**Government Final Project Transcription**

**00:00 - [Jacob]**

When I started out as a freshman at Collegiate, I had no desire to participate in speech and debate. My mom actually had to make me sit in on the call for the first practice that year. It was a call because, of course, being a junior in spring of 2023, my freshman year was during the height of the pandemic and my entire first semester was completely online. Which was an entire experience that I could talk a lot about, but that is not the purpose of these interviews. Today I want to share about speech and debate - an activity that has been so, so important to me during my high school experience. As I said, I had no intention of doing it at first, and it didn't help that the coach was my history teacher who had just told me I would have to do formatted notes every single week. But, once I started going to practice and really getting to know the team and the activity, it became the most valuable thing to me. The ability to express emotion and political opinions and portray characters and experience and debate important issues that my generation will have to address one day, all within one activity is something so amazing to me. Curating speech pieces by collecting poetry and researching news articles has informed me of so many opinions and world events I wouldn’t have otherwise been educated on. And, it has given me an avenue to express hard emotions and portray my experiences. And, debate has instilled a wealth of knowledge about so many important topics into me that I know will be useful as I grow up to become a more contributing member of society. So, with this piece I want to highlight a few of my friends, Sara Redmond, Ella Montague, Allison Rojas, Django Halloran and Rose Moll, and their experiences with speech and debate. I more so want to focus on the things that stand out to them - what they have taken out of it and how they think it will serve them in the future. So settle in, and I'll let them tell it.

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**[Jacob]**

Hey, Sara.

**01:56 - [Sara Redmond]**

Hi.

**[Jacob]**

How are you today?

**[Sara]**

I'm OK. How are you?

**[Jacob]**

I'm good. Today, I'll be asking some questions about debate. So, first off, when did you join the debate team? Like, what year of high school for you?

**[Sara]**

It was sophomore year. It was second semester of sophomore year when I joined.

**[Jacob]**

Do you think when you joined has had any effect on how you view debate as an activity or the experience as a whole?

**[Sara]**

Um, so, I mean, when I had first heard about debate it was freshman year and we were doing track and you guys were talking about how you guys would miss practice for debate. And, I was like, whoa, that's so cool - I'm want to miss track practice, and I never ended up doing it freshman year. But, I always thought debate was a very aggressive and, like, kind of stuck up sport? And, it can be – sometimes - but there's also there's a bunch of different categories in debate that which I didn't know about, and there's a bunch of different things that I didn't know about debate before I had joined. Like, there was so much work that you had to put into it and that there was like so much debates going on within the team that you had to have before you could even start to compete. So it was a lot.

**[Jacob]**

What has been your favorite debate memory? And if you don't have a specific one, just your general, just a general like memory like things, something that happens often that is your favorite thing.

**[Sara]**

I would say. Hanging out at the tournaments is always really fun and at the end of practice, when we always talk to Johnson, that's also really fun. I think one of my favorites Ohh it was one of my first tournaments last year and I didn't advance and so I was still there. And, we were - I was with Allison - at Marquette and we were just walking around exploring, and I was wearing these really long pants because I didn't have anything else and I was wearing these really small heels as. Well, on the floor was really slick. And so I slipped on air and fell backwards onto my butt. And Allison just stood there and laughed at me for like five minutes and we were like, it was on this bridge and. And there was three other people from our team coming towards us, I don't remember who they were, but they just stood there and laughed at me too. And it was really funny.

**[Jacob]**

So it's kind of in the same vein, vein so I think I know the answer, but what's been your favorite part of debate? Is it the people, the tournaments, practices? Your piece? Your case?

**[Sara]**

Oh, I don't know. I really like doing my Congress, um, speeches that I write, and I also really like doing Congress in general, which is...peculiar...because, I don't know. It's just Congress is just so, it's not easy. Nothing in debate is easy-

**[Jacob]**

Yep. Amen

**[Sara]**

But also like congress is one of the- I don't want to. Say chiller parts of. But it's not as like. Go, go, go. Like policy or. It's not like you're all alone, like LD. Like you're competing by yourself. But you also have your teammates in the room majority of the time, and they're there to support you, and you're talking about current issues that are going on. And like, you're basically cosplaying as representatives and I think that's really funny, but I think that's my favorite part. Debate is doing. Congress and just some of the experiences in congressman are just, man. like you would not expect them like getting barked at by a person in a Congress room. Very surreal

**[Jacob]**

What's been the hardest part of debate for you?

