

Miami Dade Urban Debate League

May 2023 Newsletter



Pictured Left to Right: Issabela Martinez (Miami Senior High), Rocio Pelaez (Miami Senior High), Nicole Batista (South Miami Senior High), Jeanie Paguaga (South Miami Senior High)

MDUDL DEBATERS RETURN FROM THE 2023 URBAN DEBATE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP!

Last week, the Miami Senior High School and South Miami Senior High School debate teams competed in the 2023 Urban Debate National Championship (UDNC). Representing Miami Senior High School were Rocio Pelaez & Issabela Martinez and South Miami Senior High School had Jeannie Paguaga & Nichole Batista.

The two teams put up an impressive display as each managed to win a respective round! There was much excitement from their peers and teachers alike as they celebrated this outstanding achievement. The Urban Debate National Championship, hosted by the National Association for Urban Debate Leagues (NAUDL) showcases the best urban debaters from across the country.

We extend our congratulations to Rocio Pelaez & Issabela Martinez and Jeannie Paguaga & Nichole Batista for participating in such a prestigious event and emerging winners of their round. Through intense practice, they have demonstrated the value of urban debates when it comes to engaging young minds in critical thinking and problem solving activities. We wish them even greater success in all their future endeavors!



<https://www.miamiudl.org/>



@miamiurbandebate



A MESSAGE FROM JEANIE PAGUAGA

"My experience at Nationals was something familiar yet so different from what I was accustomed to. Although I had participated in tournaments before, we were heavily reliant on Zoom, therefore, Nationals would be my first in-person tournament. Nationals excited me in the sense that I would be able to meet new people from all across the country, each with their own style of debate. I also wouldn't have to deal with technical difficulties or my cat stepping over my keyboard. I didn't just meet new people, but I also learned about new debate tactics that I was unaware of. I entered Nationals a bit nervous, naturally, but I left feeling like we did win after all. During our rounds, my partner often said, "Maybe the real prize is the friends we made along the way", and as cheesy as it sounds I believe it to be true in its own way. The debaters that we met were extraordinary and knowledgeable and I feel like we learned so much from them.

The mere thought of kritiks and topicality scared me, but in the end, it was such an intellectually invigorating experience because I now saw debate through a different lens. In my opinion, Policy Debate is like a puzzle, or better yet, a game of Tennis. While your opponents may be shooting these arguments and these nuclear war impacts, you have to learn how to bounce back with a stronger argument that is hopefully less detrimental to humanity and much more realistic. Overall, I found Nationals to add another layer of interest for me in debate. Even outside of Nationals, so many of these debate skills are applicable to mundane scenarios as well and which is what makes Policy Debate so beautifully versatile.



Pictured:

South Miami Senior High School Debaters
Left to right: Nichole Batista, Jeannie Paguaga





BILZIN SUMBERG DONATES \$10,000 TO THE MIAMI-DADE URBAN DEBATE LEAGUE AND SPONSORS THE HOLLAND AND KNIGHT DEBATE CLASSIC

MIAMI, Florida --March 28, 2023 Bilzin Sumberg, a leading Florida law firm, announced today that it will be sponsoring the first Miami Urban Debate League (MDUDL) tournament of the year in September 2023 with a \$10,000 donation to the organization. MDUDL, a non-profit organization that empowers young debaters from diverse backgrounds to find and use their voices, will be returning to face-to-face debate for the 2023-2024 school year.

“We greatly appreciate your support for our programming initiatives. We could not provide these services without the contributions of our partners.”

MDUDL Treasurer, Dale Reed (pictured) thanks Bilzin for their contribution. “We greatly appreciate your support for our programming initiatives. We could not provide these services without the contributions of our partners” Dale Reed, Miami Dade Urban Debate League Treasurer.

About Bilzin Sumberg:

Bilzin Sumberg is a commercial law firm based in South Florida, providing legal expertise in a range of practices including corporate, real estate, land development & government, commercial finance, business litigation, environmental, and restructuring & bankruptcy.





Pictured:

Cydney Edwards, Exiting MDUDL Program Director

THE LEAGUE WELCOMES KALYN LEE

After a very meaningful five years years with The Miami Dade Urban Debate League, it is bittersweet that our Program Director, Cydney Edwards, will be departing our league. We congratulate her in her new role as associate director for the Office of Multicultural Arts Initiatives at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. We thank you for all of your hard work and dedication to our students and our league.

We are excited to announce the new Program Director, Kalyn Lee. Kalyn Lee attended The University of Alabama for both her B.A. in Political Science and M.A. in Communications studies. Kalyn competed for the Alabama Forensic Council, The University of Alabama's nationally ranked Speech and Debate team, where she also served as co-captain. Kalyn joined Teach for America in 2017, teaching and coaching debate at Miami Carol City Senior High School.

Her dedication to her school and students was recognized by Miami Dade County Public School. She was awarded the prestigious honor, 2020 Francisco R. Walker Rookie Teacher of the Year for Miami-Dade County, the third largest United States school district. Beyond high school, Kalyn also teaches on the collegiate level within the Department of Communications at both Miami Dade College and Broward College. Kalyn has worked with a number of dignitaries, including school board members, served on panel discussions with Mayor Daniella Levine Cava, and has a track record of being an educational equity advocate through her various publications and community organizing experience.



Pictured:

Kalyn Lee, MDUDL Program Director





Upcoming Events

Urban Debate League
Middle School Nationals:
May 6-7, 2023
Location: Virtual via Yaatly

Summer Debate Institute:
August 1-2, 2023
Location TBA

Virtual Career Day:
TBA

2023-2024 Student
Council Applications due:
June 1, 2023
Check the website to apply.

Website Reboot

We are thrilled to announce the relaunch of the Miami Dade Urban Debate League website! This revitalized website is now live and ready to explore. Visitors can find a comprehensive overview of the organization, profiles of all participating teams, and detailed information about upcoming tournaments and events.

We invite everyone to check out the new [website](https://www.miamiudl.org/) at and discover what exciting activities they have planned this year!

Good Luck iPrep North!

Good luck to the iPrep North Middle School debaters! These students will be competing at the Urban Debate League Middle School Nationals on May 6-7, 2023. This tournament will be held virtually via Yaatly.



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