

Impact Report

Forensics Program 2019-2020

Impact Report

The annual Competitive Communications Impact Report marks another tremendous season; our students continued to redefine and raise standards in research, discipline, and competition as exhibited in their successes in **Speech and Debate, Mock Trial, and Model United Nations teams**. The achievements of the 2019-20 season exemplify exceptionalism both in and out of competition. Even with the end to in-person competition due to world COVID-19 concerns and Colorado College's travel restrictions, our students continued to find outlets to channel their passions and talents for communications and community virtually. Throughout the academic year, our teams were highlighted in student publications and most notably, twice in former President **Jill Tiefenthaler's** blog and newsletter to parents and alumni.

We are very proud of our growing Forensics program. The 2019-20 goals for our teams were designed to promote and implement team cohesion, retention, and unification in all three competitive programs. As we celebrated the expansion and diversity of all of our student teams (now encompassing approximately 50 students) we updated and improved performance and peer-training strategies in on-campus programming. Our new programming encouraged constructive discourse outside of competition in meaningful ways through public forum discussions and post event dialogues at the Competitive Communications House. We are so appreciative of Acting Dean of Students/Acting Vice President for Student Life **Rochelle Dickey's '83, P'19** third year of direction and support of our program.

SPEECH AND DEBATE

The Speech and Debate Team celebrated another successful season with our varsity team qualifying 21 events to the American Forensics Association's National Individual Events Tournament (AFA-NIET). The team also competed in six regional and national qualifying tournaments, successfully hosted the annual James 'Al' Johnson Memorial Tournament and participated in the District IX qualifying tournament for nationals (the AFA-NIET). In order to participate in the AFA-NIET, our students advanced to finals rounds in three tournaments with a cumulative total ranking of '8' for each event they participated in. Additionally, our varsity team was accepted to the International Forensics Association's international competition in Tokyo, Japan, this past March. Unfortunately, IFA and AFA-NIET were canceled due to COVID-19. This marks **Sarah Hinkle's** 10th season coaching forensics at Colorado College and we are grateful that she continues to lead our teams to great success- congratulations to Sarah!

The students put in enormous effort engaging in bi-weekly practices and did an outstanding job by winning a total of seven Overall Sweepstakes awards in Colorado, New York, Utah, and Nebraska; an unprecedented accomplishment given the abbreviated competitive season.

In October, the Speech and Debate Team attended the Mills Annual Tournament and Aztec Invitational, where **Noah Hirshorn '20** won the Top Limited Preparation Speaker award and CC's five student competitors collectively advanced into multiple finals rounds and placed first in Overall Sweepstakes as a team at each tournament respectively.



Speech and Debate Team with Coach — Al Johnson Tournament, October 2019



Speech and Debate
USAFA, September
2019

In addition to tournament travel, we were pleased to have several alumni return for the annual James 'Al' Johnson Memorial Tournament to judge rounds and assist in logistics throughout the weekend. We are so appreciative of their support, and students enjoyed the reunion and new friendships formed with our alumni, in addition to competition.

Cumulatively, our students' efforts paid off and they earned Overall First Place Sweepstakes while simultaneously advancing three students to the national tournament only four weeks into the competitive season: **Noah Hirshorn '20, Stephen Sigman '22, Deksysos Damtew '22, and Colleen Campbell '23. Alanna Jackson '23** earned her competitive slot shortly after, with a total of five students who qualified for the AFA-NIET national tournament in Santa Ana, California. The AFA-NIET has the most rigorous qualification standards of the three inter-collegiate national tournaments in the country.

The five varsity team members trained simultaneously to participate in the International Forensics Association 30th Annual Tournament in Tokyo, Japan. The tournament offers Parliamentary and International Debate formats, as well as individual interpretation of literature, Limited Preparation, and Platform Speaking events. This is the second time our team qualified to compete in IFA after receiving several awards, including second place in IPDA Debate and Extemporaneous Speaking at the IFA competition in Berlin, Germany, in 2019. Although the team was disappointed to not be able to compete on the international stage in Tokyo due to tournament cancellation amid COVID-19 concerns, they maintained their enthusiasm and are looking forward to next year, whatever it brings.

Congratulations to these outstanding competitors:

Noah Hirshorn '20	Stephen Sigman '22
Deksysos Damtew '22	Anusha Vajjala '23
Alanna Jackson '23	Ben Greely '23
Sami Reis '23	

Competitive Communications students have embraced the college's antiracism initiative and are committed to the continued efforts to combat systemic racism beyond the examination in rhetorical spaces but also in seeking opportunities to practice civic and community engagement. Second-year speech and debate students **Stephen Sigman '22** and **Deksysos Damtew '22** participated in an intercollegiate civic debate and deliberation at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights in Atlanta, Georgia.

The first of its kind, sponsored by Emory University's Barkley Forum for Debate, Deliberation, and Dialogue, this event brought together debaters from across the nation to advocate for a policy change regarding the manifestation of contemporary voter suppression following the outcome of Supreme Court case *Shelby County v. Holder* in 2013. The students used their expertise in debate to interrogate and bring awareness to the partial dismantling of the Voting Rights Act and the Court's decision to overturn key provisions of the VRA that required pre-clearance of new election laws in states with a history of voter discrimination. The result of this decision has made it far more difficult for a significant number of Americans to exercise their fundamental right to vote. The event, aptly titled, "One Person, No Vote" took place at the Delta Airlines Gallery of NCCHR.

