



CLUB NEWSLETTER

WALT WHITMAN SPEECH & DEBATE

JUNE 2023

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTORS
AMY XUN, HANNAH MULLINS, AND RENIA AHMED

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

It was a pleasure to celebrate our seniors, coaches and the wonderful Walt Whitman Speech and Debate families at the year-end potluck. Please join me in congratulating all our seniors on their achievements. We are so proud of you!

After a few years of virtual tournaments, our team was finally able to travel and compete in-person at national tournaments for all events: Congress, Lincoln Douglas, Speech, and Public Forum. Again this year, several of our team members ranked among the top in the country at these tournaments. Our PF and LD varsity teams qualified for the Tournament of Champions (TOC), and the Speech team will be competing at the NSDA Nationals in Phoenix, Arizona in June. I'm so happy to see our novices working hard, preparing for tournaments next year.

Our heartfelt thanks go to our talented coaches, the Walt Whitman High School administration including Dr. Dodd, our faculty sponsor Mr. East, and our parent board and parent volunteers for all your help. Our team is grateful to have your continued support!

We are delighted to welcome our new student leaders and the new parent board.

Thank you and have a wonderful summer!

Kanisha Weerakoon
President, Parent Board

PUBLIC FORUM

This year, Diya Bhattacharjee and William Hallward-Driemeier placed 32nd at Harvard, collectively received a record of 10 bids to the Tournament of Champions, and ranked among the top 10 debaters in the entire nation.



"Harvard was amazing in terms of the development of our relationship with Varsity; it was nice knowing that they were there to help us between rounds. I've never felt closer to the team." - Shahmeer Ali

Freshmen Arti Qerimi and Shahmeer Ali broke into elimination rounds at Harvard, their first ever national tournament. Similarly, Hannah Mullins and Raj Basu reached semifinals in the UK National Digital Series.



Harrison Walley and Rachel Barold also achieved a Tournament of Champions bid and a top 32 spot.

LINCOLN - DOUGLAS



"After being part of WWSD for the past 4 years, I can confidently say that the relationships I built with my peers and teammates have been the most rewarding part of it all. Even though LD is solo debate, I never felt alone because of the unity of the team." - Shreekanya

Representing the Whitman LD program at Whitman, Haider Zaidi reached Octafinals at the Harvard National Forensics Tournament as well as earning a bid to and participating in the Tournament of Champions.



CONGRESS

The Whitman Congress team reached Semifinals at both the Princeton and Stanford National Tournaments as well as Finals at the Bronx Science National Tournament.

"My favorite memory of Congress was when we would talk about a real world event that had happened and then proceed to exaggerate to the point where we would make a whole screen play about it." - Dea Rucaj



Liam Darnell was awarded Top Novice at the Washington Arlington Catholic Forensics League Tournament.



SPEECH

Whitman speech finished an impressive year with Dani and Clara both qualifying for nationals in Informative Speaking and Dramatic Interpretation, respectively.



Karthik broke in semis at Pennsbury as well as quarters at Stanford, qualifying for nationals.



"I'm so glad I joined Speech this year because of the community. The speech team is such a fun and supportive group where everyone is helping you improve." - Lydia Orgen

Joseph attained a third place spot at Yale as well as second place at Pennsbury for Oral Interpretation, qualifying for nationals.



At Nationals, Joseph broke to semis in Program Oral Interpretation, Karthik competed in Original Oratory, and Dani competed in Spoken Word.

Good Luck to our Graduating Seniors. We Will Miss You!

David (MIT), **Hari** (Northwestern University), **William** (Williams College), **Ethan** (Brown University), **Justin** (Stanford University), **Jasper** (William and Mary College), **Matthew** (George Washington University), **Juliana** (Oberlin College), **Shreekanya** (Cornell University), **Clara** (Brown University), **Becca** (Vassar) and **Tanushree** (Cornell), and **Karthik** (Georgia Tech).

INCOMING LEADERSHIP

2023-2024 STUDENT LEADERSHIP

- **President:** Diya Bhattacharjee
- **Vice President:** Joseph Akinyoyenu
- **Congress Captain:** Max Freeman
- **LD Captain:** Haider Zaidi
- **PF Captains:** Jinara Weerakoon and Miles Hillman
- **Speech Captain:** Daniela Klein

2023-2024 PARENT BOARD

- **President:** Kanisha Weerakoon
- **Vice President:** Sohail Zaidi
- **Secretary:** Rebecca Konrad
- **Treasurer:** Roji Menon
- **Operations:** Tom Mullins
- **Natl. Tournaments:** Helen Barold
- **WACFL:** Sohana Shahnaz
- **Members At-Large:** Pete Freeman and Shelley Klein

FACULTY SPONSOR: Jacob East

END OF YEAR POTLUCK

