

## Campus tunes in to final debate at watch party

By Lisa Berkman / Correspondent | Posted: Tuesday, October 23, 2012 12:00 am

The Youth Political Participation Program hosted a “Popcorn and Politics” debate watch party last night, which featured separate rooms for CNN, MSNBC and FOX News coverage.

Elizabeth Matto, director of the Youth Political Participation Program, said though President Barack Obama was in the lead just a month ago, the race has come incredibly close in the past few weeks.

“There aren’t that many undecided voters left out there, but there are a lot of voters who aren’t sure if it’s worth turning out on Election Day,” she said. “The biggest impact of these debates is to either encourage or discourage people to actually turn out.”

Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney said President Barack Obama did not take a stronger leadership role internationally and is harming the country’s stance by going into the background.

“We want a peaceful planet,” Romney said. “We want people to enjoy their lives and know they’ll have a long and prosperous future. That’s our goal, and the responsibility has fallen to America. It requires us to be strong.”

Romney said the president’s behavior in the global sphere is harmful and that his tour in the Middle East degraded the U.S. image through apologizing.

“You said on national television that America had dictated other nations,” he said. “Mr. President, America has not dictated other countries. We have freed other nations from dictators.”

Obama labeled Romney’s political ideologies as impulsive and outdated — a fault that can reverse the country’s progress.

“You said Russia was the biggest geopolitical threat,” Obama said to Romney. “The war has been over for 20 years. You want to impose the foreign policies of the ‘80s, the social structure of the ‘50s, and the economy of the ‘20s.”

Romney said he only called Russia a geopolitical threat, and identified Iran as the greatest national security threat.

Obama said Iran would not have a nuclear weapon as long as he is in office.

“I said that the moment I came into office,” Obama said. “I put in place the strongest sanction against Iran in centuries. It’s crippling their economy.”

Romney was criticized for his diplomatic gaffes over the summer as he visited Israel, Poland and Britain to gain international support. Matto said the Republican nominee still needs to prove he is worthy in this area to get the American people on his side.

“He doesn’t have that much foreign policy experience to demonstrate,” she said. “People might have some doubts. He has a responsibility to demonstrate to voters that he can be a dependable and reliable leader.”

Romney also argued Obama’s budget cuts are dangerous, as they have decreased the amount of certain military supplies that have been a high priority since Franklin D. Roosevelt’s presidency. But Obama said the country should not hold on to the obsolete policies of the past.

“We also have fewer horses and bayonets,” Obama said. “The question is not a game of battleship. It’s what our capabilities are ... That is not reflected in the kind of budget that you’re putting forward, because it just doesn’t work.”

But both agreed the domestic economy needs to improve for America to maintain a strong presence in the world.

Romney said Obama is all talk, as he has not seen results the president has promised. Obama predicted to have a 5.4 unemployment rate by this point, but the country is 9 million jobs shorter than that.

“I’m a businessman,” he said. “I know what it takes to create 20 million jobs. I saw in the last four years something I don’t want to see in the next four years. I’m going to get Americans working again.”

Romney said it is essential to have an economic partnership with China, but it is difficult to get on equal footing with Obama’s policies. The United States owes other countries approximately \$16 trillion, he said.

“China has an intention that’s very much like ours in one respect — they want a stable world,” he said. “They don’t want war. They don’t want to see protectionism. We can collaborate and we can work with them if we’re willing to be responsible.”

Obama said Romney would not be able to afford his own financial plan, and that he would actually worsen the debt problem. Romney plans to implement a \$5 trillion tax cut with a \$2 trillion increase in military spending.

“You can’t spend \$2 trillion in additional military spending and \$5 trillion on tax cuts,” he said. “You can’t say you’re going to accomplish this by closing the loop holes and deductions without naming them.”

Lukas Keller, a graduate student in the Department of Political Science, said he was disappointed the debate hardly broached the topic of Europe’s political influence.

“I thought it was a shame that Europe wasn’t mentioned in the foreign policy debate,” said Keller, who is from Germany. “I thought that some mention could have been done on that continent.”