

Learning to Disagree (Sabrina Ropp)

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by

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Sabrina Ropp is the chairwoman of the Debating Club (DC) Vienna where young, ambitious people learn how to present their opinions to a critical audience. Located in the Stallburg, a part of the actual Imperial Palace in Vienna, the DC is a prestigious institution promoting political interest. Miss Ropp told The Laurel what it is that sets the DC apart from other debating clubs:

The Laurel: What 's the motivation for young people to debate and not party through the night?

Ropp: Our members are eager to improve their abilities to take the lead during a discussion. They come here for training purposes, just like they would go to the gym if they wanted to improve their physical performance. At the DC we learn how to give speeches, how to argue and how to disagree successfully and professionally. But we are also a community of like-minded people. We care about each other's development and enjoy spending the night with friends. That way it's a lot of fun as well.

The Laurel: How important is the career aspect for your members?

Ropp: Extremely important! That's not a secret, we even advertise it. The DC is not a typical American debating club. We're not interested in competitions, we focus on the training aspect. Practicing a confident and convincing body language, tone and argumentation will definitely help you in a job interview, presentation or conversation.



The Laurel: Can you draw a picture of the typical DC member?

Ropp: I don't think so. We're from very different backgrounds and fields of study with political orientations from green over conservative to socialist. That way we can benefit from our diverse perspectives. What unites us though is our passion for good performance, debating and and overall liberal mindset.

The Laurel: What makes a good speech?

Ropp: Structure, humor and objectivity. Only a well-structured speech will convey your message. Humor makes it much easier to connect to your audience. Objectivity is key if you want to be taken seriously. The Brits are very good at selling themselves, they appeal to the most different audiences and thus have more success with personal presentations. Why? Because they're taught how to do it. That's what we offer our members, so they can impress their international competitors.