

Dear Owen L. Coon Foundation,

The Northwestern Debate Team has profoundly shaped and defined both my college experience and my life. Trying to explain the importance of the team and the scholarship that I have been privileged enough to receive is nearly impossible. I will say that being at Northwestern would not have been possible without the support of the Hardy Scholarship. Receiving this support has brought tears more than once, both for me and for my family. My mother is a single parent who runs a small retail business, and I have two older brothers who are also currently in school. The difference that the scholarship has made cannot be overstated.

Participating in debate has challenged me, driven me, supported me, and rewarded me throughout my time at Northwestern. My teammates have become my family; my coaches have become my mentors. Perhaps more importantly, debate has pushed me intellectually and as a person.

I often tell my friends that debate is more work than all of my classes put together each quarter, and yet it's the work I do most enthusiastically. The competitive drive, the accountability to others on your team, and the immensely challenging nature of the game all generate the most intense commitment to anything I've ever participated in. I have learned to conduct highly rigorous logical tests of arguments; I've learned to question my own personal beliefs in a way that has made me more open-minded and less ideological; I've participated in year-long research on a topic as intensively in my freshman year as my thesis will be in my senior year; I've expanded my understanding of the world, my knowledge of the intricacies of policy making, and my appreciation for the challenges of making well-thought-out and constructive policies. All of this I owe to my participation in debate, which I in turn owe to the scholarship that has made it possible.

Thank you to all those responsible for these opportunities. I could not be more appreciative.

Sincerely,

Peyton Lee