

# Forensics as Communication

## The Argumentative Perspective

James H. McBath, Editor

Published by  
National Textbook Company  
in conjunction with the  
American Forensic Association  
and the  
Speech Communication Association





## CONTENTS

PREFACE	v
I FOUNDATIONS OF THE CONFERENCE	
National Developmental Conference on Forensics	
<i>George W. Ziegelmuehler, Conference Director</i>	1
II RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED BY THE CONFERENCE	9
Definitional Statement	11
Future Goals and Roles	12
Theory and Practice	22
Research and Scholarship	34
Preparation, Status, and Rewards	41
III KEYNOTES TO THE CONFERENCE	51
The Issues of Forensics	
<i>Scott Nobles</i>	53
Research Needs in Forensic Communication	
<i>Samuel Becker</i>	59
Project Delphi:	
Assessment of Value Judgments on Forensics	
<i>John C. Reinard and John E. Crawford</i>	63
IV POSITION PAPERS AND RESPONSES	81
Future Goals and Roles of Forensics	
<i>Malcolm O. Sillars and David Zarefsky</i>	83
Theory and Practice in Forensics	
<i>Annabel D. Hagood</i>	101
<i>William M. Reynolds</i>	111
Research and Scholarship in Forensics	
<i>Richard D. Rieke and Bernard L. Brock</i>	129
Professional Preparation, Status, and Rewards	
<i>Lucy M. Keele and Kenneth E. Andersen</i>	143



V	PROSPECT	163
VI	APPENDIX	167
	Timetable of Major Events	169
	Criteria for Selecting Task Force Assembly Participants	171
	Task Force Participants	171
	Conference Planning Committee	174
	Special Rules of the Action Assembly	175
	Conference Policies and Schedule	176
	Summary of Leadership Conference	178

## PREFACE

The National Developmental Conference on Forensics proposed no less than to chart future directions for forensics education. In this book we have tried not simply to report outcomes but to convey the deliberative processes by which they were reached. The give-and-take of argument is reflected in both recommendations and conclusions. Although some recommendations were adopted unanimously, consensus was achieved through lengthy committee discussion and in floor debate. Recommendations are accompanied by rationales intended to clarify the meaning and illuminate the underlying reasons for the recommendation. At critical points in the deliberations, conferees found it necessary to settle on definitions before productive discussion could proceed; at other times they determined the need for a major statement on policy. While the recommendations pertain to action commended to individuals or organizations, the policy statements represent action taken by the conference.

In preparing this book, extensive use was made of taped recordings of the proceedings. The editorial board often consulted them to clarify the language of the participants and the context of exchanges in order to determine the meaning intended by participants.

That the conference relied on the contributions of many people goes without saying. A planning committee that included Robert Boren, Forrest Conklin, Donald Cushman, James McBath, Frank Sferra, and George Ziegelmüller worked more than a year in launching the conference, settling on participants, issues, and procedures. Robert Hall, associate executive secretary of the Speech Communication Association, contributed sound judgment and professional assistance in all phases of the conference. Public leaders provided estimates of their forensics experience.

All participants are contributors to this volume. Authors of position papers anchored the conference, stimulating its thinking and guiding the discussion. Writers of response papers tested the position statements; their responses are best conveyed in excerpts organized by the issues they ad-

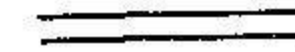


addressed. A small group of conference reviewers—Kenneth Andersen, Bernard Brock, John Greg, and David Zarefsky—served as the editorial board for this volume. They drafted rationales, nominated response excerpts, and joined the conference director and me in making countless editorial decisions. Finally, and especially, I want to acknowledge the leadership of George Ziegelmüller, director of the conference. From his writing of the original proposal, through every step of its development, he was a prime mover of the conference.

The significance of the work at Sedalia is yet to be measured. It will be seen in improvements effected in forensics education.

James H. McBath  
University of Southern California

# I



## FOUNDATIONS OF THE CONFERENCE



## NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTAL CONFERENCE ON FORENSICS

George W. Ziegelmüller  
Conference Director

Over the course of centuries, the nature of forensics instruction has undergone many changes. The practical, legal instruction of the Sophists and the truth-seeking dialogues of the Greek philosophers gave way to the more oratorical *suasoriae* and *controversiae* of the Romans. These, in turn, were replaced by the formal disputations of the Middle Ages and early Renaissance. The eighteenth century gave rise to the literary and debating societies, and in the latter part of the nineteenth century intercollegiate debate contests first were held. By mid-twentieth century the primary medium of forensics instruction had become the forensics tournament.

Argumentation theory, like forensics practice, has evolved gradually and uncertainly through the centuries. Logical proof was a central concept in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. Although it continued to be featured in Roman and later Latin rhetorics, logical proof was not given the same prominence as in Aristotle's writings. During the late Middle Ages, however, there was a renewed interest in Aristotelian logic, and it influenced the concept and conduct of disputation, the chief form of argumentation study and performance in universities until the rise of debating societies in America. From the late seventeenth through the early nineteenth centuries such philosophers as Francis Bacon, John Locke, and John Stuart Mill worked to develop theories of inductive proof. It was not until the late nineteenth century that the first contemporary textbooks devoted exclusively to the study of argumentation and debate appeared.

### CURRENT FORENSICS SCENE

Given the variety of emphases that characterized the evolution of argumentation theory and forensics education, it is not surprising that there is considerable diversity within the current American forensics scene. At the present time, both formal classroom instruction and beyond-the-classroom activities programs are used widely as instructional settings for

---

George W. Ziegelmüller is Professor of Speech Communication, Wayne State University, and was conference chairman.



argumentation and forensics education. This classroom instruction is often performance oriented with special emphasis on debate training. Sometimes, however, the instruction is primarily theory oriented with little or no emphasis on oral performance. The activities programs may be *competitive* (tournament oriented) or *noncompetitive* (audience oriented) or a combination of both. Even among competitive programs there is likely to be a considerable difference in the level of competition emphasized. Some programs compete primarily on a local or regional basis, while others favor a more intense national level of competition.

Diversity in the American forensics scene is not limited only to the instructional setting but is also characteristic of training experiences. Students may receive forensics training through debate or individual events or both. Debate training may involve experience in traditional debate, Lincoln-Douglas debate, cross-examination debate, or parliamentary debate. Individual events instruction may include oratory, manuscript speaking, extemporaneous speaking, impromptu speaking, humorous interpretation, serious interpretation, after-dinner speaking, student congress, choral reading, or any of a number of other events.

Instruction in forensics has, over the years, been most readily available at the high school and college levels. However, forensics education currently is expanding rapidly at the junior college and community college level, and in some areas forensics activities programs are being developed at the junior high and elementary levels.

These differences in instructional setting, training experiences, and levels of education are among the more observable differences within the current forensics scene. Beneath these externals, however, are more fundamental differences in educational goals and argumentation concepts. The goals of forensics education may be seen as primarily rhetorical or primarily dialectical. If the goal is *rhetorical*, then the aim is to train skilled public advocates. If, on the other hand, the goal is *dialectical*, the aim is to develop skill in analysis or information processing. Again, depending upon the educator's philosophy, forensics may be viewed as a game, as a simulation, or as real life.

Differences in points of view regarding basic argumentation concepts also exist. Some argumentation experts, for example, believe that argumentation theory and practice should be based on the legal model; others argue for a policy model; and still others argue for a multiplicity of models.

#### ORIGIN OF DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECT ON FORENSICS

While some variety of perspectives is desirable within any discipline, in recent years the extent and degree of diversity within the American forensics scene have created misunderstandings of concepts, confusion of goals,

and conflict of interests. It was, in part, in response to these conditions that a group of interested forensics educators convened the Western Forensics Conference. Held on the campus of California State University, Fullerton in May 1971, this meeting was intended to be exploratory, rather than problem solving, in nature. At the conclusion of the conference it was recommended that a national developmental conference on forensics "be convened for the purpose of exploring ways to improve forensics education as an academic resource for the American educational community."

The following December, the Legislative Council of the Speech Communication Association and the membership of the American Forensic Association committed their organizations to the establishment of a national developmental project on forensics, and appointed a joint planning committee. The major forensics honorary societies and many regional organizations also endorsed the need for such a project.

During the initial phase of its work, the planning committee received financial assistance from the Speech Communication Association and the American Forensic Association. In January 1974, a major supporting grant was received from the Axe-Houghton Foundation. Token financial assistance also was received from Delta Sigma Rho-Tau Kappa Alpha, Pi Kappa Delta, the Southern Forensic Association, and the Colorado District of the National Forensic League.

#### NATURE OF THE FORENSICS CONFERENCE

In conceptualizing the developmental project on forensics, the planning committee attempted to develop a format that would be particularly appropriate to the circumstances and needs of the forensics community. Therefore, the committee sought procedures that would (1) assure the availability of descriptive data concerning the current forensics scene and trends, (2) permit broad based and representative input from within the entire forensics discipline, and (3) promote agreement while not avoiding genuine conflict of ideas. In order to achieve these objectives a three-phased project was devised.

*Commissioned Research.* The identification of current emphases and trends in forensics, the comparison of programs, the evaluation of outcomes, and a variety of other related questions require access to reliable data. Although some research data were available on selected aspects of forensics education, all of them were dated and/or limited by relatively narrow focuses of investigation. Thus, the need for some specially commissioned research studies became apparent. In January 1973, a select group of scholars in the field was asked to undertake six major research projects. These six projects and their investigators were:

"A Description of High School Forensics Programs," Betty Anderson and Irene Matlon



- "College Forensics in the United States—1973," Richard Rieke
- "Attitudes towards Forensics," W. Barnett Pearce
- "The Behavioral Effects of Forensics Participation," Edward L. McGlone
- "A Critical Review of the Behavioral Research in Argumentation and Forensics," Kenneth E. Andersen

These studies were completed within ten months, and the results were reported at the 1973 Speech Communication Association Convention. The studies also were printed in a special expanded issue of the *Journal of the American Forensic Association* (Winter 1974).

*Developmental Conference Year.* The second phase of the project utilized the concept of a Developmental Conference Year. This concept was devised to encourage serious reflection about forensics throughout the discipline and to provide an opportunity for maximum input from a broad spectrum of forensics educators. The diversity of perspectives within the forensics discipline recommended such a broadly based approach.

The period from November 1973 to September 1974 was officially designated as the National Developmental Conference on Forensics Year. During this period, reflection was stimulated and the opportunity to share ideas was provided through special Developmental Conference on Forensics programs held at the SCA national convention, at each of the four regional speech communication association conventions, and at several state speech communication conferences. The format for these programs combined the presentation of formal papers and audience buzz group sessions. Individuals presenting papers and buzz group participants were instructed to identify and discuss their conceptions of the major, current issues in argumentation and forensics. The formal papers and reports from the buzz groups were used later in identifying topic areas for phase three of the project. Copies of the papers and group reports were sent to all participants in phase three for use as resource material.

*Task Force Assembly.* The third phase of the developmental project was the Task Force Assembly. The assembly was designed to serve as a focal point for the developmental project. The tasks of reconciling theoretical and practical conflicts, of proposing specific policy recommendations, and of charting directions for the future of forensics were the obligations of the assembly.

The selection of assembly participants was based upon letters of nomination, professional vitas, and conformity to predetermined criteria.<sup>1</sup> The names of Task Force members were announced four months prior to the actual convening of the assembly so that the participants would have sufficient preparation time. Task Force members were urged to read all the background papers and reports generated during the earlier phases of the

project. In addition, they were required to prepare either a position or a response paper, and they were asked to respond to a series of Delphi questionnaires.

*POSITION AND RESPONSE PAPERS.* The programs and discussions held during the first part of the Developmental Conference Year helped to identify four major areas of concern within the forensics discipline: roles and goals; theory and practice; professional preparation, status, and rewards; and research and scholarship. Each task force member was assigned to one of these four problem or task areas, and a chairperson and a reviewer were designated for each task group. The chairperson and reviewer were asked to prepare a joint position paper that would identify issues within their problem area and suggest directions for possible assembly action.

In designating chairperson-reviewer teams an effort was made to select people who would view their task area from different—perhaps even opposing—perspectives. It was hoped that through the process of preparing joint position papers the chairperson-reviewer teams might begin the processes of establishing common ground, identifying fundamental conflicts, and reconciling differences.

The completed position papers were sent to the other task force members two months before the assembly meeting, and each was asked to prepare a response to the paper written by the chairperson-reviewer team of his or her assigned task area. These response papers were collected by the project director who mailed copies to all task force members two weeks prior to the assembly meeting.

*PROJECT DELPHI.* To encourage additional preconference deliberation and to further facilitate the establishment of common ground, the identification of fundamental conflicts, and the reconciliation of differences, task force members were asked to participate in Project Delphi.<sup>2</sup> This project consisted of a series of four questionnaires. The first questionnaire asked each respondent to record statements that expressed his or her views regarding selected aspects of forensics. The statements thus generated were refined to eliminate overlapping, and a new questionnaire was prepared. This second questionnaire asked the task force members to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement with each statement. The rank order for all statements and the percentage of consensus for each ranking were computed. Each conferee then was informed of how his or her evaluation of each statement compared with the other task force members, and a reevaluation of each statement was requested. At the time of this reranking each participant was asked to phrase a brief supporting argument for each position taken that was at odds with the group trend. The rank order of all statements and the percentage of consensus were computed again. Each task force member again was informed of his or her divergence or con-

# II

## RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED BY THE CONFERENCE



---

## DEFINITIONAL STATEMENT

The term *forensic* was used in classical times to mean that kind of speaking which took place in the court of law and was concerned with decisions about justice. In modern times, *forensics* has been used in the secondary school and college settings as an umbrella under which a wide variety of speech activities are conducted, primarily in contest form.

Multiple forensics communities now exist, and forensics programs vary according to educational levels, schools, locales, kinds of students, and the priorities and talents of individual directors of forensics. Nevertheless, we have the strong conviction that various forensics communities can unite in significant ways if they endorse and pursue the overarching objective of providing students with experience in learning to communicate with people. To this end, the conference seeks to conceptualize the fundamental nature of forensics.

*Forensics is an educational activity primarily concerned with using an argumentative perspective in examining problems and communicating with people. An argumentative perspective on communication involves the study of reason giving by people as justification for acts, beliefs, attitudes, and values. From this perspective, forensics activities, including debate and individual events, are laboratories for helping students to understand and communicate various forms of argument more effectively in a variety of contexts with a variety of audiences.*

This perspective neither automatically includes nor automatically excludes any particular activities; rather, it is a perspective useful in seeing the conceptual framework that is central to and unifies all forensics activities. It also gives direction to future development. This view presupposes that people often choose to express their conclusions about the world and to present their arguments in a variety of forms, including literary and aesthetic expression as well as instrumental communication. This is not to say that all communication is primarily or even essentially argumentative, but it is to say that forms of communication may be approached from an argumentative perspective. The forensic function of the orator, the reader, or the debater is to identify and communicate the argumentative dimension.

---



## RECOMMENDATIONS ON FUTURE GOALS AND ROLES

The conference was concerned initially with the formulation of a statement defining forensics. Some members suggested a statement simply listing the contest activities customarily grouped under the term *forensics*. They reasoned that to do otherwise would cause high school and community college teachers to believe that large portions of their programs were being dismissed by the conference. Some argued that many individual contest activities should be dismissed; others, that an ambiguously worded statement could accommodate them. Ultimately, it was decided to formulate a definition that neither automatically included nor excluded any competitive events, but instead designated a perspective from which to study communication. The shift in thinking from forensics as *activities* to forensics as *perspective for scholarship* profoundly influenced subsequent deliberations.

Conferees sought to identify goals for forensics by asking: "What abilities ought students of forensics to develop?" and "What attitudes and philosophical commitments should the study of forensics engender?" Answers to these questions were suggested by implications of the definitional statement, results of Project Delphi, suggestions of other conferees, and the personal concerns of members. Little disagreement ensued in answering these questions, except with regard to wording.

The other major focus of the members' attention was the means by which goals could be achieved. From this focus were generated the questions: "How can opportunities be structured so that students may achieve the goals we have outlined?" "What roles can scholars and teachers play which will be most conducive to achieving the goals?" Answers referred to the nature of curricular offerings, the range of extracurricular opportunities, the audiences to whom forensics is addressed, and the impact of forensics on public affairs. The resolutions adopted represent proposed answers to these questions about goals and roles.

1. **Opportunities for experiences in forensics should be provided for as many people as possible by developing programs that are responsive to changes in the composition of student populations and to their emerging needs in other settings, and by adjusting the demands of instruction in forensics to the goals of a liberal education and the social and intellectual development of people. Every effort should be made to encourage the participation of minorities in forensics activities.**

Conferees recognized the importance of adjusting instructional programs to meet the needs, interests, and abilities of people. The needs of the student, not presuppositions about the program, should determine the nature of participation in forensics.

Several corollaries follow from this premise. It is necessary to assess changes in the composition of the traditional student population and to identify the characteristics of new groups entering the educational process. It is necessary to encourage participation in forensics by members of minority groups that traditionally have been underrepresented. It is necessary to design programs to accommodate the full range of interested students, including those with varying degrees of commitment to our instructional programs. In all cases, teachers and students should be certain that participation in forensics is conducive to the growth and development of the individual.

2. **Forensics should influence public affairs by various means, including educational seminars and programs for general audiences, publication of the products of analysis of public problems, and dissemination of such analyses to appropriate officials. Argumentation specialists should assume more active roles as critics of public argument.**

Conferees believed that many social, political, and economic problems are not susceptible to solution solely by recourse to the physical and social sciences. Because these problems involve judgments about values and about policy, the search for solutions must include a dialectical examination of these judgments. Such an examination, for the purpose of improving decision making, is what participation in forensics necessarily involves. Forensics programs regularly produce analyses of significant problem areas and comparisons of the potential effects of alternative policies that might be applied to those problem areas.

Accordingly, conferees believed that forensics has a significant role to play in serving the public interest. Responsible officials and the citizenry at large could benefit from access to the products of research and analysis conducted under the auspices of forensics programs. Moreover, the argumentative process itself should be promoted to the public as well as within our institutional programs.

3. **The department of speech communication is the most appropriate home for forensics programs; forensics educators should work toward the development of a mutually supportive relationship with their departmental colleagues. In addition, forensics educators should seek the development and expansion of mutually beneficial relationships with related disciplines.**



Conferees believed strongly that forensics programs should be housed in academic departments within educational institutions. Programs without any academic affiliation decrease the likelihood that the forensics specialist will be perceived as a scholar whose work is vital to the educational process, and increase the likelihood that competitive activity programs will be regarded as ends in themselves.

The argumentative perspective on communication, central to the definition of forensics, also is a major concern of departments of speech communication. Accordingly, conferees reasoned that speech communication departments constituted the most appropriate home for forensics programs, not as a mere convenience but because of shared intellectual concerns. Two foci of shared concern were especially noted: the study of the process of invention and the conception of rhetoric as an epistemological instrument. These foci are elaborated in the position paper by Sillars and Zarefsky (see page 83). In schools without speech communication departments, however, or in which such departments have objectives incompatible with the goals of forensics endorsed by this conference, forensics programs may be forced to find other departmental homes.

Moreover, because forensics draws upon a variety of disciplines to provide subject matter for its arguments and knowledge of the process of argumentation, and because forensics can contribute to other disciplines, scholars in forensics can and should develop mutually supportive relationships with those in other disciplines as well as with their departmental colleagues.

- 4. Forensics should be viewed as humanistic education. Forensics educators should provide a wholesome, exciting learning environment in which students are encouraged to develop positive attitudes toward the worth of ideas and toward themselves, other persons, and society at large.**

Conferees acknowledged that students' personalities are affected by their experiences in forensics. Inquiry into, and confrontation among, ideas and values inevitably must affect their own conscious and unconscious choices of personal values, self-images, and world views. Hence, the forensics educator should be concerned that the impact of forensics participation upon the student be positive. Such a result is enhanced by regarding forensics as an enterprise in humanistic education.

Sometimes, there may be unhealthy by-products of participation in forensics. The critical testing of ideas may give rise to cynicism and negativism toward all values and ideas; the development of argumentative skills may give rise to affectation, obstreperousness, antagonism, or arrogance. Consequently, forensics educators have a major responsibility

to provide an environment in which students respect the ideas and values of others, in which students use their critical skills in a positive manner to build mature, responsible, intellectually based world views.

