



Western Kentucky University

UA12 Student Affairs

Series 2 Student Activities, Organizations & Leadership Office

Subseries 28 Forensics Team

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Administrative History: The debate team was known at various times as the Western Debaters, Debate Squad, Intercollegiate Debate Team, Western Debate Association/Associates, Forensic Union, and the William E. Bivin Forensic Society. Since 2006, it has been the WKU Forensic Team.

Competitive debate began for Western at the precursor institution, Ogden College, in the 1870s. In 1919, the Congress Debating Club was established at the Western Kentucky Normal School. Debate and oratorical skills were practiced at CDC meetings and members often participated in competitions as individuals and as part of a debate team. During World War II, scarce resources ended debating for a while, but returned in the late 1940s. Women had their own debating clubs (ex. Girls Debating Club, formed 1928) and contests (sponsored by the AAUW and SNEA), but were not prominent in debate competition in the 1930s and 1940s. They were allowed to join the Congress Debating Club and returned to competitive debate in about 1950.

The debate team was administered by the English department until Speech and Theatre was separated into a new department in 1968 and became its new home. WKU first awarded debate scholarships in 1963. Speech and Theatre became Communication and Theatre in 1976.

The forensics program was once again discontinued in the early 1980s, but was reestablished in December 1987 by the Regents as the William E. Bivin Forensic Society and was the "responsibility of the Department of Communication and Broadcasting." Forensics stayed with Communication when Broadcasting was moved to the School of Journalism & Broadcasting in 1999.

After a decade of advocacy, Judy Woodring was able to convince the administration that a forensic team was a good investment. Between 1999 and 2003, she was able to increase the coaching staff and establish a more professionalized approach to forensic competition. Deadlines for writing drafts of speeches and performance of a piece for a coach before being scheduled to compete are two examples.

In 2004, the forensics program established the Elizabeth McWhorter Harden Forensics Alumni Association, named after a 1956 graduate, former debate team member, and first woman president of the Congress Debating Club. In 2008, Forensics was separated from Communication and now reports directly to the office of the Provost.

The WKU Forensics Team is unique among its competitors because it competes successfully in both speech (dubbed individual events) and debate.

"Our program has won more national forensics titles in the last ten years than any other team in the country. WKU is the only team to win the American Forensic Association national title, National Forensic Association national title, NFA debate national title and the International Forensic Association title all in the same year, a benchmark the team has set six times." Ganer Newman, 2015, <https://www.wku.edu/forensics/>

Sources:

Board of Regents meeting minutes, December 1987

Chandler, Chris, Email re: Forensic Team Context Statement, 1/15/2016

Wilson, George, Western Debate as Old as the Hill, CHH 04/21/1965

WKU Speech Program Starts Alumni Group, PCDN 07/14/2004

Wood, Willson, History of the English Department 1907-1972, UA68/6/1

Description: Records created by and about the forensics / debate team.

Dates: 2008-present

Extent: 7 folders, oversize, digital files

Subject Analytics:

Forensic orations.

Forensics (Public speaking)

Forensics Team (WKU)

Western Kentucky University

Digital Commons:

Communication

Rhetoric

Speech and Rhetorical Studies

Accession Information: These records transferred to WKU Archives upon its creation.

Access Restrictions: none

Allied Materials:

[UA1C11/93 Forensics Team Photo Collection](#)

[UA68/3/2 Communication Student Organizations](#)

Preferred Citation: UA12/2/28, WKU Archives, Bowling Green, Kentucky, USA.

Processing Information: Records processed and collection inventory created 2019, revised 2022.

Finding Aid Report

06/27/2022

UA12.2.28	Records	Date
Level	Subseries	Linked toUA12.2
Title	UA12 Student Affairs	
Collection	Series 2 Student Activities, Organizations & Leadership Office	
Scope & Content	Subseries 28 Forensics Team	
	WKU Archives	
	Records created by and about the forensics / debate team.	

