Debate Wins a Trio of Championships in Baton Rouge

Despite taking a partial squad of seven Debaters and one Individual Events competitor, the Mendoza Debate Society at Lee College emerged victorious at the Louisiana State University “Mardi Gras Invitational” as they brought home a dozen awards and honors including the Overall Sweepstakes Community College Championship. Hosted by LSU in Baton Rouge on Feb. 1-3, Lee College Debaters also won Third Place in the Team Debate Sweepstakes against a banner field including Duke University, Texas Southern University, host Louisiana State University, Mississippi State University, and Bossier Parish Community College.

Members of the Mendoza Debate Society brought home individual championships as well, including closing out the JV Debate division with the naming of Aria Giacona and Pamela Johnson being named Junior Varsity Debate Co-Champions. Vanessa Rangel took home the Team Debate Speaking Championship, as she and teammate Ty Young finished as Team Debate Finalists. Young also finished in Fifth Place in Team Debate Speaking.

Lee College Debaters brought home the lion’s share of speaking trophies, with Jaden Houseman being named Third Place in Junior Varsity Debate Speaking; Johnson also won Fourth Place in Junior Varsity Debate Speaking while Giacona finished in Fifth Place in Junior Varsity Debate Speaking. Rangel also finished as a Varsity Debate Quarterfinalist. They were joined in competition by teammates Adam Naiser, Dax Ramgoolam, and Hailegh Wingo.

Prior to the New Orleans event, the Mendoza Debate Society also won 14 awards and honors at the Southern Forensics Championships at Louisiana Tech University in Ruston Jan. 25-27.

Award for Lee team members included the Overall Sweepstakes Community College Championship. Lee College Debaters also finished as the Debate Sweepstakes Community College Champions against a field of over two dozen top community colleges and universities including University of North Texas, Louisiana State University, University of Central Arkansas, University of Southern Mississippi, Drury University (Missouri), Northeastern State University (Oklahoma), and Jefferson State Community College (Alabama).

Lee College Debaters also found success as individuals with the pair of Vanessa Rangel and Dax Ramgoolam earned their Quarterfinalists awards in Team IPDA Debate. Ramgoolam also finished as an Octofinalist in Varsity IPDA Debate. Pamela Johnson finished in Fifth Place in Extemporaneous Speaking, Top Novice in Extemporaneous Speaking, and as an Octofinalist in Junior Varsity IPDA Debate; she also picked up a Fourth Place award in Junior Varsity IPDA Debate Speaking. Hailegh Wingo brought home a DeSemifinalist award in Extemporaneous Speaking and a Quarterfinalist award in Junior Varsity IPDA Debate. Miguel Lopez finished as a Novice IPDA Debate Octofinalist while Maddie Orozco, in her first tournament ever, won 4th Place in Novice IPDA Debate Speaking and was named a Double Octofinalist award in Novice IPDA Debate. They were joined in competition by Lacey Gulley, Julio Martinez, and Adam Naiser.

Lee College Debaters will return to competition on Feb. 15-17 at the BPCC “Eddy Shell Invitational” in Bossier City. The Mendoza Debate Society is led by Director of Forensics Joe Ganakos and Assistant Debate Coach Christine Courteau. For more information about the Lee College Debate Team, please contact Director of Forensics Joe Ganakos at jganakos@lee.edu or 281.425.6502.