- 5. Forensics educators should seek further development of mutually supportive relationships with international programs.**

Fundamentally, forensics is concerned with reason giving by people in communication situations. Just as audiences differ in their standards and criteria for "good reasons," so there are differences among nations and cultures. Most current study of forensics is premised upon dominant American values and standards. Although scholars thereby may improve understanding of public decision making in America, they risk ethnocentrism if this understanding is regarded as a paradigm for what occurs in *all* decision-making situations. To avert this risk, international and intercultural programs in forensics are desirable.

International programs in forensics now exist, most notably the international debate exchanges sponsored for more than 30 years by the Speech Communication Association. Conferees endorsed these programs and encouraged the development of others. Additionally, they believed that the profession should encourage involvement with persons and organizations from other nations, both within and without the forensics and speech communication fields, where a community of concerns is found.

- 6. Forensics should encourage research and scholarship for the purpose of expanding knowledge of argumentation theory and the effects of argumentation practice.**

A few conferees believed that the heavy demands of active teaching and coaching in forensics precluded some people from contributing to research and scholarship. The majority, however, argued that any discipline will atrophy, becoming a closed system, unless it is invigorated by ongoing research and scholarship. Each individual scholar and teacher of forensics, likewise, should be acquainted with and contribute to research and scholarship, both because of a sense of responsibility to his discipline and because his own professional growth, like that of his discipline, depends upon constant involvement in the processes of investigation and analysis.

- 7. Forensics should provide a variety of forums for the systematic analysis and discussion of significant contemporary issues. Forensics has a societal responsibility to promote rational decision making and to provide training in adapting argumentation to a variety of audiences and situations.**



The study of communication from an argumentative perspective necessarily involves concern for the interaction between arguments and audiences. This recommendation recognizes that adapting arguments to a variety of audiences is an important skill students should develop. It also recognizes that argumentation theory and practice will have greater utility if tested before a variety of types of audiences, which may have differing conceptions of what constitute "good reasons" to assent to arguments. Conferees were concerned that existing theory and practice may be appropriate only for a limited range of audiences and believed that applicability to a wider range, even within tournaments utilizing critic-judges, would be desirable.

Providing opportunities for students to argue before a variety of audiences also is beneficial *for the audiences*. They, too, become participants in the process of reason giving. Hopefully they, too, become more aware of their own values and are moved by the confrontational setting to reexamine their own standards of judgment. Hence the abilities cultivated through participation in forensics not only should enhance the participants' skills but also should serve to improve decision making in society.

8. **Forensics should develop students' communicative abilities, especially the abilities to analyze controversies, select and evaluate evidence, construct and refute arguments, and understand and use the values of the audience as warrants for belief.**

Conferees were disturbed by recent suggestions that forensics should serve primarily as a laboratory in dialectic, as opposed to rhetoric or communication.<sup>1</sup> One conferee also was concerned that "the only educational goals endorsed by more than half the respondents as 'very important' " in the preconference survey by Richard Rieke<sup>2</sup> were dialectical skills.

Without exception, however, conferees rejected the position that dialectical and rhetorical skills were separable, or that skills of forensics could be learned in a productive way apart from what one conferee labeled "the total process of people communicating arguments." In addition to indicating that the conferees regarded concern for communication as central to forensics, this recommendation identifies four communicative abilities that students should improve through training in forensics. The conferees assume that forensics can provide effective training in developing these abilities and that students who achieve them are able to function more effectively both within and beyond the educational institution.

9. **Forensics should promote adherence to the ethical and scholarly obligations of the advocate, including respect for the integrity of evidence, accurate representation of the ideas of others, and rigorous examination of beliefs.**

Implicit in the argumentative perspective is a concern for ethical and scholarly statements. People give reasons for their beliefs and actions, to themselves and others, as a check against arbitrary, capricious, or unsound choices. They engage in research in the subjects of their arguments, in order that they might ground their reasons in credible and reliable evidence. For reason giving to be a meaningful exercise, participants and critics must be able to assume confidently that ethical and scholarly standards have been satisfied. Hence, no rationale for the value or importance of such standards should be needed; their role in forensics should be self-evident. Because they sometimes are violated, however, there is value in their reaffirmation. Conferees adopted this resolution unanimously without debate. Its implementation depends upon the determination of forensics educators as teachers to develop positive attitudes toward ethical and scholarly standards and the insistence of forensics educators as judges upon adherence to standards.

10. **Secondary schools, colleges, and universities should develop sequences of courses in the argumentative perspective on communication. Additionally, nontraditional programs should be developed to make the argumentation curriculum available to a wide audience of students.**

Conferees were disturbed by recent evidence of the limited development of graduate curricula in argumentation.<sup>3</sup> They were concerned that the same condition probably exists at the undergraduate and secondary levels as well. The most prevalent course of instruction was thought to be one that focuses solely on the procedure and format unique to intercollegiate or interscholastic contests. Such courses are not undesirable, but neither are they sufficient to provide instruction in the argumentative perspective on communication as defined by this conference.

Educational institutions are urged to make the theory and practice of *general argumentation* the emphasis of their beginning courses or units of study in argumentation. Advanced offerings might concern specific topics within the general theory (such as the concept of rhetorical validity), particular settings in which argumentation occurs (such as legal advocacy), particular modes of decision making (such as cost-benefit arguments), or the critical appraisal of argument in particular controversies (such as the controversy over amnesty for war resisters). These curricular offerings should be publicized among prospective students in other disciplines as well as those in speech communication and should be granted "general studies" designation and credit in the academic program.



- 11. Although the forensics educator has significant roles in the development of theory, in research and scholarship, and in the administration of forensics programs, the primary role is as teacher.**

Conferees recognized that educators in forensics, like their colleagues in all fields, play many significant roles. But the *raison d'être* for the educational process, now as in classical times, is the mutual teaching-learning relationship that exists between student and teacher. Other roles have developed over time as auxiliary to this relationship. Accordingly, the primary function of the forensics educator is to teach students—to help them develop skills, to cultivate high ethical and scholarly standards, and to establish a climate in which students have an exciting and enjoyable intellectual and social experience. The general goal of the teaching mission is to make people more proficient in argumentation, both while they are students and after.

- 12. While excessive or unwise competitive stress may be destructive to individuals and ideas alike, competition among ideas and among people has a significant positive role to play in forensics activities.**

Conferees believed that competition often provides the best environment for testing ideas and for motivating students who engage in the rigorous application of intellectual skills to the discussion and evaluation of significant social problems. The testing of ideas and values can occur best in an environment of confrontation among skilled advocates whose impetus for maximum rigor and scholarship springs in part from the knowledge that these conclusions will be tested by able opponents.

Competition appears to provide motivation for people in American culture. In our society, the desire to be compared favorably with others long has appeared to provide the impetus for creativity and rigor in the performance of tasks. The knowledge that contestants will have the products of their labors compared for the purpose of a judgment motivates them to do their best. When students observe that increased knowledge and improved skills result in greater success, competition provides the impetus for learning.

Conferees recognized, however, that reactions of students to the competitive environment sometimes can be perverse. They acknowledged that an excessive or unwise competitive stress can be destructive of healthy personalities and can produce distortions of ideas. One conferee suggested that it was not the fact of competition but the structure of contest events and the reward system that produced dysfunctional consequences. While

conferees believed that most forensics educators refuse to condone unwise or excessive competitive practices, they nevertheless were concerned, as one participant put it, that "an unmodified statement in favor of competition hung out by itself, is potentially dangerous and capable of misinterpretation not only outside but inside the forensics community."

On balance, conferees emphasized that competition can be a positive force when the standards of judgment are drawn from well-defined and established theory and when the critics applying those standards base rewards on proficiency in executing sound theory. Educators in forensics must create environments in which students are evaluated on the basis of the ability to execute theory effectively. Furthermore, since competition is a reality in our society, students should learn how to function positively and effectively in a competitive environment.

- 13. Students should have the opportunity to participate in both debate and individual events.**

In an earlier resolution, conferees endorsed the value for students of having forensics experience in the presence of different types of audiences. Similarly, they recognized and endorsed the existing variety of forensics activities. Individual speaking events expose students to a wide range of communication experiences, making it possible for students to concentrate on improving such specific communication skills as organization and style. These individual events, like contest debate, provide valuable laboratory experiences in the argumentative perspective on communication. Conferees believed that, for experiences in forensics to be most beneficial, a variety of events that appeal to students' interests and respond to their needs should be available at all levels of education.

- 14. Educational institutions should assure that there is full, continuous, and predictable funding of forensics programs.**

Conferees recognized that sources of funding may vary with time and circumstances. They believed, however, that forensics programs should be funded at levels adequate to satisfy the educational needs of the student and the school. They also believed, as one conferee put it, that "at whatever level of funding, the full amount should be assured by the educational institution," because forensics is an essential part of the educational experience. Certainly, directors of forensics should not be faced with the choice between use of personal funds and a severe deterioration of program quality. In addition, funding should be continuous and predictable, so that long-range decisions can be made.

No academic program is immune from examination in light of an institution's overall educational priorities. This recommendation does not



attempt to claim any preferred status for forensics relative to other academic departments or programs. It does, however, recognize that the ideal forensics program, for which these goals are designed, is characterized by the principles of funding contained in this recommendation.

Conferees regarded the problem of funding as serious at all educational levels. A student's ability to benefit from education in forensics often is determined by his personal financial resources. This condition is particularly disturbing in the secondary schools where the base for participation in forensics is greater.

- 15. To improve the ability to participate in and criticize decision making in society, preparation of students for inquiry and advocacy concerning propositions of public policy should be continued. In addition, new programs should be developed that adapt to decision making in other areas, especially the judicial.**

Conferees recognized that the traditional practice of debating propositions of public policy has many educational purposes, and they particularly endorsed its value as a means of preparing people to participate as advocates or critics in situations in which policy decisions must be made. The theory and practice of debating propositions of public policy in interscholastic competition, therefore, should be based upon sound theory and practice appropriate for realistic policy deliberations.

However, conferees also recognized that policy decision making is only one area in which forensics skills are useful. They urged the development of new programs that adapt to decision making in other areas. Programs in judicial debate, especially designed for prelaw students, are illustrative of the possibilities for innovation. This specific example is cited because conferees believed that a substantial contribution could be made in response to immediate needs. Conferees in no way wished to limit their recommendations to this specific area. The general objective is to conceive of a broader role for forensics than merely as an instrument for decision making about public policy.

- 16. Educators should study the potential value of forensics adapted to the elementary school level.**

With respect to many skills and competencies, such as learning foreign languages, early learning may be more beneficial than later learning. Conferees suspected that such also may be true with respect to some argumentation skills. The current increased interest in speech communication education at the elementary school level should not ignore the possibility of including forensics instruction especially appropriate for elementary school students.

In unanimously adopting this recommendation, conferees did not necessarily endorse the development at this level of programs substantially similar to those now existing at the secondary and higher education levels. Rather, they suggested that adaptations of forensics activities might make special contributions at the elementary school level. The potential usefulness of such adaptations should be explored.

NOTES

1. One statement thought by some conferees to reflect this position is Steven Shiffrin, "Forensics, Dialectic, and Speech Communication," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 8 (Spring 1972): 189-91.
2. "College Forensics in the United States—1973," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 10 (Winter 1974): 130-32.
3. See, for example, Bruce Gronbeck, "Four Approaches to Studying Argument in Graduate Programs," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 9 (Fall 1972): 350-54.



## RECOMMENDATIONS ON THEORY AND PRACTICE

By almost any measure, matters of forensics theory and practice occupied a considerable portion of the time and energy of the members of the conference. The Delphi questionnaire contained more statements in this area than in any other. The Committee on Theory and Practice submitted 34 resolutions for consideration by the Task Force Assembly, almost half the total considered. Most resolutions submitted by individual members of the assembly dealt with particular practices.

Although several of the resolutions on theory and practice prompted extended discussion—and at times sharp disagreement—many of the resolutions adopted were accepted unanimously and others were endorsed by substantial majorities. For resolutions on which the members were divided in their views, the accompanying rationales incorporate major arguments presented in the deliberation.

Many of the resolutions focus on specific forensics practices, particularly in the tournament setting. However, in addressing this family of specific topics, the members of the assembly reiterated several general positions:

1. Theory and practice are best served when progress in one informs the development of the other.
  2. Theory and practice of argumentation should be responsive to and influence work in related disciplines.
  3. Although many controversial practices can be destructive of the educational objectives of forensics training, care should be exercised in selecting and developing the appropriate correctives; this caution does not diminish the educational responsibilities of the forensics director.
  4. Experimentation and variety in forensics practices should be encouraged.
- 
1. Many disciplines contribute to argumentation theory. Argumentation theorists should monitor, evaluate, and, where appropriate, utilize theoretical advances in related disciplines. In particular, theorists should develop models simulating a variety of decision-making situations.

Because the processes of analysis, developing, testing, and communicating arguments are utilized in all fields of study, it is inevitable that practices and approaches developed in other fields can make important contributions to argumentation theory and practice. Similarly, the theories in the field of argumentation have application in many disciplines. It is appropriate to test such theories in terms of their applicability to a variety of decision-making settings. This interdisciplinary approach to theory building will enhance the relevance and influence of argumentation theory.

2. The forensics educator should contribute to curriculum development in speech communication and in related disciplines. Particular attention should be given to the application of argumentation to the study of social issues, to serving students with special interests (e.g., prelaw), and to interdisciplinary instruction.

The conferees recognized the responsibility of the argumentation specialist as educator to participate fully in the ongoing process of curriculum development in speech communication. He can make a special contribution to the development of new programs to meet emerging student interests. Such programs could include applying the tools of analysis to the case study of policy argument for students of history and government, and of decision making in problem solving for students of management and administration. Since the study of argument has application in many disciplines, it is appropriate for the forensics educator to join with colleagues in these disciplines in developing curricula and providing instruction.

3. The study of argumentation through experience in forensics is worthy of academic credit.

The granting of academic credit to students who participate in forensics is a current practice in many educational institutions. Moreover, the rigor of forensics training is such that it is the equivalent of an ongoing honors program for qualified students. The granting of credit may encourage broader participation in forensics programs. The conferees endorsed this practice since the study of argument through forensics advances the study of speech communication and is consistent with the goals of a liberal education.

4. Tournament debate should be an enterprise in the comparative communication of arguments; it should not be primarily an exercise in information processing or intrapersonal communication.



Several major criticisms of tournament debating practices appear to stem from an assumption that the activity is primarily one of rapid recitation of bits of evidence, erroneously known as "information processing." The presentation of material at a rate too fast for many persons to follow; the practice of a team presenting more pieces of information or minor points than opponents can absorb; the use of language shorthand to increase the quantity of information presented at the expense of clarity of argument; the relative infrequency of explanations among evidence, inferences, and conclusions; the relative rarity of discussions of value assumptions—all seem to flow from a belief that debating is a contest in which victory goes to the team that presents the most information quicker and more efficiently. Such practices appear to have the tacit support of many teachers and judges of debate.

If forensics educators were to advise and encourage debaters to emphasize communicating arguments effectively, and if judges were to discontinue rewarding teams that violate that standard in favor of information processing, debate teams might very well stress communication and argumentation. The collection, evaluation, and use of evidence, of course, would remain an important part of the communication of arguments, but that function would not receive undue emphasis as it now does.

5. **A statement should be publicized identifying the primary educational goals of forensics and the responsibilities of the individual student, the forensics educator, the critic-judge, and the professional organizations in achieving these goals within the structure of tournament competition.**

---

#### GOALS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Education in forensics should enable students:

- To understand and communicate various forms of argument effectively in a variety of contexts and with a variety of audiences.
- To learn theories that seek to explain the process of communicating arguments with people.
- To analyze controversies, select and evaluate evidence, construct and refute arguments, and understand and use the values of the audience as warrants for beliefs.
- To participate effectively as advocates or critics in situations where decisions must be made.
- To clarify one's personal and social values through confrontation with the value judgments advanced by others.
- To promote respect for the integrity of evidence, accurate representation of the ideas of others, rigorous examination of beliefs, and the procedures by which critical decisions are reached.

- To develop positive attitudes toward the worth of ideas and toward oneself, other persons, and society at large.

Providing an optimal learning environment for all students, especially in forensics tournaments, is a shared responsibility.

- *The Participant.* The primary responsibility for avoiding foolish and unethical practices in tournament activities rests with the participant. In casting arguments into forms, using evidence, identifying with values, and treating opponents' ideas, the individual must not subvert desired objectives by allowing other, less worthwhile, objectives to become temporarily dominant.
- *The Critic-Judge.* The critic-judge has the responsibility to insure that the decision rendered and the criticism given promote the objectives of the activity. When a critic-judge becomes passive in the role of choicemaker, practices may be permitted that damage these objectives. The critic-judge has the responsibility to make judgments on the basis of the educational objectives of the activities and to offer a critique to assist students to achieve them.
- *The Forensics Educator.* Educators in forensics should create learning environments in which students develop proficiencies based on sound educational and communication theories. Directors of forensics have the responsibility for stimulating growth in an atmosphere of freedom, for acting as a critic-judge in tournaments, and for planning and supervising competitive events in a manner that contributes to development of respect for the activity and for oneself.  
In addition, the forensics educator must grow as a professional person. He or she should participate in state, local, and national forensics organizations for the purposes of improving his or her own insight and abilities and furthering the ideals of forensics.
- *National Organizations.* Professional forensics organizations are responsible for establishing standards to assist forensics educators in promoting competition as a positive ingredient in all forensics activities. The conference notes the leadership already exercised by such organizations as the American Forensic Association in setting guidelines and codes for making competition among ideas and among people in forensics activities a wholesome enterprise.

- 
6. **Summer forensics institutes based on educationally sound principles and practices should be encouraged. The American Forensic Association Educational Practices Committee should promote the development of such institutes.**

Conferees recognized that some forensics institutes may encourage practices inconsistent with recommendations of the National Developmental Conference on Forensics. In order to promote educationally sound in-



stitutes, the AFA's Educational Practices Committee should consider the following suggestions:

1. Provide opportunities for the exchange of ideas and information regarding the goals and objectives of existing institutes.
2. Encourage revision of institute curricula and instruction to reflect current research in speech communication.
3. Encourage institute directors to use more than one topic for debate and not necessarily limit instruction to the national high school debate proposition.
4. Encourage institutes for high school forensics directors and greater attendance by them at institutes.
5. Encourage greater dissemination of the products of institutes through workshops open to more students during the regular school year.
6. Encourage the development of institutes for beginning participants in forensics activities.
7. **Support should be sought from federal, state, and private sources to assist in funding summer forensics institutes.**

Opportunities to attend forensics institutes should be available to all students. Conferees agreed that ability to pay should not be a factor in determining whether a student will participate in an institute. Some states now fund summer programs for high school students in other disciplines, notably fine arts. One conferee, however, objected to government funding for the private development of an individual student, warning of possible government interference and unavailability of federal funds for summer institutes conducted by church-related institutions. Many conferees, however, agreed that efforts to find government and private funding would provide more high school students greater opportunity to study reason giving in our society, an objective consistent with the goals of American education.

8. **High school forensics educators should develop closer interaction with their colleagues at the college level regarding questions of argumentation theory and practice.**

Conferees recognized the desirability of encouraging dialogue on questions of argumentation theory and practice. Such interaction would be of particular value to high school forensics directors who lack specialized training in the speech communication discipline. All forensics educators would benefit from the recognition of mutual interests and the sharing of experiences that dialogue entails. Opportunities for such interaction should include additional courses in argumentation theory and practice designed by institutions of higher education for persons already directing high school forensics.

9. **College forensics educators should expand the range of services provided by their institutions to high school forensics programs.**

Conferees recognized that more can be done by college forensics directors to assist their high school colleagues by using existing and new service channels. Many colleges have service programs created specifically for assisting high schools, including informational exchanges, workshops, and seminars. Because of their special community role, two-year colleges can be particularly helpful in implementing this resolution.

10. **State high school and community college administrative bodies and forensics leagues should reexamine regulations restricting student participation and travel, to determine the consequences of such measures in limiting the educational opportunities available to students.**

Conferees recognized the concern of high school and community college forensics directors whose students now are prohibited from participating in some tournaments. For example, some states impose limitations on the distance students may travel to enter tournaments. Conferees believed that the rationale for state restrictions on travel and other rules limiting opportunities to engage in competition is largely unknown. Moreover, inconsistencies exist in the rules imposed by contiguous states and by state forensics leagues and the National Forensic League. Study and reexamination of these regulations therefore is indicated.

