



ANJALI GARG

Debate

It's as **highly competitive** and **intense** as any sport, with its own rules and language, fierce rivalries, rigorous preparation, and summer camps where you hope to attract the attention of college coaches. You don't have to be tall or athletic, but it does help if you can **talk really, really fast**. Debate has been the center of junior Anjali Garg's world since high school, and she credits it with opening worlds of opportunities.

"Debate has helped me be **successful** in everything I do," says Garg, a sociology major active in women's and multicultural issues on campus. "It has made me a **better student**—to think quickly, construct an argument in a coherent way, critically analyze an issue, and to know both sides of an issue. The research skills, political **awareness**, and the **confidence** it's given me have all helped me."

Garg, whose parents were born in India, grew up in Wisconsin. She found her niche when she took a debate class in ninth grade. When her family moved to Minnesota, she picked her high school based on the reputation of its debate coach. She competed in tournaments across the country, winning several, and advanced to the two most prominent national championship tournaments. By the time she attended Wake Forest's **debate camp** before the start of her senior year, she was beginning to see that debate could be her ticket to a good college. "The

debate community here was very welcoming, and there were strong women in the program who were incredible debaters. The coaches were supportive and encouraged people of all backgrounds to be a part of the program."

Debate is a **mentally challenging** and **time-consuming marathon** that lasts all year. After receiving the topic for the year from a national college debating organization, the twenty or so members of the team continuously research every conceivable issue, hone their arguments, and map out strategy for tournaments. Two person teams (Garg's partner is junior James Morrill) focus on specific issues. Garg spends up to twenty hours a week preparing for the three or four tournaments the team competes in each semester. She advanced to the elimination rounds of several tournaments her freshman and sophomore years and was voted one of the top five freshman speakers at one of her first tournaments.

Even though she still has a year-and-a-half left at Wake Forest, she's already thinking about graduate school in public administration or social policy and preparing herself mentally for that last debate. "It's been such a huge part of my life, and the scary thing is that my time is almost done. Getting up there (in front of the judges) and **talking really, really fast** and engaging in intellectual arguments, it's a scary thought that I won't be doing that anymore."