

**February 11, 2008**

**MSU Debaters take home Big Ten Debate title in Evanston, IL**

The Midwest's finest debate programs gathered in Evanston, Illinois the last weekend of January for the Owen L. Coon "Big Ten" Debate Championships. Michigan State outpaced the host -- Northwestern University -- to receive top honors in the Big Ten. The University of Minnesota placed third.

In order to advance to the elimination round sequence, a two-person team had to win at least four of their seven preliminary debates. Michigan State entered four teams, all of which advanced to the elimination rounds. Three of these teams made it to the "final four" -- capping off a dominant performance by the Spartans.

After seniors **Abby Schirmer (IR, senior)** and **Jeremy Hammond (IR, senior)** defeated Northwestern on a 3-0 decision, the Spartans were the last Big Ten School standing.

Also advancing to the "final four" were **Ben Mehling (JMC, sophomore)** and **Sam Shore (IR, junior)** as well as **Tom Gliniecki (JMC, sophomore)** and **Patrick Klida (CCP, sophomore)**. Impressively, both of these teams won six of their seven preliminary debates.

**Katie Gjerpen (IR, sophomore)** and **Katie Klante (JMC, sophomore)** also advanced to the elimination rounds -- bowing-out in the quarterfinals.

"Every National Champion from 2001 through 2006 came from a Big Ten University", said Head Debate Coach Will Repko, "so how we measure-up against Big Ten competition is especially important. Having three teams in the final four is more than we could have anticipated. We were particularly impressed with the results of the younger MSU debaters. This bodes well for the future of the program."

While the tournament provides special recognition for the Big Ten programs, it also allows regional competitors from non-conference schools to participate. Accordingly, the MSU team of Gliniecki and Klida faced off against Wayne State University in the final debate, where they were defeated on a 2-1 decision.

***For More Information on the Debate Team Contact:***

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