

CLAREMONT COLLEGES DEBATE UNION

FACT SHEET – March 2020

• GENERAL INFORMATION

The CCDU, a 5-C program centered at Claremont McKenna College, is among [the largest and most successful](#) college debate societies in the world. CCDU members are an extraordinarily diverse and outstanding group, including multiple Truman, Watson, Keck, National Science Foundation, Rotary, Pickering, Ford Foundation, National Hispanic, and Fulbright scholars. Members of the Debate Union have participated in study-abroad programs in 40 countries; served as interns in Geneva, Hong Kong, San Francisco, Prague, New York, Mumbai, Paris, Cairo, Tokyo, Hanoi, Cambridge, Johannesburg, Stockholm, Jakarta, Istanbul, Kampala, Lahore, Rio de Janeiro, Tallinn, Seoul, Berlin, and Moscow; and matriculated to the most selective graduate and professional schools.

The Debate Union consistently ranks among the top competitive programs in the US. The professional, public event, and outreach programs are without peer – the CCDU sponsors scores of events for many tens of thousands of participants annually. Any undergraduate of the Claremont Colleges is eligible to participate in sponsored activities. [No previous experience](#) is required for participation – generally, about half of the members of the CCDU have had no prior speech or debate training.



• CONTEST PROGRAMS

The Debate Union participates in national and international intercollegiate debating in the World Universities Debating Championship (WUDC) format, also known as British Parliamentary (BP) debate, as well as additional select competitions, including the Lafayette Debates (sponsored by George Washington University and the French Embassy to the United States), Social Justice Debates (sponsored by Morehouse College), Society of Professional Journalists Debates, Cornell-Claremont Debates, Madison Cup Debates (sponsored by James Madison University) and the International Humanitarian Law Debates (sponsored by the CCDU), as well as various tournaments in Spanish, including the US and Pan American Championships. The BP format is the most popular US college debate model and among the more rigorous – for example, debate competition includes undergraduate and graduate school students. In varied formats, debaters have [won four national debate championships and placed second 5 times](#), placed in the top ten in the nation for 24 of the past 28 years, and received many hundreds of additional national and international debate and public speaking honors. The Debate Union established the US national championship in the BP format and hosted the first 3 championship tournaments; the CCDU also sponsored the first university championship in the Public Debate Program format. The [CCDU schedules more than 30 tournaments](#) each year. In the past few years, students attended competitions in the United Kingdom, Canada, China, Korea, Germany, Ireland, Thailand, Turkey, Philippines, Botswana, Peru, Greece, New Zealand, and the United States.

• PUBLIC EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

The Debate Union has an unparalleled historical commitment promoting public debate and discussion on matters of controversy and concern. The CCDU [sponsors more than 40 campus and community events annually](#). These events include debates, lectures, academic conferences, discussion panels, town hall meetings, broadcast productions, advocacy training seminars, international student/faculty exchanges, poetry slams, podcasts, and other national and international community, interscholastic, and intercollegiate events. The Debate Union has sponsored a public affairs cable television program, *UNCOMMON GROUND*, held the first poetry slam in the former Yugoslavia, and conducted a series of *Presidential DebateWatches* and *Speak Out!* programs – public open forums modeled on Speaker's Corner in London's Hyde Park. The CCDU has received national awards from debate and non-profit organizations for its public debate and discussion activities. In the past few years, students participated in [public events and workshops in Croatia, Slovakia, Korea, the United Kingdom, Uganda, China, South Africa, Panama, Slovenia, Italy, Turkey, Kenya, Germany, the Czech Republic, Tanzania, Hungary, Peru, Qatar, Russia, and the US](#). Working with campus political, residential, and student advocacy groups and non-profit organizations, the Debate Union prepares public speaking and debating instructional materials, trains speakers, and hosts events. The CCDU has sponsored educational and cultural exchanges with secondary school and university teachers and students from the United Kingdom, Jordan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Germany, Turkey, Korea, China, Peru, and Slovenia. The Debate Union hosts a dozen instructional and professional development conferences on campus – summer debate and leadership communication workshops for middle school and high school students, international format debate seminars, coaching workshops, and certification sessions. The Debate Union has participated in prison debate programs in California, New York, and Oregon and sponsored and hosted regional electoral candidate debates, including a mayoral and city council candidate forum for the City of Ontario. In February 2016, the Debate Union hosted an academic conference – the *Conference on Nuclear Politics*, featuring keynote speakers from MIT and the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. With the return of post-pandemic, in-person conference programming, the CCDU will host a *Conference on Criminal Justice Reform* and a *Conference on Electoral Reform*.

• EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

The Debate Union has extensive outreach programming and sponsors the [nation's largest class and contest debate and public speaking training program for secondary school students – the Public Debate Program](#). More than 800,000 middle and high school students in 36 countries, primarily representing socially and economically marginalized communities, use debate public speaking and argumentation resources and participate in class and contest programs each year. CCDU outreach programs were favorably reviewed in recent articles in *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times*. The Tanzanian Ministry of Education adopted the Public Debate Program model for its secondary schools. College students produce text and video curricular materials, conduct educational research,

direct instructional seminars for secondary school teachers and students, assist in program evaluation projects, and judge at competitions. Public Debate Program training permits students to succeed in any debate model – students participating in the CCDU's [MIDDLE SCHOOL PUBLIC DEBATE PROGRAM \(MSPDP\)](#) have [won 8 national debate championships](#) in non-PDP middle school and high school debate events, including Lincoln-Douglas, policy, and parliamentary debating. The MSPDP National Championship is the world's largest debate tournament – more than 500 teams participate in the championship competition after qualifying through local and regional league tournaments. In its [INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC DEBATE PROGRAM \(IPDP\)](#), the largest high school international debate program in the US, the CCDU recruits, selects, and trains US teams for major debate competitions, including the Eurasian Schools Debating Championship, China National Open, European Open, Prague Spring, and Pan American Debating Championship. IPDP students have won top team and individual awards at all of the previously listed international competitions. Members of the Debate Union travel with secondary school teams as tournament administrators, event trainers, coaches, and judges. The CCDU hosted the leading international secondary school tournament in the Americas, the Pan American Debating Championship, in 2010 and 2015. In addition to debate outreach, the Debate Union sponsors national and international public speaking, leadership communication, photojournalism, civics and community action, academic writing, and healthy eating initiatives.

• ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION TRAINING

The Debate Union produces public speaking, argumentation, and multimedia presentation guides to support effective student oral presentations in the classroom. Debate Union staff and student interns meet with faculty and students for class presentation, seminar session, and individual tutorials, videotape student performances and practice sessions, and provide critiques of class and professional presentations. With the assistance of the Debate Union, public

speaking, argumentation, debate, and moderated discussion have been integrated in college international relations, economics, political science, literature, psychology, and sciences classes. Debate Union staff members have worked with the Robert Day School of Economics and Finance, the Pomona College Career Development Office, Claremont McKenna's Center for Writing and Public Discourse, Rose Institute of State and Local Government, Pomona Innovation Lab, and Claremont Journal of Law and Public Policy to develop professional oral communication, multimedia presentation, and quantitative display co-curricular workshops and exhibition debates. The Debate Union supports professional oral communication training through [campus and summer internships and clinic programs](#) (e.g., security studies and nuclear nonproliferation research at Harvard University's Managing the Atom project, administration of international debate outreach programming in Eastern Europe, South America, and China with the International Debate Education Association, production of media campaign advertisements and other materials for candidates and advocacy organizations, etc.) In addition, the CCDU sponsors clinic programs, such as the [ACADEMIC CONFERENCE CLINIC](#), in which students research, write, and present a paper at a national or international academic conference. Student papers have been accepted for argumentation, education, democracy promotion, development studies, mathematics, security studies, neuroscience, and political science conferences in Asia, Europe, and the United States; students have made presentations at Clinton Global Initiative, United Nations Youth Forum, and TED events.

