



2020-2021
WASATCH INDEPENDENT
DEBATE LEAGUE
ANNUAL REPORT

OUR YEAR

405
students



22
classes

9
tournaments



7 official tournaments
(5 online, 2 in-person)
2 run by the student council
average of 203 students



ABOUT US

Founded in 2008, the Wasatch Independent Debate League now serves over 400 students. We are dedicated to creating the best possible educational experience for our students—experiences that are inspiring, motivating, and fun. We believe that students who can research effectively, examine ideas critically, and express themselves thoughtfully will reap benefits in every aspect of their lives. While primarily centered around the Wasatch Front in Utah, this year saw the expansion of the league into online classes, as well as a brand new, in-person class in Arizona. Since most of the tournaments were held virtually this year, this made it easier for the online and Arizona students to compete. The year culminated with an in-person tournament for everyone, and the Arizona team traveled up to participate.

TEACHERS



SAMUEL
MARTINEAU

Samuel Martineau has been teaching speech and debate in the homeschool community for thirteen years. He is the founder and director of the Wasatch Independent Debate League, which has been introducing homeschooled students to academic debate for the past 10 years. He has also seen significant success as a mock trial coach, including coaching two top-10 teams at the National Mock Trial Tournament.

Samuel Graduated Magna Cum Laude from Weber State University with a B.S. and teaching certificate in communication teaching and a minor in history teaching. He also recently won the KSL Teacher Feature Teacher of the Week Award.



AMBER
JOHNSON

Amber Johnson graduated from Utah Valley University in 2018 with a degree in communications. Since then, Amber has taught elementary education at the Family Lyceum, a private school in Ogden; served as a program head and board member for Heroic Youth, a non-profit organization; and headed the 2017 leadership course for AISU's Chinese Foreign Exchange Program. Amber has also worked for six years as a public librarian, and was the assistant coach for the 2020 Heber Valley Zion Academy Junior High Mock Trial Team.

As a teen, Amber spent six years in the Wasatch Independent Debate League, winning the overall award for Outstanding Performance in her senior year.

Amber is married to Jared Johnson, and they have two children.



JANTZEN
RUSSELL

Jantzen Russell has years of teaching experience in charter schools, summer camps, and church assignments. In total, he's mentored and taught over a thousand kids. Jantzen is also the owner of the marketing company Revox Marketing. As a WIDL alumnus, he's passionate about good communication and epic speeches. As a student, his favorite event was oratory in which he was a regular top-five finisher. Jantzen was also a key team member of the first homeschool mock trial team to make it to the state championship in Utah.

Jantzen is a father of two and married to the most beautiful woman in the world. He enjoys running, reading, and making dad jokes.



RACHELLE
SCOTT

Rachelle Scott is a season-ticket-holding Sun Devil grad. She met her husband at an Arizona State University basketball game and they now have six little devils! She is a business owner, director of a law firm, and a homeschooling mama. She values learning and has broadened her education by becoming a cosmetologist, a triathlete, and even a ham radio operator. She enjoys continuing to learn by attending BYU Education Week, traveling with her family, and trying to figure out how to get things to grow in Arizona.

She loves teaching and has spent years directing youth camps and women's retreats, coaching sports, mentoring speech competitions, and serving in her local communities and church. She's thrilled to be taking on the challenge of expanding the debate program in Arizona!

EXECUTIVE BOARD



SUZANNE CHRISTENSEN
MODEL UNITED NATIONS



ANGELA RICHENS
NONPROFIT DEVELOPMENT



MELISSA GEORGE
MERCHANDISE



LORI URESK
ALUMNI TOURNAMENT



KAELIN HIRSCHI
INTERNSHIP DIRECTOR



ZACH YOUNG
TOURNAMENT STAFF/PHOTOGRAPHER



JAMES MCKENZIE
ALUMNI OUTREACH/ANNUAL REPORT



CHARLOTTE MCKENZIE
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

STUDENT COUNCIL

Mirabella Archibald, Chris Eagar, Isa Maurer, Alexander Henage,
Gwenllian Oberon, Esther Eberting, Daniel Bennion,
Gideon Warnock, Hailey Petrich, Hunter Uresk, Matthew Hatch,
Treysen Anderson, Dallin Christensen, John Kennedy



Part of our mission is to prepare students to engage with their communities for good. Here are a bunch of ways that students have been doing that this year!