11. **The National Debate Tournament Committee and the AFA Educational Practices Committee should utilize the findings of this conference in evaluating and improving the NDT as an educationally sound tournament model.**

The National Debate Tournament (NDT) is the single most visible and prestigious of the collegiate debate tournaments, enjoying the sponsorship and financial support of the AFA. It absorbs the time and energies of a large number of prominent forensics educators. Therefore, the NDT should serve both as a reflection of the best standards of theory and practice and as a leader in promoting such standards. The results of this conference should provide useful input for the immediate and continuing tasks assumed by the NDT Committee and the AFA Educational Practices Committee. These committees ought to provide leadership for constructive innovation in tournament practices, and the NDT ought to serve as a model for excellence in forensics.



- 12. The NDT Committee should adopt the cross-examination format of debate for the NDT as soon as practicable and should consider utilizing other formats in future years.**

Since the NDT exerts considerable influence on practices in other tournaments, the adoption of alternative formats by the NDT Committee would stimulate their use elsewhere, an objective of another conference resolution. This resolution encourages the NDT Committee to adopt the cross-examination format in the foreseeable future and to consider other formats in subsequent years. The cross-examination format is specifically recommended for early adoption because its use is expected to sharpen the contest among arguments in debate. The conferees noted that the AFA Blue Ribbon Committee on the NDT has endorsed a similar recommendation.

- 13. Organizations appointing members to the SCA Committee on Intercollegiate Discussion and Debate should instruct them to include with each proposition submitted for final vote a brief statement of its substantive parameters.**

Conferees recognized that the proposition—the statement of judgment which identifies the basis of controversy—is central to academic debate. Conferees who supported the resolution argued that a statement of the substantive parameters of the proposition would enable forensics educators and debaters to understand more clearly the intent of the framers of the proposition. Such a statement could lead to more informed voting in the selection of propositions. Conferees also viewed this resolution as one response to misinterpretations of the proposition and as a step toward developing consensus on reasonable interpretations of the proposition. Opponents of the resolution argued that it would not result in clarifying and limiting the scope of the proposition selected for debate since the interpretive statement itself would be subject to interpretation. Moreover, if the resolution achieved one of its objectives, the responsibility of the debater to analyze the proposition would be usurped. Supporters of the resolution replied that the statement submitted with each proposition would be informative, not prescriptive.

- 14. Regional seminars should be conducted at tournaments early in the academic year to provide teachers and students the opportunity to discuss interpretations of the national intercollegiate debate proposition. The results of these seminars should be discussed at the annual meeting of the AFA.**

Conferees acknowledged that forensics educators and debaters already informally discuss alternative interpretations of the debate proposition. Broadening the participation in these discussions, conducting them in

more formal settings, and making the results generally available were regarded as desirable extensions of present practice.

- 15. More frequent use of alternative events and formats in forensics should be encouraged. Forensics organizations should consider sponsoring regional and national tournaments that include such events and formats. They also should consider collecting and disseminating information about alternative events and formats.**

Because the structure of an activity affects the behavior of the participants in that activity, the wider use of alternative formats may encourage more desirable behavior by participants in the activity. For example, employing cross-examination in debate may improve the use of evidence; similarly, altering the time allocation for speakers may affect the use of the “spread” as a time strategy. Conferees also decided that diversity in events and formats could broaden the appeal of forensics as well as extend the range of communicative experiences for students.

Since alternative events and formats are not widely available, the forensics community does not benefit fully from diversity and innovation in forensics practices. Moreover, practices in major national and regional tournaments influence the selection of formats and events for other tournaments.

- 16. A variety of propositions should be used in academic debate, including the occasional use of propositions that do not call for a change in policy.**

On both a personal and a societal level, we often find it meaningful to argue values without offering specific advice or plans of action related to those value judgments. Unfortunately, little theory has been developed regarding what an affirmative or negative ought to do to fulfill its burden of analysis on nonpolicy propositions. The Research and Scholarship Committee has suggested that this is an important area for investigation. Inasmuch as practice often precedes theory—something that has occurred frequently with the theory of policy propositions—the occasional use of propositions that do not call for a change in policy may stimulate development of theory appropriate to debating nonpolicy propositions.

- 17. The judge in forensics events should be concerned with evaluating the reasons offered for belief in a rhetorical proposition. Since questions of forensics theory and strategy are themselves arguable matters, they should be resolved by the process of argumentation. It is this argumentative perspective that constitutes the standard by which the judge should evaluate a student's performance.**



---

## THE FORENSICS JUDGE

In fulfilling his commitment to the educational values of forensics, the judge acts both as a decision maker and as a critic. All judges, whether trained in forensics or not, should have these minimum characteristics: honesty, a sense of responsibility, and an ability to suspend judgment on the subject matter being considered. As decision maker the judge is called upon to make choices among alternatives emerging out of the proposition. The judge should value content above delivery and substance above technique. The stronger position on the issue should prevail, and more credible evidence should prevail over a greater quantity of evidence having less probative force.

In the area of case forms, students may evolve new paradigms that are consistent with the issues under consideration. The appropriateness of such paradigms should be determined primarily by the process of argumentation. In choosing between different interpretations of a proposition, the judge should encourage methods of analysis and reasoning about *meaning*. Only in those instances where the students themselves have failed to agree upon the bases for reasonable interpretation of the proposition should the judge exercise his or her individual and carefully considered judgment.

Since debates are judged by choice-making individuals, a priori rules for making decisions are not enforceable, although guidelines are possible. Many judges will alter their decisions in response to violations of standards in analyzing a proposition, unethical use of evidence, unclear communication, and employment of strategies that do not adhere to the highest standards of responsible advocacy. Other judges will let such abuses influence their decisions only when they bear on issues of the debate itself. But all persons have a special obligation to note and to discourage such practices in both oral and written criticism.

In addition to an emphasis on argument, the forensics judge applies a communicative perspective. Abilities in communication are necessary for argument to function effectively. When the rate of delivery and unintelligibility interfere with the communication of arguments, the judge should comment on these problems in oral and written criticism. Students cannot expect judges to give weight to arguments that are incomprehensible.

---

- 18. Tournament directors should provide adequate time for judges to evaluate student performance after each round of competition. Both oral and written criticism should be encouraged.**

Although conferees disputed the relative merit of oral and written critiques, they agreed that using both enables the judge to enhance the educational value of each round of debate and individual events competition. Oral critiques were said to provide immediate feedback and to offer the student the opportunity of asking questions of clarification. It was claimed that written critiques present a more carefully developed and permanent evaluative statement that can be considered by the student and his teacher in a less tension-filled posttournament environment.

- 19. The effects of increased judge involvement in the argumentation process during debate rounds should be studied. Judges might identify major issues for debaters between constructive speeches and rebuttals, or cross-examine debaters after each constructive speech.**

Conferees saw in this resolution a means for enabling the judge to better meet his or her responsibilities as a teacher of argument. They accepted the view advanced in one position paper that "our standard of reasonableness must be reinterpreted so that the judge is restored to his rightful role as critic. He must again be given the power and initiative to act independently in the decision-making process."

- 20. Directors of contests in forensics should make known in their invitations the procedure to be employed in assigning judges to contest rounds.**

In accepting this recommendation, conferees rejected another resolution addressed to the same question, "How should judges be assigned to contest rounds?" The defeated motion would have assigned judges "by a system that gives every team an equal chance to be judged by any given judge," and would have informed all participants in a tournament that random selection of judges was employed. Supporters of this resolution urged that such a system is not only objective but that it enables less experienced debaters to benefit from the expertise of "good" judges.

Proponents of the adopted resolution argued that many different procedures for the assignment of judges may be conducive to achieving the objectives of forensics as defined by this conference. They agreed that publication of the method of assigning judges would provide a means of guarding against arbitrary or biased assignment and that advanced publication would permit the individual forensics educator to select con-



tests for his or her students that utilize selection procedures he or she considers to be educationally sound.

- 21. Forensics organizations and directors of individual tournaments in academic debate should develop methods whereby the central themes of debate cases to be employed in a given tournament are disclosed to all participants in that tournament in advance of the event.**

Conferees agreed that academic and public debate is based on the premise that decisions are best made after rigorous testing of opposing arguments. Rigorous testing is not achieved when arguments are encountered by surprise, without the opportunity for prior research or reflection by the opposition. Methods of advance disclosure are preferable to the legislating of standard interpretations of the debate proposition. Methods used by tournament directors for disclosure might require that each participating team identify on the preregistration form its intended area(s) of affirmative analysis, circulation of this information to participating schools prior to the tournament, and exchange of affirmative cases at the time of registration.

- 22. Audience debating should be promoted through public debates on the national topic and on issues of local concern, as well as through tournaments, or rounds within tournaments, based on the audience vote model.**

Combining forensics studies and some medium of public information carries with it advantages of both education and service dimensions. Audience debating encourages the development of communication skills and provides useful feedback on the effectiveness of debating practices with general audiences. Audience debating also allows students to share their research and analysis with others, and thus contributes to the development of an informed citizenry.

- 23. Research should be conducted into contemporary tournament practices, including those that may be controversial. Arguments to change or justify practices should be grounded in reliable information.**

Conferees were sharply divided on how best to respond to controversial tournament practices as the *spread*, *operational definitions*, and *linguistic shorthand*. Proponents of the resolution claimed such practices had not been systematically studied and that objections to them often were based on intuition rather than on information drawn from research. Opponents

of the resolution argued that the practices in question were sufficiently identifiable as to justify action proscribing them and that conferees were ready "to declare themselves." In the end, the view prevailed that arguments favoring or disfavoring particular tournament practices should be based upon the evidence furnished by investigation into the practices.

- 24. Evidence should be evaluated not by its quantity but by its quality, determined in part by its credibility and audience acceptability. Thoroughness and care must be exercised in finding, recording, and documenting evidence. Advocates should recognize their ultimate responsibility for all evidence they use, whether discovered by them or by others. Further research should be conducted on the efficacy of evidence.**

Conferees were concerned with both the inappropriate and the inaccurate use of evidence. Excessive reliance on expert opinion evidence and the practice of counting, rather than critically analyzing, evidence were deplored. In general, the conferees believed that standards of source credibility and audience acceptability ought to be applied in evaluating evidence. A number of participants, however, objected to this orientation. Some dissenters rejected the criterion of audience acceptability, while others thought that the audience should be defined exclusively in terms of "the rational man."

Inaccurate use of evidence was seen as resulting from carelessness as well as from deliberate distortion, but whatever the cause of inaccuracies, conferees agreed that advocates must be held fully accountable for all the evidence they use. The fact that a particular piece of evidence was commercially reproduced or collected by another member of the squad was not seen as excusing misrepresentation or distortion.

- 25. The American Forensic Association should establish a study committee to examine current practices in forensics for their underlying theory, to examine other theoretical positions, and to suggest alternate practices to implement different theories.**

Many conferees expressed the belief that much confusion in theory and controversy in practice results from inadequate investigation and understanding of the relationship between theory and practice. However, they thought that while, as a result of their deliberations, substantial progress had been made in relating theory and practice, a continuing study of the topic was indicated. A special committee of the AFA should pursue investigations into this relationship in forensics. Results of the study might be a basis for recommending modifications in contemporary forensics practices.



## RECOMMENDATIONS ON RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

Robert Hutchins once said: "A university may be a university without doing any teaching. It cannot be one without doing any research." Hutchins's dictum applies to all academic fields. Forensics educators always have recognized the necessity for joining teaching with research. The literature of argumentation and forensics rings with calls for investigation into problems of theory, pedagogy, and educational outcomes. Yet, at the same time that forensics educators are summoned to research, the opportunities (and indeed the time) for such scholarship often have been limited by the requirements of conducting an active forensics program. This dilemma was confronted by conferees assigned to develop recommendations about research and scholarship in forensics.

In developing resolutions some members took the position that an academic field is based upon and is known by its scholarship. Thus, in the words of one conferee: "If forensics is to improve its status with colleagues and in other disciplines, it will be through heightened emphasis on research and scholarship." Another member added: "The confused state of theory and practice is due largely to deficiencies in research." Conferees recognized the priority often assigned to research by the forensics educator who must devote the major share of his or her attention to educational responsibilities. Discussion focused on the relationship between teaching and research functions, opportunities and needs in research, and alternative methods for future research. The resolutions reflect a deep concern by conferees in defining an expanded role for forensics scholarship.

- 1. Research and scholarship are intimately related to all aspects of forensics since they define new developments in methods and practices. Research and scholarship in forensics function to:**
  - a) delineate the nature of the field
  - b) investigate the relationship between theory and practice
  - c) interrelate forensics with other disciplines
  - d) describe, evaluate, and develop teaching methods.

Because research and scholarship are the foundation from which all specific areas within a field evolve, and because they establish the basis for interrelationships among the areas, a field of study is both as strong and weak as its research and scholarship.

## RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

The following questions illustrate topics for research and should stimulate scholars to formulate others:

### A. Nature of the field

1. What is the role of argumentation in small group communication?
2. What is the impact on elections of debates between political candidates?
3. What is the role of argumentation in negotiation?
4. How do nondiscursive forms of communication involve reason giving?
5. How might conflicts between value judgments be examined through argumentation?
6. What are implications of the view that decisions are made at variable points of time during the argumentative process?
7. What role does argumentation play in political campaigns, movements, and other processes of public opinion formation?
8. What constitutes an appropriate standard of validity in rhetorical arguments?

### B. Theory and practice

1. What is the role of nonverbal communication in argumentation?
2. What changes can be observed in such basic concepts of argumentation as presumption, burden of proof, prima facie case, inherency, and causal relation?
3. To what extent does current theory contribute to argumentation on nonpolicy propositions?
4. What is the utility of general systems theory for argumentation?
5. What are the relationships between current forensics practices and argumentation theory?
6. What is the value of the concept of *stasis* in analyzing contemporary forensics practice?
7. How do contemporary theories of communication and persuasion contribute to the analysis of decision making?
8. How do value theories contribute to the analysis of the decision-making process?

### C. Other disciplines

1. How do economic decision theory, political decision theory, and game theory contribute to argumentation?



4. **Forensics scholars should seek the widest possible communication of their work; dissemination is an essential ingredient of research and scholarship.**

Without dissemination, research and scholarship cannot fulfill their essential roles because for all practical purposes the information does not exist. With dissemination, the various audiences both inside and outside the diverse forensics community can be reached.

People active in forensics can be reached best through journals of the forensics associations—*Journal of the American Forensic Association*, *Speaker and Gavel*, *The Forensic*, *The Persuader*, and *The Rostrum*. People in speech communication generally may be informed through national speech journals and national, regional, and state conventions. Those across specialties within forensics can interact through seminars, workshops, and special programs at either the high school or college level. Other disciplines can be contacted through their journals and conventions. The general public can be exposed to forensics through the public media. For complete dissemination all these avenues must be utilized in varying degrees.

5. **Departments of speech communication offering graduate programs should encourage master's theses and doctoral dissertations in argumentation and forensics and should provide graduate faculty qualified to direct these efforts.**

Forensics is an important academic area of study because the skills of research and analysis and the patterns of argument, decision making, and delivery can have significant transfer value to such other communicative situations as government, law, legislature, and business. For this reason speech communication departments have an opportunity to make a contribution to these fields and a responsibility to support forensics by providing training for forensics scholars. Original research can be undertaken in theses and dissertations that furthers our understanding of people communicating arguments and that enhances respect for forensics as an area of professional concern. Such research can be conducted only if potential forensics scholars receive proper training from qualified graduate faculty.

6. **Professional organizations should give active support to research, including initiation of specific projects, strengthening of the financial bases for scholarship, and dissemination of research findings.**

While national and regional forensics organizations and the Speech Communication Association have undertaken some efforts to encourage research in forensics, a greater effort is necessary. Financial support will be required to conduct the kind of broadly based field research that is so critically needed.

Professional organizations can be helpful through (1) direct funding, (2) preparation and solicitation of grant proposals, and (3) organization and commissioning of group research. These organizations may be of further aid by making available channels for disseminating information on projects prepared, in progress, and completed.

7. **Research should be conducted to determine why certain persons are drawn to forensics activities and others, particularly women and minority group members, resist involvement. This research would include collection of data relative to personality variables, demographic characteristics, and cultural patterns.**

The forensics community has been criticized for teaching people to be overly aggressive and competitive and, more recently, for excluding women and minority groups. Before forensics educators can respond intelligently to these criticisms or correct shortcomings, they must gain reliable information about why students are attracted to the activity and what behavior and personality changes result from extended participation. We still know surprisingly little about the outcomes of forensics training.

People in forensics traditionally have held that, since forensics skills are essential to democratic decision making, the opportunity for participation should be open to all.

8. **A comprehensive holding of forensics journals and related materials should be deposited with selected libraries that agree to maintain and develop the collections. A cumulative table of contents and index for forensics publications should be developed.**

Essential to research and scholarship are the reports and findings of other investigators. Unfortunately, however, few libraries currently subscribe to all of the journals and publications related to forensics. Much useful material for research also exists in unpublished papers that have been presented at professional conferences. Such potentially useful descriptive, critical, and experimental studies are largely inaccessible to scholars. Regional collections of materials in all aspects of forensics would be a unique and helpful resource.

A complete bibliographic reference in forensics also would contribute to



research and scholarship. Such a reference should include the *AFA Register*, *Journal of the American Forensic Association*, *Gavel*, *The Speaker*, *Speaker and Gavel*, *The Forensic*, *The Rostrum*, and *The Persuader*, as well as master's theses and Ph.D. dissertations in forensics.

9. **A national developmental conference should be convened in six years to assess the impact of the 1974 meeting and to make further recommendations for development of forensics in the 1980s.**

The National Developmental Conference on Forensics is a single act in an ongoing campaign designed to assess and improve the forensics community. Prior to the conference, regional and national conventions and professional journals were employed to set the stage for the conference. Already recommendations have been made to implement the resolutions of the conference. Consistent with the campaign to strengthen forensics and enable it to adapt to new circumstances, another national conference should be convened in six years.

## RECOMMENDATIONS ON PREPARATION, STATUS, AND REWARDS

Conference papers and the results of the Delphi Project suggest a high degree of prior agreement on desired preparation, status, and rewards for forensics educators. The essential unanimity with which the resolutions passed might further reinforce this view. Deliberations, however, showed disagreements on implementation of broad generalizations about better preparation, and underscored the need for higher status and greater rewards except in cases where such status and rewards were not earned.

The chief disagreement and the key to resolution of several other troubling issues concerned the preparation guidelines. Some committee members said: "Such standards are an affront to people who are qualified through experience but do not meet the stated preparation guidelines." Others argued that such guidelines "offer the administrator an excuse to cut the forensics program in a time of tight budgets and competing needs." But the opposing views that "we have too long tolerated inadequate preparation," and that "most administrators would welcome guidelines as to what is necessary and what is desirable" prevailed.

Agreement upon preparation guidelines led directly to a request that all departments preparing forensics educators offer the necessary courses and opportunities for participation and for graduate institutions to "provide the theory and the research without which any area becomes stagnant." The various academic and professional associations to which forensics personnel belong were criticized by many as not being fully responsive to the needs of forensics.

What seemed the most explosive issue—professional rewards in terms of tenure, promotion, and salary—was defused given the previous agreements. The view prevailed that forensics educators should meet the departmental criteria if they are accorded support proportionate to the educational value of their program and that the resources provided allow the forensics educator to compete as fully and fairly for rewards as any other staff member.

1. **Guidelines appropriate for the preparation of junior and senior high school forensics educators should be established.**



---

---

PREPARATION GUIDELINES FOR JUNIOR AND  
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL FORENSICS EDUCATORS

- A. Recommended minimum qualifications
  - 1. Bachelor's degree with at least a minor in speech communication/language arts
  - 2. Specific formal instruction in argumentation
  - 3. Participation at the college level in the forensics activities that the teacher will direct
  - 4. Completion of requirements for teacher certification
- B. Recommended qualifications
  - 1. Bachelor's degree with a major emphasis in speech communication
  - 2. Formal instruction in philosophy and methods of directing forensics
  - 3. Additional coursework beyond the bachelor's degree, possibly leading to an advanced degree
- C. Recommendations for continuing professional growth
  - 1. Participation in state, regional, and national professional organizations
  - 2. Participation in workshops, conventions, institutes, and courses to keep informed of current developments.

---

---

Like all teachers, forensics educators in high schools and junior high schools must draw upon a knowledge of the learning process and adolescent psychology. They need a philosophy and the pedagogical skills that fulfill the special demands of close interaction with individual students in providing criticism, evaluation, and guidance. Responsibilities in forensics include the administration of broad, comprehensive programs and activities for the widest range of students. Forensics educators must have adequate knowledge of the theory and practice of speech communication and particularly argumentation for teaching in class and cocurricular activities. Certainly many who have not had the desired preparation have developed the equivalent through experience and personal effort. But surveys of teachers working with forensics programs demonstrate the concern of many for their own lack of preparation and the resultant poorer quality program. Inadequate preparation for these important educational responsibilities should not be tolerated.

