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For Immediate Release

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**COMMISSION ON PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES ANNOUNCES
JOIN THE DEBATES, AN ONLINE PROJECT FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WORLDWIDE,
RUN IN COLLABORATION WITH EXPLO**

This election season, in cooperation with the Commission on Presidential Debates, EXPLO is coordinating an initiative to encourage productive conversation about political and civic issues. The project, *Join the Debates*, will bring together high school students from across the United States and the world. Trained college and university students hailing from the University of Denver, Centre College, Hofstra University, and Lynn University, host sites for the 2012 presidential and vice-presidential debates, will facilitate many of these discussions.

Moira Kelly, Executive Director of EXPLO, explains the genesis of Join the Debates: “Many of us have been concerned about the poor state of public discourse around political and civic matters. The goal for Join the Debates is to directly engage young people in meaningful conversation and demonstrate that reasonable people can disagree -- and that there’s a civil way to make that happen.”

Following each of the presidential and vice-presidential debates, small diverse groups of high school students will gather online for about an hour to discuss the debates and their responses.

The conversations will take place at 11:00pm Eastern Standard Time on October 3, 11, 16, and 22.

For more information on the project and to register as a student or facilitator, visit:
www.jointhedebrates.org

Commission on Presidential Debates was established in 1987 to ensure that debates, as a permanent part of every general election, provide the best possible information to viewers and listeners. Its primary purpose is to sponsor and produce debates for the United States presidential and vice presidential candidates and to undertake research and educational activities relating to the debates. The organization, which is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) corporation, has sponsored all of the presidential debates since 1988.

EXPLO, as part of Exploration School, was established in 1977 and since then, more than 55,000 students from every state and more than 60 countries have participated in its innovative summer programs. Explo’s mission is to inspire students to discover the world of people and ideas, to respect the differences that make us individuals, and to find the common ground that makes us a community.

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