Rice Speech and Debate Team Finishes Year With Strong Nationals Showing, Professional Service, and Coaching Award

The students from the George R. Brown Forensics Society, Rice University’s speech and debate team, competed over the last month in three national tournaments in Minneapolis, MN, Lubbock, TX, and Manhattan, KS. These tournaments represent the national championships for the three intercollegiate competition associations in which the team participates. This nationals run finished a successful year in which the Rice team retained the state championship, maintained its status as one of the very best teams in the nation, and won 266 separate debates and 240 awards.

At the first tournament, the National Parliamentary Tournament of Excellence, held at Century College in Minnesota, Rice was represented by the team of Greg Miller and James Rapore. This tournament is composed of the most competitive teams of two in the nation and brings together the top 48 ranked teams of two in the nation from 40 universities and colleges. Ranking is based on percentage of wins over the whole of the season. Miller and Rapore went into the tournament ranked third in the nation after spending the entire year in the top three. Miller and Rapore reached the equivalent of Quarterfinals, winning fifteen decisions, placing them in the top eight of this very elite field.

In the second tournament, the National Parliamentary Debate Association National Championship, held at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, TX, 12 students represented Rice. This tournament is an open championship, attracting the largest entry of any debate tournament in the country. The tournament featured 285 teams from over 250 colleges and universities. Accordingly, navigating this huge field to place is considered to be a prestigious accomplishment. The squad won five awards which are listed below.

Priscilla Parrett and Ted Torous: Second Place Novice National Champions.

Greg Miller and James Rapore: Triple-octo-finalists, varsity division.

Kim Swanson and Nathan Smith: Triple-octo-finalists, varsity division.

The rice squad won 26 separate debates.

The squad finished 14th in overall tournament sweepstakes, and finished 11th in the nation for the season in debate.

In the third tournament, the American Forensics Association National Individual Events Tournament, seven students represented Rice. This tournament requires that students qualify in each event by reaching finals in the event at three regular season tournaments and by averaging third place or better in those rounds. It is considered the most difficult individual events tournament to reach and the most prestigious individual events tournament at which to place. The squad won three awards.

James Rapore: Fourth Place National Champion, Extemporaneous Speaking.


Hrishi Hari: Quarter-finalist, Informative Speaking.
In addition, Rice Assistant Director of Forensics Jeremy Grace was awarded the Barbara and Carrol Hickey Service Award for his service to the schools of the Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, and Louisiana district. This award is selected by vote by the students of 35 schools in the district.

Earlier in the year Director of Forensics David Worth was elected chair of the same district, the American Forensics Association National Individual Events Tournament District III, after serving on the district committee for several years and also completed his first year on the national committee for the organization.

Jeremy Grace also completed his second year as district chair for the National Parliamentary Debate Association District III, covering Texas, New Mexico, and Oklahoma.

Members of the squad will be attending debate workshops over the summer and will be competing next at the “Top of the Rockies Swing,” hosted by the University of Wyoming in September.