

the great DEBATER

Kara Borden will use her intensely honed debate skills in law school

BY CAREY CONNELL
DAILY EMERALD FREELANCE REPORTER

In early September, when most graduating seniors were relaxing and gearing up for their last year at the University, senior Kara Borden was already burning the midnight oil. Poring over dense legal documents didn't help her earn an "A" in a 400-level class but it did help her win rounds in debate tournaments.

"Before our first tournament of the year, we were in the debate office for 10 days straight putting in 12-hour days of researching," Borden said. "But that's what you do to be prepared."

For four years, Borden has earned close to a 4.0 GPA, triple majoring in Spanish, political science and history while traveling 10 weekends during the school year to debate against schools such as Harvard, Berkeley and Dartmouth. She was one of a handful of students who competed for Oregon's policy debate team this year, an activity that demanded lightning fast speech and an at-hand grasp of hundreds of pages of information.

A day in the life

While other travelers scan the baggage claim trying to pick out their duffels from a sea of identical luggage, Borden's green tubs bulge with evidence files so much they almost exceed the airline's suitcase weight regulation.

Upon arriving at their scheduled tournament, Borden and her partner, Jeanette Schaller, walk into the room where their first round is scheduled, carefully balancing the 50-pound tubs full of evidence that will be utilized to counter their opponents' arguments.



KATE HORTON | PHOTOGRAPHER

Graduating senior Kara Borden will be a debate coach this fall at the University of Puget Sound.

The room is relatively quiet as Borden and Schaller gather their notes for their opening speeches. While they prepare, the judge, usually an ex-debater, sits calmly and idly doodles on the score sheet upon which he will decide whose argument is superior. When the judge signals for the round to begin, Borden, the first speaker of the round, becomes an aggressive and confident attacker. At this point the untrained ear can quickly lose track of the event.

Debates such as these are fast-paced. Borden, who has been debating since she was a high school freshman, admits that learning to speak in debate style was a skill that required honing.

"I practiced a lot to learn to speak quickly," Borden said. "You have to read the evidence over and over to become more familiar with it."

Her hard work paid off. Borden secured many notable finishes for the small Oregon squad. In the Gonzaga University Jesuit Debates, Borden and Schaller won five rounds in a row to

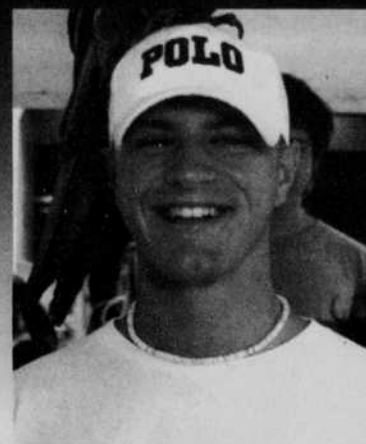
qualify for elimination rounds, and Borden beat out almost 100 debaters to win the 15th speaker award.

As a female in a predominantly male activity, Borden often fights sexism from judges and opponents who do not take her seriously at first because of her gender.

"At the biggest tournaments in the nation, only about 20 percent of debaters are women," Borden said. "Once our male opponents admitted they assumed they would have a win in the bag when they saw they were debating two women, but we ended up winning the tournament."

After graduation, Borden will coach and give lectures to high school debaters at the Whitman and Gonzaga debate camps, earning \$4,000 for five weeks of coaching. She has also accepted an assistant coaching position for the University of Puget Sound debate team. Borden plans to keep using her debate skills such as researching, discussing legal topics, and giving oral presentations when she attends law school.

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