April 22, 2015

**Sean MacDonald wins Fulton Medal!**

Sean MacDonald ’17, an economics and history major from Scituate, Massachusetts, won the Fulton Medal at the 123rd annual Fulton Prize Debate held on April 16th in Gasson 305.

The topic for the debate was “Resolved: The United States should legalize marijuana.” Serving as the judges were Dr. Robert Rosenthal (Communication Dept. Chair, Suffolk University), Dr. Celeste Wells (Communication Department) and Mario Powell, S.J. (2000 Fulton Prize winner).

Debating on the affirmative side was Fisher Pressman’17, a management major from Glen Mills, Pennsylvania, and Ryan Carelli’17, a physics major from Shrewsbury, Massachusetts. Debating on the negative side with Sean MacDonald ’17, was Myles Casey, ’17, a political science major from Whitman, Massachusetts.

The affirmative side argued marijuana legalization was beneficial for two reasons. First, they claimed that legal sales of marijuana would reduce the illicit profits earned by Mexican drug cartels. Second, they claimed that marijuana prohibition was racist because minorities were disproportionately arrested for possession and use of marijuana.

To refute these points, the negative side countered that legalizing marijuana would not weaken drug cartels because they had diversified sources of illicit income. Moreover, they claimed that even under legalization, minorities would be disproportionately arrested for smoking marijuana in public. The main objection raised was that legalization would increase usage among youth and that marijuana smoking would harm the cognitive abilities of youth and result in higher dropout rates.

In a 2-1 decision, the judges voted for the affirmative side and named Sean MacDonald (the first negative speaker) as the top speaker and the recipient of the gold Fulton Medal. Fisher Pressman (the first Affirmative speaker) won second place speaker honors and received the silver Gargan Medal.

After the debate, Rita Rosenthal was honored as the 2015 Fultonian of the Year. Rosenthal was praised for her nearly twenty years of outstanding teaching and direction of the public speaking curriculum at Boston College and her unwavering support of the activities of the Fulton Debating Society.