

Romney Debate Winner Among Penn State Students

About a dozen students gathered Penn State's Geary Hall on Wednesday night to watch the first televised presidential debate between current President Barack Obama and former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney.

The debate, which was held at the University of Denver, featured the two presidential candidates disputing over domestic issues, focusing on taxes, jobs, deficits, Medicare, healthcare, and education. Both sides highlighted the current state of the economy and the 23 million people that are currently unemployed or have stopped looking for work.

As Election Day is a short five weeks away, Obama entered the night with a small advantage over Romney, especially in most battleground states, according to a recent NBC News-Wall Street Journal post. Although the presidential debate sparked intense conversation among Penn State students, it was not clear-cut who was the winner.

Many students in the study lounge on Wednesday evening debated between themselves on who they felt presented a stronger argument throughout the debate.

Sarah Rhodes, 19, was unsure who she believed won the debate but stated that Obama had a valid point when he accused Romney of having no "specifics" about some of his plans pertaining to the economy and healthcare.

Josh Gillotti, 19, said he felt that Romney won the first of three presidential debates, although he still supports our current president. "I'm an Obama supporter, but I think Romney won tonight. I like some of Romney's opinions, but he lacks class and good manners, and that's what separates him from Obama," Gillotti said.

An overly aggressive Mitt Romney spoke over moderator Jim Lehrer on several occasions and both candidates went over time limits to express their viewpoints.

Other students also felt that Romney came off as rude and inconsiderate, while current President Barack Obama appeared more professional. Alyssa Shirley, 19, is currently a marketing major at Penn State. Shirley said she didn't know much about the election before tonight, but she felt that Romney was "unnecessarily aggressive."

Shirley also commented on the preparation of both candidates. "It kind of felt like Obama didn't really want to be there. He kept looking down at his notes the entire time," she said. Romney generally maintained eye contact with Obama throughout the evening and was well prepared when it came to the content of his information.

Obama appeared timid, and at times, unprepared.

The debate between Obama and Romney concluded with powerful closing statements. "You know, four years ago, I said that I'm not a perfect man and I wouldn't be a perfect president," Obama stated. "But I also promised that I'd fight every single day on behalf of the American people."

Mitt Romney summarized his arguments by saying there are "two very different paths" between he and Obama, affirming viewers that he plans to create jobs, lower the cost of healthcare, and not cut our commitment to the military.

As students watched the ending of Wednesday's debate, some students around the room looked disappointed while others looked overjoyed. "Democrats definitely lost tonight," was Gillotti's initial reaction. "The Republicans in the room seem pretty happy. I don't think he'll win the election, but I think Romney won tonight."

