VP debate: a 'homecoming'

BY JESSICA DUAES

The eyes of the world were on Washington University Oct. 2 as it hosted the most anticipated vice presidential debate in U.S. history. Tens of millions in the United States and around the world watched as Sen. Joe Biden of Delaware and Gov. Sarah Palin of Alaska squared off on stage in the Field House in the University's Athletic Complex.

The vice presidential debate was Washington University's first. The University previously hosted presidential debates in 1992, 2000 and 2004.

"Coming to Washington University is a homecoming of the most special kind" for the Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD), said Janet Brown, CPD executive director, in her opening remarks before the 8 p.m. debate. "This is a remarkable campus with remarkable people."

Chancellor Mark S. Wrighton echoed Brown's later comment, attributing the success of the most recent debate — the only vice presidential showdown in 2008 — to the effort and patience of the entire University community.

"It was a great privilege for us to host the vice presidential debate at Washington University," Wrighton said. "For the hundreds of students, faculty and staff who put in countless hours to make this event a success, you have my deepest appreciation."

"Washington University has once again demonstrated that we are an outstanding institution because of the skills and dedication of the people who live, study and work in our community," he added.

Wrighton, along with Student Union President Brittany Perez, welcomed the debate audience to the Field House, home of the national champion women's volleyball and men's basketball teams.

The Field House was transformed into a plush debate stage, garbed in red carpet and presided over by a large American eagle.

A few items betrayed the room's usual purpose: the raised basketball hoops, hidden by lights and scaffolding, and a dark scoreboard as nonresponsive to the proceedings as the debate audience was asked to be.

The 90-minute debate was moderated by Gwen Ifill, managing editor of PBS' "Washington Week" and senior correspondent for "The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer."

Each candidate stood at a podium under bright lights, while the audience quietly sat in darkness, instructed not to react to either of the candidates' statements.

In answering Ifill's questions on both foreign and domestic policy, Palin, running mate of Republican Sen. John McCain of Arizona, and Biden, running mate of Democratic Sen. Barack Obama of Illinois, squared off, discussing how they would address concerns of voters if elected president.

Palin: "We need a little bit of reality from Wasilla Main Street."
Candidate stand-ins debate merits of dogs, cats, jelly

By Leslie McCarthy

A little over halfway into the debate — a ruins debater characterized by hard-nosed, back-and-forth banter between two candidates — the moderator paused, looked each person behind the podium in the eye, and asked the big question: "When it comes to making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, do you use strawberry or grape?"

"I felt really lucky knowing that I would be attending this incredible opportunity," said senior Yaël Friedman. "I knew that it would be a golden opportunity to see the debates in person and be surrounded by important politicians."

The students were bursting with excitement and were so grateful for the opportunity. Many students didn't even know they would be attending the debate live. I think the most exciting part of actually witnessing the debate live was an amazing experience.

"I was better able to focus on the debates and their political agendas," Friedman said.

Graduate student Bamidele Otemuyiwa, who pulled No. 2 in the lottery, agreed. "I felt really lucky knowing that I was going to get in." Otemuyiwa said. "I could hardly believe my luck that my name came out second out of nearly 8,000 people. Seeing the debate live was an amazing experience.

"It was really interesting to see the way the media handles the showing of the debates, and sitting on the floor with all the politicians and talking to them added to what was already a great experience," Otemuyiwa said.

Senior Frances Cole summed it up best. "For one night, Washington University was the focus of all local, national and even international media, and I got to be at the epicenter of all the action," Cole said. "I had a ticket to history!"

For the 2000 presidential debate at WUSTL, 100 students initially received tickets into the debate hall and about another 50 made it in at the last minute. In 1992, fewer than 100 students witnessed the debate live.

The answer to the aforementioned PB&J question? "I use raspberry from Trader Joe's," Friedman said with all seriousness as if he were discussing foreign policy or the tax code. "It's natural and sugar-free and good for you."