- 2. Guidelines appropriate for the preparation of two-year college forensics educators should be established.**

---

---

PREPARATION GUIDELINES  
TWO-YEAR FORENSICS EDUCATORS

- A. Recommended minimum qualifications
  - 1. Master's degree with a major in speech communication for at least one of the two degrees
  - 2. Specific formal instruction in argumentation
  - 3. Participation at the college level in the forensics activities that the teacher will direct
  - 4. A course in philosophy and methods of directing forensics
- B. Recommended qualifications
  - 1. Appropriate additional coursework
  - 2. Supervised involvement in directing forensics programs
- C. Recommendations for continuing professional growth
  - 1. Participation in state, regional, and national professional organizations
  - 2. Participation in workshops, conventions, institutes, and courses designed to keep one informed of current developments

---

---

Forensics educators in two-year colleges must draw upon a knowledge of the learning process as do all teachers. But, in fulfilling the special demands of close interaction with the individual student in providing criticism, evaluation, and guidance, they must draw upon a philosophy that meets the demands of the forensics situation. Frequently, their responsibilities include the administration of programs and activities that serve the campus and community in visible ways. Two-year colleges seek to be responsive to community needs and to attract and involve students with highly diverse ages, backgrounds, abilities, and interests in forensics. Thus, forensics educators need advanced preparation in comprehensive theory and practice for work in their class and cocurricular activities. In addition, they must continue in their educational growth by remaining in contact with developing theory, research, and methodological innovations.

- 3. Guidelines appropriate for the preparation of four-year college and university forensics educators should be established.**



---



---

PREPARATION GUIDELINES FOR FOUR-YEAR  
COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY FORENSICS EDUCATORS

- A. Recommended minimum qualifications
  - 1. Master's degree with a major in speech communication for at least one of the two degrees
  - 2. Specific formal instruction in argumentation
  - 3. Participation at the college level in the forensics activities that the teacher will direct
  - 4. A course in philosophy and methods of directing forensics
- B. Recommended qualifications
  - 1. Doctorate in speech communication
  - 2. Supervised involvement in directing forensics programs
- C. Recommendations for continuing professional growth
  - 1. Participation in state, regional, and national professional organizations
  - 2. Ongoing scholarship including convention papers, publications, and leadership functions at state, regional, and national levels of professional associations
  - 3. Maintenance of a lively dialogue and interaction among personnel at various educational levels within forensics.

---



---

Forensics educators in the four-year colleges and universities have the same general preparation requirements as their colleagues. While making available an extensive program of forensics opportunities for interested students and providing advanced level instruction in the discipline, forensics educators at this level also must be able to train future teachers in speech communication and forensics. Forensics personnel must be able to draw upon the research and scholarship of related disciplines and to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the area of specialization. These forensics educators often are called upon to provide leadership for the high school and two-year college forensics communities. Thus, forensics educators must have the highest level of preparation in comprehensive theory and practice to discharge these responsibilities and to become contributing members of the discipline.

- 4. **Assistant directors of forensics who are full-time faculty members should meet the preparation requirements set forth for forensics educators in their institution as consistent with responsibilities assigned.**

Where the assistant director of forensics is a full-time faculty member he or she may be called upon to substitute for the director or to be responsible for certain areas of the forensics program. The assistant director's preparation must be comparable to that of the director and fellow faculty members in order to meet both the requirements of his or her assigned teaching responsibilities in forensics and the requirements for promotion, tenure, and compensation. Graduate students who serve as assistants to the director of forensics normally will meet the recommended minimum requirements.

- 5. **All colleges that provide teacher-training programs in speech communication should offer formal instruction in the philosophy and methods of directing forensics.**

The goal of providing well-grounded forensics personnel for the secondary school necessitates at the minimum a significant amount of formal instruction centering on the philosophy and methods of directing forensics. A few lectures in an introductory debate course or a pedagogy course are not sufficient, nor are occasional experiences in observing forensics activities. The study should be systematic and thorough rather than episodic and incidental. Ideally, such instruction will be available in a separate course, distinct from and in addition to courses in argumentation theory and participation in forensics practicum. Given the frequency with which teachers of speech communication are required to direct forensics, many colleges may wish to require the course for students preparing to teach speech communication/language arts in the secondary school.

- 6. **All institutions offering undergraduate instruction should support an extensive forensics program.**

A forensics program is a necessary and valuable part of the educational program of an institution of higher learning. Such a program fosters the development of students' abilities to communicate, analyze controversies, select and evaluate evidence, construct and refute arguments, and understand the nature of argument in the development of beliefs and social values. Experiences in debate and individual events provide for testing and refining both the theory and practice of argument, and thus play an essential role in contributing to the liberally educated person. Moreover, those schools providing training for secondary teachers need such a program to insure the adequate education of future forensics educators.

- 7. **All institutions granting a doctoral degree in speech communication should have an active forensics program providing supervised instruction for future forensics directors.**



Forensics personnel who are well-grounded in argumentation theory and practice are essential if we are to have educationally sound forensics programs. These educators should contribute to the research and scholarship of the discipline as well as discharge the teaching and administrative responsibilities of their classes and forensics activities. Unless doctoral degree-granting institutions accept the responsibility for providing adequate preparation including experience, capable personnel will not be available. Adequate training and experience cannot be provided without a viable forensics program at the doctoral institution. Such institutions have no less responsibility for providing supervised instruction in argumentation and forensics than they do in other areas of the speech communication field. Forensics programs will continue to need qualified personnel; if they are not provided by the speech communication discipline, they will be sought elsewhere even though their preparation may have been inadequate.

- 8. Graduate programs in speech communication should provide sufficient coursework and resources to permit advanced study of and research in argumentation and public decision making.**

Forensics educators need extensive knowledge of research methods, argumentation theory, and the literature on decision making. Since they must meet the scholarly and research requirements of their institutions and function as do other professors in contributing to knowledge, their graduate program must prepare them to meet these responsibilities. Sufficient knowledge of theory, practice, and research techniques will equip them to add to that body of knowledge and to meet the obligations of teaching advanced theory and of conducting research in the area of their specialty.

- 9. Professional organizations and, where appropriate, individual educational institutions should provide services to enhance the work of forensics personnel:**
- a) National, regional, and state professional associations and colleges and universities should sponsor frequent workshops, seminars, and short courses on various aspects of argumentation theory and forensics practices.**
  - b) The American Forensic Association Professional Relations Committee should actively assist individual forensics directors who request help for their programs.**
  - c) National and regional speech communication and forensics organizations should periodically sponsor developmental conferences on forensics.**
  - d) The SCA National Office, in cooperation with the SCA Division of Forensics and the American Forensic Association, should investigate and report ways in which forensics**

- budgets can be employed as effectively as possible.**
- e) The SCA Division of Forensics annually should evaluate published debate aids for high school forensics participants and circulate the conclusions.**
- f) The American Forensic Association Research Committee should commission research on the measurement of teaching effectiveness in forensics.**

This conference has urged all forensics educators to participate fully in professional organizations. These organizations are as strong as the support and participation of their members. Conversely, forensics personnel deserve the support of their professional organizations in assisting individual growth and development and in improving the quality of forensics. If they do not receive such support, they will cease to be members of these associations. In discussing the resolution, conferees pointed to specific areas of need. For example, rising costs and budget limitations are restricting student access to many forensics opportunities. Other needs exist for information dissemination and program development that are best met by the various professional organizations.

- 10. The forensics educator should meet the departmental and institutional criteria for promotion, tenure, and compensation. Typically, the primary criterion for evaluating the performance of the forensics educator should be teaching effectiveness, including the directing of forensics as a teaching function.**

The forensics educator's role in the department of speech communication should not differ substantively from that of colleagues. He or she should be a full-time faculty member who assumes specific teaching assignments, and who fulfills other educational responsibilities as appropriate to his or her institution.

Forensics is an educational function set in an educational environment. While the obligations and concomitant responsibilities are many, forensics personnel preeminently are serving a teaching function and their work in forensics should be evaluated primarily in terms of teaching effectiveness. Assuming support consistent with their responsibilities, forensics educators should be fully capable of meeting the requirements set. They should not be held to higher standards, nor do they seek lower standards.

- 11. Departmental administrators should be responsive to the educational characteristics of forensics programs:**
- a) Work with forensics should be treated as part of the teaching assignment.**



- b) **Additional remuneration should be provided in instances where forensics work is not considered a portion of the teaching assignment.**
- c) **Evaluation of the teaching load should include a measure of student contact hours.**
- d) **In scheduling classes and other assignments, administrators should be sensitive to the time demands of the forensics program.**

The forensics program is an integral part of the educational mission of departments of speech communication. The teaching responsibilities associated with forensics are such that greater than normal contact hours are required. Recognition must be given to the fact that many of the contact hours are away from campus on days outside the normal work week. In fact, travel is inherent in working with the program. Departmental administrators should enable forensics personnel to discharge all their responsibilities to the department and school—not just those associated with the forensics program. Forensics work should be included as part of the teaching load. Where that is not yet possible, additional compensation for those working with forensics is a minimum response.

- 12. Forensics educators should share equally in the advantages and responsibilities of faculty members of comparable education and experience.**

Because forensics educators share identical obligations with faculty colleagues, they should enjoy the rights and benefits open to all faculty members of comparable education and experience. Forensics educators should meet the criteria provided for promotion, tenure and compensation. But, equally, they should expect the same opportunities for teaching in their specialty, involvement in the graduate program if one exists, directing research, obtaining research funds and assistance, leave time, and professional travel. When these conditions do not exist, forensics personnel may perceive themselves as not having a responsibility to the full academic program of the department. This, in turn, may lead to loss of concern for the intellectual development of students, with an undue emphasis upon the temporary rewards associated with tournaments. Equally such arrangements frequently cause other faculty to perceive forensics as unrelated to the department's academic program.

- 13. The forensics program should receive the support of other faculty members, especially assistance in the preparation of students and with travel and/or administrative responsibilities of the program.**

This policy works to the benefit of both the forensics program and the department in keeping the forensics program integrated with the total academic functions of the department. Fellow faculty members are better able to use the forensics program as a supplement to classroom instruction and as a setting for research activities. The greater number of faculty members involved in the forensics program provide students with a range of intellectual viewpoints. Moreover, greater faculty assistance enables forensics educators to participate more fully in the other academic programs of the department.



# III

---

## KEYNOTES TO THE CONFERENCE



## THE ISSUES OF FORENSICS

Scott Nobles

As president of one of the sponsoring organizations of the National Developmental Conference on Forensics, it is my task to discuss the opportunities and challenges to be met by this conference. Our meeting here is but a part of a well-conceived project of many months. It has been preceded by several regional conferences, by a number of commissioned research papers, and, by my own rough count, by 14 position papers and 21 response papers. George Ziegelmüller's invitation suggested that I prepare an address in which I "both challenge the conferees by outlining the responsibilities of the profession's expectations and stimulate their thinking in terms of issues to be addressed." I am convinced that the papers presented reflect a strong sense of responsibility to the profession and succeed admirably in raising provocatively most of the issues that need to be addressed. With the midstream nature of this conference in mind, I should like to direct myself and you to three basic relevant questions: First, *what are the most essential developmental tasks before this conference?* Second, *in what areas does optimism seem most warranted at this point and where should we perhaps express both concern and caution?* Third and finally, *how can the forensics community best implement the considered judgment of this group's deliberations?*

In answering the first question, my sketch of the major tasks before us, while admittedly and necessarily subjective, is not likely to be very controversial. A number of developmental items that might intrigue some extended professional conferences do not have to interest us. We do *not* have to develop more organizations; we do *not* have to develop more major publications; and we definitely do *not* have to find more busywork to occupy our time. We already have the American Forensic Association, the SCA Forensic Division, Pi Kappa Delta, Delta Sigma Rho-Tau Kappa Alpha, Phi Rho Pi, National Forensic Association, National Forensic League, and others, including numerous regional, state, and local associations and leagues. It is even possible that we have too many organizations rather than too few. Since most of these organizations sponsor one or more journals, we are not among the needy in that important area. Nor must I convince you that we need not be desperate to find more ways to spend our professional time. Whatever our collegial critics inside and outside our academic discipline may say of us—and they sometimes



seem neither reluctant nor sparing in giving us the benefit of their critical assistance—they would be hard pressed to suggest any other academic group that devotes more, perhaps even as much, of its time to its teaching endeavors.

What, then, are the areas in which this conference should prove developmental? I would like to suggest three:

1. We must develop a better notion of who we are and of our central purposes. We must answer such basic questions as: What is forensics? What are its educational goals? What is the role of the forensics professional?
2. We must develop and encourage the best approaches possible to filling our most constructive professional roles and for achieving our central educational goals.
3. We must develop ways to explain and promote our work, both within and without the academic establishment.

Without a clear notion of our roles and goals, better approaches to educational achievement will be difficult to evaluate. It also seems obvious that, unless our goals and functions are clear and our approaches purposeful and broadly defensible, we will encounter grave difficulty in explaining and promoting forensics education to students, colleagues, administrators, and assorted skeptics.

Evaluating the progress of our developmental project prior to this meeting I have found, as I hope all of you have, much about which to be pleased and even proud. Both the initial decision to organize a National Developmental Conference on Forensics and the skill and enthusiasm employed by several of our leaders to win approval and financial support for the conference merit our applause. The research, the organization, and the preliminary sharing of ideas have prepared us well for the unique opportunity the conference offers us. The selection of conference participants merits special comment. This was a difficult, delicate, and almost thankless task, the execution of which was guaranteed not to please everybody, perhaps to offend some. No doubt most of us could speculate about two or three missing persons whom we thought should be here; how could it be otherwise? The greater difficulty would be in selecting those present whose places they would take. Personally, I consider this an assemblage of impressive leadership and one whose aggregate represents a fair cross section of the forensics community. This group can rightfully take pride in its selection, and SCA, AFA, and the forensics community at large can hold high expectations based upon the quality of this group of conferees.

Proof of the value of this conference and the quality of its participants is already in hand. I have read with interest and pride—even in those cases where I was not always sure that I agreed completely—the position papers prepared by task area leaders. The response papers have been equally im-

pressive. In many, if not most cases, these papers represent a thoughtful kind of scholarship and pedagogy equal or superior to that of our convention papers and our published essays. In particular, I have been encouraged by the concern expressed by all the task areas with the critical problems of academic and professional identity in the definitions of our disciplines, the formulation of its educational goals, and the clarification of professional roles. Such questions of identity and goals represent, I think, our most basic concerns and the position papers and responses seem sensitive to their critical nature. Preparation for the National Developmental Conference has been well-planned and well-executed; it offers great cause for optimism in predicting the success of this conference and of the entire project.

So much for the good news. Let me turn now to some observations more characterized by concern, more conducive to caution, and which serve to bridle somewhat my previously expressed and very sincere optimism. These comments are based upon my own reading of position papers and responses, plus my own attempts to interpret our group's responses to questions in Project Delphi. As I allude to areas of possible concern, I shall avoid references to specific papers. Such references are possible and sometimes obvious, but they would serve no constructive purpose. In some cases I am responding only with broadly intuitive reactions, similar to what duplicate bridge experts frequently refer to as "the feel of the table." I also am reacting, of course, from the background of my own forensic prejudices and predispositions. Perhaps in fairness I should indicate what some of those predispositions are, and the quickest way might be by reference to some of the papers we all have read. I accept without reservations all five of the propositions set forth by Stan Rives; I wanted to say a loud "Amen" to Wayne Brockreide's identification of the nature and goals of forensics education; and I resonated extremely well to several of Roger Hufford's suggestions for variations in forensic activities.

Let me move quickly through five potential problem areas that will, I hope, become areas of great achievement. I am concerned about:

1. The possibility of excessive defensiveness toward criticism
2. Possible threats to our relationship with speech communication departments
3. Insufficient enthusiasm for audience-centered forensics activities
4. Insufficient emphasis on our primary role as teachers of students
5. Seeming reluctance to attempt to conceptualize an ideal or "maximum-value" forensics program

I think we can agree—and that many of the essays in our journals will confirm—that the forensics community sometimes has reacted sensitively and with resentment bordering on indignation to criticism of forensics forms and activities. We hasten to defend our learning models and to reject much criticism as simply reaction to excess. Sometimes we are right. But



this conference is less a time for defensive rhetoric and skillful rationalization than it is a time for careful and objective study of all critical evaluation; and I include not just the fault-finding of academic colleagues but the addition of our own searching self-criticism. Several of the position and response papers were characterized by self-criticism; but in others, defensiveness was easily detectable and the call to arms could be at least faintly heard. Never surrendering the pride in our professional discipline and relinquishing none of our activities that we are certain enrich our students, let this conference focus on criticism and improvement—if necessary upon reorientation and reform. For we come not to defend forensics, but to further develop and improve it.

A second area of possible concern, at least as I read the preliminary papers, was a result of the several expressions of doubt about the close alignment of forensics with departments of speech communication. Such doubts may arise in part from resentment that our most persistent critics are sometimes our departmental colleagues. They also may spring from objections to the "public speaking model" as the predominant one for debaters. I would suggest that we consider carefully our long, and I believe very logical, academic associations with other communication teachers, and that we direct our strongest efforts toward seeking to improve, not to sever, those associations. We might do well to pause to ask ourselves the identity of those other departments clamoring to take us in. We might also think carefully on such practical matters as funding our programs and our positions in an academic atmosphere of fiscal austerity. Our academic association with departments of speech communication surely should be an item of careful and sober discussion by the forensic teachers gathered here. We may have much to lose.

Let us move to a third area of potential concern. I sense some cause to wonder about the extent of our emphasis on getting student speakers and debaters before public audiences. Of the four papers emphasizing the importance of real audiences from a heterogeneous community, none was written by a delegate to this convention. Is it possible that we can become so specialized and esoteric in our learning models that the art of successful advocacy in a variety of public forums becomes a lost or, at best, low-priority goal in forensics education? I speak from strong personal conviction and deep concern when I express the hope that this conference will give careful and positive consideration to the encouragement of audience-centered forensics experience.

My fourth area of possible concern is general but very basic; one might appropriately, however tritely, employ the idiom of the forest and the trees. As professional papers sometimes are wont to do, some of-seemed were so preoccupied with what we are doing and how we are doing it, that the *why* was at best submerged. As we discuss scholarship, professional standards,

and theories and practices. I trust we will keep our attention focused always on educational goals. I also trust that, however, we may differ about theory or method, we will agree always that our primary goals must be expressed in terms of educating students. Education is surely our purpose and students are just as surely the *raison d'être* of forensics.

Fifth and finally, I am nervously hopeful that we will not be reluctant to attempt to conceptualize the optimum forensics program, and that we will endeavor to approach as closely as we can the establishment of sound and complete forensics education. Some writers of position papers seemed content to define forensics as "whatever we're doing" and to praise highly the great diversity among forensics programs. I, too, recognize the necessity for diversity, but I hope it will never serve as rationalization for incomplete programs or as a deterrent to offering full ones. If, due to very limited funds, staff, and students, an educational institution must opt for a narrow program restricted either to debate tournaments or to an audience program or to individual events, then they must. I hope, however, that this conference will view such a restriction, never as virtue, but only as enforced limitation. Let me challenge all of us to strive to conceptualize the optimum educational program, one with the fullest range of forensics training. Inability of some to provide an optimum or ideal program is surely insufficient excuse for not encouraging such a model. A clear view and a full appreciation of such a program may well provide greater initiative and effort, and less easy rationalization, in pursuing the fullest range of forensics experience for all of our students.

None of the five potential concerns removes my enthusiasm and optimism for this conference, and all may more properly be viewed as challenges containing potential for great achievement. However, I do invite your attention to their cautionary nature.

In conclusion, let me address myself briefly to the last three questions posed earlier: How can we best implement the judgments of this group's deliberations? In a general way, of course, the published reports of this conference should stimulate further discussion, favorably affect community attitudes, and hopefully stimulate action from forensics teachers not at this conference. Primary responsibility, however, must rest with the follow-up leadership of this highly motivated group and with the systematic and concerted efforts of professional and honorary organizations. To that end, the planning committee invited presidents of six communication and forensics organizations to participate in the National Developmental Conference and to meet in special sessions together.

