The John R. Park Debate Society has situated high school outreach as a key element of our program because we are committed to the transformational educational outcomes created through forensics participation. According to a recent study by the National Association of Urban Debate Leagues (urbandebate.org), a leading high school debate outreach organization, training in forensics supports a range of benefits for students. Among their findings, they conclude that students who debate in high school:

- Are 70% more likely to graduate than their non-debating peers
- Are 3 times less likely to drop out than their non-debating peers
- Are 70% more likely to reach the ACT CollegeReady reading benchmark
- Score 25% higher on college-level literacy tests
- Are likely to attend a four year college or university (75% of debate participants attend a four-year institution of higher education)

Similarly, other research by Dr. Gordon Mitchell, Director of Forensics at the University of Pittsburgh, concludes that debate provides a pivotal means through which students: gain confidence in their ability to participate as active, civic-minded citizens; learn the principles of open and fair debate that are critical to a healthy democracy; and, develop the abilities to evaluate political discourse encountered in everyday life. And, the National Forensics League confirms the role of debate in training effective political leaders, noting that a majority of members of U.S. Congress are former participants in forensics.

2. **High School Outreach Program Overview**

Our high school outreach program includes several components aimed at providing a comprehensive set of supports for the Utah high school speech and debate community. Among the services we offer are:
A. Coaching & Judging

Each year we provide volunteer coaching and judging for local high schools and the tournaments they attend. This service is valuable to many individual schools and to the larger high school forensics community. Schools with newer forensics programs often do not have experienced teachers or forensics alumni from which to recruit judges. Schools with limited financial resources do not have the funds to pay teachers or judges. And, there are many schools that do not have coaches or judges with experience in all of the events that interest their students. Judging shortages often leave schools unable to attend tournaments or unable to allow their students to compete in a broader range of events. We are able to help address this problem in the high school forensics community by providing free, experienced, and independent judges.

B. Workshops

In October 2013, the John R. Park Debate Society added to its outreach program and efforts by implementing and hosting bi-annual forensics workshops for high school students on the University of Utah's main campus. These workshops were designed to offer access to forensics coaching, evidence and materials, and a supportive environment for underserved students in the local high school forensics community. Undergraduate members of the John R. Park Debate Society engage with service learning in the workshops by coaching, teaching and interacting with the high school students in group and one-on-one contexts. These workshops are held in October and February each year.

C. Beehive Bonanza

The John R. Park Debate Society supports the high school forensics community by hosting an annual high school tournament, the Beehive Bonanza, every October. In October 2014, 36 schools and more than 500 high school students from Utah and four other states attended the tournament. In addition to hosting the tournament, the John R. Park Debate Society awards scholarships to the tournament's top competitors who choose to attend the U and join our program.

D. The Beehive Forensics Institute

Another element of our high school outreach efforts is the Beehive Forensics Institute. In July 2015, the John R. Park Debate Society hosted over 112 high school students and coaches from around the country at the fifth annual BFI. The institute offers an intensive two-week program in which award-winning college and high school coaches provide individualized training for high school debate students. The BFI boasts: a nationally-recognized staff, a low student:faculty ratio (approx. 4:1), University of Utah college credit, a curriculum designed to offer a “signature” college experience, competitive pricing compared to other university-supported camps, a safe, urban environment, and “Olympic” amenities.
E. Scholarships

The John R. Park Debate Society is also proud to support high school students in continuing their education at the University of Utah by coordinating and offering debate scholarships to qualified high school students. Since fall 2010, The John R. Park Debate Society has awarded a combined total of over $100,000 in scholarships and financial support to Utah high school students. This support for local high school students is made possible by the generosity of the University of Utah, the College of Humanities, and the Department of Communication, as well as through support from the John R. Park Debate Society.

3. Summary of the 2015 Beehive Forensics Institute

The 2015 Beehive Forensics Institute hosted 112 participants from July 5-19. The intensive research experience was led by Dr. Michael Middleton from the University of Utah, Jason Jordan from the University of Utah, Professor Nicholas Russell from California State University-Long Beach, Kyle Cheesewright, Director of Forensics from the College of Idaho, and Mario Herrera, coach of the 2011 National Forensics League Student of the Year. Participants produced over 2,500 pages of research during the camp for the upcoming competitive season. Students also received University of Utah college credit and $6250 in competitive scholarships were awarded to top performing students. In 2015, participants from 12 states attended, including Alabama, California, Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Missouri, Ohio, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

A. BFI 2015 Student Feedback

1. Quantitative Feedback:

At the end of the workshop, we asked the students and teachers that participated in the institute to provide feedback for us in the form of an anonymous survey. The responses utilized the following scale:

- unsatisfactory (1)
- below average (2)
- average (3)
- above average (4)
- exceptional (5)

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<td>Rating of Classes</td>
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2. Qualitative Feedback:

The end of the survey was left open for anonymous feedback:

“Attending the BFI was a truly amazing experience for me. As a novice, I was pretty nervous at first, but the instructors and other campers welcomed me. I was able to learn so much, and I know that thanks to the BFI, I’m already ahead if the game. I’m already planning to attend the BFI next year!”

