



ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024

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2023-2024 Team Roster

Trista Bonnifield	Raquel Matias
Logan Clarke	Aether Mershon
Bronte Enyart-Martinez	Samiya Osman
Allison Gelster	Amelia Reid
James Gully	Aaron Rojas
Nedoh Gyi	Levi Schewe
Olivia Hernandez	Evelyn Schumacher
Josephine Jarwolo	Katrina Timm
Jocelyn Kletzien	Kailey Twiest
Taytum Klink	Jenna Zeug



These are the students who have engaged with the coaching staff and used team resources to further the goals of SMSU Forensics. As with many organizations, some members are more active than others.

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide a permanent record of the activities and performances of the SMSU Forensic Team during the 2022-2023 academic year. This report also serves as means of informing others of the program's activities throughout the year. The Forensics program serves SMSU students in a wide variety of ways. Specifically, the program has three developmental goal areas: academic, social, and personal.

Academically, forensic participation is a requirement of students pursuing the Communication Studies and Communication Education majors. Other students desire forensic activities on their transcript to show prospective employers that they have developed and honed their communication skills. Forensic participation provides students with a rich educational experience that give individuals skills they can use for a lifetime.

Forensics also fulfills a social function as it is a recognized SMSU student club/organization. Students come together to talk about new literature and/or public speaking topics that they are considering using in competition. They encourage one another for upcoming tournaments or congratulate each other on past tournament performances. Students also engage in community service projects and participate in local events. The students support each other and form friendships that can last a lifetime. Team members also have an opportunity to polish their leadership skills by serving as officers of the organization. Organizational activities such as holiday parties, fundraisers, high school and collegiate tournaments, community service projects and showcase performances help to fulfill the social function of the Forensics Team.



Personal developmental goals are also fulfilled through Forensic involvement. The poise and confidence gained are irreplaceable, as are the reasoning, listening, researching, and speaking skills one acquires in Forensics. An integration of these areas-academic, social, and personal-is a valuable goal of any club or organization. The SMSU Forensics Team takes pride in knowing that members have the opportunity to make strides in each of these areas.

The Forensics Team has goals, not only in educating the students of SMSU, but also in preparing them for the “real world.” Through the SMSU Forensics program, students:

- (1) develop knowledge of logic and reasoning skills.
- (2) learn the skills required to deliver an effective presentation or speech.
- (3) learn to weigh two sides of an argument objectively and sensibly.
- (4) learn to build poise and confidence, especially in front of large groups.
- (5) become exposed to intercollegiate speech and debate tournaments.
- (6) overcome any communication obstacles.
- (7) share with others what they have in common-interest in communication.
- (8) learn to research topics in depth.
- (9) learn to listen critically.
- (10) learn to form personal opinions and logical conclusions more readily.
- (11) increase their efficiency in communication.

Students have the opportunity to become involved in all areas of competitive discourse: Debate, prose, poetry, program oral interpretation, drama, dramatic duo interpretation, persuasive speaking, extemporaneous speaking, impromptu speaking, communication analysis, after-dinner speaking, and informative speaking. Any SMSU student, regardless of previous experience, can take part in forensic activities. Students may receive academic credit.

The forensics program is funded by the Student Activity Fee Allocation Committee (SAFAC). These funds supplement the fundraising done by the team and are used to offset the cost of travel, registration fees, supplies and materials.

Competition Events

After Dinner Speaking: An original humorous speech by the student, designed to exhibit sound speech composition, thematic coherence, direct communicative public speaking skills, and good taste. The speech should not resemble a night club act, an impersonation, or a comic monologue. Audio-visual aids may or may not be used to supplement and reinforce the message. Notes are permitted. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes.

Communication Analysis: An original speech by the student designed to offer an explanation and/or evaluation of a communication event, such as a speech, speaker, movement, poem, poster, campaign, etc., through the use of theatrical principles. Audio-visual aids may or may not be used to supplement and reinforce the message. Notes are permitted. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes.

Duo Interpretation: A cutting from one or more texts of literary merit, humorous or serious, involving the portrayal of two or more characters presented by two individuals. The material may be drawn from any genre of literature. This is not an acting event; thus, no costumes, props, lighting, etc, are to be used. Presentation is from the manuscript and the focus should be off-stage and not to each other. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes including introduction.

Dramatic Interpretation: A cutting that represents one or more characters from a play or plays of literary merit. The focus of this event is on the development of characterization. This material may be drawn from stage, screen or radio. Use of manuscript is required. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes including introduction.

Extemporaneous Speaking: Contestants will be given three topics in the general area of current events, will choose one, and will have 30 minutes to prepare a speech. Maximum time limit for the speech is 7 minutes. Notes are permitted. Students will speak in listed order. Posting of topics will be staggered.