The debate continued as the candidates gestured, they bantered and sugar-free and good for you."

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"We didn't really know we were going to actually debate," Latash said. "It was hard to be up there for that long. I understand now what the candidates are going to be going through."
Working with the national news variety of aspects, including wanted to get involved in the review committee named 100 reasons for wanting to play a role. Aimee Wittman, associate director of Marketing and diplomacy, also ran for a position to the debate hall. She said, "Every minute has an assigned duty," she said. "I had the privilege to help in whatever capacity," she said.

Jennie Marchal, intern, and Aimee Wittman, associate director, both at the Career Center, staff the volunteer check-in booth during debate day. The two began coordinating the volunteer effort in January. "It is a major undertaking for the University and requires much cooperation and compromise to make it happen," Wittman said. "Since we have been through the process three times before, it is easier to anticipate and plan for the inconvenience for the faculty, staff and students. It definitely requires some flexibility from our athletes and coaches," she said. Team practices had to be relocated, but during debate day, no conflicts had to be moved. Security is a crucial part of debate preparation. Don Strom, chief of University Police, was in command of more than 600 fire and police personnel from around the region. All 45 members of his department were on duty debate day. "You do as much preplanning as you can and focus on anticipating what could happen," Strom said. "That way you are better prepared to focus on the unexpected." Parking took on special complications last week. Nick Staff, director of Parking and Transportation Services, said his department oversaw lot closures; secured off-site parking; arranged for transportation for the CPD, ticketed guests and alumni events; and posted workers throughout campus to help with pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Rob Wild, chair of the Vice Presidential Debate Steering Committee, said the special people at the University helped make the event a success.

"We have people at Washington University who know how to work together, communicate, deal with conflict and resolve difficult challenges," he said. "I think they're more proud of this team effort." For a complete list of the Vice Presidential Debate Steering Committee members, go to the University's website: www.wustl.edu/news/page/ normal/12654.html.

Student volunteers gain experience in logistics, media relations

BY BLAIRE LEISLE GARWITZ

For 200 Washington University students, the Oct. 2 vice presidential debate was not merely a historical event; it was also a way to gain valuable experience with the media and politics. More than 500 students applied to be volunteers. All volunteer candidates submitted a resume and cover letter as part of their application. In a screening process coordinated by Aimee Wittman, associate director of the Career Center, and Jennie Marchal, internship specialist, an initial group of about 200 applicants was selected by a review committee composed of representatives from all areas of the University community. Students were chosen based on their academic credentials, related experience and stated reasons for wanting to play a role in the event. In addition, the review committee nominated 100 emergency substitutes.

"It was great to see so much incredible interest by people in the University community who wanted to get involved in the debate in some significant way, and that enthusiasm certainly continued to Washington University hosting an outstanding debate," Wittman said.

Most of the volunteers were assigned to jobs that kicked into high gear the week before the debate. Students assisted with a variety of aspects, including working with the national news media, assisting with media and transportation logistics. The University also provided hospitality for a variety of guests events and campus and assisted with different efforts, including tickets, controlling security and parking.

"I volunteered because I was interested in the national news media and the debate," said Julianne Lipman, a sophomore. "I was assigned to work with the media. I was also able to learn how the press operates under stress and deadlines," she said. "I was able to see how the debate was set up and how it worked." As a media runner, sophomore Shira Solomon directed media staff and moved their equipment into the debate hall. Solomon, who is considering a career in government and diplomacy, also ran security for the CPD at a shuttle.

"Walking around with my volunteer credentials around my neck made me feel very important," she said. "I had the privilege of witnessing things I never would have been able to see through mere television broadcasting of the debate." Junior Becky Light assisted in the press office and served as a media runner.

"I volunteered because I wanted to see how the press operates under stress and deadlines," she said. "I was able to see how the debate was set up and how it worked." As a media runner, sophomore Shira Solomon directed media staff and moved their equipment into the debate hall. Solomon, who is considering a career in government and diplomacy, also ran security for the CPD at a shuttle.

