Debate team national champs again

For the second straight year, the Lee College Debate Team capped off a record-setting season by earning a trio of national championship titles: the 2014-2015 International Public Debate Association (IPDA) Season-Long Community College Champions, the 2015 IPDA National Championship Tournament Community College Champions, and the 2014-2015 Team IPDA Squad National Championship.

Members of the Lee College Debate Team after the 2015 IPDA National Championship Tournament in Boise, Idaho. Pictured (l-r): front row — Cody Bijou (captain), Reagan Dobbs (captain); second row – Joselyn Mendoza, Shawn Start, Emily Trevino, Rigo Ruiz; back row — Himmler Assing, Dax Ramgoolam, Brandon Reinertsen, Kyle Diamond.

Lee College is the only two-year institution in the IPDA to repeat as national champions and the only two-year institution to win season-long and tournament titles in the same year — beating opponents from elite college and university debate teams from around the world.

In total, Lee College debaters won more than 150 awards and honors over the course of the competition season and finished as the top-ranked program in Texas within a field that included Texas State, Texas Christian University, Stephen F. Austin and East Texas Baptist universities, among others.

“What began in 2013 as a simple idea and a couple of enthusiastic students has grown into back-to-back National Championships and a dozen dedicated debaters,” said Joe Ganakos, head coach. “They’ve proven themselves to be exceptional ambassadors for Lee College, standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the best and brightest university students in the nation.”

The team success was augmented by outstanding individual performances. The duo of Team Captains Cody Bijou and Reagan Dobbs captured the 2014-2015 Team IPDA National Championship. Captain-elect Kyle Diamond won the 2014-2015 Varsity Division Championship at the IPDA national tournament in Boise, Idaho, and was also honored as a tournament double octo-finalist. Dobbs was both the Varsity Division runner-up and third-place speaker, and Bijou finished the tournament in third place in the Varsity Division, as the fourth-place speaker and as an octo-finalist.

In the Novice Division, Dax Ramgoolam was the 2015 IPDA National Championship Tournament runner-up and captain-elect Rigo Ruiz finished as the season-long runner-up. Ruiz was also the second-place novice debate speaker at the national tournament and a novice double octo-finalist, while Joselyn Mendoza finished in eighth place in the season-long Novice Division standings.

The Debate Team will return to competition in September at The Mendoza Debates at Lee College to kick off the 2015-2016 IPDA season. Lee College will also host the 2016 IPDA National Championship Tournament next April. For more information about the Lee College debate program, contact Ganakos at 281.425.6502 or jganakos@lee.edu.