



FIRST PERSON

my final answer!

“PLEASE LET ME BE RIGHT...”

By Renca Dunn



I breathe in and exhale out. My heart thumping hard and my stomach suddenly queasy, I pick up the mighty pen. A drop of sweat trickles down my temple, my nostrils flare, and I pray that this answer—Aristotle—will be right. I hustle to write as my time is limited. I look up and see a person standing in the middle, giving me a serious look with a hint of a smile.

“Oh no, I hope I am right, oh please let me be right, oh please!” I think to myself. A touch of light shines on a white wall and there it is. This is it, my final answer. If I don’t get this right, we lose the match. I look to my right and I see another person sitting with a laptop and a projector, holding two square pieces of colored paper, red for “no” and green for “yes”. I am praying for the green one. The person looks at my team and lifts up both colors. Then one hand descends. I close my eyes; I take a breath before I look at the extended hand with the color that says if my answer is right or wrong.

“GREEN!!”

I jump for joy! The pride inside of me shoots up like a rocket.

This is what I remember after four years of participating in the Western Regional Deaf Academic Bowl. Currently, I’m a freshman at Gallaudet University where I plan on majoring in French and English.

I was part of the Washington School for the Deaf’s Academic Bowl team. Each year we got to travel to a different state, depending on which school was hosting. We competed against schools for the deaf and mainstream programs. We met Gallaudet administrators and other well-known deaf people. But we did not just meet people, we also learned. There are usually three rounds in each match. They are all nerve-racking—and they each leave you feeling accomplishment when they are over. In all the years I participated, I never once failed to enjoy a match.

My team never actually won the regional bowl. We placed 4th or 6th out of 16 schools, but it didn’t matter. After each Academic Bowl ended, we felt like we had placed 1st. The Academic Bowl was an enriching experience full of opportunities. It contributed to my personal growth, showing me that whether you are wrong or right in a specific answer to a specific question, you still gain knowledge, opportunities, and

Renca Dunn, from Arizona and currently a freshman at Gallaudet University, was born in Hawaii. She grew up in three different states, went to three different schools for the deaf, and graduated from the Washington School for the Deaf.



Left: The author remembers her relief when the judge held up the green “yes” card signaling that a response was correct.

Photography by Hui Zhang