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"I was thrilled to be able to see how the press operates under stress and deadlines," she said. "The view from the news trenches was eye-opening to say the least." Working alongside the Secret Service, junior Fernando Cuta helped with the security aspects. His role involved checking and securing campus and controlling access to the debate hall.

"It was so fun to learn more about the work of the Secret Service and to get to know the agents," he said. Cuta also worked security in "Spin Alley" after the debate. "Meeting Katie Couric, Sen. Joe Lieberman, Rudy Giuliani, Sen. Claire McCaskill, Sen. Kit Bond and several others was amazing," Cuta said. "I even appeared on live television being interviewed by ABC News, MSNBC and FOX News during the "Spin Alley" interviews." In addition to assisting with security, freshman Bryan Batavendel helped with media hospitality. He greeted reporters arriving at the airport, shuttled media personnel to the debate hall in a golf cart and served as an usher before the event.

"After driving "The Daily Show" John Oliver around in a golf cart with him screaming "Scumbag," I got him to autograph my American flag tie, making for a very memorable experience," he said. "All of my friends back home, especially my high-school government teacher, will hear no end of this!"

"How could I pass up an opportunity like that? I was an honor to be a volunteer on the debate floor during the actual debate, especially being just a freshman," he said. "It was something totally unexpected."
by beth miller

the excitement surrounding the vice presidential debate was electrifying, with thousands of media professionals streaming into the Danforth University Center to witness the historic showdown between Sen. Joe Biden and Gov. Sarah Palin.

"The vice presidential debate was a dream come true for one main reason," said Danforth University Center co-general manager Chris Whitaker. "This was a once-in-a-lifetime event."

The debate was a true media bonanza, with more than 3,100 credentialed journalists from around the nation converging on the campus. The combined programming, which included pre-debate coverage and post-debate press conferences, was streamed from the Danforth University Center throughout the day, giving the audience a chance to participate in trivia contests.

"It is so exciting that WUTV had the opportunity to cover something so important to the student body and the nation," said junior Brian Whitaker, WUTV co-general manager. "This was a once-in-a-lifetime event." "There are some of the most exciting vice presidential debate because of Sarah Palin," said University Political Correspondent Jo Mannies. "She is a former mayor of Wasilla, Alaska, so her presence on the national stage is significant." "Palin did a great job," she said. "She did herself, the media and the national audience proud." "This is almost too much," said Frankel. "It's a great story. This will be a fun game to get to cover it, but since we have a representative on the panel, we get to cover it." Karibjanian said.

Local media were also in force, taking in the spectacle of the "media circus" but admitting the event was exciting. Todd Frankel, a reporter with the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, was among several Post-Dispatch reporters and several Post-Dispatch photographers on hand.

"There is almost too much," Frankel said. "There are 3,100 journalists covering two people, but it's always more fun to cover a circus."

Jeff Smith, a reporter with KYDS in St. Louis, was doing stories about the street scene around campus and about Witnesses' reactions to the debate. "This is really impressive, especially how the University and the Commission on Presidential Debates have pulled this off — hudos to Sarah Palin," he said. "I think it works in the media, it's a lot of fun to see everyone here."

Major television networks that had a podium in the debate hall were ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, USA Today, Wall Street Journal and USA Today. About 42 network and affiliate trucks were on hand. Print media included The New York Times, USA Today, the Associated Press, Houston Chronicle, Houston Post, Austin American Statesman, Austin American Statesman, The Janesville Gazette, Citizen, Austin American Statesman, The Statesman and the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner. Radio networks included National Public Radio, Westwood One/CBS News Radio, ABC News Radio and USA Today. Around campus, where there were camera crews, there were student journalists, CBS' "The Early Show" broadcast live on the mornings of Oct. 2 and 3 from both Holmes Lounge in Ridgley Hall and Holmes Lounge.

