



Eastern Connecticut State University

# NEWS

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Contact: Dwight Bachman

Public Relations Officer

(860) 465-5114 or [Bachman@easternct.edu](mailto:Bachman@easternct.edu)

Edward Osborn

Director of University Relations

(860) 465-5043 or [Osborne@easternct.edu](mailto:Osborne@easternct.edu)

Allison Kelley, Public Relations Assistant

(860) 465-5734 or [kelleya@stu.easternct.edu](mailto:kelleya@stu.easternct.edu)

## **Eastern Students Reenact Lincoln Douglas Debates**

**Photo Caption: Honor Students Drew Mizak (left) and Luke Boyd pose with Eastern’s President Elsa Núñez at the “Lincoln’s Legacy Today” Performance.**

**Willimantic, Conn.** – In celebration of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Abraham Lincoln’s birthday, Eastern Connecticut State University senior honor students Drew Mizak of Mystic and Luke Boyd of Wallingford reenacted the renowned Lincoln-Douglas debates by presenting “Lincoln’s Legacy Today” on Feb. 9 in the Betty R. Tipton Room of the Student Center.

Arguably one of the most famous debate series of all time, the Lincoln-Douglas debates occurred in 1858 and featured Sen. Stephen Douglas running against Abraham Lincoln for the Illinois Senate seat. Douglas won that election but was defeated by Lincoln in the 1860 presidential election.

Through the help of Professor William Salka of the Political Science Department, Mizak and Boyd reenacted the debate using the work of Norman Corwin, who wrote the script entitled “The Rivalry.” Mizak, wearing an overcoat and top hat, played Lincoln, while Boyd conveyed the jovial personality of Douglas.

Boyd said the reenactment highlighted the differences between the two men, adding, “Lincoln wasn’t perfect and he did have his flaws.” Boyd also said he hoped that

the debate format allowed the audience to see “the great intellectual strength of a man with little to no formal education.”

In the role of Lincoln, Mizak highlighted a lighter side of the reenactment. When Boyd charged that Lincoln was two-faced, Mizak replied, “If I had two faces, why would I wear this one?”

During the question and answer session, an audience member asked Boyd’s Douglas if he ever imagined there would be an African American president of the United States, In character, Boyd replied, “Never!” Life in the United States has certainly changed in 150 years. *(With contributions by guest writer Andrew Powaleny '09)*

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Eastern Connecticut State University is part of the Connecticut State University (CSU) system and is the state’s public liberal arts university. ECSU serves more than 5,000 students each year on its Willimantic campus.