



# women's debate institute

2009 Annual Report



***Letter from Leah Castella, Executive Director***

Ten years ago, Jeff Shaw, my college debate partner, approached me about being a part of a debate camp for girls. I immediately said yes, and that summer, we hosted 25 girls from Washington and Oregon at a small junior high school in Bellingham, Washington. There were a lot of logistical challenges, but the experience was amazing. The girls learned about debate and they bonded with each other and shared stories about their experiences in debate. But what was the most moving for me was seeing the look on each girl's face when, in the roundtable discussion we had on the last night of the camp, she explained to the group why she loved debate.

I saw in that look everything that I had felt when I was 13 and had just discovered this amazing activity. And I knew then that this camp needed to grow and thrive. Because sometimes love of the activity is not enough to keep girls involved. Debate is a competitive activity, but when things are hard or frustrating, it is support and community, not competition, that help you through. Unfortunately, for girls in debate, it is not always easy to find that support and to tap into that community. That's why the WDI is so important. We create a space for the community of women and girls who love debate to grow and flourish. And we know as that community grows, so will the participation of girls in this activity.

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***Executive Summary***

The Women's Debate Institute endeavors to increase the participation of young women in debate. We strive to increase the diversity of the debate community, through the inclusion of individuals of different races, sex, genders, sexual orientations, and other identity categories. We bring together high school students from across the country to learn and improve debate skills, and to foster a community of young women. The WDI 2009 was a tremendous success and I am truly proud of what we have accomplished.

This past year, the WDI had several important successes. We increased our attendance by 41% over 2008 – from 24 to 34 young women (only 1 student short of our capacity!). This increase in attendance demonstrates the success of our recent outreach and recruitment.

One such outreach program was our Urban Debate League Recruitment project. The National Urban Debate League ([urbandebate.org](http://urbandebate.org)) works to increase participation in debate for urban high school students across the country. The WDI targeted four regional UDL programs (Kansas City, Minneapolis, Los Angeles, and the San Francisco Bay Area) to bring seven students to our summer institute. With the financial help of the India McCullough and O'ella Ross scholarships (donated by Kali Kraum and Kelly Ross, former Kansas State University debater), the Open Meadows Foundation, the Bay Area UDL, and the Julia Burke Foundation, these students received full tuition scholarships and travel stipends.

For the second year in a row, we also hosted a dinner for female debaters and coaches at the National Debate Coaches Association high school championship. Aimi Hamraie (Emory University), winner of the 2007 collegiate National Debate Tournament, gave an inspirational keynote speech, and 15 Universities and four law firms sponsored the event.

In the coming year, we will celebrate our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary! In celebration, Kate Schuster, NDT winner from Emory University, founder of the Middle School Public Debate Program and inaugural WDI Keynote Speaker, will return to camp to deliver an anniversary keynote speech. We will also expand our UDL Recruitment Project to include more regions, and continue to provide young women an unforgettable and unique debate experience at our summer institute.

Thank you for your interest in and support of the Women's Debate Institute!

Sincerely,

Sarah Glaser  
Director of Finances



*WDI students discuss a demonstration debate between speeches.*

### **Debate: So Much More than a Game**

Students who participate in debate develop myriad skills that serve them throughout their lives. Unfortunately, men outnumber women at every level of competition. The Women's Debate Institute's mission is to close the gender gap in debate. We pursue that goal by hosting a four-day high school debate workshop every August in Port Townsend, Washington. At the workshop, we teach debate skills and techniques, we show students how to be advocates for each other in the debate community, and we encourage students to pursue debate at the collegiate level. Ultimately, we seek to create a robust debate community of girls and women.

### ***Debate Improves Scholastic and Career Skills***

Debate teaches students how to organize and persuasively express their thoughts. Developing these skills enhances a student's ability to compose a term paper or dissertation, to sit for an interview, and to speak in public. Debate also has a documented, positive impact on reading comprehension

skills.<sup>1</sup> Students become proficient at accessing and understanding government documents, law reviews, legal opinions, and all forms of international journalism, making any debater a formidable researcher before she steps foot into a college.

