



# Debate

*For over 100 years, Gonzaga has supported argument and debate as a cornerstone of a Jesuit education. Debate strives to promote a culture of diversity, inclusion, equity, intellectual inquiry, and advocacy. Students who debate will enhance a wide range of skills including critical thinking, research, and public communication. The team's philosophy centers on building those skills while also educating a democratically charged citizenry capable of naming and advocating for social change. To that end, students are offered the opportunity to engage in both competitive formats and public events designed for campus and community outreach.*

## UNIVERSITY SUPPORT

Debate at Gonzaga is a deeply rooted tradition at the University and within the College of Arts and Sciences. This support is reflected in the resources committed to the team. The University pays for all students' travel expenses at tournaments, including hotel, entry fees, meals, and transportation. In addition, the University provides the team with a large, fully furnished house from where operations are based, as well as two full-time coaches and a part-time coach who researches and travels with the team.

## SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Gonzaga Debate offers partial scholarships to policy debate students. Scholarships are merit-based and must be renewed each year. Students that work hard, support their teammates, and show improvement often see scholarship amounts increase during their college career. All policy debate recruits are considered for scholarships after they have notified the Director of Debate of their submitted application.

## CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE

Across many courses, students will find principles of debate incorporated as they hone their skills advocating for the theories and ideas in their chosen majors. All undergraduates are invited to enroll in **COMM 331 (Argumentation and Debate)**. Students who are competing in either policy or British Parliament may enroll in this course anytime during their first four semesters. College classrooms are a space where intelligent students are constantly engaged in in-depth discussions of contemporary political, economic, philosophical, and cultural issues. This 3-credit course will provide students an opportunity to enhance their research and advocacy skills as they spend the semester developing and testing arguments in the classroom in a series of informal and formal debates. Students can also earn one credit each semester by enrolling in **COMM 342 (Debate Participation)**.

## THE PROGRAM

Gonzaga has a history of excellence in collegiate debate. Since our founding, GU has supported intercollegiate debate as an integral part of Jesuit education and the Gonzaga mission. The mission is to provide debate opportunities to students in an inclusive, affirming, and intellectually rigorous educational environment. The program supports a wide range of competitive and pedagogical debate opportunities while supporting and participating in on- and off-campus events to promote civic debate with the GU and Spokane communities. Whatever your experience in academic debate, the program has something to offer!

Competitively, GU excels at both the national and regional levels of NDT/CEDA policy debate. Gonzaga teams consistently compete against the top colleges and universities in the nation. In 1989, the team won the CEDA National Championships and in 2012 advanced to the team's first NDT Final Four. Gonzaga teams have reached elimination rounds at all the major national tournaments including Wake Forest, Harvard, University of Kentucky, University of Texas, UC-Berkeley, University of Southern California, United States Naval Academy, Northwestern, CEDA Nationals, and the NDT. The program encourages students to engage in rigorous and comprehensive research to present interdisciplinary perspectives that appeal to a wide range of audiences. In addition to NDT/CEDA competition, the team also competes in Pacific Northwest Debate (PNWD), an intercollegiate debate format rooted in evidence and advocacy, yet accessible, realistic, and enriching for a diverse group of college students. The format is particularly geared for college students with limited prior debate experience, or those with limited time to devote to their involvement with debate.

The team meets and practices regularly each week throughout the season. This comprehensive and meticulous preparation, coupled with superior training in speaking, cross-examination, and critical



thinking, has been the foundation for the program's success.

In addition to collegiate competition, Gonzaga's Debate teams also participate in a variety of public debates designed to promote civic engagement on a wide range of issues. In recent years GU has been invited to compete in Washington D.C. at the Lafayette Debate, a series of public debates hosted by the French Embassy in partnership with the Institute for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies of George Washington University. In 2022, Gonzaga won the Lafayette Debates, defeating Claremont Colleges in a unanimous decision. This earned the team an audience with the United Nations to discuss their experiences with the tournament subject matter of sustainability. Closer to home, the team has participated in the NASA Astrobiology Debates hosted at the University of Washington. In 2020, Gonzaga Debate collaborated with the American Forensics Association and Debate Watch to co-host several viewings and post-debate discussions of the Presidential and Vice Presidential debates.

The program also provides several services to the college and high school forensics community. The team has created a collaborative tournament with Harvard University. In even years, Gonzaga hosts the Jesuit Invitational Debates, the largest college debate tournament in the Northwest and a major national tournament for the college policy community. In odd years, the tournament is hosted at Harvard University in Cambridge, MA. The program also sponsors the Gonzaga Debate Institute (GDI) each summer for high school debaters. The GDI is one of the top summer institutes in the nation and the largest in the Northwest. For over 60 years, the program has hosted the Conway Classic, one of the largest high school debate tournaments in the Northwest, as well as serving as host for the WSFA Championships, the WSCA tournament, and in 2005 hosted the NDT, the national championship tournament of collegiate debate.

## FACULTY CONTACT

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UNIVERSITY



## THE TEAM

The team represents a diverse cross section of backgrounds, academics, and argument interests. Team majors have included Communication Studies, Political Science, International Relations, Pre-Law, Math, Biology, Computer Science, Philosophy, Economics, Education, Business, and many others. Gonzaga Debate alumni have pursued graduate studies and gained admission into prestigious graduate programs and law schools across the country. Gonzaga debaters have attended and received graduate degrees from institutions such as Boston College, Emory University, Georgetown University, Marquette University, Pepperdine University, UC-Berkeley, University of Chicago, University of Michigan, University of Minnesota, University of Oregon, University of Pittsburgh, Wake Forest University, and many others. Some have gone on to become respected debate coaches, political consultants, attorneys, university presidents, state Supreme Court Justices, and even a Speaker of the House in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Gonzaga maintains a full-time coaching staff with extensive experience in collegiate debate. The current staff includes:

**Glen Frappier** | *Director of Debate*

**Jason Regnier** | *Assistant Director of Debate*

**Joe Skoog** | *Assistant Coach*

**Paige Spraker** | *Volunteer Assistant Coach (Alumnus and 3L at Georgetown Law School)*