I shall initiate or cooperate with efforts to get all specific recommendations introduced as action items at the next AFA convention. To that end, I shall request that appropriate AFA committees prepare and present motions, and I shall use whatever influence my official position gives me or that my friends will accede to in supporting all reasonable conference



recommendations. I do not consider "reasonable" a major quibble in view of the optimism I have already expressed about this conference.

I trust that none of us underestimates the significance of this gathering. When this conference is history, we will continue to read papers at conventions, to prepare essays for scholarly publications, and to discuss and debate with each other in hallways and in business meetings. None of those valuable methods of sporadic professional discourse, however, can match the enormous potential of this well advertised, much anticipated, well prepared five days of solid discourse among a group of carefully selected and conscientious leaders. The position papers confirm what most of us have come to believe: that criticisms from within and without academia have combined with rapid educational change and severe fiscal pressures to cloud the future for what deserves to be a strong and growing forensics community. I hope, and I believe, that the National Developmental Conference on Forensics will prove the healthiest influence exerted for many years past and many to come upon the theories, the teachers, and the students of reasoned discourse. The value of our discipline and the needs of our society demand and deserve nothing less.

## RESEARCH NEEDS IN FORENSIC COMMUNICATION

Samuel L. Becker

Last year, during his senior year in high school, my sons went out for forensics, participating both in debate and extemporaneous speaking. Without question, this participation provided him the most important experiences of his high school career. It motivated him to become concerned about and to thoroughly study public affairs; it developed his ability to think and to communicate; it helped him to discover the joys of intellectual activity; and it convinced him that the right way to resolve conflicts among people was through reasoned discourse.

Years of observing high school and college students in forensics have convinced me that this is one of the major contributions we in speech communication can make to the education of youngsters. It is in our various forensics activities, more than in any of our other programs, that most of what we believe in and study can be brought together and passed on to each generation of students. It is in our various forensics activities that we can most effectively communicate the values that form the base of speech communication. And it is in these activities that we can best help our students to develop their capacities for leadership. It is no accident that such a large percentage of the outstanding leaders in our country have been high school or college debaters.

It is for all of these reasons and more that I believe this conference on forensics is so important to the field of speech communication and to those future generations of students who I hope will profit from involvement in forensics activities. Clearly, participation in forensics has not always benefited some students as much as it should have. In addition, forensics is part of a larger educational and social system that is changing constantly. In order to maintain and, hopefully, increase its contributions, forensics too must change or evolve. The challenge to those of us who believe in forensics is to find and follow the most fruitful directions for change while, at the same time, preserving the major values that have accrued from past and present practices. I want to suggest here some of the kinds of research that may help us to meet that challenge and some of the assumptions that should underlie such research and the determination of additional research questions on which we should be working.

---

Samuel L. Becker is Professor of Speech Communication, University of Iowa, and President, Speech Communication Association.



One of the most obvious of the assumptions we must make—and yet one that seems often overlooked or denied—is that man is knowable and that the major goal of our research must be to understand him and his behavior so that we can contribute to the improvement of the human condition. The trick, of course, is to know where and how to look. David Bell pinpoints this problem in relation to liberal education when he discusses the relative importance of knowing questions and answers:

What is a question? A question... is really an ambiguous proposition; the answer is its determination.... The talmudic reverses the order of events: A man runs down the street shouting "I've got an answer! Who has a question?" In the more esoteric versions, the parable reads: If God is the answer, what is the question?

Which is the most difficult to find: the right question, or the right answer? In this—also a question—lies the heart of the educational inquiry.<sup>1</sup>

Bell's answer, like mine, is that the question is the more difficult to find and, hence, the more important. It is easy to learn what to do *after* one has a question or hypothesis; it is far harder to learn how to come up with good questions that are both important and researchable. In forensics, as in the rest of the field of communication, we already have many answers for which we apparently do not know the questions. I hesitantly offer here a few of the questions for which forensics scholars may have the answers, or the tools with which to find answers. More important, I hope that these questions will stimulate you to come up with more imaginative, more specific, and more fruitful questions.

In attempting to understand argumentation—as in attempting to understand almost any other form of communication—we recognize that such concepts as logic, evidence, facts, etc., are human constructs; they are not absolute and they are not constant among individuals at one time nor within one individual over time. Thus, one of the critical questions for those interested in forensic discourse is the set of factors that cause an individual to select or discard a given logic, a particular kind of evidence, or specific types of facts. In short, we must become involved in research on the ways in which individuals *process information*. By that term I mean the way in which individuals integrate increments of information to which they are exposed; integrate them with each other and with other stimuli they have stored previously; the way in which they create meanings from these stimuli; and the ways in which these meanings are stored and retrieved. Understanding the processing of information in this way can help us to understand the ways in which people create meanings and the effects of both immediate and long-range context on that creation.

If one of our aims is to gain wider acceptance and practice of argumentation as a means of resolving conflict, as I assume it is, we must find ways to insure that a larger proportion of people have the knowledge on which

productive argumentation and decision making depend. For a long time we thought that simply making more information available through more channels would serve to reduce the knowledge gap among the various groups in our society. We assumed that the new technologies of communication, such as television, would raise everyone's level of information so that all people would have relatively equivalent starts. There is increasing evidence that that assumption is fallacious, that our new technologies have tended to widen, rather than narrow the gap between the "information-rich" and the "information-poor."<sup>2</sup> The challenge for all in forensic communication is finding more effective ways to reach those who need reaching—to help them to know and to be stimulated not simply *more* than they have been in the past, but up to the level where they have the means to participate in problem-solving or conflict-resolving discourse.

Another important question that scholars in argumentation and forensics must concern themselves with is one that we keep talking about but on which I see little serious and imaginative research. This is the problem of the relationship of attitude change to other behavioral changes. The construct of attitude is only important or fruitful if it is truly an intervening variable for other behaviors that we want our discourse to change. That is to say, I assume that we are not interested in attitudes for themselves; we are only interested in them if they affect such behaviors as voting, discrimination, or the way one raises children. If we discover that two people have different attitudes but we fail to find any other differences in their behaviors that can be accounted for by those attitudinal differences, why should we care about the attitude difference? And up to now, the evidence that changing attitudes affects other behaviors is virtually nonexistent.

Many reasons have been suggested for the failure to find a clear relationship between attitude or attitude change and the behavior toward which the attitude is assumed to predispose people. The test of each of these explanations will be the degree to which each enables us to improve our predictions about the behaviors that attitudes are supposed to affect and, hence, our ability to understand and to develop more useful principles of argumentation.

Probably the most important area in which forensics scholars should be conducting research is the area of conflict—attempting to understand as fully as possible the role of communication in the development, maintenance, and resolution of conflict. Some of the scholars in the Speech Communication Association have made considerable contributions in this area in the past few years, as the "Communication and Conflict" issue of *Speech Monographs* and the SCA-sponsored book on the topic, both published in 1974, indicate.<sup>3</sup> These works are only a start, though. Much more needs to be done and those scholars who are trained in the theory and practice of forensics have much to contribute to this effort. This may well



be the most important research that anyone can do in this half of the twentieth century. Until the end of World War II, the failure to resolve conflicts through discourse could be tolerated because other means of resolving them, while they retarded or reversed the progress of civilization, did not destroy it. These other means can be tolerated no longer since total destruction now is possible. Hence, the critical question of our age is whether human beings can learn and be motivated to resolve their conflicts through reasoned discourse. Those who practice and study the forensic arts have a responsibility to make the answer to the question an affirmative one.

NOTES

1. David Bell, *The Reforming of General Education* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), p. 54.
2. Nathan Katzman, "The Impact of Communication Technology: Promises and Prospects," *Journal of Communication* 24 (1974): 50.
3. "Communication and Conflict," *Speech Monographs* 41 (March 1974), special issue edited by John Waite Bowers; and *Perspectives on Communication in Social Conflict*, edited by Gerald R. Miller and Herbert W. Simons (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974).

PROJECT DELPHI:

ASSESSMENT OF VALUE JUDGMENTS ON FORENSICS

John C. Reinard and John E. Crawford

During the last several years speech communication scholars increasingly have been concerned with planning directions of the general discipline and the specific interest areas within the field. Together with the New Orleans Conference on Research and Instructional Development,<sup>1</sup> the National Developmental Project on Rhetoric,<sup>2</sup> and the Memphis Conference of Teacher Educators,<sup>3</sup> the present conference is another serious attempt by representative experts to map the course of future efforts in a subdiscipline of speech communication.

Project Delphi was conceived<sup>4</sup> in order to advance the progress of the National Developmental Conference on Forensics. Since the conferees represented an unusually wide variety of interests and backgrounds, it seemed likely that the early phases of the conference would, of necessity, be spent determining the major sources of consensus and conflict among values held by conferees about forensics. It was felt that by use of the Delphi Method, a term referring to a more or less specific set of procedures developed at the Rand Corporation for eliciting and processing the opinions of a group,<sup>5</sup> task force members could be provided with a partial listing of the major sources of consensus and conflict among values held toward various aspects of forensics. This report provides a summary of the Project Delphi research into contemporary value judgments on forensics.

BACKGROUND

Whenever a disparate group of experts convenes to discuss issues, it can be expected that a considerable portion of the initial discussion would focus upon common value orientations. Nonetheless, the group process itself could tend to inhibit group productivity. Time may be consumed while members seek to identify issues, generate vocabularies, and vie for group identity. Psychological pressures also may have an undue impact on expression of value-laden judgments. According to Olaf Helmer, one of the pioneers of the Delphi technique:

---

John C. Reinard is Assistant Professor of Speech Communication, Arizona State University. John E. Crawford is Assistant Professor of Speech Communication, Central Michigan University.



The outcome is apt to be a compromise among divergent views, arrived at all too often under the undue influence of certain psychological factors, such as specious persuasion by the member with the greatest supposed authority or even merely the loudest voice, the unwillingness to abandon publicly expressed opinions, and the bandwagon effect of majority opinions.<sup>6</sup>

The Delphi technique attempts to overcome the limitations of face-to-face confrontation during the orientation phase<sup>7</sup> of group discussion.

Delphi "is a method for the systematic solicitation and collation of expert opinions."<sup>8</sup>

This technique replaces direct debate by a carefully designed program of sequential individual interrogations (best conducted by questionnaires) interspersed with information and opinion feedback derived by computed consensus from earlier parts of the program.<sup>9</sup>

This process may be used as a substitute for face-to-face confrontation when expert judgments are sought or free expression of values is desired.

A systematic Delphi-type assessment of conferees' value orientations, as reflected in judgments they make, was felt to offer several advantages. First, the crucial process of group orientation could begin in an objective, "personality free" environment. Second, intensive intellectual interactions could be encouraged to begin through a potential use of controlled iteration and feedback. Third, the chief sources of consensus and dissensus could be clarified prior to the beginning of the conference. Fourth, initial thinking about general viewpoints toward forensics could begin without the risk of adverse interaction patterns inherent in face-to-face encounters. Finally, as a result of the foregoing occurrences, optimal utilization of conference materials and intellectual resources might be facilitated. By use of Delphi procedures it was hoped that essential information about general sources of agreement and disagreement among conferees could be provided participants at the beginning of their deliberations so that progress might be made in more complex discussions to follow.

#### RATIONALE

Because the National Developmental Conference on Forensics embraced many more varied points of view than did the earlier New Orleans, Wingspread/Pheasant Run, and Memphis conferences, it was possible that the diversity could have an inhibiting effect on discussion. The conference planning committee designed a number of innovative features to maximize the interaction among participants (e.g., chairman-writer teams, process observers, meetings of topic leaders). One problem inherent to the topic area approach, however, is that each conferee is able to maximize his

input in only one of the four subjects of concern. The use of the Delphi procedures was thought to help mitigate potential negative effects of topic assignment by allowing every participant to engage in the discussion process that would underly the agenda for each topic area. Topic area leaders and members could have a common ground from which to initiate their discussion of recommendations that could reflect not only individual concerns and issue orientations, but those of all other conferees as well. The richness of input, in this instance, could well be expected to enrich the output.

A second major advantage of completion of Project Delphi was envisaged. The success or failure of the conference, in large part, could depend on the quality of the conference recommendations. It can be argued that the sooner conference participants reached the stage of proposing and discussing recommendations, the better those recommendations would be by the end of the conference. Delphi sought to achieve this goal by informing conferees of the basic issues deemed worthy of conference attention while decreasing the need for inordinately lengthy orientation prior to debate on the crucial issues isolated. Since Delphi procedures lead to identification of major areas of consensus and dissensus on issues within all topic areas, it was possible for participants to capitalize on issues where substantial consensus existed and to seriously consider viewpoints based upon values in which irreconcilable differences exist. In fact, by agreeing to disagree on some issues or by recognizing the level of agreement on values underlying specific recommendations, it may have been possible for creative recommendations to emerge which embraced the concerns of the forensics community as a whole.

In sum, Project Delphi was undertaken to contribute to the conference by:

1. Initiating value-oriented interaction of ideas in the calm deliberative environment provided by Delphi procedures.
2. Providing an opportunity for isolating subjects of concern before the conference is formally convened.
3. Broadening the base of topic area input and, thus, enhancing the confidence in and quality of conference output.
4. Maximizing the use of time by conferees by providing a description of the concerns of conferees along with a description of consensus and dissensus on those concerns.

Although the above were purposes of Project Delphi, it was not a goal of the project to define areas for necessary recommendations, nor were the findings intended to supplant discussion about forensics education. Project Delphi was completed to provide participants with an idea of some of the basic judgments and concerns of conference members. Armed with this in-



formation, conferees could better orient themselves to common interests and procede more expeditiously to development of the final document.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The essential problem faced by the Project Delphi researchers was: How can some of the relevant values held by conferees be reliably assessed? Obviously, in answering this question the researchers had to accomplish two major tasks. First, the value judgments of task force participants had to be isolated. Second, the judgments rendered had to be reliably determined.

The use of Delphi procedures to isolate relevant values seemed to be the most direct method of determining relevant values. Instead of compiling a questionnaire of statements to be evaluated by conferees—a procedure that would depend entirely on the intuition of the researchers for its reliable isolation of value judgments—it was decided to let the task force members themselves isolate topics of judgment. The first round of Project Delphi was devoted to this purpose.

Still another problem was that of isolating value judgments of conferees. There had to be some way of determining that the judgments rendered were indeed *value judgments*. English and English define value judgment activity as "a reaction to persons, situations, or actions in terms that imply an assessment of their value or worth rather than of their objective characteristics."<sup>10</sup> Rescher<sup>11</sup> points out that value judgments must include one additional feature in addition to subjective feeling toward a concept. According to Rescher's view, values imply that certain classes of concepts of objects are significant, meaningful, or relevant to the individual, regardless of the direction of the judgment. In order to obtain an assessment of value judgments two steps were followed. First, statements generated in round one of Project Delphi were worded as propositions of policy or value. Second, participants were asked to rank the statements in their order of importance. Those items that ranked highest were included for future rounds.

The second major problem was the reliable assessment of value judgments. After reference to previous research by one of the authors<sup>12</sup> it was decided that the use of a seven-point semantic differential-type scale (agree/disagree) could best tap a complex judgment or reaction to the value statement considered.

With instrumentation and isolation of value judgments accomplished, it was feasible to continue assessment of task force member value judgments of concepts related to forensics.

*Procedures.* Generally speaking, the Delphi method is a process "for the controlled elicitation of group opinion by an iterative use of questionnaires

with a selective feedback of earlier group responses."<sup>13</sup> Traditionally, the technique has been applied to forecasting the future of such factually based phenomena as computer technology or educational innovations. More recently, however, work has been completed in which value judgments are submitted to the same basic procedures.<sup>14</sup> The research completed for Project Delphi consisted of four essential rounds.

**ROUND ONE.** The first round was completed, as previously noted, in order to generate items for future evaluation. In each of the categories (goals, roles, theory, practice, research and scholarship, and professional preparation, status, and rewards) participants were requested to write as many or as few statements about forensics as they wished. The largest number of statements written was 67, the smallest number (excluding those who failed to respond to the questionnaire) was seven. A total of 560 statements was generated in round one. Of these, 130 different statements were discerned.

Round one questionnaires were sent to all participants and resource persons of the conference. After a delay of more than three weeks, 23 participants returned completed questionnaires. The only area of the country to register a one hundred percent return rate was the West Coast.

**ROUND TWO.** The second round was completed for three reasons. First, despite a conscientious attempt to include every statement generated in the first round, it was possible that some statements might have been omitted unwittingly, some not recognized as expressing the unique perspectives they actually did, or some improperly worded to suit the viewpoint being expressed. Hence, in round two participants were given the opportunity to add new items, suggest alternative items, or revise those already included. Second, a ranking of items in order of their importance was desired as another check to make certain that true value judgments were tapped by the items in the questionnaires. Third, an evaluation of the first round statements was desired so that boundaries on group consensus could be drawn in round three.

The questionnaire for round two featured a set of instructions on the cover page explaining how to complete the seven-point agree-disagree scales and requesting subjects to rank all the statements for each of the categories in their order of importance. Finally, participants were invited to add items to the questionnaire if they so desired. On each subsequent page of the questionnaire under each category heading the statements appeared in random order accompanied by the seven-point agree-disagree scale beneath each statement. Beside each item was a space in which to place a rank for the item.

Round two of Project Delphi was sent to all members of the task force and to all resource persons for the conference. Twenty-eight conferees



responded. Again, the only geographic area of the country to register a one hundred percent return rate was the West Coast.

On the ranking-of-statements instructions some respondents expressed confusion or dismay. Seven participants failed to rank the items in order of importance at all. Some provided partial rankings of the top several items in any category. In the case of those who tied ranks, the procedure commonly used to compute tied ranks in nonparametric statistics<sup>15</sup> was employed.

Thirteen new statements were added to the total list during round two and 20 statements revising existing items were added for evaluation in round three.

ROUND THREE. Round three was completed in an effort to obtain final evaluations of all items and to determine if items added in round two should be included as part of the larger list per se.

The questionnaire for round three was slightly more complicated than that for round two. The first page featured a set of instructions for the completion of the questionnaire. Participants were informed that on the pages which followed the same items they had evaluated in round two would be presented again on the same agree-disagree scale previously employed. In round three, however, a dotted line was placed through scale positions to represent the majority opinion on each item. Task force members also were provided with a small red "X" to indicate their round two position on the agree-disagree scale. Conferees were given the option of changing their evaluations if they desired. If the round three response fell outside the dotted line range of consensus, the individual was requested to state the reason for such a discrepant position. Of course, those who wished to do so were informed that their comments on any of the items in the questionnaire would be welcomed. The instruction page was followed by the statements arranged under the previously described topic headings (goals, roles, theory, practice, research and scholarship, professional preparation, status, and rewards) accompanied by the agree-disagree scales with the dotted line "range of consensus" and indication of round two response.

A second phase of the same questionnaire included the new items added from round two suggestions. Instructions requested that each participant indicate his or her agreement or disagreement with the item, rate the item on a seven-point scale as "important enough to be retained" or "not important enough to be retained," and write a reason for that viewpoint. The instruction page for phase two of the questionnaire was followed by the statements, agree-disagree scales, and importance scales.

A third and final phase of the round three questionnaire included materials for evaluations of the suggestion variations of already included items. Conferees were instructed to read the "root" statement for each item,

read and evaluate (on the agree-disagree scale) each variation statement, indicate which of the statements (variation statements or root statement) they preferred, and write any reasons for the judgments they made on the variation statements. The set of root and variation statements followed, accompanied by the agree-disagree scales for the variation statements and an instrument for indication of preferred statement forms.

Selection of statements to be retained from round two posed a problem. Given the confusion that some conferees expressed over the ranking of statements in order of importance, alternate criteria for selection of items had to be found. Above all else, it was desired that all major viewpoints be represented in the final selection of items, provided those items were deemed important by at least one representative to the conference. Therefore, a statement was retained if it met any of three criteria. First, those statements ranked in the top ten for any category of the conference were included. Second, any statements ranked as number one or number two in importance by any participant were included. Third, any items that manifested clear indications of dissensus (*viz.*, the majority opinion had fewer than 14 participants on its side, excluding the "neutral" scale position) were added to the list since it was felt that no controversial issue could be ignored for long by the conference. Hence, such controversial issues should have been included in the considerations of conferees in completing Project Delphi materials. Of the 130 statements evaluated in round two, 100 were retained for round three.