Debaters possess in-depth knowledge about a vast array of topics. In a single weekend, a student may engage in critical discussions about climate change, philosophy and critical theory, domestic and foreign policy, social movements, military and defense strategy, and global financial markets. This knowledge remains long after the debate has ended. Finally, by learning to win – and to lose – debaters develop self-confidence and self-possession. Students who participate in debate become successful lawyers, writers, policy analysts, consultants, scientists, doctors, politicians and academics. Whatever the chosen path, debate gives students an unparalleled foundation in critical thinking and public speaking.



*Enjoying a hike after lectures at Fort Worden.*

<sup>1</sup>Collier, Linda M. "Argument for Success: a Study of Academic Debate in the Urban High Schools of Chicago, Kansas City, New York, St. Louis, and Seattle." (unpublished, 2004).

### ***Barriers to Women in Debate***

There is statistical documentation that men outnumber women at every level of debate competition.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, the racial composition of the debate community is highly skewed against people of color.

There are multiple reasons for these inequalities. Almost every girl who has attended the WDI has recounted inappropriate comments based on their clothing or their appearance from male debaters, judges, and coaches. Girls also describe how gender was the basis for winning—or losing—a debate round. A hostile environment, even when that hostility is infrequent, can contribute to a higher attrition rate for females versus males. Girls frequently feel uncomfortable reporting these occurrences, and because there are insufficient female role models in the community, these negative interactions often cause girls to leave the activity.

An assertive communication style is essential to success in debate, but women who adopt this style are often negatively stereotyped, whereas men who adopt this style are often rewarded with success. Finally, debate can be an expensive activity, and few poor schools are able to support the cost of travel and competition. Programs tight on funds often choose to travel those debaters who are most successful and most vocal on their own behalf. Girls are often less willing than boys to vocalize their achievements and abilities to coaches, resulting in male teams traveling more than female teams. This can lead to a cycle in which males become, and remain, the top teams on a squad.

<sup>2</sup>Stepp, Pamela L. and Beth Garner. (2001) Ten years of demographics: who debates in America. *Argumentation and Advocacy*. 38:69-82.

These problems create a vicious cycle. Many of our students, who are the only females on their team, can be lonely at tournaments. Often, girls either stay alone in hotel rooms, or room with girls from other teams. While the boys build stronger social ties, the girls become isolated. Women leave the activity, so fewer women debate in college than in high school, resulting in fewer successful female debaters and fewer female coaches. Ultimately, there are insufficient female role models for high school girls to emulate.



*Students work on debate skills at WDI.*

### ***The WDI Strives to Increase Women in Debate***

The Women's Debate Institute was created to increase the proportion of girls and women of all races in debate by helping young women develop debate skills, and by creating a community of women students can look to for models of success. There are many successful female debaters, but some girls are unable to interact with them on a regular basis. By bringing together young women from around the country, less experienced debaters are exposed to successful, experienced debaters who can act as role models. We hope our students will never feel lonely on the circuit and will have friends to turn to for support.

We also strive to increase the racial diversity of our participants, and believe this is a critical part of strengthening the inclusiveness of debate as an activity. We have three full tuition scholarships that directly support the involvement of women of color at WDI.

While the size of the WDI may seem modest, exposure to one outstanding female debater can have a lasting impression on dozens of other girls who are uncertain about their debate future. Our goal is a debate community where success is shared equally by women and men of all backgrounds. We are confident that we can achieve that goal.

### The Women's Debate Institute

The Women's Debate Institute (WDI) is a four-day workshop for young women in high school that takes place every August in Port Townsend, Washington. Students attend daily lectures and discussion workshops where they learn about debate, college admissions and applications, and feminism. Evenings are reserved for bonfires, hikes, and other community building activities.



