

# Speech team training takes time

By Tim Schaffert

Potential benefits are great for members of UNL's forensic program, director Jack Kay said. This year more than 70 students make up the debate and individual speaking teams which competes on a national level.

There is intense interaction between students and faculty members involved, something rarely found in a typical college class room, he said. That interaction often leads to a professor's more personal, and therefore more convincing recommendation of a graduating student.

Most students who become involved in the program want to sharpen their analytical skills Kay said. With the exception of a few logic courses, there are no classes that specifically teach analysis, he said. The program helps students become more critical thinkers, he said.

Although the group provides especially good training for pre-law majors who make up about a quarter of the team, students from a wide variety of other colleges participate.

Time spent by team members varies, he said. A minimum of about eight hours a week is required, but students who are more committed to the team spend as much as 20 hours every week preparing for events, he said.

For the 36 regional tournaments, a topic selection

committee picks one subject to be debated throughout the season. This year's topic is "Curtailling the power of labor unions."

The UNL team normally enters five two-man teams in the regional tournaments. Each team debates both affirmatively and negatively on the given subject. After preliminary rounds, judged by team coaches, 16 teams are selected to compete in final rounds, from which the winners are chosen.

Several public debates are held locally during the season. Unlike the regional tournaments, they provide a variety of topics for debate. Some topics might include Reagan's economic affect on social programs; Vietnam veterans or the dangers of DNA research. This year there seems to be a trend towards the scientific questions, such as DNA research, Kay said.

In addition to the team competition, there are nine categories of individual speaking events. In these events students are free to choose and develop their own topics.

Over 650 colleges and universities compete in forensic tournaments throughout the country. The UNL team was ranked sixth last year out of the 220 schools in its division.

Kay credited the high number of outstanding individuals for the team's success.

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