**[Sara]**

Um, definitely that moment right before you give a speech like cause in Congress, you sit there for forever and then you stand up and they're like, oh, give a speech. And so like in that moment before I stand is the most like anxiety I have ever had in my life. Like I like, feel like – sensory-wise - I feel everything going on in the room and like I'm like, what if I mess up? What if, like something happens and it's definitely that anxiety and like getting over that anxiety and pushing through to get? To your speech to get to, um, to get those points so you can be able to advance or win is definitely a hurdle that you have to face at every tournament.

**[Jacob]**

Do you think debate is preparing you for the future and, if so, how?

**[Sara]**

Yes, definitely. Debate teaches you public- eugh - public speaking skills that like people don't realize how much they use. Like my mom, she gives presentations like almost every day, and she sometimes struggles because she doesn't have the public speaking skills. And here I am in debate giving speeches about freaking selling Montana to Canada with full confidence. Like it's that public speaking skill that you don't realize how often you use like you're using it right now, giving this interview because you're talking to a person like and you have to, like, have a good voice and you have to be confident and you have to like, have that plan in your head of like what you're going to say. And, so, I think I use that almost every day in life.

**[Jacob]**

Alright, thank you so much.

**[Sara]**

Of course.

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**[Jacob]**

Hello, Ella.

**06:48 - [Ella Montague]**

Hi, Jacob.

**[Jacob]**

Alright. Today, we will be talking about debate. So when did you join debate? What year of high school for you?

**[Ella]**

I joined my sophomore year. Technically I also attended a few meetings in freshman year, but at that point it was out halfway through the season and I was just like, I can't. I can't do this right now.

**[Jacob]**

Do you think when you joined has had any effect on how you view debate as an activity or your experience as a whole?

**[Ella]**

Um, I don't think so just because, um, because I think it would have gotten to this point anyways. But I think that like if I had joined freshman year, I maybe would have, um, like become friends with some of the people quicker and just like had some of that. But I still don't think it would really, really would have changed much.

**[Jacob]**

What were your first impressions of debate as a whole and the people on the team?

**[Ella]**

I was really excited about all like those things. So like it was pretty exciting to me. And so like that first impression was like a it was a really good first impression of like ohh yeah, no, this is good. And I like this and the people seem good and as much as, like, like sometimes it's like, literally it seems terrifying. And then you get into it and you're like ohh actually, I like debate better than I like speech.

**[Jacob]**

What is your favorite debate memory?

**[Ella]**

That's a good question. There's like, there's a lot of, like little moments. That are just like, like it's just like really funny. Moments where you're like, all like hanging out and you start going on like. Like they call the practice Congress round. Where we just get like mprogressively more and more like problematic, and it's just like everyone's being really funny and it's like. Just like it's purposely problematic, but in a way that's like still nice. And it’s funny, I think that's probably one of my favorite moments.

**[Jacob]**

And what is your favorite part of debate? Is it the people, tournaments, practices or your piece or case?

**[Ella]**

I think most like most everything that I enjoy, I enjoy it for the people. Like I like being able to be around people and to have that experience. I also think that like, I definitely really do like competing though like. As much as like, I kind of grew up thinking I wasn't. I'm actually like a super competitive person. And so like, When I like, like I, I do like the competition part of that and doing all of the research, it's something like, yeah, just collecting everything, putting stuff together and then being able to share it with people is cool.

**[Jacob]**

What's been the hardest part of debate for you?

