



Debating



Free degrees or not?



Stronger rebuttals and tight teamwork win the day for Ying Wa Girls' School in the term one Hong Kong Secondary School Debating Competition debating final, writes **Wong Yat-hei**

The girls from Ying Wa Girls' School came out in favour of free university education and put forward such a convincing argument that they took home the title in the final of the Hong Kong Secondary School Debating Competition (HKSSDC), Hong Kong Island division, term one.

The Ying Wa team challenged the girls from St Paul's Convent School to the motion "that full-degree university courses here should be free to Hong Kong permanent residents".

Form Four students Nicole Cheung Shin, Ingrid Suen Hoi-ying and Kary Tu Hiu-yea supported the motion, while the St Paul's team of Form Three students Victoria Liao Jing-ting and Jasmin Tsang Ji-yau, and Erica Kwan Siu-huen of Form Four, were against it.

The affirmative side said having free university education would enable the poor to escape poverty and make society more equal.

The negative side questioned whether this policy was fair, saying only university education would be free, while other vocational training sectors were being left out. They also argued that it was unfair to expatriates, who also contributed to Hong Kong's economy, but were not eligible for free university education.

Both teams engaged in extensive

discussion over the practicality of providing free university education. Both teams engaged in extensive

rank behind Hong Kong, are able to afford it, our city surely can. The negative side thought the situation in Hong Kong could not be compared to Europe because it has a much smaller population. They believed if the city were to provide free university education, there would be a drastic rise in taxes.

The affirmative disagreed that there would be insufficient resources. They said even if university education were free, there would not be a huge increase in the number of students, because students would still have to go through a tight examination process to earn a university place.

The debate, held on January 18, was adjudicated by Stephen Cooley, Regional NET co-ordinator, NET section, Education Bureau.

In the end, Cooley gave the edge to Ying Wa because they had stronger rebuttals and demonstrated excellent teamwork. "The debaters from Ying Wa were able to refer to each other's speeches," he said. "All three speakers talked about providing equal opportunities with a free university education."

He advised the debaters to be more aware of distinguishing between arguments and rebuttals when giving their speeches. "Debaters raised several points during the debate and sometimes it was hard for the audience to know whether the speaker was rebutting or raising an argument," he said.

Nicole Cheung, from Ying Wa, was named best speaker.

Throughout the year, HKSS Debating runs six free workshops, each for about 100 students, in regional centres. Students get tips from senior debating coaches.

For more information about the HKSSDC debating competition, contact the co-ordinator, Stan Dyer, at hkssdebating@gmail.com

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discussion over the practicality of providing free university education for permanent residents. The affirmative side thought the government could afford it: Hong Kong ranks among the top in the world in terms of foreign reserves. If some European countries, which



(Above) St Paul's Convent School's Jasmine Tsang speaks during the debate.



(Above) Ying Wa Girls' School's Ingrid Suen and (left) St Paul's Convent School's Erica Kwan.



(Right) Kary Tu of Ying Wa Girls' School in action, and with winning teammates Ingrid Suen and Nicole Cheung. Photos: Edmond So



say it

permanent (adj) 永久居民	policy (n) 政策	expatriates (n) 外國人
population (n) 人口	insufficient (adj) 不足夠	audience (n) 聽眾