"Our new setup allows for a great deal of flexibility," said Harbron. "As a public television station we want at the quality we produce, but we just can't get it." "This is almost too much," said Frankel. "It's a great story. This will be a fun time to be here, but since we have a representative on the panel, we get to cover it." Karibjanian said.
Demonstrators assembled next to debate venue.

The public viewing area on the Intramural Field provided a forum for many protesters to speak and express a variety of opinions.

Speakers included Melanie Schuss, a woman suffering from end-stage breast cancer and in need of health care; and John Johnson, father of LaVena Johnson, a soldier who died in Iraq. The cause of her death has never been investigated. John Johnson described the forensic details of his daughter's death and demanded an investigation.

Each speaker was given a mock ticket to the vice presidential debate, and at 6:22 p.m., the group began marching north on Big Bend toward the police barricade, demanding to be let in. Drums, shouts and chants to the police ensued.

At 6:35 p.m., Bill Ramsey, leader of the rally, said, "This is an empty road that leads nowhere, a space with barricades to keep people from people. Let's move from this dead space to one of forthrightness and collaboration."

The area was mostly empty at 6:59 p.m. when a group of more than 100 people wearing yellow T-shirts that read "Fire Fighters for Palin" held their own rally on the north side on Big Bend to the police barricade. They mingled casually with each other and with the police on the other side of the barricade.

"She has a tendency to use certain masculinists in order to be engaging to the audience, which might play better to some parts than others," Lowry said. "But she does that very effectively." Overall, though, Lowry said both played well to their base and neither would sway many voters. And Smith noted the irony between the debate's massive buildup versus its outcome.

"It had the potential for a big gain for his loss for her," he said, "but it turned out probably to help stem the bleeding (in McCain- Palin's case), and that's about it." Smith said, "We'll discuss this for about 40 hours, then the focus will turn to what the presidential candidates have in their next debate."

Smith said that the rapid succession of events is going to make it difficult for this debate, given how it turned out, to have a lasting effect.

"There is certainly about the only vice presidential debate, however, as Varghese noted their last questions, wrote their last columns and broadcast their last programs of the night — and as the last lights dimmed on "Spin Alley" — the drama of the election season continues.

The nonpartisan Partnership for the Public's Interest in the Media group set up pro-Palin T-shirts that read "Fire Fighters for Palin" and introduced their families to cable news shows and introduced their families to cable news shows and introduced their families to cable news shows and introduced their families to cable news shows...
Outside the Athletic Complex, Chancellor Mark S. Wrighton presents “CBS Evening News” anchor Katie Couric with a Washington University sweatshirt.

Brady Williamson (left) and Greg Jenkins, lead negotiators for the Obama and McCain campaigns, respectively, talk about their debate negotiations Oct. 1 at the “Speech, Press and the Constitution” seminar of Gregory Magarian, J.D., professor of law.

Moderator Gwen Hill, who broke her ankle in a fall, thanks senior Buck Smith (right) and junior Tim Taylor, for helping her onstage from her wheelchair before the debate. Smith, a quarter-back, and Taylor, a defensive lineman, are both members of WUSTL's football team.

Students and others make their political preferences known behind the MSNBC set next to Graham Chapel. "Hardball" Political Director Chuck Todd and Chief Foreign Affairs Correspondent Andrea Mitchell broadcast from the MSNBC set throughout campus.

Correspondent John Oliver of “The Daily Show with Jon Stewart” was all over campus Oct. 2, resulting in a funny segment that aired Oct. 6 on the Comedy Central program.

Students woke up early Oct. 2 to get to the set of CBS’ “The Early Show” at Holmes Lounge in Ridgley Hall. The program, which featured CBS News Chief Washington Correspondent Bob Schieffer and anchor Maggie Rodriguez, began broadcasting at 5:30 a.m. “The Early Show” also broadcast from WUSTL Oct. 3.
Approximately 3,100 media credentials were issued for the debate.

