

Stand-up Slugs Joke Their Way Into SF Regionals

Last Thursday's qualifier chooses eight Slugs to represent UCSC in national competition

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While UC Santa Cruz may not be the campus known for its ardent ability to conjure school spirit, we Slugs may have finally found a new team to root for: the UCSC stand-up comedy team.

The team, made up of the eight winners of last week's qualifying round, will represent UCSC in the second annual Rooftop-Comedy National College Comedy Stand-up competition over the next few months.

The Santa Cruz team will face off next against San Francisco State at a club in San Francisco, and the winners will be decided by both a panel of judges and audience reaction. Four comedians from the winning team will advance in the tournament.

"[Rooftop] does a lot of things with audience voting, so we work our asses off to get our friends to show up," said second-year Scott Ferrerter, a member of the team. "The audience will decide whether San Francisco or Santa Cruz moves on, so it's their home turf, and they have the advantage."

Still, Ferrerter is confident the team will do well, and that the tournament's new rules — each school's team working together, rather than a free-for-all — would help, he said.

"San Francisco is the West Coast hub for comedy," Ferrerter said. "I think we can get them if we get together, work out our stuff."

Besides Ferrerter, the UCSC group is made up of Rosie Borchert, Zack Feigenbaum, Nathan Habib, Christopher Herme-

lin, Chris Hopkins, Fred Le and Stacy Medof.

Jennifer Corbett, a Rooftop staffer who helped organize the UCSC competition, said that the turnout on campus was impressive, and that 17 people competed for spots on the team.

"We're trying to bring comedy out to college campuses," Corbett said. "It's a ton of fun for us, because it attracts a ton of young, fresh comedians."

Corbett also attended the UC Berkeley competition, and only eight people turned out to vie for the eight spots on the team, she said.

"I was just shocked by how many people tried out at UCSC," she said. "We packed the Kresge Town Hall."

The tournament, which encompasses 32 colleges throughout the country — including UC Berkeley, UC Santa Barbara, UCLA, Stanford and three Ivy League schools — pits the teams against each other in an effort to find the "funniest college." The top four teams, four comedians from each, will perform at the finals in Aspen, Colo. this June.

Ferrerter regularly hosts comedy events at BarnStorm shows on campus. These shows helped convince Rooftop to include UCSC in the tournament, he said.

"The Barn has a wonderful reputation," Ferrerter said. "We're actually able to get a lot better comedians than we should, considering what we pay them."

A stand-up comedy class was offered from 2003 to 2006. Recently there has been a lot of interest in restarting the class, said Patrick North, an assistant in the theater arts department.

"It was so popular, we actually offered two sections of the same lecture, because there was so

much demand for it," North said. Because these classes were in the 80 series, he added, non-theater majors could take them. "They sort of serve the whole campus in a way. They're really good classes for getting students interested, for reaching out around campus."

Each comedian also brings a unique personality and style to the table.

"I'm more of a physical, kinda ghetto booty pop comic," said team member Rosie Borchert, a third-year film and digital media major. "So I'm kinda all over the place."

Brian Hickey, who graduated from UCSC last spring, recently moved to New York City to pursue his dream of being a comedian.

"Everybody's got bad jokes," said Hickey, who made it to the second round in last year's Rooftop competition. "I think that's why most comedians are psychologically damaged, like me."

As far as getting the courage to perform, Hickey described the Santa Cruz community as very supportive for new comedians.

"Just get on stage," he said. "Stop telling your friends you're better than the guy on TV, and go do it."

No matter what, comedy will continue to have a place in the community members' hearts, Ferrerter said.


"[My friends] aren't doing me any favors when they come to the Barn shows, they come because they want to laugh," Ferrerter said. "I don't think that laughing will ever go out of style."

Follow the Slugs' progress at RooftopComedy.com/college/standup.




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