The QMUL expedition fund allowed me to take part in a 10-day debating tournament in Athens called the EUDC (European Universities Debating Championships), as a part of QMUL Debate Society.

**Arrival:**

I arrived in Athens on the 31st of July. From then to the 3rd of August, my partner, George Duggan, and I, became acquainted with the city and did a lot of prep work for the tournament. George and I were fortunate enough to be the only QM team at the competition, providing us with the opportunity to become better acquainted with each other as debaters and as people. We spent hours perfecting our prep time, wrote several speeches, and did vast research on current affairs in order to prepare for the competition. We also got to enjoy the sites of Athens and socialized with other debaters from around Europe.

**EUDC:**
On August 4th, the first official day on the competition, we had to register with the organization and there were workshops all afternoon that both George and I attended in an effort to improve our skills. On the 5th, the competition began. EUDC was a 3 day (August 5-7) competition that would start at 9 and end at 6 every day. There were 3 rounds of debating each day with a lunch break and a social at the end of the day. Once we would arrive at the venue, which was an international school near the hotel, we would go straight to hear the announcements. The following is a breakdown of the motions on each day, as well as our ranking within the room.

Day 1:

- Motion: THBT Greece should introduce significant financial incentives for companies and individuals currently based in Athens* to relocate to other Greek cities *Over a third of the Greek population lives in Athens.
  
  Ranking: 4th

- Motion: THBT it is in the interest of the Chinese Communist Party to cease attempts to infringe on "One Country, Two Systems" in Hong Kong, rather than continuing its current approach.
  
  Ranking: 4th
- Motion: THW encourage women to be selfish
  Ranking: 1st

Day 2:
- Motion: THBT it is in the interest of dominant organised religions for their leaders to declare more progressive interpretations of traditional dogma* e.g. on dietary and pilgrimage requirements, the acceptability of contraception, same-sex relationships
  Ranking: 4th
- Motion: THBT consumers should predominantly aim to buy locally produced goods and services
  Ranking: 3rd
- Motion: THW break up Disney
  Ranking: 1st

Day 3:
- Motion: THBT schools should teach children to be skeptical of parental authority
  Ranking: 2nd
- Motion: In circumstances where a unanimous decision is currently required, THP majority voting as the European Council's decision-making approach
  Ranking: 2nd
- Motion: THW make police commanders personally criminally liable for instances of police brutality committed by their subordinates
  Ranking: 3rd

These 3 days were the highlight of my 5-year run as a debater. Following the 3 days of debating, there were feedback workshops and quarter final competitions on the 8th of August. My partner and I went to the workshops but opted out of the debates to go with other teams who did not break into the quarter finals, into the city. On the last day, the 9th, there was the final debate. It was a black-tie event at a 5 star hotel in downtown Athens that everyone attended. Once the debate had finished, we were taken to the final night social where they revealed the results of the competition over the past week and we had one last night to
socialize with everyone. On the following day, the 10th of August, George and I flew out of Athens; him back to the UK, and I back to the U.S.

Reflection:

My time in Athens this summer was life changing. I got excellent feedback, improved with each passing day, and felt that I was a better debater and a better person for it. It was a moment where I knew that my life had been changed for the better. I had become great friends with someone I really look up to and got to see the fruition of years of debating, starting when I was back in 9th grade. I knew that it was the end of the road, but also a new beginning. I felt revitalized in the world of debate; my passion was rekindled and my enthusiasm to train and get better and work for it only increased in the months since EUDC. It was a time in my life I will always cherish and the opportunity of a lifetime I wouldn’t have been able to participate in without the Bursary Expedition Fund.