Student stand-ins for the candidates and moderator wait outside the debate hall before an Oct. 1 debate run-through. Seated, from left: Danny Gaynor, Julia Latash, Madeline Thoman, Lydia Beasley and Joe Cavanaugh; standing at right is Danielle Porter.

Chancellor Mark S. Wrighton welcomes Sen. Joe Biden as he arrives at the Athletic Complex to prep for the debate.

Gov. Sarah Palin greets Student Union President Brittany Perez upon arriving at the Athletic Complex. Looking on are (from right) Risa Zwirling Wrighton and her daughters Leah and Anna Schmidt. Brooke Curtiss, president of the Graduate Professional Council, is on the left.
Remote viewing sites let students in on the action

By Gwen Erickson

Three, two, one — debate. And the students gathered to watch the debate unfold at a remote viewing site. The debate took place at the 560 Music Center, one of six remote viewing sites on campus.

The debate, which was attended by about 150 students, was held in the McKeown Auditorium. The discussion was led by three faculty members of the Department of Political Science in Arts & Sciences: Clarissa Gold, editor-at-large of National Review Online and a former Pine Lawn alderwoman; and Ira Gershwin that pokes fun at the Center for the Study of American Politics.

The debate truly monumental. "This was far more fun than I thought it would be," said freshman Victor Levine, professor emeritus. "I was absolutely stunned by the level of discourse." Kovalev said. "This was a great opportunity for me to learn more about the candidates and their respective stances on issues." "In a time when we are bombarded with information, it is important to have a platform where we can dialogue and exchange ideas," added Eric Houtman, a history major in the Parkview Gardens Neighborhood. "I really enjoyed watching the debate and hearing about the candidates' positions on various issues.""Just the fact you have a free debate is very surprising for us Russians," Igor Kovalev said. "In Russia, there are only certain channels that cover political debates, and they are often biased towards one side. Here, you have a wide range of opinions and perspectives presented, which is very refreshing." "This debate was a great way to engage with current political issues and to critically analyze the candidates' stances," said Eric Houtman. "I really enjoyed watching the debate and hearing about the candidates' positions on various issues.""Just the fact you have a free debate is very surprising for us Russians," Igor Kovalev said. "In Russia, there are only certain channels that cover political debates, and they are often biased towards one side. Here, you have a wide range of opinions and perspectives presented, which is very refreshing." "This debate was a great way to engage with current political issues and to critically analyze the candidates' stances," said Eric Houtman. "I really enjoyed watching the debate and hearing about the candidates' positions on various issues."
Learning reaches far beyond classroom for students

BY NEIL SCHROENHERR

From organizing voter registration drives to attending activities and events and parties to building red and blue robots, the WUSTL student body was heavily involved in debate preparation. "Students are the ones who have organized much of the programming surrounding the debate and the election season," said Brittany Perez, president of Student Union. Students were able to appeal for funding through a special $50,000 Election Programming Fund created by Student Union, with control of the fund at the Gephardt Institute for Public Service, Campus Life and the Vice President Debate Committee. These funds helped create an impressive calendar of events from September all the way through November. "I am really amazed at all the energy and enthusiasm generated by the debate and the election itself. Students have definitely shown that they care about the issues and the youth vote is a vital force." — ROBIN HATTORI

Sophomore Adam Abadir declares victory for the red robot during one of many rock 'em sock 'em battles Oct. 2.

