

# Pig's



# Head

University of Queensland Debating Society

Tomas Heard, Lauren Humphrey, and Alex Molloy  
Issue 1 2010

## UQ 5th Best Debating University in the World

UQ debating society (UQDS) members performed strongly at the World University Debating Championships seeing UQ move into the top 5 behind Sydney, Oxford, Yale and Cambridge in the unofficial world rankings. UQDS President Thomas Ashby says the society is excited by the result and look forward to Botswana world championships, where he thinks UQ has a good chance of overtaking Cambridge.

After strong performances in the preliminary rounds, two UQ teams qualified for the finals series. UQ A, composed of Lauren Humphrey and Kristen Price, broke 16th and went on to qualify for the quarter finals and UQ D, composed of Sarida McLeod and Mitch Reilly, broke 26th and made it through to the semifinals. At the end of the tournament, Lauren Humphrey was ranked the 12th best speaker, the equal highest ranked female speaker in the world, and Kristen Price also made the top 20 at 19th best speaker.



The successful UQDS Worlds 2010 contingent

UQ B (Emily Chalk and Oliver Badenhorst) and UQ C (Kaerlin McCormick and Alexander Molloy) also performed well in the rounds, both narrowly missing qualification for the finals series.

As a student-adjudicated tournament, adjudicators volunteered from the student body and had to compete for finals adjudication positions. UQ also performed strongly on this front. 4 of UQ's 7 nominated adjudicators were selected for the finals series. Tom Ashby judged the open octo-finals, Stacey McEvoy and Ian Hutcheon judged the English as a Second Language Quarter Finals, and Nick Derrington judged the English as a Foreign Language semi-finals, and the English as a Second Language Final.

### UQDS 2010 Calendar

- 2<sup>nd</sup> March – Welcome Barbeque and Show Debate
- 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> March – Rounds 1-4 of Pro-Am Competition
- March – Barefoot Bowls at Toowong Bowls Club
- April – Easters Sendoff Party
- 6<sup>th</sup>- 9<sup>th</sup> April – Australian Intersarsity Debating Championships (Easters) Hosted By Melbourne University
- April – Dinner and Trivia Night
- May – Girls Night
- May – Boys Night
- 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> April, 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> May, and 1<sup>st</sup> June – Rounds 1-6, Semi-Finals and Grand Finals of Open Internal Competition
- May-June – Grand Final Drinks
- June – Australs Sendoff Party
- Wednesday 30 June – Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> July – Australasian intersarsity Debating Championships (Australs) Hosted by Auckland University
- July – Race Day Party
- 26<sup>th</sup> July – Semester 2 Classes Begin
- 27<sup>th</sup> July – Demonstration British Parliamentary (BP) Style Debate
- 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> August – BP Practice Rounds 1 and 2
- August – Taco Tuesday
- 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup> August, 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> September BP Competition Rounds 1-6
- 5<sup>th</sup> October – UQ Debating Society Annual General Meeting
- 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> October – BP Semi-Finals and Grand Finals
- October – BP Grand Final Afterparty
- 26<sup>th</sup> October – UQDS End of Season Function: Big Jugs, Hot sauce and Guacamole
- November – UQDS Ball

## DEBATING – THE NEW BLACK

So you are thinking of joining the debating society. The rational part of your mind knows it is a good idea – you get to meet new people, go to social events, and always have someone to talk to about your left/right/centrist views. If that isn't enough, you get to vent your frustrations in creative and offensive ways (because we all know that is what debating is really about). Yet some part of you holds back due to an old high-school fear, a muscle twitch reaction reminding you that debating isn't "cool", and that the worst thing you want to do in your new university environment is remake the geek-you that your parents loved but other school kids derided.

To this I have two responses (not because the QDU tells me I should, but because I actually do):

- At some point between when you left your school and when you first graced the hallowed sandstone promenades of UQ, debating became cool. I'll show you how in the article that follows. Hence, you can do debating and be cool at the same time.

- Even if you don't believe me, and will always see debating as a geeky, guilty pleasure, you can still do it. The great thing about university is that nobody needs to know what you do with your Tuesday night. Appropriate excuses for being absent on Tuesday abound. To name a few;

⇒ "Sorry I can't, its cheap Tuesday at (the movies/the markets/your mum's house)".

⇒ "Sorry, I fight crime on Tuesdays".

⇒ "Sorry, I'm doing weights with Mitch Riley. Tuesday is a glutes session and we try to get a really deep burn".

Your involvement in the debating society can be our little secret.

So into the meat of it – cool (and unique) things the debating society can offer YOU:

1. Relationship advice – the UQDS has a resident relationship specialist who can counsel you on anything from your sex life, to the finer points of your sex life. She is most famous for pioneering the "feedback system" whereby you rate your sexual partner's performance following the act of coitus. To many of the uninitiated this may seem weird, or even preposterous. However, we at the UQDS assure that spontaneous and passionate intimacy is over-rated and nothing can spice up your sex life like a little bureaucracy.

