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Dominican students attend final Presidential Debate in Las Vegas

Two Dominican students got a first-hand look at the political process this week, as they attended the third and final presidential debate held at the University of Nevada, Oct. 19.

Political science and communications major Hallie Balch '18 and business administration major Carly Holboke '17 were joined in the debate audience by President Mary. B. Marcy and Dean of Students Paul Raccanello.

Both Hallie and Carly have spent the past year immersed in politics as through their work with [College Debate 2016](#) (CD16), helping identify and discuss issues that matter to young voters nationwide. Working as a Voter Education Partner with the Commission on Presidential Debates, Dominican created CD16 to draw on technology and social media to encourage civic engagement among college. To date, College Debate 2016's social media campaign, #CollegeDebate2016, has received about two million hits from across the nation.

Both Hallie and Carly entered the debate hall hoping to hear candidates Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump discuss issues rather than resort to personal attacks.

"I think the first 30 minutes consisted of good, wholesome debate with the candidates arguing for their sides," Hallie says. "After 30 minutes, the content seemed to disappear altogether, and we were brought back into the 'he said, she said' drama that we've had all along."

For Carly, the most substantive part of the debate was the discussion about the Supreme Court. "I really liked the discussion about who the candidates would appoint as Supreme Court justices, because it was something they needed to talk about directly, and they couldn't really just bash each other on that topic," she says.

However, Carly would have appreciated more substance. "I think there was a clear winner and a loser, but I don't think I feel more informed about where candidates stand besides Hillary Clinton's stance on immigration."

As the audience is asked to remain quiet throughout the debate, both Carly and Hallie did appreciate being able to listen to the candidates without any outside distractions. "The experience is so different from watching at home," Hallie says. "We had to be quiet and not use our phones, which forced us to be present the whole time. It was really intense in there, and there's definitely something to be said for seeing the candidates in real time."

"Every moment felt surreal," Carly adds. "It was definitely a once in a lifetime experience that I will remember forever." For Hallie, the debate had a somewhat surprising result: "I went in with an open-mind - leaning more toward Trump, in fact - but came out feeling that Clinton had the upper hand. Of course there are issues I won't agree with her on, but free democracy doesn't have the ability to please everyone."

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