

Forensics program alive and well

By JIM ALLEN
Of the Emerald

Public debate seen as a useful tool

Forensics, the University's once-prominent competitive speaking program, is ready to make a return to the big leagues, according to John Rindo, the group's student director.

"People are beginning to realize what a fun, creative thing forensics can be," says Rindo, a graduate teaching fellow in the speech department. "The main reason the program is reviving is because people are realizing that public debate is an important key to getting a job after college."

The University forensics team

competes in four main areas of public speaking: persuasive, informative, extemporaneous (quick-preparation) and oral interpretation (poetry and prose reading). Tournaments are held throughout the year all over the Northwest in all these events, in preparation for a regional qualifying tournament to be held in April at Lewis and Clark College in Portland. The top finishers move on to the nationals to be held in May.

Rindo himself is a former national champion in persuasive speaking. He has been active in

forensics since the seventh grade, and he carried that interest to the University of Wisconsin, where he won the national title.

Forensics at the University began soon after the school was founded. At that time it was known as the Literary Debating Society, and since then the group alternately waxed and waned until the late 1960's and early 1970's, when Oregon was ranked among the top debating teams in the nation.

The forensics program at the University gradually declined during the seventies, suffering both

from decreasing membership and budget cuts by the Incidental Fee Committee. The group's budget, which stood at \$8,150 for the 1976-77 school year, dropped to \$6,708 for 1978-79.

"We were really at a low point last year, and the program was dying," says Rindo. "The department (speech) has always been very cooperative, but last year's faculty director (now-departed professor Gary Cross) generally didn't have much enthusiasm."

The new faculty director, professor Paul Gaske, also with the speech department, will primarily coach the team, leaving the recruitment and paperwork assignments to Rindo.

Last year, the forensics program served only about 20 people. Now, after an intense leaflet campaign coordinated by Rindo, over 35 speakers are directly involved, with another 75 people waiting to join up after new IFC funds are obtained.

That help may not be long in coming. Last week the IFC, limited to a small emergency reserve fund while the overall budget awaited approval from the administration, gave the forensics \$800 toward additional travel ex-

penses. No other program received a comparable sum.

"The IFC is totally supporting us," says Rindo. "We've done exactly what they've asked us to do."

Two weeks ago, forensics submitted a request for an additional \$5,162 to the IFC. Though the committee was forced to postpone action, the \$800 extra funding may be the sign of a change.

"Last year, the forensics program had a low cost-benefit ratio," says IFC chairer Doug Benson. "There were so few students that we felt we weren't getting our money's worth."

Rindo attributes the rise in interest to a realization by students that communications skills are important in the job market.

"The ability to communicate effectively is the number one skill in the business world today," says Rindo. "People want to make sure of their own marketability in the job world."

An important part of this year's activities will be a symposium, part of a statewide effort to interest high school students in competitive speaking.

"Through these programs we are helping the University," says Rindo. "High school students look at them and are drawn to the University's forensics program."

Students interested in the forensics program at the University may contact Rindo at 686-4171 or by visiting his office in Room 210 Villard.

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District 41: Mary Burrows (R)

District 42: Nancie Fadeley (D)

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East Lane: Bob Smith

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Ballot Measures

#4 Streamlines people's utility district formation **YES**

#7 Prohibits state expenditures, programs or services for abortion **NO**

#9 Prohibits utility companies from charging for construction work in progress **YES**

#10 Land use planning constitutional amendment **NO**

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Wage-price plan flayed

WASHINGTON (AP) — AFL-CIO Pres. George Meany repeated his belief Sunday that Pres. Carter's anti-inflation program will not work. But he said it will be up to local union leaders to decide whether to go along with it.

"I don't think it's going to work... I don't know anybody who's for it," Meany said. "On the other hand, every union has to make its own decision. We haven't gotten any word from anyone as to what they're going to do."

Meany rebuked Carter last week, saying the president's anti-inflation plan would be unfair to labor because it would hold down wages while having little effect on prices.

He repeated those charges

Sunday and again called for Congress to enact mandatory wage and price controls.

"This is the responsibility of Congress," Meany said. "This is not the responsibility of two or three men appointed by the president and who have failed before."

But in another interview Sunday, the administrator's top inflation fighter urged labor to give the program a chance and maintained that it could succeed.

Alfred Kahn, chairman of the Council on Wage and Price Stability, said the program can work if people can get behind it.

Kahn was interviewed on NBC's "Meet the Press." Meany appeared on CBS' "Face the Nation."

Kahn said, "I don't blame the American working man for being concerned." However, he added, "The president is determined to enforce this program fairly," applying to prices as well as wages.

Kahn predicted that the Teamsters union eventually will agree to a wage settlement within the 7 percent voluntary wage and benefit limit Carter has proposed, because of increased competition in the trucking industry and "the recognition by the Teamsters that we're all in this together."

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