

USU Debaters Third Overall in First Major Competition Against 46 Colleges

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The USU Speech and Debate team took third place overall at a recent competition. Students who finished in the top five of the tournament were Erika Mueller, Taehoon Bang, Brock Redman, Sam Hendricks and Carsyn Endres. At far right is Coach Tom Worthen.

The Utah State University Speech and Debate Team returned from its first major competition in the academic year as tournament champions.

The Northwest Forensic Conference tournament, held Oct. 13-15 at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Ore., is the largest speech and debate tournament in the Northwest with 47 colleges and universities from 11 states, said debate coach Tom Worthen.

Among more than 600 competitors at the tournament, USU's team placed third overall, with Boise State taking first place.

The USU team closed out the International Public Debate Association's Novice Division debate, with Taehoon Bang taking first, Erika Mueller second, Carsyn Endres third and Brock Redman fifth. Worthen said Sam Hendricks placed second in Jr Division debate, losing on a split decision in the final round to Whitworth University of Spokane, Wash.

Student winners in individual speech events included:

- Brock Redman, first in Persuasive Speaking and third in Informative Speaking.
- Naomi Ward, first in Program Oral Interpretation; she also placed fifth in Jr. division debate.
- Donnie Corwin, fourth in Persuasive Speaking.
- Erika Mueller, sixth in both Persuasive and Informative Speaking.

Out of 16 tournaments since fall of 2014, USU's team has placed among the top three in debate in 15 of those competitions, said Worthen.

Matt Sanders, an associate dean in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, described the work by Worthen and his students as "exceptional."

"With a volunteer coach and a very modest budget from donations," he said, "the USU Debate Team consistently wins against schools with paid coaches and students on scholarship."

For more information, contact Worthen at tom.worthen@usu.edu