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College of Western Idaho Wins Back-to-Back National Speech and Debate Titles *CWI's Ariel Kizer Led the Team with Three Individual Awards at the National Tournament*



Overland Park, Kan. – The College of Western Idaho (CWI) Speech and Debate team claimed the National Championship once again, after winning the Community College Title at the Pi Kappa Delta National Comprehensive Tournament hosted by Longview Community College in Overland Park, Kan. this past weekend (March 16-18).

CWI continued its unprecedented rise to the top of the national speech and debate ranks by taking top community college honors at the national tournament for the second consecutive year.

"I think it is still surreal for all of us," said CWI Speech and Debate co-head coach, Michelle Bennett. "Because we are still such a young program, nobody would have expected us to be where we are today."

CWI sent 27 students to take part in the national tournament, which featured over 2000 competitors from 70 different colleges and universities. For each individual event, CWI students went head-to-head with the entire field of competitors. Individual results were then tallied to determine the top community college team honor.

CWI received a big boost in the team rankings thanks to an impressive showing from CWI Pi Kappa Delta Chapter President, Ariel Kizer, who won three different awards by tournament's end. Kizer, a Kansas City, Kan. native, was able to make the most of her return home with a runner-up finish in the individual debate competition. She followed that up with semifinalist honors in both Program Oral Interpretation and Dramatic Interpretation.

"It was a lot of fun for me competing in my home city," Kizer said. "I had only placed in individual debate one time

before this weekend, however, so I did not have high expectations for the competition. Placing second in the entire tournament was really incredible.”

In total, CWI had six different students reach the quarterfinals or better in their respective events:

Ariel Kizer – Second-Place IPDA Debate, Semifinalist Program Oral Interpretation, Semifinalist Dramatic Interpretation

Mark Galaviz – Excellent Program Oral Interpretation

Kelsey Dillon – Semifinalist After Dinner Speaking

Rachel Turner – Semifinalist IPDA Debate

Liam London – Quarterfinalist IPDA Debate

Amber Huffman – Quarterfinalist IPDA Debate

On the heels of celebrating the second national title, co-head coach Johnny Rowing says the team is already turning its attention on the future.

“I already have students that are working on briefs and speeches for next year because they are so excited to keep this momentum going,” Rowing said. “They are already talking three-peat – that in itself is inspiring.”

The CWI Speech and Debate team will have one more opportunity this spring to test their skills against the nation’s elite as the group will send seven students to compete in the National Individual Events Tournament hosted by Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas, April 6-10.

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About the College of Western Idaho:

The College of Western Idaho is a comprehensive community college fostering student development academically, as well as occupationally. CWI has seven campus locations throughout Southwest Idaho providing higher education and 21st Century technical skills acquisition. The college is dedicated to improving the community's economic well-being by responding with highly-educated and productive graduates. The foundation for the area's only community college was created by a supermajority of voters in Ada and Canyon counties on May 22, 2007. For more information, visit www.cwidaho.cc or call (208) 562-3000.

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