

## Young Debaters Take on the Topics

April 22, 2010 11:45 AM New Wave staff  
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Middle school students from several New Orleans schools will converge on the Tulane uptown campus on Saturday (April 24) for a debate tournament, the capstone event of work led by Tulane to bring about a citywide debate league.

The Tulane Department of English and Center for Public Service both are involved in the debate project that teams Tulane students with students from local public and charter middle schools.

As part of "Aristotle in New Orleans," an ambitious service-learning course at Tulane launched last fall by postdoctoral teaching fellow Ryan McBride, Tulane students have created and coached debate teams at Sophie B. Wright Charter School, Benjamin Banneker Elementary and Lafayette Academy Charter School. In addition, at least three other schools from around New Orleans are sending teams to compete in Saturday's tournament.

McBride said the topic of the debate is whether improving the levees around New Orleans should be prioritized over restoring the Louisiana coastal wetlands. Students will both defend and argue against the motion.

The tournament begins at 9:30 a.m. on the second floor of the Lavin-Bernick Center on the uptown campus and will culminate at 2:45 p.m. with the final debate and awards presentation in the Kendall Cram Lecture Hall.

Tulane launched ["Aristotle in New Orleans"](#) in collaboration with the International Debate Education Association and the Middle School Public Debate Program. Currently, 60 middle school students enrolled at Sophie B. Wright, Benjamin Banneker and Lafayette Charter are participating in the program, coached by 39 Tulane students.

McBride discusses the debate program in this [interview](#) aired on National Public Radio affiliate WWNO-FM in New Orleans.

To help teachers from any discipline start a debate team at their school, McBride is offering a free training session at Tulane on May 22. For additional information, e-mail [McBride](#).