Speech and Debate club designs new coaching system for members

Speech and Debate plans to begin implementing the system for its student speakers starting this school year.

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STAFF WRITER

After being student-ran for 10 years, Troy Speech and Debate club developed a new coaching system for its members this school year.

Speech and Debate is a student-led club that aims to help students train their leadership and public speaking skills. The club is open to all Warriors regardless of previous experience. New club members are trained by experienced members in events such as parliamentary, impromptu and platform.

Speech and Debate Club Vice President of External Affairs Reva Sobti and Senior President Noemi Maciel partnered with Advantage Communications this summer. Advantage Communications is an organization that partners with schools across the nation to provide speech and debate programs with no extra cost to its students. The programs include hosting tournaments for elementary and middle schoolers, which require volunteer judges.

According to Sobti, Advantage Communications founded the Alumni Association, a program made available to experienced speech and debate students and alumni, in order to provide judges for its tournaments.

"In this program, students can volunteer to judge elementary or middle school competitions in exchange for group sessions with professional coaches from Advantage Communications, volunteer hours and National Speech and Debate Association points," Sobti said. "These points are earned through competitions and service activities. [Members] need enough of them to qualify for NSDA qualifier tournaments, so [speakers] can go to Nationals."

Sobti first reached out to Advantage Communications to discuss the plan in March 2024. Sobti and Advantage Communications held the first trial run on August 30, where Warriors got their first coaching session if they signed up to judge a tournament in the near future.

For every five rounds a Warrior judges, they will receive 45 minutes of coaching. The NSDA points a student receives will be discussed with students based on the situation. For now, members can sign up for Saturday coaching, Sobti said.



PHOTO BY AIDEN CHONG

LIVELY LEADERSHIP: *Warrior Speech and Debate Junior President Avni Patil speaks to club members during the first practice of the year.*

"There are many dates upcoming in the future," Sobti said. "The first 2024 semester will be a trial run to see how well the program works, and next semester the Speech and Debate club can improve and implement the program into the official curriculum."

The Alumni Association is available to everyone who is interested in it. While experienced speakers may find judging easier as they are more familiar with competing in tournaments, anyone who wants coaching can judge, Maciel said.

"The coaches will be doing sessions and they will be helping anyone of any [level of] experience," Maciel said. "We will teach you everything you need to know, and the new coaches will give new advice and expertise which will be beneficial to everyone."

Alumni Association aims to help Warriors receive feedback for their work at no extra cost. In the future, Warrior Speech and Debate would like to get personal professional coaching for the entire team without having to volunteer, Sobti said.

"[The program] will create a sense of community and add more support for members of the club," Sobti said. "If we have some outside help from experts who have a lot of experience in coaching and managing school speech and debate programs, it will allow both incoming and returning students to feel more confident going into the club."