



## *Exciting New Changes at the WDI*

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The Women's Debate Institute is now tuition free! Our robust community is dedicated to the education of young women. Each summer we host a debate institute for high school girls from around the country. Our four day camp increases the number of girls involved in debate, creates an environment that fosters community, and encourages young women to attend college. We believe in our program and never want cost to be a barrier to attendance. Thus, the WDI is extremely excited to announce a new format for 2012— applications for admission and no tuition. Since its inception, any student interested in attending

the WDI could register, pay the tuition, and attend the camp. In order to improve the quality of instruction, we are adopting a different format for 2012. Students interested in attending the WDI will need to apply and all students selected will be invited to attend tuition-free. Students will be responsible for their own travel cost to and from camp although scholarships to assist with the costs of travel are available for students with a demonstrated financial need. For application materials, more information, or to donate student scholarship visit us at <http://womensdebateinstitute.org/>



*Faculty Members Linda Collier & Beth Mendenhall scrapbook their names onto the WDI map*

### What's New

- WDI is tuition free
- WDI student Sonia Larbi makes the USA World Debate Team
- Universities create scholarships for WDI students
- Congratulations to faculty alumni Greta Stahl on her engagement

## *A Note from Leah Castella - Board Co-Chair*

The WDI is about debate, but it's not just about the winning rounds and cutting cards part of debate. It's about celebrating and cultivating in young women the traits that brought them to debate in the first place. Debate gives you a voice. It taught me to use that voice, and that it was okay to be a confident, opinionated, outspoken woman. These are traits that I value in myself, and I'm lucky enough to have

colleagues and friends who value those traits in me. But every day, I go out into the world and encounter people who don't value these traits in women. Those people think I'm overconfident and aggressive and they believe that those traits are unbecoming in a woman. Sometimes, these attitudes can be exhausting and discouraging. When I am most discouraged, I think about the WDI. At the WDI, being a

confident, opinionated, outspoken woman is the norm, not the exception. The young women who attend the camp are taught by example that they too can, and should, be confident, opinionated, and outspoken. That makes those young women better debaters. More importantly, it shows those young women that there is a whole community of amazing women who, like them, speak their minds.

## Top Universities Support the WDI



Alessandra Torres (L) and Eddie Garza (R) 2011 WDI Scholars

In 2011, some of the most successful universities on the college debate circuit supported the WDI by offering University Scholarships. Big thanks to UC-Berkeley, University of Missouri Kansas City, Wake Forest University, Kansas State University, University of Iowa and James Madison University!! Meet the 2011 scholars on our webpage at <http://womensdebateinstitute.org/2011-wdi-scholars> The mission of the WDI is to increase the number of women

debating in high school and college but we cannot do that without connecting talented young women with college debate teams. Universities sponsor students and support the camp. These donations go directly to the meal and lodging costs of students only – not to overhead, not to staff, not to fundraising. The WDI is a 501(c)3 non-profit, and we are proud that 75% of our annual revenue comes from donations by individuals, universities, and foundations.

Each university sponsor provides a student with an incredible debate experience, is recognized in our promotion materials, gets direct connections to motivated female debaters who would like to debate in college, and benefits from the on-going mission of the WDI – to increase the diversity of the debate community!

For information about the University Scholars Program contact Sarah Glaser at [sarahmglaser@gmail.com](mailto:sarahmglaser@gmail.com)

## WDI Student Sonia Larbi makes the US Debate Team

**WDI student Sonia Larbi will represent the United State at the World Schools Debating Championship, Cape Town, South Africa, January 16-26, 2012**

Longtime supporter of the WDI Kate Shuster selected our camp as one of only a few locations for the United States World Debating Team tryouts. The US National Debate Team, which competes in the World School Debating Championships, is sponsored by the Claremont Colleges. While many girls tried out there were only a few openings and we are

proud to report that WDI students made the US team!! Sonia Larbi will be representing the United States at the World Schools Debating Championship in South Africa. Two other



WDI alumni, Catherine Cho and Miriam Pritchett, earned places on the developmental team and would be strong contenders for the top team in the coming years. We look forward to next years tryouts at WDI 2012.

For more information about the World Debate team contact Kate Shuster @

## Cate Palczewski joins the WDI Board of Directors



Dr. Cate Palczewski's lectures about Critical Race Feminism at WDI 2011

The 2011 keynote was delivered by Dr. Cate Palczewski. Cate is a Professor of Communication Studies and Affiliate Faculty in Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Northern Iowa, where she also served as the Director of Debate from 1994-2009. She received her Ph.D. from Northwestern University, where she

was an assistant coach for the debate team.

Aside from being qualified, Cate's words were moving. Her speech united the history of the US women's movement and debate and motivated both students and staff.

We are pleased to announce that Cate has joined the WDI board and will be working to develop and enhance the learning objectives of our camp and to refine our curriculum.

## Thoughts from the Fire Poker

Each summer at WDI I take over the role of fire poker. While others have built and put out the fire, I enjoy keeping it lit. For me, the camp fire is the best part of camp and keeping it burning reminds me of the important work organizations like the WDI do.

For some girls this is the first time they have come close to a fire—both literally and metaphorically. While it may not be their first s'more, it is often the first time they get to work one-on-one with faculty member who knows what it is like to be one of only a few women left when the smoke dies out at a tournament. It is often the first time women who pass each other in the in-

halls or argue in debates get to know each other as women just like themselves. It is often the first time that many of us faculty remember why it is we are willing to spend time away from our families for no pay. But most important, in my view, the camp fire is the sacred time where we get to thank one another for helping us ignite the fire within ourselves. As the camp community stands around the fire I am proud to do my small part to keep it lit— as so many strong women did before and will continue to do after me.

Please contact me with news for our next newsletter. [raelynn.schwartz-dupre@wwu.edu](mailto:raelynn.schwartz-dupre@wwu.edu)



Board Member Rae Lynn Schwartz-DuPre returning from a paddle @ WDI

## What Our Debaters Have to Say

Each year we ask the students at WDI to take a moment and reflect on their experience. And, each year we are amazed by what we read. We send these reflections to our donors so that they understand what their contribution to the WDI means. You can find many of these reflections on our web site @ <http://womensdebateinstitute.org/donorthankyou>.

I pasted one below that I found very inspiring:

“Thank you for making the opportunity for girls like me to attend WDI. WDI has been my first debate camp. Though I’ve been debating policy for 2 years, there is still much to learn to improve. I want to go into public policy, a field that I know is dominantly male and white. WDI has assured me that a lady can be successful in

fields where they are often under-represented.

It is programs like this that encourage me to strive to be the best debater and best human being I can be. As an urban minority student, debating nationally has been a struggle. I have always felt at a disadvantage because I didn’t have the advantages that other nationally competitive teams have. My Urban Debate League and WDI have attempted to eliminate that barrier. I have come to terms that no, I may not have an expensive laptop, I may not have the best clothes or the best coach, but I have my mind – a mind capable of changing the world.”

**“I may not have the best clothes or the best coach, but I have a mind—a mind capable of changing the world”**



## Women's Debate Institute

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*The Women's Debate Institute is a non-profit organization that unites a robust community dedicated to the education of young women. Each summer we host a free debate institute for high school girls from around the country. Our four day camp increases the number of girls involved in debate, creates an environment that fosters community, and encourages young women to attend college.*

<http://womensdebateinstitute.org/>

Sisterhood is Vocal—Speak Out !

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*Join us this Summer — August 4-8, 2012*

