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## **Moorpark College Forensics Continues to Thrive in Virtual Competitions at the State and National Level**

### **For Immediate Release**

**Moorpark, Calif.**--(April 27, 2021) The nationally recognized Moorpark College Forensics team has once again won the team championship in its division at the Phi Rho Pi National Championships, held April 6-11. This is the college's 11th national championship in forensics, or speech and debate. The team also competed at the California Community College Forensics Association State Championships in March.

"Of the 12 students who represented Moorpark College at the national championships, eight are new to the team this year, and to speech competitions of any kind," said Rolland Petrello, chair of the Communications and Media Arts Department and head forensics coach. "Six of those students are new to the team this semester. We have not met most of the team members in person, as everything we are doing--from recruiting and coaching to competitions--has taken place virtually. However, I think these students are a testament to how excellence can be achieved even under the most trying of conditions."

Due to the pandemic, all forensics completions for Moorpark College students have been conducted over Zoom. The results of the competitions are as follows:

Phi Rho Pi National Championships: Individual National Champions:

**Alexandra Claunch** (1<sup>st</sup> semester) – Gold medal in Dramatic Interpretation (also won a silver medal)

**Annie Dilsizian** (2<sup>nd</sup> year) – Gold medal in Informative Speaking (also won two bronze medals)

**Jane Walgren** (1<sup>st</sup> year) – Gold medal in Informative Speaking (also won two bronze medals)

**Nicole Castro** (2<sup>nd</sup> year) – Gold medal in Impromptu Speaking (also won two bronze medals)

Other national medalists include:

**Christine Chragian** (2<sup>nd</sup> year) – Two bronze medals

**Kate Soto Gisler** (2<sup>nd</sup> year) – Bronze medal

**Maya Van Dien** (1<sup>st</sup> semester) – Bronze medal

**Samantha Endres** (1<sup>st</sup> semester) – Bronze medal

California Community College Forensics Association State Championships: Individual State Champions:

**Nicole Castro** (2<sup>nd</sup> year) – Gold medal in Impromptu Speaking (also won a bronze medal)

**Christine Chragian** (2<sup>nd</sup> year) – Gold medal in International Public Debate

**Jane Walgren** (1<sup>st</sup> year) – Gold medal in Informative Speaking (also won a bronze medal)

**Natalie Esposito** (1<sup>st</sup> semester) – Gold medal in Dramatic Interpretation

Other state medalists and team members include:

**Annie Dilsizian** (2<sup>nd</sup> year) – Silver and bronze medals

**Erin Van Vuren** (1<sup>st</sup> year) – Silver and bronze medals

**Alexandra Claunch** (1<sup>st</sup> semester) – Silver and bronze medals

**Kate Soto Gisler** (2<sup>nd</sup> year) Silver medal

**Maya Van Dien** (1<sup>st</sup> semester) – Silver medal

**Alia Leavitt** (1<sup>st</sup> semester) – Bronze medal

**Alexis Sapon** (1<sup>st</sup> semester) – Bronze medal

**Samantha Endres** (1<sup>st</sup> semester) – Bronze medal

**Christopher Ojeda** (1<sup>st</sup> semester)

“Winning our 11th national championship as a team is something we dared not dream of even two months ago, but this team has worked incredibly hard and exceeded all of our expectations,” said Petrello. “This has been a special year to be sure.”

The nationally recognized and highly successful forensics program at Moorpark College participates in 11 tournaments every academic year, including state and national competitions. Recruitment is ongoing and graduates of the communications studies program have gone on to universities such as Harvard, Cornell, UCLA, USC, UC Berkeley, Stanford and the University of Texas, Austin. Students have pursued careers as lawyers, college educators and politicians at the state and national levels.

A showcase performance of the Moorpark College Forensics team will be livestreamed on [YouTube](#) at 6 p.m. on May 7.

For more information on the team, or Communication Studies program, contact Petrello at (805) 553-4689 or [rpetrello@vcccd.edu](mailto:rpetrello@vcccd.edu).

### **About Moorpark College**

*Moorpark College is one of three colleges in the Ventura County Community College District and annually serves more than 14,000 students. Founded in 1967, Moorpark College is fully accredited and has the highest six-year completion rate within the California Community College System. The Campaign for College Opportunity named Moorpark College a 2020 Champion of Higher Education for the Associate Degree for Transfer Pathway. It is also a designated Hispanic-Serving Institution. The college's signature career/technical programs include nursing, radiologic technology, biotechnology and journalism. The college's America's*

*Teaching Zoo is the only associate degree exotic animal training program in the country. To learn more, visit [MoorparkCollege.edu](http://MoorparkCollege.edu) or follow @MoorparkCollege on social media.*

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