*Students and staff unwind at a beach bonfire.*

### **Student Profile: Vanova Robles**

Vanova is in her senior year of debate at Fort Lauderdale High School in Florida. In 2008, after attending the WDI's *Celebrating Our Community* dinner at the NDCA Championship, Vanova came to the WDI summer institute as the Guevara Scholar. After a break-out year on the national debate circuit, she returned in 2009 as one of our two policy scholars and as the student representative to the WDI Board of Directors. She plans to return to the WDI in 2010 as staff.

Vanova has had an incredibly successful senior year in debate, with bids to the TOC and tournament wins under her belt. She plans to debate in college next year.



Says Vanova, "The [WDI] was incredible; everyone there really cared for debate a lot and understood how important it is to have a cohesive national community. All of the coaches were an incredible help, both debate wise and for the college admissions process. The program really creates a group of people we can default to with questions about debate, college, or anything we could need help with."

### ***Location: Fort Worden State Park***

Historic Fort Worden State Park is home to WDI's lectures and classrooms, dormitories, and group activities. Located on beautiful Puget Sound, the Park's many hiking trails, beaches, and historic landmarks give the WDI a unique location. Girls reside in a large, open dormitory that encourages socializing through card games, music, and story telling. Staff members stay in an adjoining dormitory to supervise. Students and staff build relationships through various group activities: nature hikes, frisbee golf, beach walks, and barbecues provide physical activity and cement growing friendships.

### ***WDI Students: From Regional to National***

The WDI began nine years ago and draws students from across the United States. We teach both policy and Lincoln-Douglas forms of debate, and offer workshops for all levels of experience. Each year, the WDI's national reach grows.



***Sarah Glaser lectures about critiques.***

### ***A Diverse Curriculum***

The curriculum at the WDI is structured around the students. We offer two concurrent sessions: one for Lincoln-Douglas debaters, and one for policy debaters. For complex topics, we also offer basic and advanced sessions. Lectures address the debate topics for the coming year, debate skills and techniques, and debate theory and philosophy. Given the goals of the WDI, we also offer a lecture on Feminism and Race Theory. Staff members outline the academic theories of feminism and race studies, and we discuss how these theories can be used both as foundations for debate arguments, and how they operate on a practical basis in everyday lives.

We also focus heavily on college preparation. Most, if not all, WDI students plan to attend college. Staff members help debaters prepare entry essays, compile resumes, and identify schools that have welcoming debate programs. We give students the opportunity to learn about intercollegiate debate from college debaters on staff and put them in touch with college coaches. We offer several workshops that focus on how to use debate to get into and pay for college.

Finally, we organize two live debates (one policy and one L-D) between the WDI Scholars and select staff members. These debates inspire younger debaters and demonstrate advanced techniques and arguments to all.

### **Staff Profile: Carly Wunderlich**

In 2008, the WDI added Carly Wunderlich to our list of exceptional staff. Carly is a senior at Michigan State University, and she has an impressive list of successes as a college debater. She is currently ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> in the nation, has debated in elimination rounds at the 2008 and 2009 National Debate Tournament, won the Kentucky Round Robin, and was a finalist at Harvard.

Carly brings fresh energy to the WDI and immense talent and knowledge. She shares her love of the activity with the students, and she is a clear role model for students who plan to debate in college. Luckily for us, she seems to like us, too.



Carly says, "I love that debate is forever challenging me to learn. The more you debate, the harder it gets and it pushes me to work more and more. Even judging or doing research, there are constantly opportunities to learn new things.

The WDI is an excellent opportunity to meet new people. But it's really more than that, it's a chance to build a community. It's a community that is supportive and welcoming and constantly growing."

### **A Talented Staff**

The WDI has attracted some of the most successful women debaters in the country. Our keynote speakers and staff include women who have won national championships, both as debaters and coaches. We feature: Greta Stahl, winner of the 2004 National Debate Tournament (NDT) and Director of Debate at Michigan State University; Cheryl Stanga, former Emory University debater and coach at the Marist School in Atlanta; Christine Malumphy, 2005 NDT semi-finalist from Harvard and Berkeley law student; Carly Wunderlich, featured at the left; and Linda Collier, former coach of college national champions at the University of Missouri Kansas City and currently a high school coach at the Barstow School.