**[Ella]**

There's been a lot of things. There's been a lot of like, I mean, you get a bunch of people together, there's going to be drama, which is always, which is fine. I also think, like, the burnout hits hard, especially like this year, like you're writing, like, cases nonstop, you're speaking for three days, like, nonstop. Like, essentially non-stop. You're doing all this stuff on top of normal like school and homework and stuff. So, I think that like, just like that all adds up and then it's just like a lot and it's a lot of burnout and a lot of really stressful like situations that you get yourself into.

**[Jacob]**

Do you think debate is preparing you for the future and, if so, how?

**[Ella]**

Absolutely? Yeah, I think that like debate is super like helpful for a lot of things and a lot of like communication skills in particular, not just presentation skills, but also, um, not, not just presentation communication, but also like one-on-one communication. And I think like it is a good way to like to, like talk about how you. Um, yeah, I'm just trying to like, oh, sorry - Sharing your voice too. And like, being able to actually voice what you need and being able to, I think it's actually made me less of a people pleaser and which has been like, but it's good for me when you're chronic people pleaser and you get anxiety about it, I'm more likely to push back now. Not, and not to, an extreme but like. yeah. So I think, yeah.

**[Jacob]**

All right. Thank you!

**[Ella]**

Yep

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**[Jacob]**

Hello, Allison, how are you today?

**11:39 - [Allison Rojas]**

I’m doing...average.

**[Jacob]**

OK. Thank you for being honest. My topic today is speech and debate. So first, my first question is when did you join the debate team? Like what year in high school for you?

**[Allison]**

I joined my sophomore year.

**[Jacob]**

Do you think when you joined has had an effect on how you view debate as an activity or your experience in it as a whole?

**[Allison]**

I would say it's impacted my personal experience because sometimes I look back and I kind of wish that I joined in freshman year because then I would have done it for longer and I would have been more experienced where I am now as a junior and I compare myself a lot, so sometimes I will compare myself to people who have been in speech and debate since their freshman year and look at things like points and things like that and think like, oh, I wish I could be like them. “If only I had joined in freshman year, I would have had more points” or something like that. So I do definitely think there's that, but I'm also - I'm still really grateful that I joined in the first place.

**[Jacob]**

What were your first impressions of the activity and the people on the team?

**[Allison]**

So my first impressions of the activity. So, at first I knew what debate was because I had dabbled in it in middle school, but I didn't really like the amount of research that I had to do, and I had no idea what speech was. But then you know, you told me what speech is like. And I was like that's really cool. So I thought it was, I just genuinely, my first presence was that this was something really cool and I don't know why more people like I don't know why I hadn't heard of it before. And when I was a novice, you know, you don't really have to do a lot of case writing in your novice. So I really didn't. Have to do all that. Research that I dreaded, but. Yeah. What was the? Second part of the question?

**[Jacob]**

That- also your impressions of the people?

**[Allison]**

Well, a lot of them. I thought everyone was like, you know, really cool and talented. You know, those people like you and Lilley and Sifa that I looked up to, and because, you know, thinking that this, this activity is really cool and think that these people. Are really cool and a lot of people in my grade joined when I joined, so there were a lot of novices in my year as a sophomore, so there were a lot of people that I was friends with and it just felt- it felt really comfortable as a novice because it felt like I had a good support system then.

**[Jacob]**

What is your favorite debate memory?

**[Allison]**

Oh, favorite debate memory? Awe, man. I feel like I have a lot, but a specific one is in, in sophomore year there was this case that we went up against a lot and we called it the duck case because these people they, they were arguing for more wetlands protection and our neg case against that was saying that it was solved in the status quo. So their whole argument was redundant. And there was this really specific argument that they that this team would make that without wetlands protection, we're going to be seeing these pandemics like the plague and the Black Death and COVID and things like that, and but they also said that, you know, wetlands are being destroyed at the same time - and we're - I had this really specific question about that contradicted a lot of their points about, well, if these wells are being destroyed, where are these epidemics and pandemics that you're talking about, and my opponent was speechless. Literally no answer. She looks to her partner and I felt so satisfied in that moment because I think that was the first time I really caught an opponent like in their tracks. Yeah, that's, that's kind of the first. thing that I think of.

