

**'My greatest success is actually having an effect on the way people think.'**

— ZEKE MIHELICIC ('14),  
JMU Debate team

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among the top 20 in all three national collegiate rankings.

JMU Debate attracts students from all academic disciplines and the JMU team is unique in the number of its debaters studying the natural sciences. Regardless of academic backgrounds, the team is held together by the same Madison camaraderie found throughout campus. While debaters engage in verbal duels, armed with differing opinions, "every single person is always just as happy to see their teammates excel as they would be for themselves," says Nikki Cone ('12).


The 2011–12 team included 32 debaters and eight coaches — a stark difference from when program director and communication professor Mike Davis came to JMU in 2006 as the sole coach of seven debaters. Although the largest JMU team to date, the squad is considerably smaller than most of its competitors and operates on a significantly smaller budget than the other top 50 teams.

JMU has become a formidable team among elite collegiate debate and earned 43 individual top speakers awards this season. Nine JMU students were named National Debate Scholars — the equivalent of All-American — for their performances. Political science and history major Mark Waugh ('12) and communications major Oliver Brass ('13) were also named to the CEDA All-American team, placing the two among the top 30 debaters in the country.

In a debate setting, students "think on their feet with little in-competition preparation time," Davis explains. "This quick thinking nature of debate hones their critical thinking skills in a way that no other activity could."

Holding to James Madison's principle that a republican democracy is healthy only when informed and civil debate thrives, in 2001 the James Madison Center partnered with the debate program to found the annual Madison Cup tournament. Made possible through sponsorship from the Arthur N. Rupe Foundation, the Madison Cup is a unique intercollegiate debate, which combines the excitement and challenge of tournament competition with the relevance and empowerment of a public audience and audience participation. The Rupe Foundation recently awarded JMU a \$49,000 grant to be used for the Madison Cup tournament and to establish a public debate class. Offered this fall semester, the course is open to all students and will be co-taught by Davis; Paul Mabrey, assistant director of debate; and Kathy Clarke, communication studies librarian.

"It's not the wins or losses that count, but rather the impacts arguments have on people," says math major Zeke Mihelcic ('14). "So, my greatest success is actually having an effect on the way people think."

Keeping an eye on increased participation, Davis says the real secret to JMU Debate's success is never being satisfied with previous accomplishments. "We certainly feel that we should celebrate our successes," he says, "but at the end of the day unless I am looking forward to what we can accomplish next, I am doing a disservice to our students and to JMU." 



2012 Google Online Marketing Challenge winners (l-r): Tara Goode ('12), Rachel Krause ('12) and Nicole Behr ('12). This marks the third consecutive year that a JMU team has taken the top regional prize in the Google Marketing Challenge.

**College of Business**

## JMU takes top Americas prize in Google marketing challenge

BY PATRICIA L. MAY

**A** team of three JMU May graduates was named the Americas Region winner of the 2012 Google Online Marketing Challenge. Marketing majors Rachel Krause (Alexandria, Va.), Nicole Behr (Basking Ridge, N.J.) and Tara Goode (Gulph Mills, Pa.) competed in the challenge as part of marketing professor Theresa Clarke's College of Business Marketing 490 class.

"I am so proud of our students for performing remarkably well in the challenge," says Clarke. "They are a talented, hard-working group."

The team won top honors by creating a Google AdWords campaign for Triple C Camp, a youth camp and challenge course in Charlottesville, Va. The purpose of the competition is for teams to partner with a business or nonprofit website to maximize targeted and relevant traffic to the business or nonprofit organization's website. Krause, Behr and Goode were among 11,000 students in 86 countries to compete. According to Google, the 2012 competition was "the most competitive and diverse pool of teams yet."

In addition to the 2012 Americas Region winners, JMU had a second team that placed among the top 15 in the Americas and among the top 60 teams in the world. This is the third time in five years that a JMU team has won the Americas region. Each member of the winning team receives a new laptop and a trip to Google headquarters in Mountain View, Calif.

