



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS
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News Release

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UTD Debaters Soar to Highest Level Ever -- Listed Third in the U.S. in Latest Rankings

*Home of Champion Chess Team Now Also Can Boast
Of One of the Nation's Best College Forensics Programs*

RICHARDSON, Texas (Oct. 3, 2005) – Move over chess masters, here come the debaters.

The University of Texas at Dallas (UTD), home of the top collegiate chess program in the country, can now boast it has the third-ranked forensics team in the land.

UTD made its best showing ever in the latest Varsity Point Rankings of the National Debate Tournament, released over the weekend. Previously, the university's highest ranking was 25th in the nation among varsity teams, which was achieved at the end of the Fall 2004 semester.

Finishing ahead of UTD in the latest rankings were, in order of finish, Missouri State University and the University of Kansas. Rounding out the top 10 were the University of California – Berkeley, Wayne State University, the University of Michigan, the University of Iowa, Emporia State University, Miami University of Ohio and Dartmouth College.

“The entire debate family at UTD – students, coaches and supporters – is thrilled that the university has been recognized as one of the best varsity debate programs in the country,” said Christopher Burk, UTD’s director of debate. “We’d like to continue to improve, as well as demonstrate that we have staying power among the nation’s elite programs over a period of years – much like the success enjoyed by our colleagues in the chess program.”

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Debate is part of a strategy employed by UTD – which doesn't field a football team – that emphasizes “cerebral sports” that favor brains over brawn. Nearly a decade ago, the university launched a chess program that quickly became a perennial contender for national championships. UTD's chess players have won or tied for the Pan American Intercollegiate Team Chess Championship title, emblematic of the top college chess team in the Western Hemisphere, four out of the last five years. In addition, students from UTD have enjoyed success in Destination ImagiNation, an international creative problem solving competition – including two first-place finishes in a global tournament held in June.

The UTD debate program's fortunes began to rise with the hiring in 2001 of Burk, a former student debater and assistant debate coach at The University of Texas at Austin. Its standing among the approximately 100 colleges and universities – large and small, well-known and unknown – in the U.S. that field student debate teams has risen steadily since his arrival.

UTD has gotten off to a quick start in the 2005-06 debate season, scoring a third-place finish in a field of tough national competitors at a season-opening tournament at the University of Northern Iowa and a victory in a competition at Wichita State University.

In college debate, two teams, each composed of two students, face off on a general topic – one taking the affirmative position, the other the negative side. The topic for the 2005-06 collegiate debate season is: “Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially increase diplomatic and economic pressure on the People's Republic of China in one or more of the following areas: trade, human rights, weapons nonproliferation, Taiwan.”

About UTD

The University of Texas at Dallas, located at the convergence of Richardson, Plano and Dallas in the heart of the complex of major multinational technology corporations known as the Telecom Corridor®, enrolls more than 14,500 students. The school's freshman class traditionally stands at the forefront of Texas state universities in terms of average SAT scores. The university offers a broad assortment of bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs. For additional information about UTD, please visit the university's web site at www.utdallas.edu.

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