

Tasmia has edited

Artea Brahaj Period 8

Article Stub: WOMEN IN DEBATE

Angle: Jenna Jung, Vice President of the Speech and Debate Team is spearheading the Women in Speech and Debate Meetings this year. “Women in Debate” are bimonthly meetings in room 107 in which debaters discuss current issues of female representation and the patriarchy in debate! In the future, Jenna aims to have female speakers come to discuss their own experiences combating sexism in debate and/or their respective fields, and have presentations on different feminist theories. The first meeting was Tuesday, November 14th but there will be meetings in December. The date is not yet decided. The purpose of these meetings is to create a support system for women in speech/debate and also work on problem solving in order to improve issues of sexism in the debate community. The meetings are open to everyone on the team. Female and male debaters share their experience (good and bad) and how it related to their identity in a supporting environment.

Edited by Tasmia Kabir

Article Headline: Women in Speech and Debate Stomp Out Sexism

Draft Article Copy (make sure it has a strong LEDE to start, and quotes from students):

“Condescending and aggressive” wrote a judge to a debater who was loud and assertive.

“Combative and convincing” wrote a judge to another debater who was also loud and assertive.

The difference? The former was a female.

It is no secret that there are inherent divisions in the Speech and Debate community in terms of prejudice and traditionalism. The Women in Speech and Debate (WISD) program, launched in 2016, is a series of bimonthly meetings that aim to raise awareness of this issue by allowing women to come together and discuss experiences with sexism in the debate community.

Jenna Jung '18, Vice President of The Bronx Science Speech and Debate Team and head of WISD, explained the importance of having such a program within the school. “A huge problem with sexism in the debate community is that these problems are never really heard and shared with others to shed light on the gravity of the issue. Having an open forum for women to share what they've gone through is a great form of stress relief and a great wake up call for all of us,” said Jung.

While there may not always be blatant discrimination of female debaters, all the microaggressions add up, making it more difficult for women to not only feel comfortable within the debate community but succeed at their event. Sydney Teh '19, Captain of Congressional

Debate, described some of her experiences. “At debate camp, I was taught to speak in a deep voice because it made me sound more ‘powerful’ in a round. My ballots often included comments regarding my suit or my hair, significantly more than any of my male peers. You enter a round and see that you are one of three girls in a round of 20 people; the disproportionate participation is very apparent.”

This year is especially unique as more attention has been given to actively addressing these problems rather than simply discussing them. Jung explained, “WISD will take our first real strides to creating a behavioral checking system for our team and community to use. For example, we are focusing on creating a forum for our debaters to report any form of misconduct they witness while debating in order to go about correcting said behavior.”

Even further, the meetings have brought light to the fact that female debaters feel inherently disadvantaged by traditional judges. These judges tend to give demerits to women for higher inflections of voice or "sass". Therefore, “this year's goals is to go about re-educating judges on how to conduct themselves while judging female debaters. We feel as though these ways about judging students has to be altered,” said Jung.

Uma Balachandran '18, Captain of Lincoln-Douglas Debate, has personally been affected by the feedback she had received from more traditional judges. “Judges would often tell me that I need to stand up taller, ‘look less nervous’, or wear heels when my opponent is a male. I think when those moments take place, they often make me feel lesser for something I cannot control,” said Balachandran.

While there is a blatant need for these new initiatives, changing judge mentality is an enormous feat that cannot be done in a day. To take steps towards such a goal, Jung is working with Stuyvesant High School to help them start their own Women in Debate program and in doing so, spreading the initiative to all the major debating schools in New York. This year, more than ever, the Women in Speech and Debate program is taking the bull by the horns and ensuring that female debaters too can get as much as possible out of the activity they so love.

Post 1-5 Photos here and upload into Coppermine with comment linking photo(s) to your article (Approve for January 2018 Science Survey / SECTION / STUB)

And without any present threat of security at

Captions for Each Photo(s) Numbered to Match Photos:



**Caption:** (Artea B.) Jenna Jung '18, Vice President of the Speech and Debate Team, is the leader of the Women in Speech and Debate (WISD) program.



**Caption:** (Artea B.) Men and women throughout the Speech and Debate team attended a Women in Speech and Debate Meeting

[http://bsyb.bxscience.edu/coppermine2015/displayimage.php?album=lastcomby&cat=0&pid=91584&uid=310&msg\\_id=8929&page=1#comment8929](http://bsyb.bxscience.edu/coppermine2015/displayimage.php?album=lastcomby&cat=0&pid=91584&uid=310&msg_id=8929&page=1#comment8929)

Research & Interviews (do this first; this is a REQUIREMENT):

I am writing an article on Women in Speech and Debate for journalism and I have a couple of questions:

1. Why do you think a program like Women in Debate is necessary?
2. What do you have planned for the year and how will this year be unique? Are there any new initiatives you plan to put in place?
3. Have you ever encountered sexism within the debate circuit? How does that change how you carry yourself as a debater in round?
4. What do you hope debaters take away from each meeting?
5. Any additional quotes you want in the newspaper?