Another procedural difficulty involved determination of the range of consensus for the statements in round three. Obviously, if a majority of subjects expressed favor or disfavor with an item, that group would provide reference for the range of consensus. Unfortunately, there were instances in which a plurality, but not a majority, fell on one side or the other of the neutral point. When this occurred it was decided that encouragement of expression of reasons from both sides of the controversy would be desirable. Hence, when fewer than 14 subjects expressed viewpoints falling on one side or the other of the neutral position on the agree-disagree scale, the three center positions were assigned as the range of consensus for the item. In this way, discussion of both sides was stimulated for the round three questionnaire.

Round three questionnaires of Project Delphi were sent to all members of the task force and to all resource persons for the conference. Twenty-seven participants completed the questionnaires. Of the 13 new statements suggested in round two, four were considered important by conferees (*viz.*, the mean score for the statement's importance was at least five on the seven-point scale). Of the variation statements of already included items, a variation or root was included if at least one-third of the total number responding (nine) felt an item should be retained. The reason more conservative



procedures were not followed in retaining items is that the researchers did not feel that statements that held specific meaning for a significant minority of the conferees could be justifiably deleted from the listing of statements. If the meaning originally intended by the minority were changed by the majority, the statement retained may not reflect the viewpoint originally intended. At any rate, the researchers were hesitant to delete items held to be distinct statements or a specific perspective by a significant minority. As a result of such procedures 17 variation statements were added to the list while seven root statements were replaced by one or more of the variations.

Participant cooperation in round three questionnaires appeared to be unusually conscientious. All respondents included reasons for at least one of the statements in the questionnaire, often offering further explanation of their positions despite the fact that theirs was a majority or neutral viewpoint.

**ROUND FOUR.** Technically speaking, the data gathered from round three of Project Delphi provided enough information to allow the isolation of the key sources of consensus and dissensus among task force members. Nevertheless, round four was completed to allow dissemination of the reasons for the discrepant opinions to conferees and to see if changes in evaluation of items occurred in light of supplying such reasons. Previous research using Delphi procedures<sup>16</sup> on prediction of factual material found that feedback of reasons for extreme responses and feedback of supplementary relevant opinions from the group produced no clear-cut results. It is possible that, when dealing with information related to divergent value judgments, experts may find greater consensus following the reception of additional information about the viewpoints taken by other conferees. It was felt that round four could tap the impact of reception of divergent information while also providing a final estimate of group consensus or dissensus immediately prior to the conference itself.

The 52-page questionnaire for round four featured a set of instructions on the cover explaining how to complete the seven-point agree-disagree scales and asking the conferees to respond to each item only after reading the reasons provided for the opinions held by members of the task force. On each page of the questionnaire the statements appeared under their appropriate headings accompanied by a set of reasons expressed by task force members, and a seven-point agree-disagree scale with a dotted line indicating the range of consensus on the item.

Since this was the final questionnaire in the series of four, no additional comment from conferees was expected and none was manifested. The completion of this round immediately prior to the beginning of the conference provided the opportunity to isolate sources of consensus and dissensus

which likely represent the scope of value judgments actually existing at the time the conference was convened. Twenty-two participants responded to round four. Statements to which they reacted are reported in Table 1 (pages 73-76).

*Analysis of Results.* The analysis of round three and round four results features means and standard deviations for each item. The means provide an indication of the average opinion of the conferees on each statement and the standard deviation provides an indication of the spread of scores around the mean. The smaller the standard deviation, the smaller the deviation from the mean.

## RESULTS

Summary statistics of the results of round three and round four of Project Delphi appear in Table 2 (page 78). Analysis of specific items reveals a substantial disparity among the standard deviations of individual items. While the researchers desired to leave specific item by item interpretation to the discretion of task force members, one cannot help but notice that, while a number of statements exhibited clear signs of consensus behavior, a very large number of items showed a distinct lack of common agreement.

Applying a convenient procedure for determining which items manifest signs of group consensus (an item may be considered to have common agreement with a position if the number of persons in the majority is at least 80 percent and if the standard deviation is not large, typically no greater than 2.0), it may be noticed that the category that exhibited the largest proportion of items upon which consensus was found was the "Professional Preparation, Status, and Rewards" area. Conversely, the area that exhibited the least amount of consensus was "Practice." Hence, it might be expected that conferees in these two areas may have considered positions from distinctly different levels of agreement on basic values about the subject area. Of course, the criteria for determining group consensus as suggested above was only arbitrary and conferees were justified in developing their own criteria.

The researchers hesitated to draw extensive conclusions out of concern that their efforts would encroach on the interpretation that conference members would apply to the specific item results. Instead, the researchers restricted their remarks on the results of Project Delphi to the few preliminary statements already suggested above. The specific findings were presented to conferees to help them determine common interests and values of task force members so that the progress of the conference could be expedited.



**Evaluation.** Following the conference, participants were asked to provide some judgment of the value of Project Delphi to their deliberations. Since this undertaking marked—to the knowledge of the researchers—the first time Delphi method procedures had been applied to preconference arrangements, it was deemed advisable to have an estimate of the reaction of participants to the project.

In addition to several open-ended questions, conferees were requested to indicate how helpful they found Project Delphi during and following the initial orientation period of the conference. Participants responded on a seven-interval scale (very helpful/not very helpful). The results indicated that participants found the Project Delphi results very useful during the initial orientation period ( $\bar{X}=6.12$ ) as might have been expected if Project Delphi actually met the goal it established for itself: provision of information to participants in order to overcome initial orientation problems. Thus, it seemed that task force members believed Project Delphi indeed was useful during the orientation phase of the conference.

Participants also indicated that the results of Project Delphi were useful after the orientation phase ( $\bar{X}=5.8$ ). Communication with the researchers following the conference indicated that participants made reference to the Project Delphi report throughout the proceedings, not just during the orientation phase. Since conferees tended to make use of the report during subsequent parts of the conference, it would seem that the entire undertaking was useful for postorientation discussion, although such was not the express purpose of the project.

Taken as a whole, the evaluation of the project by task force members provided support for the belief that Project Delphi met its goal of assisting in the orientation phase of the conference, as well as assisting conferees in later discussions. As such, the use of Delphi techniques was helpful for this particular conference and potentially could be helpful in other conference situations.

In sum, Project Delphi was conceived as an attempt to contribute to the National Developmental Conference on Forensics by isolating major sources of consensus and dissensus for task force members prior to the beginning of the conference. By use of Delphi techniques, items for consideration were generated, revised and rank ordered, reconsidered and probed, and reconsidered again in the light of feedback from task force members. Responses from task force members indicated that the project was a valuable adjunct to the conference proceedings.

Table 1: Project Delphi Statements

## GOALS

1. Forensics programs should focus primarily on educating students, not just on coaching them through competition.
2. Forensics directors should be more concerned about developing students' abilities in analyzing controversies, building cases, developing communication skills—and less concerned with winning, developing reputations, and collecting and processing information.
3. Forensics should teach and encourage students to develop skills in organizing information.
4. Forensics should encourage and enforce a strong ethical code regarding the use of evidence, persuasive style, and speech writing.
5. Forensics should encourage and enforce a strong ethical code regarding the use of evidence.
6. Forensics should teach students to respect the obligations of the skilled advocate.
7. Forensics should provide more opportunities to research and discuss significant contemporary issues.
8. Forensics should make an effort to attract larger audiences of interested observers.
9. Forensics should train students to understand and influence value hierarchies.
10. Forensics should be a major interest area within the SCA and regional associations.
11. Forensics should make an active effort to involve large segments of the general student population in its activities.
12. Forensics budgets should be provided by college administration funds, not student government fees.
13. Forensics should develop a set of behavioral objectives for the teaching and practicing of argumentation-communication skills.
14. Forensics should develop a set of behavioral objectives based upon behavioral research findings for the teaching and practicing of argumentation-communication skills.
15. Developing students' public speaking skills should be the central goal of the forensics program.
16. Individual and debate events should receive equal emphasis in forensics programs and tournaments.
17. Forensics should receive substantial funding from private or governmental granting organizations.
18. While forensics should receive substantial funding from private and governmental granting organizations for the Bicentennial and National Developmental Conference, day-to-day operations should not receive substantial funding from private and governmental granting organizations.
19. Forensics should find ways to reduce the amount of time required of students.
20. Forensics should seek greater dissemination of its research and analysis of issues appropriate to public decision-making bodies.

## ROLES

1. Forensics should become more closely associated with departments of speech communication.
2. Forensics should seek to bring enlightened discussion of current issues to general audiences.
3. Forensics divisions should provide a laboratory environment for students interested in problems of empirical research, reasoning-argument development, or delivery skills.
4. Forensics should focus on ways to upgrade critical thinking in public affairs.
5. Forensics should encourage field work opportunities in politics, law, or business for its students.
6. Forensics should define its role in association with the curriculum in speech communication.
7. Forensics should seek closer integration with legal and business professions and departments.



8. Forensic directors should seek the cooperation of faculty members in other departments in the training of students.
9. Forensics training should be required of certain non-speech majors, e.g., law.
10. Forensics programs should participate in a greater number of interdisciplinary "honors" programs.
11. Forensics should assist campus and community groups to develop and test ideas.
12. Forensics should play a major role in public debates that occur in such places as state legislatures, community action groups, or businesses.
13. The basic argumentation course should deemphasize competitive debate as a pedagogical model.
14. The basic argumentation course should give competitive debate equal billing with other pedagogical models.
15. Forensics activity should be primarily performance-oriented.
16. The argumentation course should be an alternative to the commonly required introductory speech course.

---

#### THEORY

1. Sound theory should not be limited only to academic debate.
2. A major theoretic need is the study of how proposition analysis and case presentation is received, processed, and evaluated by various subjects, tournament judges, legislators, juries, etc.
3. Forensics should develop models of the argumentation process which would be useful to majors in government, prelaw, sociology, or speech communication.
4. Research designed to test argumentation theories should be conducted over a period of time at different tournaments and across different settings.
5. Sound theory must appeal to students, colleagues, and the general public.
6. Theories should be developed for debates on propositions of fact and value as well as policy.
7. Forensics should develop models for oral deliberation in decision-making settings.
8. Any useful conclusions about argumentation theory must eventually come from studies employing general or popular audiences as subjects.
9. Theories of forensics should be developed for discourse in various deliberative settings.
10. "Inherency" must be theoretically and operationally defined.
11. Forensics theorists need to propose and disseminate models of the oral processes that govern decision-making activities across a wide range of practice areas.
12. A good theory should lead to the development of instruments that could evaluate such specific skill variables as judging criteria.
13. A good theory should focus upon traditional assumption of evidence and its effects upon arguments.
14. Such new concepts as the "alternative justification case" and "attitudinal inherency" should be investigated thoroughly.
15. There is no theory of debate at this time.
16. Any new theory in forensics should be based upon empirical research findings.
17. Forensics needs sound theoretical bases for dividing "aesthetic" and "logical" events into two discrete categories.
18. Any new theory in forensics should be based upon the "new rhetorics."
19. Any new theory in forensics should be based on work in philosophical argumentation.

---

#### PRACTICE

1. Tournaments are necessary, desirable, and valuable.
2. The AFA code of ethics should be vigorously enforced.
3. The debate judge should demand a delivery style that is compatible with the best models of public speaking.
4. The individual events judge should demand a delivery style that is compatible with the best models of public speaking.
5. The AFA should define generally the terms and parameters of the national topic.

6. A debater should be eligible for course credit on the basis of his research and practice activity.
7. Selected debate tournaments also should offer "seminars in argumentation" for the participants, coaches, and general public.
8. The debater should be encouraged to deliver his arguments in a moderately paced, pleasant style.
9. The role of evidence in debate needs to be less prominent.
10. The "negative spread" should be discouraged.
11. Argumentation courses should be academically independent of a debater's need for course credit.
12. The course in argumentation should not be used as a means of giving credit for extracurricular debate.
13. The forensics director must focus on the teaching of useful theory and practice and must deemphasize or discourage competitive strategies.
14. Tournament topics occasionally should embrace propositions of value.
15. As part of his or her training for contest participation, a student should speak before classes, community groups, etc.
16. Summer forensics institutes should be discouraged.
17. Summer forensics institutes should be carefully regulated.
18. Tournament directors should try to supply audiences for final and/or preliminary rounds in both debate and individual events.
19. There should be minimal time lag between speeches.
20. The current use of "operational" definitions should be discouraged so that specific definitions can be used that would broaden the topical relevance of affirmative cases.
21. All evidence should be stated with a full qualification of sources indicated and a complete citation, and it should conclude with a statement of significance.
22. All evidence should be stated with a full qualification of sources indicated.
23. All evidence should be stated with a complete citation of sources indicated.
24. More college and high school debaters should be recruited as judges for tournaments.
25. Forensics should have no absolute *rules* for judging tournament debates.
26. The cross-examination debate format should be used much more than it is now, but not used exclusively.
27. Two to four propositions should be debated each year rather than just one.
28. Coaches should monitor the ethics of debaters more carefully.
29. Forensics directors should encourage debaters to develop the attitude that debaters and judges are human beings and not information processing machines.

---

#### RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

1. Forensics needs hard evidence regarding the transfer value of forensic participation to "real" oral advocacy practices.
2. We need studies on how a season of competition affects debaters.
3. Forensics scholars need to focus on the contribution that legislators, judges, businessmen, or practicing attorneys may have to offer for theories and practices in argumentation.
4. More M.A. theses and Ph.D. dissertations should be undertaken on issues related to forensics.
5. The forensics community should have a panel of competitively selected papers at every SCA convention.
6. Forensics journals should occasionally commission specific research and conceptual pieces for individuals in the field.
7. Ways must be found to decrease the time required for running a high quality forensics program.
8. There should be more forensics-related articles appearing in *Speech Teacher*, *Speech Monographs*, and *Quarterly Journal of Speech*.
9. All journal articles should be edited more rigorously.
10. Current publications need to embrace more articles offering specific suggestions to forensics directors.
11. The published product of forensics programs, such as collections of evidence, should have the same professional status as publications of original research in other fields.



### *Keynotes to the Conference*

12. A comprehensive statement of relevant questions for research or theory should be published.
13. Argumentation variables should be investigated in both tournament and general settings before they are reported.
14. The stylistic and methodological rigor common to such journals as *Speech Monographs* should also be required for articles submitted to forensics journals.
15. The faculty position of assistant director of forensics needs to be incorporated into more university rosters.
16. Articles on topic-related issues should be printed in nonforensics journals.
17. Forensics research should be limited to the questions of forensics and should exclude issues of attitude change or other related speech, psychology, or sociology topics.
18. Forensics scholars should submit their better articles to *JAF A*, *Rostrum*, *Forensic*, and *Speaker and Gavel* FIRST.
19. Forensics scholars should submit their better articles to *JAF A* FIRST.
20. Research in argument should be related closely to research in communication.

---

### PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION, STATUS, AND REWARDS

---

1. A forensics director should have significant released time from teaching and committee duties.
2. Forensics programs should be directed by individuals who are regular full-time faculty members rather than by graduate students.
3. Forensics directors should have formal training in coaching and judging skills.
4. Forensics directors should have an extensive background of graduate and undergraduate coursework in speech communication.
5. The AFA and/or the SCA should sponsor regional workshops to train judges.
6. The AFA and/or the SCA should sponsor regional workshops to train coaches.
7. A forensics director should be immune from publish or perish rules.
8. The AFA should establish academic/professional qualifications, standards, and certification procedures for directors of forensics programs.
9. Promotion and tenure decisions should consider the forensics director's coaching and should partially account for the size and success of the program.
10. Certification of high school forensics directors should be based upon a specified college background.



Table 2: Summary of Results for Project Delphi Statements

Statement Number	Round III			Round IV (n=22)			Statement Number	Round III			Round IV (n=22)		
	Mean	S.D.	Percent Majority	Mean	S.D.	Percent Majority		Mean	S.D.	Percent Majority	Mean	S.D.	Percent Majority
<b>GOALS</b>							<b>PRACTICE</b>						
1	6.64	.84	96	6.44	1.26	57	1	6.20	1.50	88	6.06	1.22	89
2	6.52	1.10	92	6.78	.62	100	2	5.28	1.91	84	4.33	2.08	61
3	6.58	.62	100	6.89	.32	100	3	4.96	2.24	67	5.76	1.44	88
4	5.96	1.51	83	5.61	1.34	78	4	6.04	.98	88	6.00	.79	94
5	5.85	1.70	81	6.00	1.56	83	5	3.50	2.33	54	4.28	1.62	50
6	6.50	.76	100	6.67	.67	100	6	5.84	.88	96	5.89	1.05	89
7	6.17	1.14	92	5.83	1.30	83	7	5.76	1.03	92	5.78	.79	100
8	6.08	1.29	96	5.94	1.31	83	8	5.28	2.11	80	5.76	1.44	82
9	6.19	.96	92	5.72	1.24	72	9	3.72	1.40	56	3.71	1.23	59
10	6.24	1.03	92	6.06	1.08	94	10	3.31	1.77	58	5.11	1.60	67
11	5.68	1.49	88	6.00	1.25	94	11	6.31	1.22	88	6.11	.99	94
12	5.96	1.37	72	6.06	1.43	78	12	5.74	1.59	78	6.44	.76	100
13	5.42	1.31	81	4.94	.90	69	13	3.92	1.59	42*	4.33	1.05	61
14	4.24	1.86	48	3.76	.81	35	14	5.20	1.62	84	5.72	1.42	89
15	4.42	1.78	58	4.50	1.17	61	15	5.60	1.26	88	5.56	.69	94
16	3.84	1.82	60	3.11	1.71	67	16	2.90	1.92	62	3.44	1.17	50
17	4.88	1.56	71	3.69	1.31	25	17	3.57	1.89	65	4.33	2.11	50
18	4.68	2.36	68	5.94	.72	100	18	5.68	1.57	84	5.22	1.70	72
19	4.27	1.32	46	4.24	1.16	47	19	5.21	1.94	67	6.28	1.10	89
20	5.32	1.35	84	5.24	1.35	71	20	3.96	1.64	56	3.89	1.37	56
<b>ROLES</b>							21	3.95	1.66	63	4.33	.94	56
1	5.84	1.46	84	6.06	1.55	88	22	3.04	1.80	71	4.94	1.40	78
2	6.44	.64	100	6.72	.45	100	23	5.08	1.50	63	5.24	1.77	65
3	6.00	.79	100	6.00	.66	100	24	3.38	1.65	42	4.24	1.11	47
4	6.16	.73	100	6.44	.50	100	25	4.12	2.03	48	4.71	1.67	53
5	6.04	.87	92	5.82	.62	100	26	5.42	1.73	71	6.24	.94	100
6	5.88	1.14	88	5.67	1.00	89	27	4.19	1.94	42	4.94	1.54	72
7	5.54	1.22	92	4.88	1.30	82	28	5.88	1.14	88	6.11	.81	100
8	5.68	1.10	96	6.44	.83	94	29	5.50	1.02	96	6.33	.88	100
9	5.16	1.51	68	4.39	1.57	56	<b>RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP</b>						
10	5.80	.69	100	5.83	.69	94	1	5.96	1.06	96	5.67	.82	100
11	5.76	.71	96	5.94	.62	100	2	5.63	.70	100	5.71	.82	100
12	5.36	1.47	80	4.56	1.64	72	3	5.79	.71	100	5.53	.75	95
13	4.96	1.71	56	4.83	1.30	56	4	5.96	.73	100	5.78	.79	94
14	4.17	1.70	25**	4.28	.93	44	5	6.29	.79	100	6.39	.82	100
15	4.29	1.89	58	4.50	1.07	61	6	5.38	.81	96	5.50	.69	94
16	4.92	1.36	73	4.24	1.44	53	7	5.17	1.25	83	5.17	.69	89
<b>THEORY</b>							8	5.50	1.22	79	5.00	1.62	67
1	6.58	.88	95	5.76	1.31	82	9	5.04	1.06	79	5.00	1.00	78
2	6.04	.82	100	6.19	.88	100	10	5.46	1.52	79	5.00	1.10	78
3	6.20	.89	100	6.17	1.17	94	11	2.76	1.58	56	2.22	1.18	83
4	5.60	.75	100	5.61	.68	100	12	5.52	1.52	84	4.78	1.51	83
5	5.88	1.20	79	5.11	1.10	72	13	4.04	1.30	33*	3.89	1.05	44**
6	5.60	1.46	92	5.56	1.17	94	14	4.88	1.69	71	4.89	1.66	61
7	5.76	.95	92	5.83	1.01	89	15	5.04	1.21	58	4.44	.76	56
8	5.12	1.58	68	5.12	1.64	76	16	4.32	.93	28*	4.50	.96	33*
9	5.80	1.02	88	5.88	.96	94	17	2.12	1.07	96	2.28	.65	100
10	5.84	.92	92	5.65	.84	88	18	3.84	1.28	32*	3.50	.96	33*
11	5.60	1.17	84	5.71	.95	88	19	4.00	1.69	30**	3.39	1.26	56
12	4.67	1.68	67	4.72	1.14	78	20	4.69	1.92	58	5.22	1.40	72
13	4.54	1.38	63	4.44	1.26	67	<b>PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION, STATUS, AND REWARDS</b>						
14	5.72	1.08	88	5.72	.99	89	1	6.24	1.75	96	6.33	1.41	94
15	3.46	1.87	58	3.33	1.57	72	2	6.80	.49	100	7.00	0.00	100
16	4.46	1.57	62	4.17	1.26	50	3	5.96	1.31	96	6.06	.94	100
17	3.52	1.39	44	3.61	1.03	28	4	5.67	1.31	88	5.41	.97	88
18	3.68	1.35	36*	3.89	.94	33**	5	4.97	1.47	83	4.88	.58	81
19	3.88	1.66	48	4.11	1.14	47	6	5.38	1.33	88	5.06	.41	94
							7	3.80	1.70	56	3.11	1.70	72
							8	5.35	1.57	88	4.11	1.49	61
							9	5.48	1.32	81	4.78	1.27	72
							10	4.92	1.66	72	4.39	1.06	67

\*Neutral range held plurality. Percentage indicates those who fell on the side of neutral indicated by the mean.  
 Note: The midpoint of the seven-point scale is 4. Means greater than 4 indicate positive evaluation of the statement. Means less than 4 indicate disagreement with the statement.

