

March 20, 2022



SMU Wins First International Title in Debate

SMU senior political science and finance major, Ryan Booth of Alamo, California won the *International Public Debate Association* Championship at the *32nd International Forensics Association tournament* held March 15 & 16. The tournament was scheduled originally to be in Mexico City before being moved online one month ago. Booth defeated seven opponents on his way to the championship. In the final round, he defeated a debater from Dordt University on the resolution— *Resolved: Russia should be removed from the United Nations Security Council*. Booth was negative and won on a 3-0 decision. 24 colleges and universities competed in parliamentary and international debate formats as well as individual interpretation of literature, limited preparation, and platform speaking events. The growing size of the tournament featuring 4 new virtual events designed to promote further access for competitors from around the world was highlighted as a positive signal of increasing engagement in international dialogue during IFA President Dr. Nicholas Butler's closing remarks at the awards ceremony held on Tuesday evening. London hosted the inaugural International Forensics Association Tournament in 1991 and Japan is scheduled to host the 33rd annual tournament in March 2023. The competition is open to undergraduate students in good standing from around the world. Some of the competing universities included: University of Washington, Oregon State University, Texas Southern University, University of Utah, University of North Texas, Cal-State Fullerton, and the University of Illinois at Chicago. Oregon State University was the defending IPDA international champion and has won the international title twice in the past five years. IPDA debate had 38 competitors and was the largest of more than a dozen speech and debate events offered at the tournament.

All four of SMU's debaters including Emma Waite, Hailey Hazen, and Eric Ryan advanced to the sweet 16 of octafinal debates. Eric Ryan was selected by judges to be the third best speaker at the tournament. Emma Waite was undefeated in the preliminary rounds— including a fourth round win against the second place debater from Dordt University. All four SMU debaters finished among the top 15 speakers in the tournament. SMU debaters won 75% of their preliminary debate rounds— their highest win/loss percentage of the season.

This is the first time SMU has won an international title in speech or debate competition. SMU took third place in IPDA debate in Montreal in 2018. Next year's IFA tournament will be in Tokyo, Japan. Yale and Vanderbilt universities competed at IFA in 2021. Dr. Voth directed 15 international title winners between 1995 and 2000 while the Director of Debate and Speech at Miami University. Those past winners competed in events such as parliamentary debate, impromptu speaking, after dinner speaking, informative speaking, overall team sweepstakes, prose, and poetry.

SMU debaters were Ryan Booth, Hailey Hazen, Eric Ryan, and Emma Waite.

SMU judges and coaches were Price Morgan, Brandt Vernon and director, Dr. Ben Voth.

Full results of the championships awarded at this tournament and past IFA tournaments can be seen at:

*In group photo left to right:
Voth, Booth, Morgan, Ryan, Hazen, Simes, Waite*

March 20, 2022

<https://s3.us-west-1.amazonaws.com/files2.forensicstournament.net/tournamentdocs/3190-IFA%20Archive.pdf>

Student details:

Booth, Alamo, California, Senior, Political Science and Finance

Hazen, Colleyville, Texas, Sophomore, History

Eric Ryan, Plano, Texas, Freshman, Finance, Journalism, Data Science

Waite, Colleyville, Junior, Mechanical Engineering with a biomedical specialization



*In group photo left to right:
Voth, Booth, Morgan, Ryan, Hazen, Simes, Waite*