Thank you,  
Artea Brahaj

JENNA JUNG:

Hey Artea sorry bout the delay -

1. WISD is necessary especially now given the inherent divisions in the speech and debate community in terms of prejudice and traditionalism. In the past, many women in the speech and debate community have experienced instances of sexism within round and at tournaments, where they were judged and dropped for behaving distinctly from their male counterparts or dressing a certain way. I have attended too many tournaments where I see my teammates discriminated against by traditional judges or where I see them treated rudely by other debaters. The WISD program answers a great need to come together and discuss our experiences with sexism in the debate community and **strategize ways in which we can combat it and increase accessibility for female debaters to get as much as possible out of the activity we love.**

2. I think this year will be especially unique in that we will take our first real strides to creating a behavioral checking system for our team and community to use. Last year, we mainly focused on issues that needed to be addressed and came up with loose strategies to answer these issues, but never actually put the ideas through implementation. After the first meeting already, we have already taken great steps towards creating this forum for our debaters to report any form of misconduct they witness while debating in order to go about correcting said behavior. The other serious aspect of this year's goals is to go about re-educating judges on how to conduct themselves while judging female debaters. Traditional judges tend to be predisposed to give demerits to women for higher inflections of voice or "sass"; we feel as though these ways about judging students has to be altered.

3. I have definitely witnessed my share of sexism within the debate community. Whether it was sitting in a round, watching my teammate get treated awfully by her opponent, or being the only female debating in a room full of 20+ male spectators arguing with the judge to change her decision to be in favor of my older male opponent, I have definitely changed the way in which I carry myself in round. In freshman year, I generally stumbled into rounds late after getting lost on large campuses and buildings. I would apologize profusely for my actions and fumble with my things. After debating with my teammates who have helped me a great deal, I learned more about perceptual dominance. I started carrying myself with more confidence after realizing that ever insecurity or slight nervousness I displayed to the judge and opponent would only work against my success.

4. With each meeting, I hope to hear all the experiences that debaters bring forth to share with the room. A huge problem with sexism in the debate community is that these problems are never really heard and shared with other to shed light on the gravity of the issue. Having an open forum

for women to share what they've gone through is a great form of stress relief and a great wake up call for all of us. Second, I want to teach members of the team new lessons and aspect of correct, intersectional feminism, or how to correctly go about answering these issues of prejudice and sexism in and out of the debate community. Lastly, I aim to get these women to start strategizing possible solutions to the problems we bring up and talk about in meetings.

5. Sexism in the debate community is taught and facilitated in school. The only way to stop it in the debate community is to address it in all aspects of our lives.

UMA: CAPTAIN OF LD

Hi Artea!

1) I've experienced countless micro-aggressions within the debate circuit. It's often been small things like a judge telling me to stand up taller or "look less nervous" when my opponent is a male. I think when those moments take place, they often make me feel lesser for something I cannot control. I will never be a six-foot-tall male who can take command over a room simply by walking into one because I am so physically small.

2) These experiences are actually the reason I started wearing heels in rounds. I've never liked heels and as a novice, never felt a need to wear them. However, the more sexism I experienced, the more I felt as though I needed to do more to be perceptually dominant, even though that really shouldn't be my obligation.

Hope this works!

Uma

SYDNEY CAPTAIN OF CONGRESS

Yes yes yes,

I've encountered sexism throughout debate, but it's never been direct discrimination in which someone directly looks down upon me because I'm a female debater. It is just intertwined in the culture in little ways. For example, at debate camp, I was taught to speak in a deep voice because it made me sound more "powerful" in a round. My ballots often included comments regarding my suit or my hair, significantly more than any of my male peers. Girls are more often called condescending or aggressive when they appear to dominate in a round. You enter a round and see that you are one of three girls in a round of 20 people; the disproportionate participation is very apparent.

It has not changed the way I carry myself in a round to a great extent because I feel it's important to still showcase dominance and confidence when countering another argument effectively. However, it has made me more aware of the way I'm perceived by judges and my peers. Females on the debate circuit have definitely started to recognize this issue and have actually began speaking about it which I think is very important.