

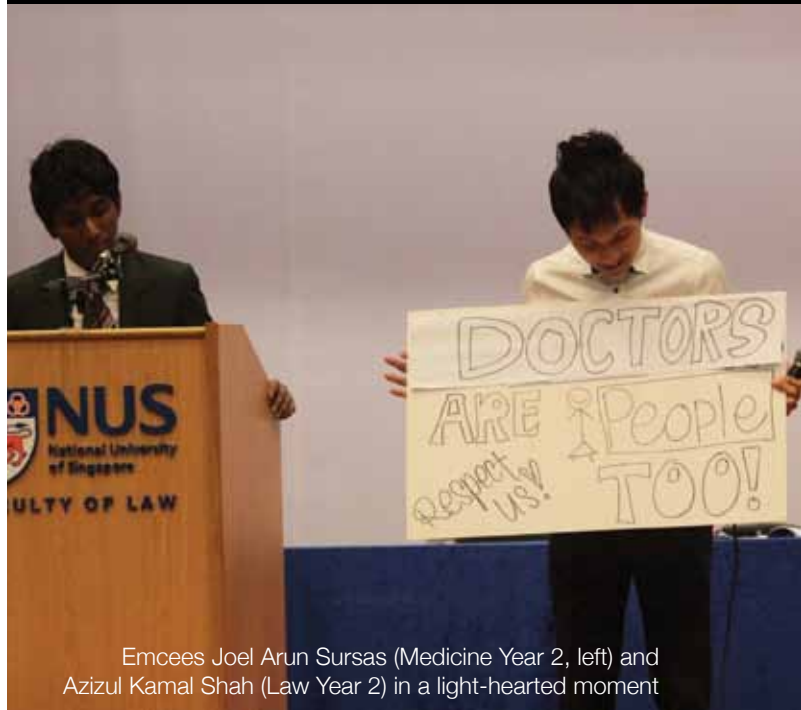
Scalpels VS Gavels

Medicine-Law Debate 2011

By Rajesh Ravi

The stage was all set for a great showdown. The hall was filled to its maximum capacity and beyond. Everyone was huddled in groups, eagerly discussing what was to come. The distinguished judges seated right in front seemed to be bracing themselves for a tough decision. Both teams were on stage looking confident and raring to go despite the tense atmosphere. Just as the debate was about to begin, the members from Team Law stood up and began pulling out a number of bags. I stood up to get a better view, just to be sure of what I was seeing. They were changing into scrubs! The crowd broke into uncontrollable laughter.

The Medicine-Law Debate was held on 28 January at the main auditorium of the Law faculty in the NUS Bukit Timah Campus. The highlight of the annual Medicine-Law Challenge, it couldn't have started in any less a comical fashion. This year an interesting tweak was made to the format: a member of the alumni was to be fielded in each team of three. For us, the choice was obvious in the fabulous A/Prof Paul Tambyah, a well-known infectious diseases expert. Under his stewardship, Team Medicine, also comprising of Sean Tan (Year 2) and Marvin Loh (Year 1), looked set to continue our winning streak in this event. Standing in our way was a determined Law team, comprising of alumni Nabil Mustafiz, and Year



Emcees Joel Arun Sursas (Medicine Year 2, left) and Azizul Kamal Shah (Law Year 2) in a light-hearted moment

2s Joshua Raj Thomas and Sadhana Raj, who were going all out for their very first win. The motion for the night was "This house votes for a party of lawyers".

Opposing the motion, Team Medicine built an argument around how doctors would make a better party, citing many reasons such as the community-oriented nature of our occupation and our selfless attitude. The Law team conceded we might be more angelic but argued that such traits do not make the better political party and instead suggested that since they

knew the law, they were better suited to lead the country. Sean cleverly crafted a reply to that suggesting that while the lawyers may know the law, they knew little about people. What ensued was an interesting and equally comical exchange of ideas that had the audience rolling on the floor.

Just to highlight one of the many funny moments of the night - at one point, the Law team listed A/Prof Tambyah's supposed credentials in trying to make a point that we took



Team Law putting on their scrubs in preparation for a major operation



The audience is all ears as Sadhana (centre) is speaking

things way too seriously. A brave soul then stood up from the Medicine side of the hall and shouted that they had mixed up A/Prof Tambyah for the equally esteemed A/Prof Joseph Thambiah, an orthopaedic surgeon! This was later confirmed to be true by the man himself. A/Prof Tambyah's eagerly awaited speech turned out to be truly golden, and many, including myself, gave him a deserving standing ovation.

After the speakers from both sides were done with their speeches, the debate moved into the rebuttal round which was notably more "serious" in tone as each team attempted to shoot down the other's argument and establish their case one last time. The judges, A/Prof John Richardson (NUS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences), Gaurav Keerthi (former President of Debates Association Singapore), Jonathan Chong (Vice-President of Debates Association Singapore), Prof Kumaralingam Amirthalingam (Law) and Dr Toh Han Chong (Medicine) then adjourned to another room to ponder over their decision while the floor was opened to the house. Students from both faculties participated enthusiastically, fielding questions and sharing some of their takes on the motion. The air was heavy with anticipation and the whole hall fell into silence as the judges returned. After a brief speech stressing that the decision was very close, the judges awarded the victory to the Law team.



Nabil (far left) and Sadhana interrupting as Sean (far right) is delivering his speech

A/Prof Tambyah was also awarded the Best Speaker Award, much to the approval and joy of the audience.

Despite the loss, Team Medicine must be commended for an excellent display of debating. Rest assured, they will be back with a bang in the next edition. Meanwhile, Team Medicine recorded impressive wins in Men's Frisbee, Women's Floorball, Men's Handball, Men's Rugby, Women's Rugby and Women's Soccer, and won the overall Challenge Shield for the fourth year running. Congratulations to all winners! **SMA**



Rajesh is a first year medical student with a keen passion for writing. His works are currently published in Pulse, YLLSoM's student magazine.



A well-deserved win: A/Prof Tambyah (right) takes home the Best Speaker Award