

Forensics: Debaters played 'devil's advocate'

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the military. This debate marked the end of the season for the University team, although several debates are planned for the off-season.

"The great thing about debate is the ability to think through things," said Aaron Donaldson, the University team's assistant coach.

Donaldson said the debate did not necessarily reflect the views of the participants but instead created a "devil's advocate" for public discussion.

Despite boos, hisses and shouts of "shame," the team from University College Dublin cited moral and historical grounds in its defense of the Bush administration's pre-emptive stance on military action.

"In the history of the world, no liberal democratic nation has ever invaded another liberal democratic nation," UCD's Ross McGuire said.

University juniors Jason Lear and Brad Krupicka debated that pre-emption has caused the world to become less stable and Iraq to become a quagmire that has hurt its citizens more than helped them. They also pointed to the 100,000 Iraqi civilian casualties they said have come from military

action so far.

Following the debate, both teams fielded questions from the audience, town-hall style, regarding their respective positions.

McGuire said debate in Ireland is a national pastime and is significantly different from U.S.-style debate.

"American structure focuses more on structure and clinical logic," McGuire said. He said this style also places more emphasis on analysis and is intended to convince an expert the debater has control of the subject.

"Debate in Ireland is more centered on convincing the layperson," McGuire said, adding that Ireland's style is slower and more rhetorical.

Irish National Debate Champion Frank Kennedy agreed.

"We're much more used to debating from the crowd," he said. "This originates from Wednesday night town-hall meetings." He added that everyone is entitled to a point and anyone is allowed to ask a question.

Kennedy said debate in Ireland has a long history. He said most Irish colleges have societies where people discuss and debate issues in weekly public forums. The oldest debate society in Ireland began at Trinity College in Dublin 235 years

ago; University College Dublin's society is 150 years old.

"Every single chief justice of the Supreme Court (in Ireland) and four of eight prime ministers debated with UCD," Kennedy said.

Kennedy and McGuire have traveled to colleges around the United States, including the National Parliamentary Debate Association's national tournament at Texas Tech University on March 17-20. In past debates, the pair have debated with the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Norm Chomsky, Colorado Gov. Bill Owens and Mary Robinson, former high commissioner for Human Rights in the United Nations.

Debate at the University began in 1876 with the creation of the University Forensics Program. The team pioneered a style of debate commonly used in competitions called "Policy Debate," University assistant coach Donaldson said, adding that the team's heyday was in the early 1900s.

"They used to be so popular they could charge admission to help pay for football uniforms," he said.

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Law: Pro bono hours totalled more than 10,600

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In all, University law students last year contributed more than 10,600 volunteer hours to nonprofit and government agencies that help the poor. University students volunteered their time at various legal-aid programs, domestic-violence clinics, public defenders' offices, victims' service programs, youth-offender projects, community mediation programs, district attorneys' offices and many others. The hours contributed at law-clerk wages amount to nearly \$130,000 of free legal help.

Dunlap worked on two large projects during her time with Regan's firm. "She does a ton of things day to day and has made it possible for me to take on so many cases and litigate them," Regan said.

The first project was in response to the Interference with Agricultural Operations law, which affects people who protest by tree sitting or blocking access roads.

"The law is used to oppress free

speech," Dunlap said. "It has been found unconstitutional in one county and is up for appeal right now."

Dunlap researched the law for the indigent activists who were arrested under it and could not have afforded the legal help needed to fight their arrests.

Dunlap also devoted much of her time to working with prisoners who were arrested and convicted with extraordinary sentences. One case was that of Jeffrey Luers, arrested for setting fire to sport utility vehicles in the area.

"He was sentenced to 22 years for setting fire to SUVs because of the political speech wrapped up in the activity," Dunlap said. "He was punished within the system for political speech."

As well as working on the two projects, Dunlap helped Regan create the Civil Liberties Defense Center.

"She was instrumental in getting it off the ground," Regan said.

The center will serve as a referral service and a brief bank, a collection

of briefs and research on various civil rights issues, to help people who would otherwise be unable to afford legal help.

"It is in response to the (USA) PATRIOT Act and the changes in civil liberties we have seen in the last few years," Dunlap said. "It is dedicated to performing services and giving information to mainly activists without money but that use free speech."

The center is currently assisting in finding protesters of the Biscuit Fire who have been found guilty under the Interference with Agricultural Operations law.

"We have referred and matched approximately 25 clients with attorneys so far," Dunlap said.

After graduation Dunlap will become an associate at Regan's firm, where she will continue to work on environmental litigation, criminal defense and civil liberties cases.

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