

Coming to America

Ugandan delegation visits Ripon as part of program with National Forensic League

As part of a cultural exchange sponsored by the Open Society Foundations, the National Forensic League (NFL) recently invited to Ripon a delegation from the Republic of Uganda.

The objective of the exchange was to investigate how the NFL operates its speech and debate honor society to recognize student and teacher accomplishments.

Participating in the exchange were Gastervus (Gasta) Kakaire, high school coach at the Patron King's College Budo and president of Uganda's National Debate Council (NDC), and Ronald Rwankangi, program associate for the Open Society Foundations' Youth Initiative.

The exchange was organized by Adam Jacobi, the NFL's education and programs coor-

dinator, and included a complete tutorial of the history of the NFL's development from a select membership association to the modern, not-for-profit organization that serves about 3,000 middle and high schools annually.

Carol Zanto, finance director, gave a comprehensive tour of how the NFL processes school memberships, invoices and merchandise orders.

Scott Wunn, NFL executive director, said, "The NFL is excited by the prospect of sharing our unique model of recognizing and incentivizing speech and debate participation in a time when communication education is becoming an increasingly critical global skill for college and career readiness."

Ripon College joined the NFL

as a partner in the exchange.

Vice president and dean of the faculty Gerald Seaman invited Gasta and Ronald to participate in "The Main Thing," a symposium of college faculty for discussing a shared facet of education.

Coincidentally, the topic of discussion this semester was "speech," featuring presentations by professors Jody Roy and Rafael Salas.

Professor Jeanne Williams, department chairperson for educational studies, invited the Ugandan guests to speak to her international education class, team-taught with Professor Touorouzou Hervè Somè, originally from Burkina Faso.

After listening to Gasta and Ronald talk about the nature of schooling in Uganda, students



RONALD RWANKANGI, LEFT, and Gastervus Kakaire, second from left, listen to Adam Jacobi and Carol Zanto (foreground) explain National Forensic League operations. *submitted photo*



ADAM JACOBI, LEFT, meets with visitors from Uganda: Ronald Rwankangi, middle, and Gastervus Kakaire. *submitted photo*

asked a range of questions, from class size (up to 100 for general education courses, but 15 to 20 for specialized courses), to Gasta's favorite author: Shakespeare.

Professor Deano Pape, director of forensic activities, invited the Ugandans to sit in on practice with his students, to get a sense of collegiate forensics.

Finally, the delegates attended the theatre department's production of "The Cripple of Inishmaan," directed by Professor Robert Amsden.

The Ripon Rotary Club also hosted a reception, since several school principals in Uganda are members of Rotary International.

The three days in Ripon wrapped up with attending a Leadership Ripon seminar, facilitated by Professor Jack Christ, where the subject was collaboration.

Gasta shared an African proverb that resonated with the group, pertaining to how one person can attempt to carry a heavy log, or many people can effortlessly move it.

Ronald, who has done his master's work in leadership studies, found the seminar to be particularly stimulating, and relevant to the kind of work facing the NDC in creating a long-term organization in Uganda.

Jacobi and the delegates then headed south, driving through the Horicon Marsh, and visiting Jacobi's former school in Milwaukee, Rufus King International School high school campus, as well as the historic Milwaukee City Hall.

The group then visited Glenview, Ill. (suburb of Chicago), to observe the Northern Illinois NFL District Tournament, where they saw American debate, public speaking and literary perfor-

mance in action.

They also conversed with several coaches, and sat in on a conversation with Jacobi and several coaches who are starting a middle school league, to foster an even greater demand for communication education in the northern Illinois area.

The tour of the United States wrapped up with a debriefing session to map out a comprehensive plan to create a speech and debate honor society in Uganda, patterned after the NFL, followed by a trip to the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago.

The Ugandans said they hope to continue this philanthropic grant initiative by inviting NFL staff to help facilitate their teachers in embracing and running their honor society, and to assist in developing their national tournament.

Business



Visitors from afar

A pair of delegates from Uganda enjoyed a first-hand peek at what Ripon has to offer, thanks to the National Forensic League.

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