**[Jacob]**

What's your favorite part of debate? Is it the people, the tournaments, practicing? Or is it your piece or your case?

**[Allison]**

I think it's a mix of everything kind of. So you know, there's a lot of people on the team that I just, you know, I love hanging out with. And this is, you know, I love doing this activity with them. I love tournaments, even though sometimes they are really stressful like I love that stress in a way where it's like it's, it's competitive and I like that competitiveness and I really like performing. I like, I love performing my piece, especially this year because this year my piece like is really personal because it relates to the shooting and it feels like this is something that I can truly, really speak from. It's something that you know it shakes. The world, and it's something that I can speak from with experience. And it feels so much stronger putting that out there.

**[Jacob]**

What's been the hardest part about debate for you?

**[Allison]**

Probably the stress because I don't really feel stress building up to tournaments or practices or anything like that until I'm actually at the tournament and then I feel really stressed, especially if it's in debate because debate you are going directly against people, while as speech you're you know, you have your pieces, but they're separate, you're not actually attacking directly. So I kind of, the only times I really dread it are those seconds literally leading up to starting the round. Knowing that, you know, I never actually get physically injured, but sometimes I feel a little like emotionally injured in a way. Where it's like – I, like I wouldn't really I mean obviously I want to win a round. I wouldn't really care if I, if I didn't win as long as it didn't hurt me a lot. Because I do feel really hurt after like a sucky round, because sometimes it feels like the other team can be really aggressive and it just kind of gets to you and that's something that I really, like, because, you know, in pieces in speech you can kind of expect where it's going to. You like, but with debate you don't know if your opponents are going to be nice, respectful opponents or you're going to be someone who yells at you and belittles you.

**[Jacob]**

Do you think debate is preparing you for the future and, if so, how?

**[Allison]**

I would say kind of, I mean like I'm not going into anything political or like theatrical, like directly out of high school. But I would say that it has, it's given me like speech writing skills, and that's a little like obvious - like it’s speech and debate, of course you're going to be writing speeches. But, I feel like I'm more put together in a way where I, like, I know what sounds good and I know how to practice the speech. I know how to give a speech. I feel better. Like publicly presenting.

**[Jacob]**

Thank you.

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Alright everybody, I'm here with Allison, who would like to add a little bit more about her favorite speech and debate memories.

**[Allison]**

So this is something that's not actually from round or like competing itself, but it's just kind of like the culture that surrounds speech and debate tournaments is that, you know, you can come out a round like hating your debate opponent, or like, you know, disliking your speech opponent because I feel like people don't hate their speech opponents as much as they do with their debate opponents. But anyway, after that, usually if you brush that aside, you can like make some really awesome friends. This is kind of like a general memory, but I've like made so many friends at speech and debate tournaments and even if they're just like tournament friends where I only say hi to them and like only interact with them at tournaments, but like the amount of late night talks that I've had at tournaments, or just like late night jamming out in like some random school's bathroom to a One Direction song where it's like these people that are, you know, two hours away, that that live 2 hours away from me and that we're probably never actually going to hang out like outside of tournaments. But having this, like, really unique bond that's only found at tournaments, I feel like it's, it's almost like that sweep over vibe where it's like it's getting late and all of a sudden you're just, like, spilling things. You're just saying things like and you trust that this person will keep this. And that's just something I think it's really sweet.

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**[Jacob]**

Hello, Django.

**19:49 - [Django Halloran]**

Hi

**[Jacob]**

Alright, today we'll be talking about speech and debate. My first question is when did you join the debate team? Like what year of high school for you?

**[Django]**

That was my freshman year.

**[Jacob]**

Do you think that when you joined has had any effect on how you view debate as an activity or the experience as a whole?

**[Django]**

I definitely think so, because I started during that year of COVID doing it virtually and that definitely sort of impacted how I look at it now. It’s, it's a lot more fun doing it non virtually. So I think I enjoyed it more since then and I'm kind of glad I stuck with it for the next couple of years after that and wasn't discouraged by that, but I'm definitely glad I started freshman year just to have that extra year of experience because there are definitely a lot of people on our team that started after their freshman year, and I think they just sort of missed out on some experience, even if it wasn't the best time to be doing debate.

