

The John R. Park Debate Society

The John R. Park Debate Society has been a campus organization since 1869. As we prepare to enter our 149th year, we are pleased to share with you our successes over the past year, as well as our plans for the future.

Utah Legislature Recognizes Debate Society's Achievements

The University of Utah's John R. Park Debate Society was recognized, Friday, Feb. 2, with a resolution by the Utah State Legislature. They were honored for their exemplary accomplishments including their advancement of teaching speech and debate, as well as receiving the 2016-17 season-long national championship awarded by the National Parliamentary Debate Association. The debate team had the honor of attending the resolution's passage through the Utah House, followed by the Utah Senate.

In recent years, the team has enjoyed a close partnership with Alliance for a Better Utah co-hosting campaign debates. During the committee hearing, they offered their strong support of the resolution.

"I have had the great pleasure of working closely with the John R. Park Debate Society, its director Michael Middleton, and many of its members over the past two years," said Chase Thomas, policy and advocacy counsel for Alliance for a Better Utah. "Our two organizations have come together to host many debates, and the way in which they organize and conduct our political debates with professionalism, fairness, and, perhaps most importantly, with impartiality, is not lost on those who participate. The involvement of the debate society has made these events not only a useful platform for the candidates, but also an invaluable resource for the public to become engaged in the democratic process."



Members of the 2017-2018 John R. Park Debate Society at Utah State Legislature in February 2018.

If you would like to make a contribution to the John R. Park Debate Society's Scholarship Fund or if you would like to learn about other ways to support the team, contact our Director of Forensics, Dr. Michael Middleton, by email (m.middleton@utah.edu).

BECOME A FRIEND OF UTAH FORENSICS! Friends of Forensics are supporters from throughout the community whose contributions provide vital support for public events, high school outreach, and other programs sponsored by the JRP. In addition to offering this support, friends of the team receive an annual newsletter updating them on the team's accomplishments during the year and upcoming plans. We hope that you will support the team monetarily or, if that's not an option for you, we would be delighted to talk about other ways of supporting the team. We hope that you will join this community of Utah Forensics supporters. **To join, email your name and address to at m.middleton@utah.edu.**

Debate Society Co-Hosts Congressional Campaign Debate

The ABU Education Fund and the University of Utah's John R. Park Debate Society hosted a debate for the special election in Utah's 3rd Congressional District to fill the seat vacated by the resignation of Jason Chaffetz.

"We [were] excited to once again...partne[r] with the Debate Society to hold a debate for this historic special election," said Josh Kanter, board chair for the ABU Education Fund. "It is vital that voters have as many opportunities as possible to make an informed decision before voting to send someone to be their representative in Congress. This debate...serve[d] an invaluable role in supplying that information to constituents in the 3rd District."

The ABU Education Fund and the John R. Park Debate Society have a history of co-hosting debates. Every two years, they partner for a series of state legislative debates, holding three such debates last year, in addition to a debate between two candidates running for a spot on the Utah State Board of Education.



Members of the Debate Society Review Rules and Questions before the Debate

John R. Park Debate Society Wins Two International Championships

The John R. Park Debate Society traveled to Montreal, Canada on March 12-14, 2018 to participate in the International Forensics Association Annual Tournament & Conference. In the U's inaugural trip to the tournament, the team placed fourth in tournament sweepstakes. In addition, the Debate Society placed in the top five in debate. Rounding out the performance, Shad Wojciechowski won the international championship in After-Dinner Speaking. Teammate Christopher de Freitas won the international championship in Impromptu Speaking. The team will aim to improve on these results in 2019 when it attends the tournament to be held in Berlin.



Shad Wojciechowski, 2018 IFA After-Dinner Speaking Champion



Chris de Freitas, 2018 IFA Impromptu Speaking Champion