Container List

Container	Folder	Creator	Date	Title
Box 3	1	Forensics Team (WKU)	2003, 2011, 2016	Proclamations and Awards
Description	Tribute to Western Kentucky University's William E. Bivin Forensic Society, Congressional Record, 5/7/2003 Proclamation in honor of the WKU Forensics Team from the Kentucky State Senate, 2011 WKU Forensics Celebration (list), 11/14/2016			Subjects Awards
Box 3	2	Forensics Team (WKU)	1921-2016	Correspondence and Clippings
Description	AAUW Oratorical Contest Asbury College Au, Elizabeth Austin Peay State University Berea College Bivin, William Capps, Randall Chandler, Chris. Email re: Forensic Team, 1/15/2016 Congress Debating Club Corum, Jenny Courtney, Ashley Denhardt, Robert Drake University Eastern Kentucky University Forensics Team (WKU) Forsythe, Earl Harden, Elizabeth. Letter to Gary Ransdell re: Her Memory Book, ca. 2005 Harvard Debate Hoover, Judith Howell, Ryan International Forensics Association Championship Tournament Jenkins, William. Letter to Judy Woodring re: Congress Debating Club members, nd Kentucky Wesleyan University Middle Tennessee State University Miller, Russell Morehead State University Murray State University Nave, Lindsey Parsley, Coy Perry, Joelle Romerhausen, Nick			Subjects Alumni & alumnae Biography Clippings Correspondence Debates Forensic orations. Memory Public speaking Reminiscing Scrapbooks Tournaments Radio broadcasting

Rudloff, Bill
 Salomon, Louis
 Silvera, Evelio
 Taylor, Richard
 Transylvania University
 Union University
 University of Kentucky
 University of Louisville
 Western Michigan State Teachers College
 William E. Bivin Forensic Society
 Woodring, Judy

Box 3	3	Forensics Team (WKU)	1991	Administration
Description	Fund Administration Agreement of the J. Richard Oexmannn Forensics Award, 1991			Subjects Alumni & alumnae Gifts
	Scholarships			
Box 3	4	Forensics Team (WKU)	1972, 1991-1994	Tournaments & Rankings
Description	Appalachian Winter Classic, January 1993, January 1994			Subjects Debates Forensic orations. Programs Schedules (Time plans) Student works Tournaments
	Barbee, Trey Black, Adam Butler, Greg Capps, Randall Cecil, Eric Christian, Christie Class of 1994 (WKU) Crabtree, Janay Cross Examination Debate Association Davis, Julie Eaton, Steve Fleming, Chris Gibson, Steve Governor's Classic Tournament, October 1993 Hollon, Cory Interstate Oratorical Association, May 1972 Jones, Melony Kendall, Tojuana Kentucky Forensic Association State Championships, February 1993 Mattingly, Rob National Forensic Association National Championships, April 1994 Otterbein Debate Tournament, October 1991, January 1993 Otterbein Tournament, January 1993 Racer Classic Tournament, February 1993 Roberts, Chris Snodgrass, Amy Spears, Andy Stewart, Amy Thompson, Bill Trippel, Andrew Walsh, Chris Whitaker, Samantha William E. Bivin Forensic Society Woodring, Judy Woods, Matt Zorn, Woody			

Box 3	5	Forensics Team (WKU)	1991, 1993, 2015-2016	Events	
Description	3rd Annual Eastern CEDA Debate Workshop, July 1993 Ambam, Andrea As We Make History: Black in America Today: A Black History Performance Symposium, 2/24/2016 Badjie, Haddy Black Excellence Exposition, 2/28/2017 Black History Month Bowling Green Black Lives Matter Brown, Damon Chandler, Chris Cross Examination Debate Association Davis, Lyric English, Kayla Essence in Harmony Green, Durwan McLarty, Tiffany O'Connor, Brent Phi Alpha Phi Fraternity Render, Brandon Wasuge, Asha WKU Invitational Speech and Debate Tournament, November 1991 (high school, list) William E. Bivin Forensic Society Woodring, Judy			Subjects	African Americans Blacks Debates Forensic orations. Performances Programs Student works Tournaments

