

Speech & Debate Team Wins 2026 National Championship



For the first time in school history, the Mt. SAC Speech and Debate team has won the Phi Rho Pi National Championship three years in a row. The team scored 350 total sweepstakes points — the highest in team history. Mt. SAC earned 44 total awards, including 20 gold, 13 silver, and 11 bronze medals.

Mt. SAC placed first in overall sweepstakes, first in individual events, and fourth in debate in the Wyman/Petrello Large School Division, finishing ahead of Diablo Valley College (296 points), El Camino College (174.5 points), and Orange Coast College (165 points). The tournament, held April 6-11, in Bethesda, Maryland, featured 337 total competitors from 52 community colleges from ten states.

In addition to the team awards, **Sophia Trugerro** earned the Bovero-Tabor Top Speaker in the Nation award, earning more points (37.5) than any other student at the tournament. Sophia, a first-year team member, won gold medals in Parliamentary Debate, IPDA Debate, and Extemporaneous Speaking, along with a silver medal in Impromptu Speaking. Sophia is the tenth Mt. SAC student to earn this award since 1963 and the first since 2016. Sophia shared, “My achievements are not mine alone. They belong to my coaches, team, and family. Gracias por creer en mí y estoy orgullosa de representar Mt. SAC.”



Additional standout performances included **Riese Ili** (tied for 2nd, 35 points), **Asha Longworth** (tied for 3rd, 32.5 points), **Kenneth Park** and **Angela Tanjuakio** (tied for 4th, 30 points), and **Max Ibarra** and **Sophia Allen** (tied for 5th, 27.5 points).

In individual events, the team had numerous students win multiple national titles including Asha Longworth winning golds in Informative and Persuasive Speaking, Max Ibarra winning golds in Communication Analysis and Persuasive Speaking, and Riese Ili winning golds in Programmed Oral Interpretation, Poetry, and Speech to Entertain. In Informative Speaking, Mt. SAC advanced five students to the final round and captured four gold medals (**Alex Sacramento**, Asha Longworth, **Isabella Catalan**, and Sophia Allen). Professor **Sarina Wang**, who primarily coached the speech events this year, shared, “To earn four national titles in the Informative event alone is extraordinary. It reflects not just the student’s discipline, but the passion they brought to every round.”



In the debate events, the team won four gold medals. Kenneth Park won three gold medals in debate including NFA-LD, Parliamentary (with Sophia Trugerro), and IPDA. Sophia Trugerro went undefeated in all seven debates in IPDA on her way to a gold medal, winning both elimination rounds on 2–1 decisions over El Camino College and Moorpark College. **Professor Danny Cantrell**, Director of Debate, shared that “This was an outstanding performance in the debate events. Securing the program’s first-ever gold medal in NFA-LD and our first parliamentary gold in many years highlights the dedication and preparation of our debaters. Their hard work was clearly reflected in their success.”

In Interpreters Theater, Mt. SAC advanced two theaters to final rounds. “Out of the Ashes,” with students Riese Ili, Asha Longworth, and Sophia Allen, a performance focused on the 2025 Altadena wildfires, earned bronze. “Brutal,” with students Alex Sacramento, Angela Tanjuakio, **Sebastian Obeso**, and **Wisam Hagsaleh**, a performance centered on student protests, earned silver. Mt. SAC was the only program to advance more than one theater to the final rounds.



What made this historic win especially significant was the team had 11 first-year team members who joined the team last fall. Mt. SAC earned a gold medal in 12 out of the 15 different events offered at the tournament. For the second consecutive year, all fourteen Mt. SAC competitors advanced to elimination rounds.

This marks Mt. SAC's 13th Phi Rho Pi National Championship (2025, 2024, 2019, 2014, 2013, 2011, 2006, 2003, 2001, 2000, 1998, 1994). The team was coached by Communications professors **Thuy Pham, Jedi Curva, Danny Cantrell, Alissa Duong, Alix Lopez, and Sarina Wang.**



2026 Phi Rho Pi Awards

Sweepstakes

Gold	Overall Sweepstakes (1st place)
Gold	Individual Event Sweepstakes (1st place)
Silver	Debate Sweepstakes (4th place)

1st place Bovero	Sophia Truggero (37.5 points)
2nd place Bovero (tied)	Riese Ili (35 points)
3rd place Bovero (tied)	Asha Longsworth (32.5 points)
4th place Bovero (tied)	Kenneth Park, Angela Tanjuako (30 points)
5th place Bovero (tied)	Max Ibarra, Sophia Allen (27.5 points)

Individual Awards

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alex Sacramento Informative Gold - Angela Tanjuakio Dramatic Interpretation Gold - Asha Longsworth Informative Gold - Asha Longsworth Persuasive Gold - Isabella Catalan Informative Gold - Isabella Catalan Impromptu Gold - Kenneth Park IPDA Debate Gold - Kenneth Park NFA-LD Debate Gold - Kenneth Park and Sophia Truggero Parliamentary Debate Gold - Max Ibarra Communication Analysis Gold - Max Ibarra Persuasive Gold - Riese Ili Programmed Oral Interpretation Gold - Riese Ili Poetry Gold - Riese Ili Speech to Entertain Gold - Sebastian Obeso Speech to Entertain Gold - Sophia Allen Informative Gold - Sophia Truggero Extemporaneous Gold - Sophia Truggero IPDA Debate Gold - Syd Bush Speech to Entertain Gold 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alex Sacramento, Angela Tanjuakio, Sebastian Obeso, and Wisam Hagsaleh Interp Theatre Silver - Angela Tanjuakio Programmed Oral Interpretation Silver - Asha Longsworth Poetry Silver - Max Ibarra Prose Silver - Samantha Montes Informative Silver - Sebastian Obeso Dramatic Interpretation Silver - Sophia Allen Persuasive Silver - Sophia Truggero Impromptu Silver - Syd Bush Dramatic Interpretation Silver - Wisam Hagsaleh Poetry Silver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aidan Barlow Impromptu Bronze - Alex Sacramento Persuasive Bronze - Angela Tanjuakio Speech to Entertain Bronze - Asha Longsworth, Riese Ili, and Sophia Allen Interp Theatre Bronze - Isabella Catalan Speech to Entertain Bronze - Samantha Montes Extemporaneous Bronze - Sophia Allen Prose Bronze - Syd Bush Prose Bronze - Wisam Hagsaleh Programmed Oral Interpretation Bronze
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