Food Drive

\$12,943

44,540 lbs



Every year the WIDL conducts a food drive in December. We exceeded every expectation this year! Collectively we raised \$12,943 and gathered 44,540 lbs of food!

The Orem/Provo classes gathered the most. One of the students, Hunter Uresk, explained how they set up a website where people could donate, designed and delivered fliers, and picked up so much food. "A huge part of our success was teamwork and involving the various skills of everyone. For instance, I led most of it. Brandon did all of the tech stuff. Kaitlyn helped organize food drives, Hailey got other classes to come help, and more."

This year the WIDL pioneered the Civic Engagement Internship. Culminating in two presentations at the United Nations NGO forum, the interns met weekly to discuss topics important to them and find ways to meaningfully communicate these issues with their community. The interns worked tirelessly and performed exceptionally well this year. We are excited for this program to grow! Of the experience participant Gwenllian Oberon said, "Working with the UN and the other non-profits was a really cool experience to have, [particularly] being able to see the work that others were doing to help improve the world. A lot of times . . . we don't appreciate the people who are out there working to create change right now. [Additionally, we were] able to write and present our own content. I felt like I gained some really valuable experience from the reactions we got from members of the international community."



Civic Engagement Interns





WAIL TALK

by WIDL

Student Matthew Hatch started "Wall Talk" this year, a podcast featuring students discussing current events. He wrote, "I wanted to give students the opportunity to voice their opinions to a large audience. I didn't realize how large that audience would be. We had listeners all over the country. I was impressed by the level of preparation everyone put in—they were always ready with whatever question I could throw at them. [Interviewees had] strong opinions, and opinions would collide, but I never had to break up a fight. I believe that [is due to] the culture created in the league. My hope is the people who listened caught on to that and learned something about how to discuss ideas."

The student council was involved in many of these projects. President of the Student Council, Mirabella Archibald, said, "It was an absolute honor to be the President of the WIDL Student Council this year. I learned so much! I essentially served as a logistical manager for the council. I hosted a council retreat, organized meetings, delegated assignments, and helped members of the Student Council carry out their visions for the league! I learned . . . how important conflicting feedback is—especially if it conflicted with my ideas. There were several projects I was excited [about], but after hearing valid arguments from other members of the council I recognized significant flaws I had in my ideas. Acting as the president allowed me to experience principles like respect for all viewpoints, critical thinking, and how friendly debate reaches an improved conclusion! I am excited to take everything I have gained from the league out into the world!"



Snow cones prepared by the Student Council for the end-of-year party



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

2020-2021 was a difficult school year for the Wasatch Independent Debate League, as it was for all educational institutions. We had to adapt to online tournaments, enact protocols to keep students safe, and work extra hard to deliver a great educational experience—but we're a debate league, and that meant that we were also tested in our commitment to civil discourse. With so many strongly held opinions regarding COVID-19 and the attending restrictions, I believe our greatest triumph was seeing our students and our community disagreeing with each other strongly while also listening to and maintaining respect for each other. I feel encouraged by what our students will bring to the world as people who have learned the combined skills of critical thinking, persuasive argument, and civil discourse. To all who worked with us or supported us in any way this year, allow me to offer my sincere gratitude. I believe in our mission and appreciate any who help us advance that mission in any way!

—Samuel Martineau, Director
July 2021

THANK YOU SPONSORS!

BYU



THE
UNIVERSITY
OF UTAH



WEBER STATE
UNIVERSITY