Box 3	6	Forensics Team (WKU)	2012-2017	Events - Showcase	
Description	Acosta, Camille Allen, Celena Allseits, Mark Anderson, Brian Armstrong, Megan Badjie, Haddy Brazier, Sarah Burke, Murphy Champagne, Claire Chandler, Chris Coaches and Staff (list) Collins, Emma Corum, John Courtney, Liz Covert, Marshall Cox, Meg Dawkins, Janniqua Devia-Allen, Gabriella Dowty, Ian Dukes, Nefertiti Elliott, Alexis Evans, Carolyn Fraser, Ellis Garber, Ashton Gilyard, Nick Green, Durwan Groves, Austin Heyne, Richard Jones, Jasmine McLarty, Tiffany Medero, Kristina Membership (list) Milby, Curtis Moore, Sam Murdock, Frank			Subjects	Charity Debates Forensic orations. History Performances Showcases Speeches, addresses, etc.

Nellans, Lily
 Newberry, Jamaque
 Nguyen, Mario
 O'Connor, Brent
 Orłowski, Spencer
 Pratt, Elle
 Prochazka, Tyler
 Reynolds, John
 Rife, Tyler
 Roberts, Ray
 Rodriguez, Justin
 Rung, Bailey
 Settles, Paige
 Sledge, Lauren
 Taylor, Susan
 Thomas, Elijah
 White, Lindsey
 Williams, Lataya
 Wilson, Darius
 Wisenden, Matt
 WKU Forensics Showcase
 Wozencraft, Alex

Box 3	7	Forensics Team (WKU)	2011-2017	Events - Banquet
Description	Acosta, Camille Coaching Staff (list) Collins, Emma Dailey, Tyler Dukes, Nefertiti Furgerson, Jessica Glaser, Dan Groves, Austin Knapp, Blake Lowry, Dawn Lux, Jace Mann, Evan Membership (list) Newberry, Jamaque Newman, Ganer Nguyen, Mario O'Conner, Brent Peckham, Seth Rainey, Todd Ransdell, Gary Robin, Ben Waid, Amanda Whittlely, Robert			Subjects Banquets Forensic orations. Performances Speeches, addresses, etc. Programs
CD Box 3	CD1027-CD1031	Forensics Team (WKU)	2003-2008	Film/Video/Audio File
Description	DVD - 5 It Took More Than Talent . . . , 2006 CD1029 - https://youtu.be/DbTRMU0A2nk WBKO. WKU Forensics Team, 5/6/2007 CD1031 - for viewing only WKU Forensics: Banquet Video, 2007 CD1028 - https://youtu.be/-Hs35iXebJ4 WKU Forensics Presents, 2003 CD1030 - https://youtu.be/2EnQXNT4o2Q WKU Forensics: Welcome to the Jungle, 2008 CD1027 - https://youtu.be/Q8sHwqanv6l			Subjects Photographs Video recording

OS Box 121	18	Forensics Team (WKU)	2015-2016	Posters
Description	Chandler, Chris Green, Durwan Williams, Lataya WKU Forensics Showcase			Subjects Charity Debates Forensic orations. Performances Posters Showcases Speeches, addresses, etc.
OS Box 122		Forensics Team (WKU)	2000	Film/Video/Audio File
Description	VHS Tapes - 2 digitized Amy Jones, poetry interpretation, nd, m1284.mp4 - https://youtu.be/ZFdj1xVLK1M Promotional video - m1283.mp4 - https://youtu.be/RLYtko8aw0 Allen, John Barnett, Stephen Blaser, Keith Chamberlin, Andrew Dickerson, Shadana Eubank, Miranda Forensics Team (WKU) Gerbig, Matt Jones, Amy Knuckles, Shellei Lux, Jace Ponananta, Alisa Richardson, Kerri Shirley, Wesley Wilkins, David Wininger, Phillip			Subjects Awards Trophies Debates Speeches, addresses, etc. Forensic orations. Public speaking