

137th ANNUAL BALDWIN ORATORICAL CONTEST

The oldest continuous public speaking contest west of the Alleghenies!

*Speech is the chief tool with which civilization was developed
and it remains the chief tool by which men (sic) work and live together.*

–W. N. Brigance

Contest Theme: Practicing Civic Engagement

Being a good citizen can mean many different things, from voting to being a political activist, from serving on the local school board or city council to establishing a career in public service, from helping to build a local skateboarding park to taking an active interest in one's community. These acts of citizenship illustrate the concept of civic engagement, our participation in organizations, institutions, and societies with the goal of contributing to the public good. Through civic engagement we enrich our communities and seek means to collectively address the challenges and problems we face.

Is there an issue of significant public debate within your community that you would like to transform? What might a group of concerned, engaged citizens do about this problem if it came together and agreed upon a solution? Many problems can seem too "big" and "distant" for citizens to imagine how they can make a real impact, but when an advocate translates that problem into local terms, it becomes relevant and creates the possibility for change. Your charge is to advocate for a specific public action that addresses an issue faced by your community. To succeed, you should talk about the issue and your solution in local terms whenever possible. That is, explain how the problem and your approach impact your immediate audience, and guide the audience toward actions they can take to help solve the issue.

Format: Contestants will enter a persuasive speech. You are given great latitude in how you address or deal with the topic. The speeches should fall in a range between 8 and 10 minutes and be delivered in an extemporaneous style.

The members of the Rhetoric Department (Profs. Abbott, Hamilton, Lamberton and McDorman) will judge the preliminary rounds on Tuesday, April 5, Wednesday, April 6, and Thursday, April 7. You may sign up for a time on the sheet outside the Rhetoric classroom (FAC 206). If you cannot make one of those times, we will do our best to arrange an alternative time, likely on Thursday, April 7. The top speakers will advance to the finals round at **8:00 P.M. on Wednesday, April 13 in the Lovell Lecture Hall (Baxter 101)**. Preceding the finals, the final round speakers have dinner with the Rhetoric faculty and our distinguished panel of final round judges.

If you have questions or wish to discuss a speech topic, contact one of the members of the Rhetoric department.

1st Prize	\$250
2nd Prize	\$150
3rd Prize	\$100