**[Jacob]**

What were your first impressions of the activity and the people on the team?

**[Django]**

You know, it was kind of strange, again, just doing it virtually. As far as the activity goes, it definitely felt pretty nerdy and I knew that going into it. I was kind of talked into it by my sister and I, was, I was pretty aware of the activity as a whole, But it definitely sort of gave me a better understanding of what, what exactly it was, and I definitely learned a lot from it. As far as the people on the team, I didn't really get to know any of them. There were a couple of people I already knew. My debate partner, Judah - we've been friends for years. But, otherwise I really didn't get to know the people just because it was virtual. So that was really strange.

**[Jacob]**

What has been your favorite debate memory?

**[Django]**

Oh, that's tricky. I honestly just like there's only been, I think one or two tournaments I've won and both, both those times it's just so satisfying for them to call out your name, and I think that's got to be one of the most satisfying experiences also just getting to know people and making friends is probably the best overall as far as like not an individual memory or experience, but that's definitely been one of the most important factors.

**[Jacob]**

So kind of in the same vein, you may have answered it a little bit, but what is your favorite part about debate? Like is it the people, tournaments, practices, or like your case or pieces you've had in the past?

**[Django]**

It's definitely between the people and the tournaments, I've made a lot of friends and grown closer with a lot of friends through debate. The tournaments are also great experiences. Just, just sort of you get to show off your skills and they last a long time. It just feels like this sort of marathon, but you're finally getting to display those skills that you've been learning for however many months.

**[Jacob]**

What's been the hardest part about debate for you?

**[Django]**

Hardest part for debate is probably like the nerves honestly going into debate round can be pretty nerve wracking and trying, getting up the nerves to try new speech categories or new debate categories, or debate with a new partner can be pretty hard, and just sort of daunting when you're going into a tournament setting with some sort of new factor on the line.

**[Jacob]**

Do you think debate is preparing you for the future and? If so, how?

**[Django]**

I definitely think so. One of the biggest things that I think it's helped with is just public speaking and being able to talk to people without really getting nervous. I've done extemporaneous speaking, which you have to prep a speech pretty quickly, and I think that's definitely going to be a very useful life skill. It's also something that - I recently had a job interview - and I made connections to debate several times when I was asked those questions., just because it's such a good experience and a lot of those, a lot of the skills I've learned have carried over to those sort of real world scenarios.

**[Jacob]**

Hmm, that's awesome. Thank you for talking me today.

**[Django]**

Thank you.

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**[Jacob]**

Alright, hello, I'm here with Rose-

**23:21 - [Rose Moll]**

Hhhiii

**[Jacob]**

And, today, we'll be talking about speech and debate. Now, my first question is when did you join the debate team? What year of high school for you?

**[Rose]**

Sophomore year, baby.

**[Jacob]**

Do you think that when you joined has had any effect on how you view debate as an activity or the experience as a whole?

**[Rose]**

I think I would have liked it less if I'd started freshman year. Because we were all online, right, and I know you guys were doing it and it just looked really stressful. Some of my friends were doing it, and “there’s like these big binders.” and I was like, “Oh my gosh. that's so much work.” I feel like, I think it was better that I jumped in sophomore year because then I could actually do stuff with people and not just be like ohh, it's these other people on the screen, just like all my other classes.

**[Jacob]**

So when you did join, what were your first impressions of the activity and the people on the team?

**[Rose]**

I was like sort of overwhelmed at first. I was like, Oh my gosh, there's so many choices, there's so many things that are going on. But I was, also, the people on the team, I thought they were really cool. There was a lot of like people who I didn't really know, and so it was really fun for me to kind of get to know those people. It really felt like a weird, like nerd community. We were all just there to, like, act and argue and stuff.

