

Facts about the Wichita State University debate program

Wichita State University competes in intercollegiate policy debate. The activity relies heavily on evidence acquired through research and preparation done prior to each debate. Policy debate teaches numerous skills, including research, analysis, critical thinking, organization and strategy. Participation also builds confidence, teamwork, leadership and poise, especially in public exchanges.

The WSU debate team began in 1896 and engaged in its first competition in 1898 (against Southwestern College). The debate team at WSU is the second oldest student organization on the campus. The student newspaper is the oldest, both under the Elliott School of Communication.

The WSU debate team participates in more than a dozen tournaments between September and March, including two national championship tournaments. The National Debate Tournament is limited to the 78 best two-person teams. WSU has qualified 15 times to the NDT. WSU won the NDT in 1968. Bob Shields and Lee Thompson were the winning two-person team.

WSU also attends the Cross Examination Debate Association National Championship Tournament. The field is open to any team and usually is attended by nearly 200 teams. WSU hosted the inaugural tournament in 1986, and hosted the tournament two more times in 1997 and 2008. WSU has competed every year except one. WSU's best showing at the tournament was 2009 with the two-person team of Matt Coleman and Eric Robinson, losing in the quarterfinals.

Twelve students have competed in tournaments for WSU this year. The team is coached by Jeffrey Jarman and two graduate teaching assistants, Eric Robinson and Dustin Wiens.

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