“I loved my time at the BFI. It was an unforgettable experience. I made friends that I feel will last a lifetime. Also, I feel prepared to go back to my team, teach them what I learned, and start the season at an advantage.”

“I liked the individual instruction provided at the BFI as well as the fully critiqued practice rounds.”

“I thought the instructors were exceptional and really helped to improve my debate technique. When I asked questions in lab the instructors responded with concise and coherent responses. The overall experience was extremely educational and vastly helped to improve my debate style.”

“The variety of age, experience, and knowledge of instructors was great.”

B. BFI 2015 Parent Feedback

1. Quantitative Feedback:

At the end of the workshop, we asked the parents of students that participated in the institute to provide feedback for us in the form of an anonymous survey. The responses utilized the following scale:

- unsatisfactory (1)
- below average (2)
- average (3)
- above average (4)
- exceptional (5)

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<td>Interaction with Staff</td>
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<td>Registration Process</td>
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2. Qualitative Feedback:

The end of the survey was left open for anonymous feedback:

“We had originally signed up our kids for one week. They had such a good time and were learning so much, they asked us to extend their camp to two weeks. Amazing!”.

“I appreciate as a parent and coach how BFI took into consideration and modified some of their approaches with our students due to the way debate is conducted in our state. It was greatly appreciated. Thank you!”.

“My son learned more in the two week BFI camp than the entire year in high school debate. His research skills and confidence improved tremendously. It was wonderful to see the excitement on his face and hear what he learned each evening”.

“My son got a lot of individual attention and came away with his completed script for competition. He also got a lot of feedback for his dramatic interp performance so he can finish memorizing and polishing it for competition. He learned a lot and felt like the camp was a very valuable experience overall”.

Great job! My daughter came home inspired and already asking to come back next year!


John R. Park Debate Society students volunteered 300 hours over the 2014-2015 school year. We provided judging at 9 high school tournaments.

Caesar Cicero at Northridge High School
Portia Douglas at Viewmont High School
Silver and Blue at Juan Diego High School
UDCA Speech Arts at Lehi High School
Woods Cross Invitational at Woods Cross High School

We provided volunteer coaching at three local high schools:

Brighton High School
Park City High School
Viewmont High School
5. Summary of the 2014-15 High School Workshops

The October 2014 workshop had 92 high school participants and the February 2015 workshop had 85 high school participants. The high school students represented at the workshops came from a range of local schools (see below).

The workshops were divided into three sections: Cross Examination, Lincoln-Douglas, and Public Forum Debate. Two undergraduate students were assigned to each section along with a member of the John R. Park Debate Society’s coaching staff for support and supervision. The workshops were held after high school hours from 4:00-8:00 pm and each section followed a similar order of events that included a lecture, instructional activities for high school students, a short break for dinner (pizza and drinks were provided free of charge to all workshop participants), and finally a demonstration debate.

American Leadership Academy  Murray High School
Academy for Math Engineering & Science  Park City High School
Brighton High School  North Summit High School
Cottonwood High School  Rowland Hall
Grantsville High School  Roy High School
Hillcrest High School  Syracuse High School
Intermountain Christian School  Viewmont High School
Kearns High School  West Jordan High School
Layton High School

6. Plan for 2015-2016 High School Outreach

The 2015-2016 academic year will mark the 6th year of our high school outreach program. Thus far, our program has focused most of its efforts on providing judging and coaching support for local high school debate programs. As a result of the success of this year’s high school workshops, next year our goal is to continue to offer this support through a fall and spring workshop and to expand the workshops in size and offerings. These workshops will take place each semester on campus and will focus on offering coaching and support to local high school debate students. Teams of our college students will be assigned to conduct various portions of the workshops under the supervision of the High School Outreach Coordinator. These teams will implement curriculum and work with teachers and students to develop debate skills. In addition, the workshops will provide an on-campus experience for high school students and will incorporate the Office of Recruiting to answer questions and assist students aspiring to continue their education at the University of Utah. In addition, we will host for the second year, the Utah Tournament of Excellence (UTE), in April. This
tournament celebrates top competitors from each Utah high school classification (1A-5A) and culminates with awards for the “best of best” in Utah high school forensics.

7 John R. Park Debate Society Contact Information

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