Many long-time staff members have moved beyond debate into careers in law, science, community organizing, politics, and academia, but continue to volunteer at the WDI because of the positive impact that debate had on their own lives. This diversity of experience makes our staff a valuable source of information and inspiration to debaters with all types of aspirations.

### **2009 Accomplishments**

The WDI had two major goals for 2009: to establish a recruitment program targeted at students from the Urban Debate League, and to increase attendance at the 2009 summer institute.

### ***UDL Recruitment***

One of the primary goals of the WDI is to increase the racial and class diversity of students who compete in debate. The National Urban Debate League has established regional debate leagues in

urban centers throughout the United States, and they have been incredibly successful at reaching their goals. We targeted four UDL regions (Los Angeles, San Francisco, Kansas City, and Minneapolis) from which to recruit UDL students for our summer institute. We also acquired a grant from the Open Meadows Foundation to provide travel stipends to four UDL students. Combining full tuition scholarships from the Julia Burke Foundation and individual donors, we were able to fund the travel and registration of seven students who debate in UDLs.

### ***Increasing Attendance***

A second important goal is to increase the national reach of WDI. Table 1 shows that we consistently increase the number of states represented at WDI each year. As more and more students travel from afar to attend the WDI, our attendance will increase and the community we build will be more widespread. In 2009, we broke our attendance record at 34 students.

**Table 1: WDI attendance statistics.**

<b><i>Year</i></b>	<b><i># Girls</i></b>	<b><i>States</i></b>
2004	14	2
2005	9	3
2006	21	6
2007	21	8
2008	24	9
2009	34	11

### ***Growing our Fund Raising Base***

The WDI strives to keep costs as low as possible to allow any girl who desires to attend camp, regardless of her financial circumstance. We receive a significant proportion of our funding from donations, and consequently seek to increase our donor pool to keep costs low and to offer scholarships to girls. This year we broke all prior fundraising totals and added three new full tuition scholarships.

As detailed on page 12 of this report, we increased our fundraising revenue by 21%. This year, we added the Gail McDougle Scholarship, a full tuition scholarship for debaters from Texas donated by Cullen Hendrix in honor of his mother. The Open Meadows Foundation sponsored four travel stipends to students from Urban Debate Leagues. As in past years, the India McCullough and O'ella Ross scholarships were donated by Kali Kraum and Kelly Ross (a former Kansas State University debater) and supported attendance of two students from Urban Debate Leagues. We again were proud to offer the Guevara Scholarship, a fourth full tuition award for a student of Hispanic origin. Finally, for the fourth year in a row, we received a generous grant renewal from the Julia Burke Foundation that went directly to ten students for tuition costs. Staff members did direct outreach to likely donors, which allowed us to increase the number of donors.

### ***Other 2009 Successes***

Following up on the success of our first event in 2008, the WDI again sponsored a dinner for female debaters and coaches at the National Debate Coaches Association high school championship in Las Vegas, NV in April.

Aimi Hamaraie, winner of the 2007 collegiate National Debate Tournament, gave a memorable keynote speech addressing what it means to be a woman in debate and the impact of being part of the first all-female team to win the NDT. The students in attendance received WDI gift bags, created a gigantic community map that showed their hometowns, and played Women in Debate Trivia. We awarded the second annual Creating Community award to Michelle Roddy, former Kansas State University debater and partner in the firm Asimou & Roddy, PLC for her longtime support of the WDI.

The dinner was financially sponsored by 15 Universities, four law firms, and several former debaters, including: California State University Fullerton, Emory University, Gonzaga University, the University of Iowa, James Madison University, the University of Pittsburgh, Samford University, Trinity University, the University of Miami, University of Missouri-Kansas City, University of Richmond, the University of Northern Iowa, Vanderbilt University, Weber State University, West Georgia State University, and Whitman College.