**[Jacob]**

What has been your favorite part of debate? Is it the people, the tournaments, practices or your piece or case?

**[Rose]**

I do really, mmmmm, like I don't know. It depends on the tournament, honestly, because some tournaments suck because some are like really fun depending on like how long they are and whether you would advance. I think definitely the people.

**[Jacob]**

Alright, in the same vein, what has been your favorite debate memory? If there is anything specific that you can remember?

**[Rose]**

Oh, oh, one of them has to be when we were teaching Django how to tie a tie. Because I remember, it was at our first - one of - our first tournaments sophomore year and it was, like excitement was very high because I've never been to a tournament before and it was at our school, obviously like we weren't with other people, but it was really fun and everyone was there. We're getting ready and Django was freaking out because he didn’t know how to tie a tie., and Silas had to show him. And, like, watch a YouTube video and Django still couldn't do it. So then Silas tied it for him and Django felt so proud of himself. Which is really funny. Yeah, that was one of my favorite memories, I think.

**[Jacob]**

What has been the hardest or most challenging part about debate for you?

**[Rose]**

The actual debating part, because I am a speech person, I don't love debate. It kind of stresses me out. Because of like there's so much to do and I just don't have the...energy? Not the energy. I don't have the commitment for debate specifically, and so when I was doing LD [lincoln douglas debate] this past year, a lot of it was like, it felt really fun. Like in tournaments sometimes. And I was like oh “I'm, like, I'm flowing, I'm answering your points.” But then, like, I hate prepping. I hate prepping so much. Like I don't want to find the answers to their arguments. I don't want to like go search through like the deep internet and, like, find all this stuff, because that feels like a lot of work to me. But like the end goal felt really satisfying, but for me I don't know if it was enough for how much work it took.

**[Jacob]**

Final question, do you think debate is preparing you for the future and, if so, how?

**[Rose]**

I think so in terms of like talking to people. And also just getting your point across in a very succinct way. So I do radio, obviously, [*Rose was unaware that her greater audience may* ***not*** *have been aware of that factoid*] and I've definitely gotten a lot faster at it so I've been able to like take information that I have and kind of put it into a storyline that I want to use like, quickly. And I feel like that's really valuable thing to have, especially like even you're just like, writing essays even from your own head to be able to like story map out what you want so you can get your point across in the most succinct and persuasive way possible.

**[Jacob]**

Thank you so much.

**[Rose]**

Thank you.

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**27:15 - [Jacob]**

Alrighty, back to me - hello. I love that debate has offered me and so many people the opportunity for an academic and even nerdy expression of themselves. I think it's so interesting that some of my interviewees even had opposing views on some things, yet they all so deeply loved debate. For instance, Django thinks that the people who weren't a part of the debate freshman year were missing out. Whereas Rose and Ella thought joining sophomore year, was the best way for it to work out, and that doing it online would have sucked. I always love hearing people's debate memories and I think the fact that we have so many is a testament to how amazing of a space debate is and the opportunities for success and friendship that it provides. I forgot to ask a question about it during the interviews, but I know all the people I interviewed very personally and I know they would agree with the sentiment that debate was also very important after the shooting. Partly because we had some practices during the time after the shooting, before we went back to school. Those were amazing times to get together and just get to see people and feel connected to them, especially when you're close and they're important to you because debate. Another reason I think it was good is that after the shooting is part of what I've already expressed: it's an amazing avenue for self-expression and a way to channel your emotions. And that's really important to have something you can dedicate your time to and focus on after a traumatic event. I for one, really leaned into that. My speech category is called program oral interpretation – or POI - and I have been struggling to find a topic all year - pre shooting. But then afterwards it was so clear to me that this needed to be my topic, so that's what I did, and it was incredibly healing and good for me. It was amazing to express my thoughts and process how I was dealing with it as I put it together and practiced it and performed it. So, all in all, debate is such an amazing activity and I wish more people were a part of it. I genuinely believe that there is a category and something for everyone, and I am so thankful for it. I'm also really happy that I got to pull these people together and share and document their experience as well. Thank you.