

Debate team wins two national championships

ABILENE, TX – The Mendoza Debate Society at Lee College was in dominant form en route to winning a pair of IPDA National Community College Debate Championships at the 2022 IPDA National Championship Tournament & Convention. The event was hosted April 7-11, 2022 by Abilene Christian University.

Lee College finished as both the 2021-2022 IPDA Season-Long Community College Champions and the 2022 IPDA National Championship Tournament Community College Champions. Lee College debaters also finished in 4th overall place in the Founders' Cup Sweepstakes against the field of 45 universities and community colleges, including Southern Methodist University (Texas), University of Florida (Fla.), University of Tennessee (Tenn.), University of Arkansas (Ark.), Mississippi State University (Miss.), Georgia Tech University (Ga.), Boise State University (Idaho), and University of California–San Diego (Calif.).

Lee College's success is even more impressive, as half of the competition squad is composed of students in the Goose Creek CISD's IMPACT Early College High School. Team Captain Adam Kinder capped a remarkable career at Lee College with season-long national awards, including 3rd place in Varsity Debate Speaking, 3rd place in Team Debate Speaking, 8th place in Varsity Debate, and 6th place in Team Debate, along with teammate Andrew Jones.

Kinder also finished as a National Championship Tournament varsity quarterfinalist at this year's championship tournament. Team Co-Captain-Elect Rebecca Currie was named the 2021-2022 6th place in Novice Debate and was a National Championship Tournament novice quarterfinalist.

The team's other co-captain-elect, Diego Moreno, was a National Championship Tournament Novice triple-octofinalist, while graduating sophomore Linley Brown was a National Championship Tournament novice quarterfinalist. Moreno and Brown also finished as National Championship Tournament Team Debate double-octofinalists. Lee College alumni Pamela Johnson and Jerry McCauley also finished as Professional Division quarterfinalists.

For the 2021-2022 IPDA Season, Lee College also placed as the 10th Place Founders' Cup Sweepstakes, in 4th place in the Novice Squad Sweepstakes, 6th place in the Professional Squad Sweepstakes, and in 8th place in the Team Debate Sweepstakes.

"This is probably my proudest moment in collegiate debate," said Adam Kinder, who is bound for Columbia University. "Despite having some of the youngest debaters in the nation, we were able to prove to the nearly 200 programs nationwide that community colleges can stand toe-to-toe with anyone in this country."

The 2021-2022 Lee College National Championship Tournament Team consists of Jovani Arellano, Linley Brown, Aaliyah Castro, Rebecca Currie, Priscilla Guerra, Lilly Gutierrez, Emma Jaramillo, Pamela Johnson, Andrew Jones, Ornella Joseph, Riyanna Kennedy, Adam Kinder, Cassie Kutev, Julio Martinez, Jerry McCauley, David McDowell,

Diego Moreno, Nathan Mustapha, Elias Perry, Carlos Reyes, Luis Torres, Kimberly Truong, and Ty Young. They were coached by Director of Forensics Joe Ganakos and Assistant Coach Rigo Ruiz, and assisted by volunteer coach Leah Sparkman.

Lee College Debate will return to competition in September, when it will host the IPDA season kickoff tournament, "The Mendoza Debates at Lee College."

For more information about the Lee College Debate Team, contact Joe Ganakos at jganakos@lee.edu or at 281.425.6502.