2009 was the fourth year of our WDI Scholars program, a recruitment tool that brings in three exceptional high school debaters to act as role models and teachers. This year, our Scholars were Laura Johnson from Minneapolis, MN, Vanova Robles from Ft. Lauderdale, FL, and Robyn Sellman from Coon Rapids, MN. Our Scholars put on demonstration debates for the workshop at large, and presented arguments and ideas during lectures. These young women are invaluable additions to the camp because they bring both experience and talent from across the nation. The Scholars program serves several functions. First,

less experienced debaters are able to observe advanced debates, and they learn from Scholars who debate on the national circuit and compete at national championships. Second, the Scholars learn from teaching younger debaters and from sharing their experiences. Finally, the WDI benefits from increased national exposure.

The WDI continued its production of two handbooks of debate *How-Tos*, one for policy, and one for Lincoln-Douglas. Handbooks are written by staff members and explain popular arguments with examples, provide advice on how and when to run arguments, and outline many of the basics covered in lectures. As a part of our focus on using debate to get into and pay for college, we provided students with a booklet that contained information about debate programs around the country that offer scholarships to incoming students who plan to debate in college, along with information about other public speaking scholarships. Finally, we provided approximately 500 pages of evidence to each girl. Evidence included topic-specific cases and positions, and a WDI-generated Feminism file.

### 2009 Goals Assessment

The WDI has two primary metrics for success: the number and diversity of the girls that we serve, and the quality of the experience that the girls have. In regards to our first goal, for the first time in the nine-year history of the camp we were only one student short of full capacity. This success can be attributed to the growing reputation and exposure of the WDI and our directed recruitment and outreach activities.

As for the experience the students have at WDI, their comments speak for themselves:

*I love learning about who I am as a woman, no matter the circumstances. This camp was the ice breaker for many things in my life that have been uncertain. Sidney Brown*

*WDI has provided an outlet by which I am able to improve my skills. More important than that, I feel that WDI has allowed me to connect with other women in debate. Being able to hear their diverse experiences as women in the debate community, which is heavily male dominated, has truly changed the way I view the world and made me feel a part of that community in a way I never thought I would. Michelle Flores*

### Goals for 2010

We have two major goals for 2010: expanding our Urban Debate League recruitment program, and finding a new location for hosting the WDI (beginning in 2011). We will also pursue our on-going goals of increasing our donor pool, establishing new scholarships, and increasing the number of girls who register for the summer institute. Finally, we are organizing a celebration of our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

To expand our UDL recruitment program, we are identifying WDI Ambassadors in many UDL regions. These ambassadors will help us identify young women who would benefit from and contribute to the WDI summer institute. These students will be approached to apply for scholarships and to attend the WDI. We hope to add at least three new UDL regions to the four already targeted (Los Angeles, San Francisco, Kansas City, and Minneapolis).

The WDI has been held at Fort Worden, WA for the past seven years, and recently we have begun to outgrow its

capacity. Furthermore, we believe a more centrally-located site for the summer institute will facilitate more involvement of students from the Midwest and East Coast. We are currently looking for new locations that are affordable, accessible, and maintain the unique, retreat-like setting we have come to love at Fort Worden.

We plan to expand our fund raising capabilities even more. We hope to increase the number of scholarships we offer students, so that girls from across the country are able to attend the WDI. We will pursue relevant grant opportunities, and continue to expand our direct mailings projects.

To celebrate our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, we have invited Catherine Schuster, NDT winner and founder of the Middle School Public Debate Program, to be our keynote speaker at camp. Kate was the keynote at the first WDI held in 2001, and she is an inspiring woman who is incredibly dedicated to our cause. We can't wait! We are also planning several fundraising activities based around the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

The Women's Debate Institute is proud of our accomplishments achieved during 2009 and excited about our goals for 2010. With the continued and expanding support from individual donors, we are confident our enrollment will increase in numbers and geographical representation. We sincerely thank all those who have been a part of making the WDI an important contributor to the debate community and society at large.

## Financial Information

The following summarizes finances for the WDI from Oct. 1, 2008 – Dec. 31, 2009. In 2009, we adjusted the dates of our fiscal year to end in Dec.

