

Overflow Hampton U. crowd watched Trump-Clinton debate

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By Kyla Wright

Thirty minutes before **first debate** Monday night between U.S. presidential hopefuls Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, Hampton University students filled the Student Center theater to standing-room-only capacity by 8:30 p.m.

At right, Hampton U. students watch the presidential candidates' debate from Student

Center atrium. An overflow crowd packed the Student Center theater Monday night. [Photo by Mecca Evans]



Des'Tini LaGrone, a junior journalism major, Spanish minor from St. Louis, said, "I hope that a lot of students are tuning in, because this is not only affecting our future, but our children's futures as well." LaGrone said she focused on hearing about the candidates' views on student loan debt and education overall.

The Greer Dawson Student Leadership Training Program and the Gamma Iota Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. hosted, "Dissecting the Debate: Watch and Discuss."

Representatives from Planned Parenthood urged students to remain informed and involved in this election. They also asked for volunteers for the Hillary Clinton campaign office in the Harbors Shopping Center. After having brief discussions with students, the televised debate from Hofstra University in New York began. The local hosts invited the crowd to tune in on Twitter using the hashtag **#HUIDebateWatchParty**.

Pearis Bellamy, a junior psychology major from Turnersville, New Jersey, and a member of the Student Leadership Program as well as Delta Sigma Theta, Sorority, Inc., said, "It is important for our students to be engaged and becoming informed about the candidates' opinions affecting us. We must be informed voters."

Some students said they are anxious about this debate and the upcoming election, seeing that the stakes are pretty high. **Daija Rivers**, a sophomore kinesiology major from Philadelphia, said she started the "White Hall voter registration challenge" a few weeks ago. She started this challenge to

encourage and inform students in her dormitory about registering to vote in addition to staying on top of the candidates.

"Our generation has to understand that we have stepped into a debate that could make or break our future," said Rivers, "so voting and being mature during this time is vital."

After the 90-minute debate, at 10:35 p.m. both host organizations led a panel discussion with two Hampton students and an HU Police Department officer. There was talk about the debate, and the panelists urged students to vote, and offered these pointers:

- The black vote is essential to this election
- If you don't vote, you are giving up your voice
- Make sure you pick the candidate that aligns to your views

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