of Phoenix's online programs, which would then be integrated into the University of Idaho's existing online offerings. This move is seen as a significant step towards expanding the university's reach and providing more students with access to quality education. However, some critics argue that the purchase is too expensive and that the quality of the online programs may not be as high as the traditional on-campus programs.

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Career and Technical Education Center receives NAF's Distinguished rank

The Career and Technical Education Center at the University of Idaho has received the National Achievement Foundation's (NAF) Distinguished rank. This is a significant achievement, as it recognizes the center's commitment to providing high-quality career and technical education. The center's success is attributed to its focus on industry partnerships, hands-on learning, and a strong emphasis on student success. The NAF Distinguished rank is the highest honor that the center can receive, and it is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the center's staff and students.

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