\*\* Number represents the percentage of persons whose judgments fell on the neutral position.



NOTES

1. Robert J. Kibler and Larry L. Barker, eds., *Conceptual Frontiers in Speech-Communication* (New York: Speech Association of America, 1969).
2. Lloyd F. Bitzer and Edwin Black, eds., *The Prospect of Rhetoric* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971).
3. P. Judson Newcombe and R.R. Allen, eds., *New Horizons for Teacher Education in Speech Communication* (Skokie, Ill.: National Textbook Co., 1974).
4. The researchers are indebted to James H. McBath for initially suggesting the project and providing invaluable assistance during the completion of the research effort.
5. B. Brown, Samuel Cochran, and Norman C. Dalkey, *The Delphi Method II: Structure of Experiments* (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand Corporation, June 1969); *The Delphi Method, III: Use of Self-ratings to Improve Group Estimates* (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand Corporation, November 1969); *The Delphi Method, IV: Effect of Percentile Feedback and Feeding of Relevant Facts* (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand Corporation, March 1970).
6. *Analysis of the Future: The Delphi Method* (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand Corporation, 1967), p. 1.
7. Ernest Bormann, *Discussion and Group Methods: Theory and Practice* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), pp. 115-23.
8. Olaf Helmer, *The Use of the Delphi Technique in Problems of Educational Innovations* (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand Corporation, December 1966).
9. Olaf Helmer and Nicholas Rescher, *On the Epistemology of the Inexact Sciences* (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand Corporation, 1959).
10. Horace B. English and Ava C. English, *A Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychological and Psychoanalytical Terms* (New York: McKay, 1958), p. 577.
11. Nicholas Rescher, *Delphi and Values* (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand Corporation, September 1969), pp. 2-5.
12. Factor analysis of competing scales in a study by John C. Reinard and Dick A. Bridges. "An Experimental Study of the Effects of Refutation Techniques on Change of Opinion" (Paper presented at the Western Speech Communication Association Convention, November 1972, Honolulu, Hawaii) revealed that a seven-point agree-disagree scale loaded separately from a set of simple effective measures, apparently estimating a total judgment of concept acceptance including cognitive considerations in addition to the simple effective measures.
13. Rescher, *Delphi and Values*, p.1.
14. See Rescher, *Delphi and Values*, and K. Baier and Nicholas Rescher, eds., *Values and the Future* (New York: Macmillan-The Free Press, 1969).
15. Sidney Siegel, *Nonparametric Statistics: For the Behavioral Sciences* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956).
16. Norman C. Dalkey, *The Delphi Method: An Experimental Study of Opinion* (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand Corporation, June 1969).

# IV

---

## POSITION PAPERS

## AND RESPONSES



---

---

No college freshman can project 25 years to decide what he needs to learn—subject matter is easily forgotten and in today's world, the knowledge explosion makes constant learning an inevitability. But all adults today need to be able to communicate with clarity, to articulate ideas, to reason, to separate key facts from the barrage of ideas we all are exposed to every day.

No single activity can prepare one better than debating—the ability to think on one's feet, to form conclusions rapidly, to answer questions logically and with clarity, to summarize ideas are all processes which forensics activity develop and develop well.

HELEN M. WISE  
Past President, National  
Education Association

The development of leadership in a democratic society has a very direct relationship to the art of debate. One becomes a leader by molding public opinion to support a given course of action, not by dictating such an action. This involves the ability to pinpoint the crucial issues of the day, and the willingness to apply oneself to the task of research in order to assemble all considerations bearing upon those issues. It requires the ability to apply logic, rather than emotion and prejudice, to the assembled data, the courage to accept the decisions thus indicated, and the ability to present the opinions thus developed in such a way as to persuade others to a like point of view.

EDMUND S. MUSKIE  
United States Senator

---

---

## FUTURE GOALS AND ROLES OF FORENSICS

Malcolm O. Sillars and David Zarefsky

It is understandable that this conference should ask what our goals are and what roles we see as most fruitful. It is not so normal, however, that we should have to begin this discussion with the admission that we are not really clear, even in a general sense, as to just what we do. Physicians, physicists, lawyers, and carpenters seem to know generally what they do but the forensics community must begin with a fundamental question, "What is forensics?" An answer to this question is essential to any discussion of goals and roles.

### WHAT IS FORENSICS

To define what we do by any classical, or even contemporary, view of the word *forensics* would cause us deep trouble. Our activities involve everything from deliberative debate to oral interpretation of literature, almost none of which would fall under what any reasonably well-educated outsider would call forensics. It is clear that we must begin to define forensics by what we do. It would be easy to provide a reasonable list of activities and say "this is what we do," but when we look at the problem in a more analytical way, we are confronted with some difficult choices that are far-reaching in their implications. We will advance the thesis that scholars and teachers in forensics should define their interests primarily in terms of their substantive scholarly concerns, rather than their roles as administrators of activity programs.

On the college and university level, at least, an age of tightened budgets, declining enrollments, and competing pressures is upon us.<sup>1</sup> In such an atmosphere it is doubtful that activity programs will survive as ends in themselves or simply through the force of tradition. Nor is it clear that they

---

Malcolm O. Sillars is Professor of Communication and Dean of Humanities, University of Utah. David Zarefsky is Assistant Professor of Communication Studies and Director of Forensics, Northwestern University.



should. As programs are evaluated, it legitimately will be asked to what extent they advance educational goals.<sup>2</sup> If we are to be able to answer such questions, we must begin by clarifying the constituents of this field, forensics, and articulating a role-definition as scholars.

We would propose that forensics be defined as *the nature, scope, and function of argumentation in intrapersonal and interpersonal communication*. The types of questions prompted by such a focus would include: "What are the primary components of argumentation as a communicative form?" "In what situations is argumentation especially useful or especially inappropriate?" "How does argumentation compare with other methods of decision making and communication?" "What standards are appropriate to the analysis and evaluation of argumentation?" and so on. Such a definition would encompass most of our activity, with only humorous declamation and oral interpretation existing at the fringes.

We confront a second problem in definition. *Argumentation* appears to be the key word in the definition of forensics. It, too, must be defined with care if we are to know the future goals and roles of forensics.

*Argumentation vs. Persuasion.* One point of view sees argumentation as a substance that can be differentiated from some other substance called persuasion. The literature of the persuasion-conviction controversy goes back a long way<sup>3</sup> and is rooted in our understanding of human psychology. Donald Douglas argues that one of the two factors accounting for the "sparsity of scholarship in argument" is the "historical confusion of argument with persuasive aspects of rhetorical theory." "Argument and persuasion," he argues, "are different simply because they exist for different purposes and are concerned with different phenomena."<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, Douglas does not indicate explicitly what the difference is. Nonetheless, he is the most recent exponent of a popular and traditional position. Many others have seen debate as currently practiced to be training in "dialectic rather than in rhetoric."<sup>5</sup>

If we were to take the opposite point of view, that argumentation is another word for persuasion, then forensics would have no special role except to provide practical experience in persuasion. One can understand, therefore, why so many of us have been willing to see a dichotomy between argumentation and persuasion. We know that what we are interested in is different from what the persuasion theorists discuss. But perhaps there are more than two alternatives. Permit us to suggest a third.

*Argumentation is the study of reason giving by people in communication situations.* A definition of this sort excludes such persuasive phenomena as those investigated in much of the research on suggestibility. But substantive differences between persuasion and argumentation are not as important as the approach one takes to communication. We believe that scholars

and teachers of argumentation are interested in knowing how people make arguments and how they can make them more effectively. Such an approach is clearly audience oriented. It provides for both normative and descriptive study but its focus is upon the total audience impact at one moment rather than upon isolated variables.

In this approach, every argument contains reason, evidence, motive, value, credibility, language, etc., but contains them in a unified package that, for scholars in argumentation, can be understood only by looking at the whole argument in its social construct. With this approach, much of the research in persuasion (credibility, attitude change, fear appeals, and the like) could be used in argumentation, but the central attention would be on its relation to the argument made. Moreover, if argumentation is the study of reason giving in communication, then some systems of persuasion, such as Gary Cronkhite's paradigm of persuasion, are essentially argumentative.<sup>6</sup> Such an approach to the definition of argumentation makes contemporary philosophical work in argumentation particularly relevant. It is quite clear that Chaim Perelman has in mind something like this (and not a new dialectic) when he uses the term argumentation. Although Stephen Toulmin had other objectives in mind, his model is particularly applicable for the study of a broad audience-based system of argumentation.

Whether argumentation views communication as a reason-giving activity, as a new dialectic tied to some notion of objective truth, or in some other way which the conference may define, there is no doubt that, as Douglas notes, analysis is central to it.<sup>7</sup> Argumentation seems to imply careful examination of how arguments get put together and build into other arguments. Questions of inherency, burden of proof, presumption, and the like need to be examined systematically to see how they fit with the definition of argumentation selected. In defining argumentation, therefore, we will want to examine a number of analytical methods including general systems theory.

A primary task of this conference is to define forensics. This task in turn will mean defining argumentation and argumentative analysis. We can only examine the goals and roles of forensics adequately when we understand these terms as a process of decision making.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO SPEECH COMMUNICATION

A primary goal should be to define more clearly and coherently our relationship to the field of speech communication. Although Robert D. Kully sees a "growing alienation between forensics and the speech communication discipline," W. Barnett Pearce's study makes it clear that, despite occasional individual attacks, forensics is well regarded in the profession of speech communication. A sample of exclusively SCA members



shows no significant difference from two samples of AFA members in support of forensics. There is a significant difference, however, in the perception of the goals of forensics activity. AFA members, who are more likely to be practicing coaches, tend to see the goals of forensics activity as developing analytical ability and research skills rather than the ability to construct and refute arguments, ability in public speaking, and listening.<sup>8</sup>

One explanation for the disparity may involve a failure of persons in speech communication to recognize that changes which have taken place in the field generally have had parallels in forensics. Over the last generation, the public speaking situation less frequently has been characterized as a paradigm of communication. Yet forensics often is evaluated by persons in speech communication as if the public speaking model still were appropriate. Adverse reflections on a "debate style"—rapid rate of delivery and other behaviors characteristic of debaters—presume the centrality of the public speaking situation to forensic endeavors. But few college and university forensics specialists would regard developing skill in public speaking among their most important goals.<sup>9</sup> When asked to indicate their objectives, they frequently identify skills related to intrapersonal information processing, analysis, and decision making.<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, the AFA study of high school forensics programs<sup>11</sup> did not consider the question of goals. These may be quite different from those of college programs. From the college standpoint, however, some members of the speech communication profession have criticized the forensics community for its failure to achieve goals that the college forensics community does not regard as fundamentally important.

The possibility should not be ignored, of course, that the naming of these goals is a product of the criticism. That is, it is not out of the question that forensics directors, stung by criticism that their debaters cannot communicate, have sought to defend themselves by saying, "That isn't our objective." To prevent such possible influences, this conference should take care to find out whether the goals that are most *useful* to this generation of forensics directors also are the most sensible for the long run.

Even though development of analytical skills may not be the only objectives, they surely will be as important as they have been for 70 years as goals of forensic activity. Ways need to be found to make these goals more explicit, both to ourselves and to others who may not understand what we do.

In addition to reestablishing, through clarification of goals and continued reexamination of the processes of analysis and decision making in the practical laboratory of forensics, we need to recognize and exploit the speech communication parentage of argumentation and forensics. Two approaches to this task may be productive:

A. The Report of the National Developmental Project in Rhetoric designates the study of *invention* as a primary focus for scholarly investigation.<sup>12</sup> Much of the work done by forensics specialists concerns the inventional process—how advocates come to generate particular types of arguments, to determine the point of dispute, to evaluate the strengths of their positions, and to select or reject arguments for use. The investigation of each year's debate proposition should yield a fund of information about the inventional processes used with respect to that subject in the public forum. The forensics specialist's concern for these matters also should advance the general theory of invention. This conference should consider ways in which such knowledge may be made more useful to the field of speech communication.

B. From the writings of several contemporary philosophers can be derived an approach to rhetoric that regards it as an epistemological instrument. Central to the work of such writers as Perelman, Johnstone, and Toulmin is the recognition that vast areas of knowledge are not susceptible to truth testing by any empirical means. The National Developmental Conference in Rhetoric recognized this conclusion in proposing that a rhetorical model should replace a fact/nonfact model of truth in the realm of human affairs.<sup>13</sup> Scholars in forensics, in identifying the nature, scope, and function of argumentation, are defining the boundaries of a truth-testing instrument analogous to science in its rigors and appropriate to those questions that science cannot answer. The implication of regarding argumentation as the analog of science is to establish a strong claim for it as a means of knowing. Hence, forensics specialists should be able to contribute significantly to the philosophy of rhetoric.

Although the substantive concerns of forensics derive clearly from speech communication, they do not derive *uniquely* from that field. Many forensics specialists have been trained in fields other than speech. Moreover, a substantial minority of forensics activity programs have no connection with the curricular programs in speech communication.<sup>14</sup> Much will be lost by failing to take advantage of the substantive contributions to forensics theory of fields such as law, philosophy, and the social sciences. Because forensics is the offspring of many scholarly disciplines, interdisciplinary bases for forensics programs should be welcomed. This suggestion, however, should not be taken as an endorsement of programs that have *no* base in any of the academic departments of an institution. The existence of such programs increases the difficulty of defining the role of the forensics specialist as scholar and encourages the perspective that activity programs should be evaluated as ends in themselves.



More opportunities should be cultivated for exploiting the intellectual contributions of different fields to the specialist in forensics. Specifically, it is suggested that:

- A. Interdisciplinary conferences and symposia be encouraged, in which particular theoretical concepts of forensics would be addressed by scholars representing a wide spectrum of academic disciplines.
- B. Attempts be made to develop a publication or a section in the *Journal of the American Forensic Association* that would report on new ideas pertinent to forensics from the literature of a variety of academic disciplines, in a much fuller and more systematic way than currently is possible.

Just as a variety of academic disciplines contributes to the intellectual substance of forensics, so forensics can make an increased contribution to other fields. Efforts by forensics scholars to illuminate topics in history, law, government, and the social sciences from the perspective of argumentative analysis should be encouraged. This encouragement might take the form of commissioning a series of monographs, urging scholars in forensics to write material suitable for publication in the journals of other academic disciplines as well as our own, and so on.

#### PEDAGOGICAL ROLE OF FORENSICS

The longest standing and still strongest role of forensics programs is a pedagogical one. We teach students about argument according to our individual and group lights. If a debate coach is nothing else, he or she is surely a teacher. It is a most rewarding kind of teaching because we get the opportunity to work with the best students who come voluntarily to deal with challenging social problems.

Richard Stovall's report calls our attention to a broader pedagogical role for forensics:

For two years, I have been trying to discern a trend in the forensic participation among Ohio high schools. Our membership trends show a frightening pattern. Less than five percent of our membership comes from the city school systems of Columbus, Cleveland and Cincinnati. The suburban schools surrounding these cities, small town schools, and farm community high schools provide the overriding majority of our members.<sup>15</sup>

Although, as Stovall points out, this trend is a product of a number of political and budgetary factors within communities, there may be some responsibility in an elitist role that we cast. We may be missing large numbers of students because our programs are geared to students from relatively well-educated homes. Perhaps new practices are needed (even new theory?) to cast forensics in a broader pedagogical role. This might not mean eliminating what we do now: rather, it might mean adding new

programs, perhaps even new systems of programs, to forensics. It also might mean trying, in our corporate role, to make urban school systems more aware of the value of what we are doing.

Even in colleges and universities, the role of pedagogy in forensics requires reexamination. In many institutions, teaching in forensics is merely an offshoot of the intercollegiate debate program. An undergraduate course in argumentation is often a performance course largely for debaters and prospective teachers of debate. Such courses, although valuable, are insufficient means of teaching the broader perspective of forensics. Attempts should be made to develop curricula and teaching materials focusing upon the theoretical, substantive concerns of forensics. These attempts could be facilitated through the exchange of course descriptions, syllabi, and other materials, and through the sharing of ideas and pedagogical methods under the auspices of forensics organizations.

Special attention should be paid to identifying new audiences for the curriculum in forensics, in recognition of the trends in American higher education outlined in the CSSA paper by John Schmidt.<sup>16</sup> Among the possible extensions of the forensics curriculum might be included:

- A. The development of training programs and short courses for prelaw students in the identification and analysis of controversy
- B. Workshops and programs centered on issues of concern to the individual campus or community
- C. Courses, or units of courses, developing case studies in the analysis of policy argument, which might prove useful to students in history and government
- D. Course offerings in decision making and the analysis and solution of problems, which might be of interest to students of management and administration

To facilitate the development of such special curricula, forensics organizations should be encouraged to commission the creation of model programs, to seek funding to underwrite these ventures, and to disseminate the results.

The centrality of the competitive activity program to the pedagogical objectives of forensics needs to be restated and redefined. The authors are convinced that the competitive program is central to the goals we have described. If the competitive program is to continue it should be linked to the advancement of substantive theory and should establish the importance of competition in developing forensics skills. It will be necessary to develop a rationale that explains how a competitive program achieves the goals we seek. For example, if argument is regarded as a truth-testing device, then extensive and sustained competition can be justified as necessary to maximize the rigor of the instrument. The National



Developmental Conference should explore this and other derivations of a rationale for competitive programs.

More conscious effort should be made to use the competitive program as a vehicle to develop and test theories of argument. This objective may be facilitated by:

- A. Open forums at debate tournaments to consider important theoretical concerns
- B. Student conferences and exchanges of points of view, perhaps under the auspices of a competition in debate theory
- C. Increased contribution to journal literature from students
- D. A general attitude on the part of the forensics community to encourage innovation in theory and technique

Forensics specialists must become more informed about the standards and criteria employed by administrators to assess pedagogical effectiveness. Forensics organizations should consider sponsoring workshops and special programs to acquaint their members with the techniques of educational management so that members may be able to respond more effectively to demands for accountability, programmed budgets, and cost-benefit analysis. Such workshops and programs should develop the ability to apply management criteria to forensics programs and the ability to identify areas of pedagogy that are not evaluated appropriately through the use of such criteria.

#### RESEARCH ROLE OF FORENSICS

A second role that is highly touted but not very productive is the research role. Little of the research in argumentation is carried out by those who are directly active in the field, probably because they are too busy and perhaps because they feel the need to spend so much time in defending their role and practices. It is enough here to observe that a clear focus of the substantive concerns of forensics should generate the research questions, the answers to which will further the development of theory. Douglas identifies a number of concerns that warrant research. Among these are the theoretical requirements of advocacy, the philosophical implications of using argument as a decision-making instrument, the nature and method of analysis, the concept of evidence in nonlegal settings, and the nature of informal reasoning.<sup>17</sup> In formulating and answering questions concerning these topics, the use of speculative, historical, and empirical modes of inquiry should be encouraged. Forensics organizations should offer their expertise in identifying research priorities and designing projects.

More sophisticated research concerning pedagogy in forensics also is needed. Most of the available empirical research seeks to determine the

effect of forensics participation versus nonparticipation on some dependent variable. At best, such research may enable us to support an ultimate justification of forensics. It will not, however, enable us to answer questions that are far more immediate and pressing.

