
Friday, September 5, 2008

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College Dems, Republicans face off on issues in debate

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Published: Friday, September 5, 2008

Updated: Friday, September 5, 2008

College Democrats and Republicans assembled Thursday night in the Overby Center Auditorium to debate the issues of the upcoming presidential election.

Moderated by Eric Weber, assistant professor of public policy leadership, the two parties discussed questions that were divided among domestic issues, economic issues, and foreign policy.

The two debate teams comprised students of varying majors and ages. Tyler Craft, Martin Edwards, Cadley Burns and Billy Roach represented the Republicans. The opposing Democrats were Brent Caldwell, Jeff Dreste, Melody Frierson and Brent Clark.

Weber, who crafted the questions independent of the two parties, began the debate with immigration. The Democrats began the debate with a two-minute explanation of their position outlined by Dreste, a junior political science major. The Republicans, represented by senior managerial finance major Billy Roach, were then given one minute to respond and critique. Afterward, the Democrats had another 30 seconds to respond. The process began again when the moderator asked the Republicans the same question, thereby giving both parties equal opportunities to weigh in on the issues.

The debate continued as each side exchanged opinions and perspectives on a wide-range of issues with alternating speakers. The audience, described as "a nice crowd" by Weber, all qualified to receive a stamp on their "passport" as a part of the "Passport to the Debate" program, which is one of the ways to enter in a lottery for a ticket to the upcoming presidential debate.

Each side had its own thoughts concerning the debate.

"This debate was exactly what we wanted. Everybody who leaves here will be better informed," College Republicans President Tyler Craft said.

College Democrats President Brent Caldwell said the final judgement of who won will have to wait until after election day.

"I think we (the Democrats) won," Caldwell said. "But it really doesn't matter what I think. What matters is how the election turns out in November."

ASB President Graham Purcell was also in attendance.

"It's really exciting to see students come together to debate important issues. We need to see more of that," Purcell said.

- Editor-in-Chief Tyler Clemons contributed information to this story.

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