Sigman and Damtew created research files interrogating the impacts of the Supreme Court's decision to remove parts of the VRA and then applied knowledge learned from the tour to contextualize contemporary concerns regarding second-wave racism and its serious effects on voter suppression. Their policy recommendations started with a ground-up approach of more funding in public education to promote a stronger culture of civic engagement and ended with creating mechanisms in the existing policy that addresses the issues regarding voter suppression today.

Following the event, they were honored for their efforts, winning a Reflective Response Award demonstrating substantial consideration of the arguments presented. Additionally, Damtew won a Top Peer Award for outstanding contributions to the public deliberation. Both students displayed noteworthy ability to create compelling and thoughtful discourse and each expressed appreciation to have the opportunity to collaborate on real issues impacting Americans today.

MOCK TRIAL

The Colorado College Mock Trial team experienced an extraordinarily successful year that culminated in the A-team qualifying for the National Championship Tournament hosted by the American Mock Trial Association. The Mock Trial Team competed at four invitational tournaments, as well as the Regional Tournament and Opening Round Championship Series Tournament. Unfortunately, the National Tournament was canceled due to COVID-19. This is the seventh year the team has been successfully led by **Regina Walter '80**.



Daniel Lawrence '20 Outstanding Attorney Award and National Qualifying Trophy @ORCS, March 2020

Colorado College collaborated with the United States Air Force Academy to host the Rocky Mountain Regional Mock Trial Tournament, as it has since 2017. The tournament was held February 21-23 at the Terry R. Harris Judicial Complex in downtown Colorado Springs. Local judges and attorneys scored the competitions, and this Regional Tournament drew 19 teams from Colorado, California, Arizona, and Texas.

Colorado College was able to field two teams during the 2019-20 AMTA season, an A-team and a B-team. Members of both teams were awarded for outstanding performance at various competitions. Congratulations to these competitors:

- **Lauren Porter '22** - Outstanding Attorney at Wake Forest University
- **Theodore Weiss '21** - Outstanding Witness at University of California Santa Barbara
- **Eric Ingram '23** - Outstanding Witness at Wake Forest University and ORCS
- **Emma Gorsuch '21** - Outstanding Attorney at Wake Forest University and Outstanding Witness at Baylor University
- **Phoenix Chang Roper '22** - Outstanding Attorney at UC Santa Barbara and Baylor University
- **Taylor Hawkins '21** - Outstanding Witness at Regionals
- **Daniel Lawrence '20** - Outstanding Attorney at Baylor University and ORCS
- **Eric Ohlund '20** - Outstanding Witness at Regionals and ORCS, and the only competitor at ORCS with a perfect score



In addition to individual awards, the A-team took second place overall at the Noah K. Antony Green & Gold Invitational at Baylor University and won the Rocky Mountain Regional in Colorado Springs. The B-team earned an Honorable Mention at the Regional Tournament.

Along with the other top five teams from the Regional, Colorado College's A-team advanced to the Opening Round Championship Series in Geneva, Illinois. At ORCS, teams are divided into an A, B, C, and D bracket based on past performance. Going into that tournament, CC was ranked 263rd in the country, placing them in the D bracket. However, the team rallied and pulled out all the stops, ultimately placing in the top 6 at the tournament, and earned a bid to the National Championship. They were the only D-bracket team to advance to Nationals in the country and we couldn't be prouder!

This was Colorado College's first time qualifying for that National Championship since the 2013-14 school year, when the CC Mock Trial Team was founded. Unfortunately, the team was not able to compete at Nationals, as that tournament was canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. If anything, this is just more motivation to make it back to Nationals soon.

MODEL UNITED NATIONS

The Model United Nations Club, also directed by **Sarah Hinkle**, emphasizes understanding in international security, health policy, environmental protection, human rights, and humanitarian aid by researching countries' positions and representing them at collegiate conferences. Members of the club also strive to promote global awareness on campus. A unique space where communication takes the form of a United Nations debate, CC's MUN team completed a successful second season and participated in the 10th Annual Session of the Santa Barbara Intercollegiate Model United Nations Conference from November 21-24, 2019.



The Santa Barbara conference was a resounding success for the CC MUN team. The team sent its largest delegation yet, with 12 members (five of whom had never previously participated in college MUN) representing CC at the conference. Across six committees, delegates from CC led efforts to address the current Uighur crisis in China; steer the Ashikaga Shogunate of Japan in the 1400s; and create the next generation of international telecommunications technology. Through successful diplomacy, exemplary research, and persuasive public speaking, most of our delegates were driving forces behind the successful resolutions passed in their committees. This conference provided a great introduction to MUN for the team's new participants and facilitated the delegation's continued growth and expansion.