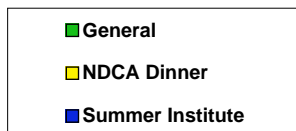
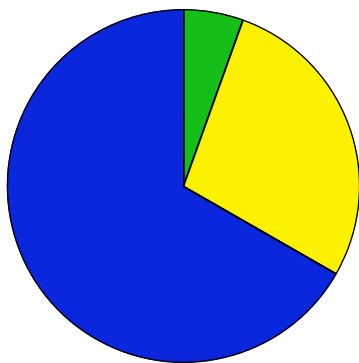
### EXPENSES

<u>Event</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>Amount</u>
General	Fundraising	434.84
	Supplies	974.16
NDCA Dinner	Venue	3,902.21
	Travel, accommodation	1957.94
	Supplies	1103.05
Summer Institute	Venue	9,734.86
	Travel	6599.85
	Supplies	325
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>\$25,031.91</b>

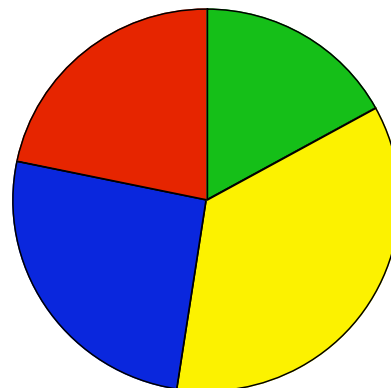
### REVENUE

<u>Category</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Foundation Grants	4,250.00
Individual Donors	8,873.38
NDCA Sponsors	6,390.00
Registrations	5,425.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$24,938.38</b>

**EXPENSES**



**REVENUE**



## Donors

The WDI receives generous donations from organizations and individuals, including:

Julia Burke Foundation	Susanne Brown	Gail McDougale
Open Meadows Foundation	Leah Castella	Courtney & Tim McFadden
CSU-Fullerton	Sharon Chan	Lindsay McGuirk
University of Miami	Anne Chapman & John Hanlon	Bruce Nagel
Trinity University	Sandra Chapman	Becky Opsata & Greg Achten
University of Missouri- Kansas City	Damon Circosta	Ben Palosaari
University of Northern Iowa	Scott Bailey Clifthorne	Rick Peacor
Vanderbilt University	Linda Collier	Mark Perlberger
Weber State University	Loren Depping	Lewis Reagan
West Georgia State	MG Devereux	Susan Rector
Whitman College	Sarah Glaser	Elizabeth Repko
University of Iowa	Don & Linda Glaser	Kieran Ringgenberg
Gonzaga University	Omar & Veronica Guevara	Michelle Roddy
James Madison University	Jenny Heidt	Loren Rosenthal
University of Pittsburgh	Cullen Hendrix	Rachel Saloom
University of Richmond	Justine Hinderliter	Aleava Sayre
Samford University	Ryan Hudson	Jeff Shaw
Emory University	James Johnston	Catherine Shuster
Donna Astion & Michael Fricklas	Mary Keir	Cheryl Stanga
Audrey Astion	Kimi King & Jim Meernik	Sara Steenhouse
Annalei & David Babson	Jane Kirchhofer & Doug Hennessee	Emily & Jason Trice
Ted Belch	Kali Kraum & Kelly Ross	Rebecca Tushnet
Allison Bergstrom	Ish Kundawala	Alison Walcott
Rebecca Best	Sean Lemoine	Danielle Weise
Sandy Brown	Deidre Lockman	Christina Wheeler
	Devin Makjut	Mark Yopp
	Harmony Mancino	

## Executive Board

Leah Castella – Executive Director  
 Sarah Glaser – Director of Finances  
 Rae Lynn Schwartz-DuPre – Director of Development  
 Aleava Sayre – Director of Recruitment  
 Vanova Robles – Student Representative for 2009  
 Dev Majkut – Director of Alumni  
 Linda M. Collier – Board member  
 Greta Stahl – Board Member

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