

To: Dr. Erika Paterson
From: Jennifer Luu **JL**
Date: February 24, 2017
Subject: *Proposal for Identifying Causes of Current Female Retention Rate in the UBC Debate Society*

Introduction

The UBC Debate Society (UBCDS) is a competitive club centred on debating and persuasive speaking. Its major goals are to bring competitive recognition to UBC and promote debate in the Vancouver community. While the club promotes a socially inclusive environment, it could benefit from increasing current female retention rate. Female debaters represent an excellent resource of debating knowledge and leadership. Their continued inclusion is greatly beneficial to the overall wellbeing of the UBCDS.

Statement of Problem

Current female retention rate in the UBCDS is an area for improvement. Retention rates of female members are unequal to their male counterparts. This represents an area of concern; diversity is valued, but there seem to be deterrents to female retention. Given the benefits of continued female membership, the club would benefit from investigating reasons for current female retention.

Proposed Solution

In the interest of club commitment to inclusivity and longevity, I propose to identify causes of current female member retention. Knowledge of the causes will be beneficial in planning actions to retain female members. I will additionally identify methods to retain female members, to improve club initiatives towards inclusivity.

Scope

I will pursue the following areas of inquiry in the formal report:

1. What are current attitudes of female members towards debate, relative to their male counterparts?
2. What are systemic attitudes about female participation in intercollegiate debate?
3. What are contributors to current female retention rate in the UBC Debate Society?

4. How can the UBC Debate Society increase female member retention?

Methods

My primary data sources will include consultations with a current Equity Officer, Hannah Goddard-Rebstein; a Diversity Committee member, Zeynep Fattah; and Executive Member Garion Hicks. I will collect consultation data in the form of anonymous responses to interview questions. I will also conduct an online, anonymous survey to assess male and female member attitudes towards debate. Finally, I will gather secondary source data from online sources. My sources will include academic publications and intercollegiate debate-related websites.

I will summarize data from my primary sources by presenting relevant verbatim quotes and visuals. Data from secondary sources will be summarized in quotes.

My Qualifications

As a two-year member of the UBC Debate Society, I am familiar with club operations and structure. I additionally worked as a Residence Advisor for UBC Student Housing and Hospitality Services, providing me with experience in developing community initiatives.

Conclusion

A more diverse representation in the UBCDS is needed to maintain an inclusive environment. In addressing the above areas of inquiry, I can identify causes of current female retention rate in the club and solutions. With your approval, I will start my research immediately.