2017 Student Speech Contest

The Colby College chapter of Phi Beta Kappa is pleased to announce its third annual student speech contest, to be held during the Colby Liberal Arts Symposium, on Thursday, April 27, from noon-1 pm.

All Colby students are eligible to participate. Prizes will be awarded to the top three speakers: $500 for first prize; $300, for second; $100, for third.

The topic is: “In what ways can a liberal arts education enable one to sustain intellectual openness and civic engagement in the face of an increasingly polarized rhetoric in the public discourse?”

Speeches are not to exceed 6 minutes in length. Every speech must address the primary topic, though how you address the topic is up to you. Be creative; be interesting; be compelling. Humor is welcomed and even encouraged, but it must be well integrated into your response to the topic. The judges will evaluate the speeches based on content, style, delivery, and impact.

Some additional questions that may help frame your approach to this speech:

• What is the best way to balance advocating for one’s own political passions with pursuing rhetorical civility?
• What can the average person do to promote a culture of open and honest dialog in our society that encourages both individual expression and tolerance of dissent?
• What strategies can one employ to remain genuinely open to—and respectful of—positions with which one personally disagrees and for the people who advocate those positions?

Contestants will deliver their speeches in two preliminary rounds of competition between April 10 and April 20. The top six contestants will be selected to compete in the final round during the Colby Liberal Arts Symposium.

Students interested in participating will need to pre-register by 4 pm on Friday, April 7, so that we may schedule the preliminary rounds appropriately.

The first 20 pre-registrants will each receive $20 gift certificates to Pad Thai Too (contingent upon their good faith participation in the preliminary round competition).

Phi Beta Kappa is the oldest national honor society, and it honors excellence in the liberal arts and sciences. Colby has had a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa since 1896, and each year it elects to membership a handful of academically outstanding juniors and approximately 10% of the senior class, chosen on the basis of their academic achievements, good character, and demonstrated commitment to the ideals of liberal education.

Information on Colby’s chapter of Phi Beta Kappa can be found at: www.colby.edu/phibetakappa

For further information about the competition, contact Kevin Rice, kprice@colby.edu, x5763.