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**For Immediate Release**

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## **El Camino College Debate Team Defends National Title**

The El Camino College powerhouse debate team recently returned from the Phi Rho Pi Community College National Tournament with its best finish to date. The team successfully defended its national title in debate with a margin of about 86 points, placing second in the nation overall. The national victory follows an outstanding performance at the state championships, where the team scored its best performance in more than 25 years.

At the Phi Rho Pi Community College National Tournament, the team was honored with two special awards, selected by their peers as the students who represent the finest qualities in their respective events. Tony Liu and James Nee won the Bossard-Twohy Award in parliamentary speaking and Shannon Meredith won the Fish-Nelson Award in Lincoln-Douglas debate.

In addition, 11 team members took home gold medals from the tournament, including: Bear Saulet and Richard Ewell, parliamentary debate; Wendy Steiner and Sydney Awakuni, parliamentary debate; Mark Faaita and Shannon Meredith, parliamentary debate; Mark Faaita, Lincoln-Douglas debate; Shannon Meredith, Lincoln-Douglas debate; Whitney Gamble, programmed oral interpretation; James Nee, extemporaneous speaking; and Albro Lundy, extemporaneous speaking.

Other award winners include: Tony Liu and James Nee, bronze, parliamentary debate; Albro Lundy and Ben Porter, bronze, parliamentary debate; Bear Saulet, silver, Lincoln-Douglas debate; Richard Ewell, silver, Lincoln-Douglas debate; Sydney Awakuni, silver, Lincoln-Douglas debate; and Wendy Steiner, silver, impromptu speaking and bronze, speech to entertain.

The tournament drew 398 students and 124 coaches from 58 community colleges around the country; it is the only national debate competition open only to two-year colleges. The tournament is also the only one that offers a wide variety, with 11 individual events, in addition to four forms of debate and interpretive theater sessions.

After another successful year, several members of the team are being heavily recruited by four-year universities. So far, two students will attend Concordia University in the fall, and one is going to Point Loma University, all on forensics scholarships. Two others have been accepted to UCLA, and another to the University of California at Berkeley. The El Camino College debate team is coached by Francesca Bishop, Diana Crossman, and Mark Crossman.

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