Rock 'em sock 'em robots duke it out on campus

Before the two candidates verbally sparred, engineering students created a set of blue and red rock em sock 'em robots that duked it out on campus before the debate. EnCouncil president Lee Cordova, a senior biomedical engineering major, and seniors Sam Wight and Matt Watkins, mechanical engineering majors, built the red and blue robots. They used durable aluminum tubing for arms, sheet metal for bodies and a backpack-like strap that allowed the robots to move around with various students managing the controls. Though no ultimate winner was determined, students enjoyed seeing the robots in action. "The colors are coincidental," Cordova said. "We gave them different colors to tell them apart. But it became obvious there was political significance." Cordova, Wight and Watkins have been working on the idea since Thurtne Carnival in the spring of 2007. "EnCouncil always comes up with games to raise money for charity, and we hatched this idea," Cordova said. "In part, it grew out of my interest in high school of making props." Many prototypes later, the group has found success. "This is our senior year, and among the three of us we wanted a design that won't have to be reinvented, as we've done," Cordova said. "These robots will be good to go for Thurtne 2010 and beyond. That's our hope."
Secret Sunshine • Aging and Retirement • Childhood Health

Exhibits
"The Religious Art of Modern Women" at the University of Pittsburgh. At 6:30 p.m.

Washington University in St. Louis

Washington University in St. Louis

University Events

Art historian Smith to discuss contemporary art and global change

By LIM OTTEN

Within a month of publishing his notionally colo-

une, "The religious art of modern Women," at the University of Pittsburgh. At 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 15


Tuesday, Oct. 14

May 13, 14

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within the university's collection of notable figures, including Beethoven and Richard Wagner. T겐주에 의해 인용된 문서는 추가적으로 채택되었습니다. 2022년 10월 6일.
Debate
Page 1
Illinois, freaked out on myriad issues ranging from the rights of same-sex couples to climate change.
While Palin lauded McCain as someone who did not always follow party lines, Biden repeatedly
commented McCain to President George W. Bush.
Biden stated the need to create a timeline for a pullout of U.S.
forges in Iraq, and Palin said it
was necessary to be satisfied with
nothing less than victory. Both stressed their connection with the
common American.
"I think we need a little bit of
reality from vanilla Manne Wall brought to Washington, D.
Palin said.
"With me in my neighborhood, go back to my old neighborhood in Claymont,
"A Mixed Media Celebration:
Washington University Invitational II.
The McWilliams Fitness Center
*why did they do that?*
Thus, the audience and lays down rules in a clear, strong voice:
"If she's in pain from her ankle she
can watch the debate on TV," she
said. "I wasn't pushed."
"I fell," she says. "I wasn't pushed.
"It's going live. Katie Couric follows a
donkey-and-elephant cookie
content and red vs. blue.
"I'm going to get you live today,
Alaska mayor and former Republican
"Hardball with Chris Matthews"
"The reason: to watch two
debate hall.
"It was a thrill just being
"I wasn't pushed."
"You can see it's the debate the audience has
come to see, and the first appear-
ance of the debate, the effort to
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"Hardball with Chris Matthews"
"The reason: to watch two
}
Athletic Complex transformed into debate site

**By RYAN RHEA**

The Athletic Complex has been the site of many thrilling sports contests, but Oct. 2, it housed a different kind of match — the 2008 vice presidential debate.

As Sen. Joe Biden and Gov. Sarah Palin squared off during the 2008 vice presidential debate, a global audience looked on, and the Athletic Complex's Field House served as a studio space suited for broadcasting this event to the entire world.

Turning a gymnasium into a studio-quality space has been no easy task. Walker, A.B. '94 (economics), now a vice presidential debate coordinator, said such exposure to the nation's highest political leaders?

Walker, J.D., who earned a law degree from Yale University in 1997, described the experience of uplifting and illuminating, humbling and exhilarating.

Meeting the candidates is a debate bonus for SU presidents, yet it is only one of the many highlights during the preparation and execution of a debate.

SU presidents engage fellow students, welcome debate ticket winners

**By TERI NAPIER**

Not one of my political heroes (Bill Clinton) and the President of the United States (George H.W. Bush) in the same day.

How many undergraduates can say they engaged in personal conversation with the other candidate?