Model UN provides the tools for students to translate the needs of a broader community into substantive policy solutions, and fight for these solutions to be implemented through diplomacy, compromise, and debate. The following students participated in SBIMUNX:

James Hanafee '22 *Secretary General*
Grace Rosner '22 *Assistant Secretary General*
Johanna Troche '20
Nick Cleveland-Stout '23
Andrew de Figueiredo '22
Alex Rehorst '20
Zachary Weiss '22
Filip Carnogursky '22
Saigopal Rangaraj '23
Adrianna Baumann '23
Pranav Sai '22
Albus Cao '22



COMMUNITY OUTREACH DURING COVID-19

CC's Speech and Debate Team used the stay-at-home order this past Spring Semester to shift their priority from training for international and national competition to reorganizing our energy into an opportunity to give back to the high school speech and debate community. The first of its kind, our students designed and launched the virtual Colorado Speech and Debate Camp, providing sessions targeted to high school students preparing for national competition in limited preparation, public forum, and policy debate events. The timing for support was crucial as students were left without the direct support of their classroom coaches during the stay-at-home order from March-May 2020. While all intercollegiate tournaments had been canceled due to COVID-19, the National Speech and Debate Association was the sole organization that was able to support the abrupt shift to an online format to host a national tournament for upwards of 3,000 students.

Our Colorado College students also connected to CC alumni at the National Speech and Debate Association headquarters to advertise the virtual camp. Through NSDA's marketing and outreach, our students were able to successfully coach students from all around the country as they prepared their events for virtual competition this past June.

Our students worked hard to maintain a community aspect to the experience by utilizing virtual break-out rooms and through working to engage the students outside of the parameters of competition by developing sustained connections.

FIRST ANNUAL ALUMNI SPEECH AND DEBATE OPEN HOUSE AND BREAKFAST

We were pleased to open our new home for Competitive Communication to parents, alumni, and friends for Homecoming Weekend 2019. Our guests were invited to brunch on Saturday and Sunday, where they enjoyed a leisurely visit with recent National Speech and Debate Association Hall of Fame inductee **Mike L. Edmonds**, who is now acting co-president of the college; head speech and debate coach, **Sarah Hinkle**; other Competitive Communications staff; and current debate team members, alumni, colleagues, and friends. While visiting, the guests listened to updates and awards from recent national and international competitions, shared memories and stories, and learned more about Competitive Communications (Forensics) recognition, planning, and funding.



Model UN Team Santa Barbara
Conference celebration dinner

LOOKING AHEAD

Needless to say, the global impacts of COVID-19 far extend the parameters of the competitive communications world and our teams have worked together virtually to cope, connect, and adapt as we prepare for the possibility of distance learning classes and non-traditional ways to participate in on-campus programming and virtual competitions for the 2020-21 academic year. Our goal is to focus on virtual programming, on-campus engagement and re-imagining community-building as we plan for the academic year. All Competitive Communications students will be moving to an online tournament format for the 2020-21 season, including the James 'Al' Johnson Invitational. The students are looking forward to opportunities to hone their public speaking skills in a completely fresh medium.

FUNDING IMPACT

The Colorado College Forensics Program has enjoyed generous support from donors over the years, and this support has been impactful in positive ways for the program and our students:

1. The James Al Johnson 1956 Endowed Debate Fund offset considerable expenses as we once again, hosted the Annual James "Al" Johnson Memorial Tournament.
2. The Johnson Debate Fund also lent support to new opportunities for our students to travel and compete. Although travel is currently curtailed due to COVID-19, we are looking forward to returning to the international stage, most notably the International Forensics Association competition in Tokyo, Japan, in March 2022.
3. Thanks to the wonderful generosity of some of our long-standing donors and former debaters, most notably key alumni from the Class of 1967, we have established the James "Al" Johnson Endowed Scholarship. When fully endowed, this scholarship will provide need-based support on an annual basis for students actively participating in the Forensics Program at Colorado College.
4. The Apollonian Club Prize is another component of our endowed funds, which allows us to award a cash prize each year to the outstanding student in our Forensics Program. **Noah Hirshorn '20** was a proud recipient of the 2020 Prize at Honors Convocation in May 2020.
5. Our new Competitive Communications House is a very visible and vital naming opportunity for a donor who would like to make a lasting impact at Colorado College.

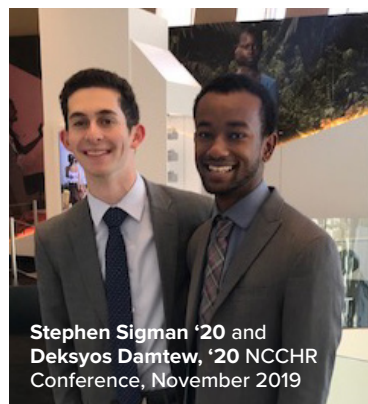
As we anticipate increased team membership, continued successful competition and advancement, including a place on the international stage, and our new Competitive Communications House, Colorado College is grateful to our generous supporters, whose donations provide necessary support as our students engage, learn, and grow.



Homecoming Alumni Event, October 2019



Japan IFA tournament Varsity Team, February 2020



Stephen Sigman '20 and Deksyos Damtew, '20 NCCHR Conference, November 2019



IPDA Sweepstakes at NYC, December 2019

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