2. A relationship – stuck for love? The UQDS is famous for pairing like-minded and argumentative people, creating happy, if tumultuous, relationships. Note to the men – sometimes you have to wait a few years. Woman are in short supply. Never fear though - by the time you are in fourth of fifth year, the UQDS will have recruited a fresh first year that is attracted to your debating skill. There are plenty of precedents.

3. Unpredictable, irrational anger – life without occasional violent criticism is boring and doesn't prepare you for the real corporate world. Soon you will become a master of non-verbal communication, able to detect micro-signals that your placid debating companion is about to explode like a great Krakatoa of crazy. If it says it is hungry, and it isn't holding a diet coke bottle, dive for cover.

4. Cougar attacks – sometimes a particularly recalcitrant young lady manages to avoid the hooks and claws of adoring older men. She keeps her head down, lives a pure life of debating, work, and rigorous exercise. However, at some point she realizes that, as a fourth year, she is no longer the hunted, but suddenly a ferocious hunter. Yet she realizes a problem – how to snag the young blood? With such epic conversation starters as "Oh, I remember the debate of '04, when..." and "I wonder what the topic tonight will be", she realizes that all those years of diligent droning have left her bereft of the very skills required to lure, lull, and maul her prey. So she becomes an ambush predator – seeking out the weak, the inebriated, the unsuspecting. Having claimed her first victim (from the jaws of another wild cat no less), she has gained a taste for blood, and yours may be next.

5. Epic leadership challenges – the UQDS is a genuinely democratic institution. Last year saw the established order be challenged by the nascent communist party (since dubbed the Red Menace). Thankfully, the will of the Elders prevailed, and the Pre-Selected Candidates triumphed.

6. A cohesive executive unit – Commissar Ashby was elected on a platform of collective-decision making, and is not afraid to reign in those individuals with corrupted ideologies (may Sister Chalk be forgiven her transgressions). The Executive Council is One, and portfolio titles merely a hangover from times best forgotten.

Freedom of the Press – ... You are reading this article I realize the above anecdotes are in fact a collection of "in-jokes" (though I hope some of the concepts are zany enough that they are humorous and intriguing to the outside). The truth is that debating is the most inclusive clique you might ever encounter, full of in-jokes, in-teresting people, and in-cest. This is an open invitation to be part of all that fun!

You have a choice. You can come on Tuesdays, debate, learn, and return to your life, or you can become (as those above have) a part of the UQDS legacy.

The former is perfectly acceptable, and a great way to become a more confident and expressive person. Those in the society love teaching new debaters their craft, and exposure to your personality and intellect is all we ask in return.



Pictured: typical uni debating girls.  
Centre: Tom Gole, oozing debating skills

# The *Secret* to Stopping Debates from Going Off the Rails

## *Setting the scene or Contextualisation: Making debates fun and interesting*

Do any of the following sound familiar? Teams who couldn't agree on what the debate was about? *or* Teams who got away with misrepresenting the hell out of each other and never engaged? Then chances are the affirmative team didn't contextualise the debate properly.

## *Make your debate interesting: Explain why you are even having the debate!*

It sounds almost too obvious but oftentimes teams can go through a whole debate without explaining *why* anyone should care about it. That's a recipe for boredom. Get your 'problem' out there early and the audience is more likely to bother to listen to the rest of the debate. Put simply an affirmative team needs to give a *reason* (in debating jargon, an 'imperative') why we should bother to change anything at all – what's problem with the status quo? Hint: As a general rule change is effort so we don't bother unless there's a good reason.

## *The politicians approach: Tailor your 'problem' so you have a chance at solving it.*

Too many well-meaning debaters try to make their imperative a huge problem - let's say dictatorships are bad - and then suggest a solution that cannot possibly hope to overthrow dictatorial regimes around the world. That's a credibility loser. Make your problem too large and no one will take you seriously. At the World Debating Championships the fourth round motion was: That this House believes that Governments should subsidise interracial and interfaith marriage. Some 'cunning' teams thought they would set this debate in conflict-ridden countries like Israel and Palestine. The *problem* is no one seriously thinks that the Israeli Palestinian conflict can be solved by a few marriages. And those 'cunning' teams just sounded foolish.

## *Avoid making your debate painful - rule out annoying and irrelevant side issues/situations*

A context is the perfect place to crack out examples – by the end of it the audience should know what kind of scenario you think the debate is about. Ask yourself: What kind of people and places are central to this debate (and almost as importantly which aren't)? Another topic at Worlds was: That this House would punish communities for honour killings. Some negative teams decided it would be a good idea to discuss countries where many honour killings occur (and this model definitely wouldn't work) like Iran and Saudi Arabia. Those countries often openly endorse honour killings – it is pretty damn obvious we're *not* talking about those countries. Pity that affirmative teams didn't clearly rule them out from the get-go by providing examples of *actually* relevant countries (Turkey etc).

## *Contextualise!*

Lazy teams either forget or simply can't be bothered contextualizing because they assume everyone will get what it's about. Those teams lose debates more often than they should to annoying teams who aren't nearly as good because the debate got so messy the adjudicator had no idea what the hell was going on. And even if they win, their debates are more likely to be BORING. Contextualise! You won't know how you ever debated without it. Besides in 9 out of 10 debates it's not like you'll have a better idea for how to begin your speech.