For this year's debate, the University's SU president, Brittany Perez, Arts & Sciences, Perez said what she remembered for Nixon looking down at him, "I was so close I could feel his breath," she said, "but after being a part of the 'Educate Yourself' forum that the University provided the other day, it really just made me appreciate that experience."

For Perez, the most important aspect is keeping the temperature just right for the candidates. At the first-ever televised presidential debate — between candidates John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon in 1960 — the appearance, ease and experience were critical. The 1960 debate is remembered for Nixon looking pale and out of shape, compared to Kennedy's tanned and confident appearance.

"We try to keep it down to the low 60s," Rakers said, "and you get all the physical space as a holder of the cooler temperature, so when the heatload comes in — all the people and all the lights create a tremendous heatload — it will remain under 65 degrees."

Another consideration is acoustics. Sound typically reverberates in the gymnasium, but the carpet and drapes, aside from adding a touch of elegance, helped absorb the sound. The air ducts also were tweaked and tested to ensure that each campaign received the same amount of space as the other candidates.

"Each candidate was set up in their own booth. There was a lot of evolution in sound equipment over the years," said Steve Rackers, manager of capital projects and records in the Facilities Management Office. "So even though it's chaotic, you start to understand the order of the chaos."

"It was one of the single most involved," Perez said. "Many people outside of the SU community, whether it was administration, faculty, staff and students — we were together on such a major event."

"It was a once in a lifetime experience," said Tanya Smith, SU '07.

Beyond the debate, Perez is pursuing a doctorate in educational studies at Emory University, also spearheading a series of SU-sponsored events for the 2008 election.

"The CPD arrived at 6 a.m. Sept. 29 from the University of Washington, with the set that had been used for the presidential debate the Friday before. By the afternoon of Sept. 30, the set was raised, the stage lighting rig was set up, and more than 100 workers were on site. CPD has hosted three presidential debates in the past — in 1992, 2000 and 2004 — and prepared for one in 1996 that was canceled. The CPD staff dedicated the space to the fundraising efforts of the organization.

On that Monday, Oct. 2, Perez and her peers played into this year's planning.

"It was one of the single most involved," Perez said. "Many people outside of the SU community, whether it was administration, faculty, staff and students — we were together on such a major event."

"Brittany Perez addresses the crowd before the debate."

"Gov. Clinton spoke to (me and others) at length, he listened and he knew he heard that there were two votes in Pennsylvania."

Walker, J.D., who earned a law degree from Yale University in 1997, described the experience of uplifting and illuminating, humbling and exhilarating.

Meeting the candidates is a debate bonus for SU presidents, yet it is only one of the many highlights during the preparation and execution of a debate.

SU presidents also sit on the University-wide debate planning committee. In this capacity, they are ideally suited for hosting debates, so you can't ask for anything more.

Beyond transforming the debate venue itself, the SU presidents in the Athletic Complex were converted in order to house the media. The Recreational Gym became both the Media Filing Center (containing approximately 220 tables and portable communication outlets) and "Spin Alley," where pundits offered their views of the debate immediately afterwards.

Francis Gym, site of the 1904 Olympics, also offered workspaces to C-Span and various affiliate networks and television stations by using drapery to separate each area.

In addition, office space and classrooms throughout the building were temporarily designated to the CPD and to five major networks. Outside, 45 exterior live stand-up positions were constructed for TV interviews.

A unique factor in this year's vice presidential debate was the public and media's fascination with Palin, and approximately 3,100 media members were credentialed for the debate.

The influx of media required that additional trucks and generators be parked on the practice field, and more than three miles of network cables were required to accommodate wireless devices.

Schael praised the multifold effort of the entire University community in preparing for such an event.

"When it comes to hosting debates, SU is on top of its game with the space for any debate," Schael said. "The University has the ingredients of a champi onship team — expertise, talent, teamwork, leadership and a tradition that has an elevating power of its own," he said.