Impromptu Speaking: An impromptu speech, serious in nature, with topic selection varied round by round, section by section. Topics will be of a proverb nature. Speakers will have a total of 7 minutes and may use the time at their own discretion. Notes are permitted. Each speaker in a given section will have the same topic.



Informative Speaking: An original, factual speech by the student on a realistic subject to fulfill the general aim to inform the audience. Visuals may or may not be used to supplement and reinforce the message. Multiple sources should be used and cited in the development of the speech. Notes are permitted. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes.

Parliamentary Debate: Parliamentary Debate is a formal contest of advocacy which theoretically occurs in a House of Parliament. Participants are the Government and Opposition teams, and the moderator is Madam or Mister Speaker of the House. A motion or resolution is a sentence or phrase which provides the subject of debate. The Government Team has a limited amount of time, usually fifteen minutes, to prepare a case centered around this topic. Published materials, or other resources for the debater's use in the round, may not be brought into the debating chambers.

Persuasive Speaking: An original speech by the student designed to inspire, reinforce, or change the beliefs, attitudes, values, or actions of the audience. Multiple sources should be used and cited in the development of the speech. Notes are permitted. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes.

Poetry Interpretation: A selection or selections of poetry of literary merit, which may be drawn from more than one source. A primary focus of this event should be on the development of language. Play cuttings and prose works are prohibited. Use of manuscript is required. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes including introduction.



Program Oral Interpretation: A program of thematically-linked selections of literary merit, chosen from two or three recognized genres of competitive interpretation (prose/poetry/drama). A primary focus of this event should be on the development of the theme through the use of narrative/story, language, and/or characterization. A substantial portion of the total time must be devoted to each of the genres used in the program. Different genre means the material must appear in separate pieces of literature (e.g., A poem included in a short story that appears only in that short story does not constitute a poetry genre). Only one selection may be original. Use of manuscript is required. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes including introduction.

Prose Interpretation: An original or selections of prose material of literary merit, which may be drawn from more than one source. Focus of this event is on the development of the narrative/story. Play cuttings and poetry are prohibited. Use of manuscript is required. Maximum time is 10 minutes including introduction.

Coaches

The forensic team is coached and managed by the Director of Forensics, Ben Walker and Assistant Director of Forensics, Julie Walker. This was Professor Ben Walker's 8th year as Director of Forensics. This was also Professor Julie Walker's 8th year as the full-time ADOF. Both Professor Ben Walker and Professor Julie Walker are full-time faculty members within the Communication Studies Program.



As coaches, they work with students individually to prepare for intercollegiate competitions and travel with the team to contests. While at contests, in addition to supervising students on the team, they serve as adjudicators of competitors from other schools. The coaching staff is also responsible for managing the travel arrangements of the team, accounts, team activities, hosting tournaments, fundraisers and the co-curricular aspects of the team.

Season Highlights

The competitive season for college speech runs the entire academic year, with competitions starting in early October and finishing in March. SMSU Forensics had *another* fantastic year. Here are some of the competitive highlights from the season:

- **At the Minnesota State Championship (@ Concordia College)...**
 - Freshmen Amelia Reid and Katrina Timm take 5th in Duo Interpretation
 - SMSU Forensics places 3nd in the Limited Entry State Championship
- **At the International Forensics Association Championship (in Dublin, Ireland)...**
 - Junior Nedoh Gyi as a Semi-Finalist in Dramatic Interpretation
- **At the Asynchronous Speech Championship...**
 - Freshman Jocelyn Kletzien was a Quarter-Finalist in After Dinner Speaking
 - Junior Allison Gelster was a Novice Finalist in Poetry Interpretation
 - SMSU Forensics places 9th in the Limited Entry Team Sweepstakes



Campus and Community Events

This year, beyond the many different tournaments the students competed in across two semesters and the activity fairs, team meetings, and parties attended, forensics also organized, contributed, and/or participated in the following events:

- **High School Workshop**
For the second time, we hosted a speech workshop for high school students to get ready for their season. Area coaches and students deeply appreciated the event on January 6th 2024. We helped coach high school speech students and tried to show them a good time on campus.
- **Drag Show**
The LGBTQ+ Club held a Drag Show on campus on February 3rd 2024. Several team members attended and assisted with this event. We also assisted with some printing costs and storage space for the event.
- **Poetry Out Loud**
The team provided space and judges for the regional Poetry Out Loud competition on February 12th 2024.
- **Individual Student Projects**
Our team has resources that many students turn to for help. Several students this year borrowed team equipment for their own use on personal projects including: microphones, presentation clickers, visual aid stands, camera tripods, and our wheelchair.