Questions must be raised about the relative effectiveness of the wide range of pedagogical methods employed. For example, are the benefits of forensics maximized with one style of coaching as opposed to another? Is the gut-level feeling that certain practices (such as those Hufford labels "the spread, the squirrel, and the silences"<sup>18</sup>) are undesirable warranted by research demonstrating that those who employ them minimize the values of forensics? Is the "winning-versus-learning" dichotomy valid? Is there such a thing as an *overly* competitive program? Is there a point of diminishing returns to the benefits of participation in the activity? Does an oral critique significantly improve proficiency in forensics? These are examples of questions central to our pedagogy. Often, teachers and coaches have answered them intuitively. In some instances, they have legislated their intuitions—e.g., the 14-tournament maximum in the AFA Code. In other instances, they have developed a voluminous literature to express their intuitions. We will advance neither our understanding nor our pedagogy if we do not formulate these intuitions as research questions and submit them to careful testing. Forensics organizations could encourage this process by commissioning a systematic program of research in current problems of pedagogy, and disseminating the results of this research throughout the forensics community.

Finally, a more careful assessment is needed of the existing research in forensics. The essay by Kenneth Andersen indicates some of the difficulties in locating and using fugitive material.<sup>19</sup> The accessibility of this material should be increased. Among approaches to this end might be the formation of a special collection in forensics at some library and the reprinting and indexing of available research. In particular, the development of a cumulative table of contents and index for forensics publications is recommended.

#### THE FORENSICS SPECIALIST

Thus, we can identify two primary potential roles for forensics: the pedagogical and the scholarly. As an adjunct to that we would ask serious consideration for the redefinition of the role of the forensics director.

In the roles so far defined is the clear implication that specialists in forensics should conceive of themselves primarily as scholars rather than as administrators. In some institutions, a self-fulfilling pejorative definition of the forensics program and its director as intellectually marginal has been adopted. Such a definition has permitted the hiring of inexperienced can-



didates for positions often *defined* as nontenured, with extensive work loads and a range of responsibilities that precludes the time and energy needed for serious scholarship. Not surprisingly, such persons often do not become productive scholars and teachers. What is at issue is primarily a question of definition—how we regard ourselves and our role. It seems reasonable that the National Developmental Conference should help forensics specialists to define themselves as scholars seeking to answer important substantive questions. Such a role would not mean an exclusive attention to scholarship so as to slight excellence of teaching. It need not always even mean publication, but it would mean that each member of the forensics community, whether actively engaged in directing forensics or not, must see the expansion of our knowledge of argumentation as a primary duty.

Were we to limit our definition of the roles of forensics and forensics directors to pedagogy and scholarship, there would be enough to do within the interdisciplinary goal structure set out here. But there may be other roles. We encourage our respondents, in addition to commenting and expanding on what we have said, to suggest them.

## NOTES

1. See James H. McBath, "Beyond the Seventies," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* (Spring 1972): 175-76; John W. Schmidt, "Future Constraints Facing Intercollegiate Forensics" (Paper delivered at Central States Speech Association Convention, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, April 5, 1974). For a more optimistic view, see James F. Weaver, "Response to the Trends: National and Regional Associations" (Paper delivered at Central States Speech Association Convention, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, April 5, 1974).
2. Richard Stovall has noted the growing reliance on behavioral objectives as a means to justify educational programs. See "Forensics Today" (Paper delivered at Central States Speech Association Convention, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, April 5, 1974).
3. Lester Thonssen and A. Craig Baird, *Speech Criticism* (New York: Ronald Press, 1948), pp. 372-78.
4. Donald Douglas, "The Status of Historical Research in Argumentation," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 10 (Winter 1974): 157-58.
5. Steven Shiffrin, "Forensics, Dialectic, and Speech Communication," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 8 (Spring 1972): 189.
6. *Persuasion: Speech and Behavioral Change* (New York: Bobbs Merrill, 1969), pp. 74-92.
7. Douglas, "Historical Research," pp. 158-64.
8. Robert D. Kully, "Forensics and the Speech Communication Discipline: Analysis of an Estrangement," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* (Spring 1972): 192-99; W. Barnett Pearce, "Attitudes Towards Forensics," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 10 (Winter 1974): 138-39.
9. Richard D. Rieke, "College Forensics in the United States—1973" *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 10 (Winter 1974): 131.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 130-31.
11. Betty Anderson and Irene Matlon, "A Description of High School Forensics Programs: Report on a National Survey," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 10 (Winter 1974): 121-26.

12. Lloyd F. Bitzer and Edwin Black, *The Prospect of Rhetoric* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971), pp. 228-236.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 244.
14. Rieke, "College Forensics," p. 128.
15. Stovall, "Forensics Today," p. 3.
16. Schmidt "Future Constraints," pp. 3-4.
17. Douglas, "Historical Research," pp. 156-74.
18. Roger Hufford, "The Debate Tournament" (Paper delivered at Eastern Communication Association Convention, Washington, D.C., March 22, 1974).
19. Kenneth Andersen, "A Critical Review of the Behavioral Research in Argumentation and Forensics," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 10 (Winter 1974): 148.



## RESPONSES TO

### FUTURE GOALS AND ROLES OF FORENSICS

#### Formulating Definitions and Goal Statements

WAYNE BROCKRIEDE (UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO): If I am right in seeing forensics as involving many communities, any attempt to formulate *one* definitive statement about the concrete goals and specific roles of *one* forensics community in relation to students, schools, or society has little merit. What would please one community might be irrelevant or distasteful to another. But the alternative of formulating a separate statement for each community may foment a divisiveness not in the best interest of any community.

I propose that this conference (1) recognize the legitimacy of plural communities, each with enough flexibility to adapt goals to circumstances and needs of a particular educational level, department, school, locale, or kind of student, but that it (2) identify a general goal for students and a general role for faculty that builds a common frame of reference within which various communities can argue profitably about more concrete issues.

RAYMOND ZEUSCHNER (CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE): Our goals are set for us, not in one large vote adopting a set of statements at a conference or association meeting, but by hundreds of small decisions made each week in advising our students, participating in our local academic settings, casting ballots in individual rounds of competition and in discussions with colleagues. The sum of these choices—our practices—become our definitions and our goals.

#### Argumentative Perspective on Communication

M. JACK PARKER (NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY): (Sillars and Zarefsky) may be wishing a problem away when they assert that their definition of scholarly concern as *argumentation* "would encompass most of our activity, with only humorous declamation and oral interpretation existing at the fringes." Perhaps we are dealing with an endless fringe. Many would find some of the activities under the forensics umbrella (in Illinois high schools, there are more than a dozen) clearly outside the purview of the study of argument. Furthermore, some of the traditional individual speaking events such as oratory and extemporaneous speaking may or may not be argumentative in substance. Such a definition then probably excludes many of the speech activities (especially in the high school) that customarily are directed by forensics personnel. On the other hand, to broaden the

definition of scholarly concerns to include the substance of many of the individual activities might require such generality as to make the definition meaningless.

WAYNE BROCKRIEDE: Argument might be defined as existing somewhere on a continuum between a quibble and a syllogism. Toward one end of the continuum lies an influence attempt that provides too *little* rationale: the influencer engages in assertion, suggestion, seduction, or rape. At the other end lies an influence attempt that provides too *much* rationale: the influencer entails a conclusion, piles on truisms, or plays overkill in supporting undebatable propositions.

Argument, therefore, is concerned with the *rational* and the *problematic*. Argument is rational because an inferential leap to the choice of one uncertain option rather than others is based on a perceived rationale and is made after advocates of competing positions have undertaken the risk of confronting one another. Argument is problematic because an inferential leap goes beyond the materials of the argument, because choices are made, because risks are taken, because the issue cannot be resolved with certainty, and because people (arguers and judges) have to perceive and interpret what is said and make choices as *people*, not as computers.

DAVID A. THOMAS (AUBURN UNIVERSITY): In keeping with the evolution of American society towards greater technology and greater dependence upon both small and mass organizations, our forensics educational emphases must be adapted to incorporate the argumentative perspective into cooperative as well as competitive formats. Also, it seems to me that general systems theory should be drawn upon more heavily in our argumentation theory as a particularly appropriate tool of analysis in such a future social and educational context.

#### Place of Communication in Forensics

WAYNE BROCKRIEDE: Taking communication out of forensics appears based on the misconception that debating skills can be developed additively, one by one, and outside of the context of people communicating arguments. Viewed this way, people can rank public speaking skills low and easily dismiss them as "mere rhetoric." Sillars and Zarefsky argue that adverse reflections on the style and delivery of debaters presume "the centrality of the public speaking situation to forensic endeavors." Not so. Central to forensics under the definition I am advancing is not any single skill but the total process of people communicating arguments, a process that requires both dialectical and rhetorical dimensions.



RAYMOND ZEUSCHNER: It is clear that our "audiences" in the competitive setting are "trained" to respond within a fairly narrow set of categories. In our judging, we are asked by debaters and individual events speakers to ignore an enormous amount of sensory data and concentrate on our "flow." Audiences that are not "trained" respond in ways more consistent with the studies done in persuasion and argumentation. They find the sources of information (the debaters) without credibility, the topics usually irrelevant, the argumentation and refutation to be of such little consequence that they see no connection between the practice of our profession and any useful merits in society.

STANLEY RIVES (ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY): The primary concerns of forensic inquiry and advocacy, both as educational goals for participating students and toward the enlightenment of public issues, should be upon thorough research and analysis and advancement of reasoning and evidence in support of positions on public questions that are communicated effectively to a variety of audiences. This view rejects as something approaching nonsense statements like "debate is an intellectual game that employs speech communication merely as a matter of convenience." The above proposition also rejects "public speaking" as a central concern of forensics. Any modern speech communication department has long since refocused its concern on the total process of communication and a variety of forms of communication. It does not and should not reject "effective communication" by the advocate of the results of his inquiry.

### Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Ties

JOHN DEBROSS (UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA): I have only a feeling that our place should be in speech communication departments, but serious thought is required when one realizes that speech communication departments are among the weaker, not stronger, departments in many colleges and schools. Furthermore, some speech communication departments have given signs of not wanting forensics and it is time we faced this fact. Where we belong is basic to what our theory and practice must be and our answer should not ignore the prospect of being in different departments at different institutions.

BRO. RENE STERNER (CENTRAL CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL, PITTSBURGH): Most college debate programs have the advantage of at least some association with the department of speech and communication arts. Certainly this is less true on the high school level where perhaps the majority of schools do not even have separate speech departments. As a result, practice is even more removed from theory and high school programs frequently are en-

trusted to anyone willing—sometimes even to those unwilling. As a result, there is a wide disparity within the high school community over just what debate is or ought to be.

ROGER HUFFORD (CLARION STATE COLLEGE, PENNSYLVANIA): Debate seems to me to be interdisciplinary in its approach, and to "belong" to general studies rather than to a specific discipline. We are inherently concerned with the processes of the social sciences when we debate policy questions. We may utilize the logic of the philosophers, and when we debate the energy crisis we find ourselves immersed in the materials of science. If we must master the rhetoric of the English teacher to be successful, that is an added advantage. If we must learn the skills of oral communication because our contests are conducted that way, that is another potential advantage. The question of where an activity "belongs" is outdated. Educators are recognizing that rigid disciplines have built-in limitations, and debate is one vehicle that can bypass those limitations.

RAYMOND ZEUSCHNER: While the desirability of an interdisciplinary base for forensics programs is evident, such a base should not be viewed as one in which our contributions clearly enhance scholarly endeavors in them. In the long run, the generalizing ability in the particular case of forensics and the wider case of speech communication will place us in an excellent position to integrate research findings from many diverse areas.

DAVID A. THOMAS: Harold Howe II, former U.S. Commissioner of Education, provided a provocative and imaginative prophecy of the long-range future of education in an article in the *Saturday Review/World* (August 24, 1974). Envisioning a time fifty years from now, Howe depicts students as being taught to suppress their competitive motivations and instead to develop their abilities to cooperate and perform within groups and organizations. If this vision comes true, we may expect our speech communication curriculum to continue its tendency towards emphasizing small groups, organizational communication, interpersonal communication, and mass communication. Needless to say, this development also will bear heavily upon the shaping of future forensics programs, because they must conform to the goals of their supporting departments.

### Pedagogical Objectives

M. JACK PARKER: In our society, most debating is part of (or an outgrowth of) certain institutionalized decision-making processes. Essentially these are two: the *legislative function*, that is, the necessity of governments and associations to establish policy designed to improve the corporate life, and



the *judicial function*, that is, the necessity to determine criminal culpability, settle civil complaints, and interpret the statutes and procedures involved therein.

If teachers of forensics were to adhere to the goal of preparing students to serve as advocates and critics within the institutionalized frameworks in which realistic debating takes place, it might facilitate the resolution of some of the most pressing problems in the field. Stated simply, what we do and how we do it would have to pass the test of preparing students for the kinds of debate which are conducted in our society.

JAMES HAWKER (JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL, LAFAYETTE, INDIANA): I would call to the committee's attention that the high school teacher is more interested in the practical application of the theories and models than in the philosophical background for goals and roles of forensics.

ROGER HUFFORD: Viewed as a tool, and as a servant of all the disciplines, debating, with its stress on critical thinking and effective communication, provides a marvelous advantage in the competition for grades, and later for jobs. If we turn ordinary students into effective problem-solvers who can organize their thoughts, support their conclusions, look at all sides of issues, and have the habit of concern about pressing social issues, we have a precious product to sell, and a market of job-hungry students who will be anxious to get what we have to offer. If we insist on putting the stress on the development of theory rather than students, like the purveyors of Diophantine equations we can propound theories that will astonish the learned and overwhelm the neophyte, without really contributing very much to most students or to society.

### **Changes in Student Populations and Teaching Methods**

RAYMOND ZEUSCHNER: Forensics is, for the most part, an elitist activity. By that I mean that it is largely white, suburban, middle class. Because forensics is oriented to the "college-bound," it naturally is more predominant in those high schools that view themselves as preparing students for college, and less frequently found in those high schools that see their roles as terminal institutions.

We can look to the nation's 1,200 community colleges for an answer. Community college forensics participants often reflect the makeup of our cities. Unfortunately, these community colleges often are plagued by the problems that confront our urban public school systems— inadequate support funding for extracurricular and cocurricular activities, and emphasis on job-skill oriented programs.

Such academic programs as forensics need special encouragement and support in the urban schools, especially the community colleges which

serve to bridge the gap between an inadequate high school program and the rigors of the university. With emphasis on developing a strong community college forensics program, many of the students neglected by the secondary schools would be served.

DAVID A. THOMAS: Pedagogical methodologies must be devised to effectively implement our evolving goals. As our teaching approaches become more positive, we may expect student demand for our offerings to increase. With regard to the classroom approach to argumentation and forensics, ways must be found to increase productivity. In particular, learning resources now available and improved resources for the future must be exploited by forensics educators. At present, such sources as the National Information Center for Educational Media (NICEM) catalogs and indices to educational videotapes, 8 mm., 16 mm., and 35 mm. film cassettes, filmstrips, and audio tapes, offer very limited selections of materials relevant to our teaching concerns.



---

I regard experience in argumentation and debate as perhaps the most useful single feature of my undergraduate career. It furnished me with motivation for independent research, pragmatic training in social science methodology, a wealth of factual information, much of which I have retained to this day; training in clear, concise, and direct thinking, free of all the flabbiness and confusion that frequently inhibit effective planning or presentation; some flare for attention-compelling performance; and confidence to make a point, argue the case, support a point of view or demolish effectively an unacceptable or unworkable point of view.

**SIG MICKELSON**

Broadcast Journalist,  
Former President, CBS News

While the skills of oral presentation were necessarily developed during my forensic training, I consider those skills clearly secondary to the skills of organization and analysis which were finely honed during that training. They involved the ability to evaluate a general topic with minute care over an extended interval, followed by the ability to organize a concise persuasive argument on that subject, followed by the ability to apprehend and organize material presented by an adversary in a short time, followed by the ability to respond in a tightly knit and well supported structure in a similar short time interval.

**RICHARD M. MARKUS**

Past President, American  
Trial Lawyers Association

---

**THEORY AND PRACTICE IN FORENSICS**

Annabel Dunham Hagood

**ARGUMENTATION THEORY -- A CRISIS IN IDENTITY**

There are certain compelling reasons for suggesting we have yet to decide what argumentation theory is and how it should be practiced. Expressing the view that argument is intended to perform a responsible role in decision making, Donald Douglas observed:

The one overriding impression gained from reviewing argumentation scholarship is that until recently scholars have not been terribly responsive to this central intent of argument.... With the exceptions of the principal works of Henry W. Johnstone, Maurice Natanson, Chaim Perelman, and Stephen Toulmin, almost any review of historical scholarship will result in frustration and unrewarded effort.<sup>1</sup>

Undoubtedly, a part of the argumentation theorist's ambivalence is rooted in the ambivalence of the discipline itself. Communication seems to be everybody's business, and our theory is to be found in many disciplines. At some point, we must conceptualize the role of argument in the discipline of speech communication and develop a body of theory drawn from several disciplines. The theory should emphasize the role of analysis and the developing and testing of oral arguments as integral parts of any attempt to understand and affect the human condition.

Before such theory can be generated, however, we must identify the argumentation theorist and his role as an educator. To some, the argumentation theorist is a "debate coach," and his role is one of preparing his students for intercollegiate debate tournaments. This limited view was expressed by the director of the team winning the 1974 National Debate Tournament:

I gather from past critiques of this final round that it is customary to deliver a Philippic upon the rapid-fire delivery of the debaters and upon the general concept of the spread. It is a custom I choose to ignore because, in my view, such condemnations mistake the fundamental nature of modern academic debate. They assume that debate is a speech activity, at least one important aim of which is the persuasion of the audience. In fact, debate is an intellectual game

---

<sup>1</sup>Annabel Dunham Hagood is Professor of Speech and Director of Forensics, The University of Alabama.



which employs speech communication merely as a matter of convenience. It is far easier and quicker to conduct a twelve round tournament employing verbal communication [sic] than to utilize written interchanges. But the speech is peripheral rather than essential, and the location of debate programs under the aegis of speech or communication departments is largely an historical accident. The essence of debate is the intellectual clash between two teams; to that end we engage in intensive research, develop second-line argumentation, and devise stratagems for the unwary opponent. The purpose of the game is to discover which team can out-think the other. The spread is simply one of many tactics which may be employed in pursuit of that end.<sup>2</sup>

To others, including this author, the argumentation theorist has a dual concern—a concern with the process of argument and a concern with the complex process of oral communication.

Identifying the argumentation theorist may be easier than conceptualizing his role in the discipline of speech communication. Some contend that current theory and practice place the argumentation theorist outside the mainstream of his discipline. Andersen argues:

Those who fall within the forensics and debate community are doing less and less study of argumentation in the wide range of real-life settings in which it occurs, of which competitive debate is one. The majority of empirical researchers in the speech discipline, now work with paradigms quite unlike those suggested by contest debate and by argumentation and debate textbooks. People in the forensic community need not participate in the paradigms of other communities of the discipline, but the implications of not participating should be clearly understood: a lack of communication, a different orientation with different questions and different goals.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps the reason for an alienation between argumentation theorists and their colleagues—and for our difficulty in conceptualizing our role within the discipline—is to be found in the narrow view some take of the process of oral argument.

Ultimately, the role of the argumentation theorist within the discipline will be determined as we come to grips with the meaning of argumentation theory itself. We must draw this theory from several disciplines, from philosophy, law, and historiography and from an investigation of the paradigms of sociology, psychology, economics, and political science. There will be common threads and discordant notes but there also will be sufficient commonality for us to theorize, hypothesize, and theorize again. Crucial to our expanding the body of knowledge, however, will be two factors:

1. The point of departure for hypothesizing must be the existing body of knowledge itself. Our literature is replete with new approaches that are in no way compared or contrasted with existing forms. For example, what is the rationale for proposing a goal-oriented case or a criteria

case? How does such a case affect the affirmative's defense of the proposition? How does it affect the burden of proof and burden of rebuttal?

2. The laboratory for testing new theories must not be the academic debate tournament as it is presently constituted. A more specialized setting for testing hypotheses cannot be imagined. Persons presumed to be argumentation theorists, and operating without commonly agreed upon ground rules, reward and punish at the end of each round of debate. The critic-judge is denied the option of saying neither team won; regardless of what happened in the round, one team must be declared the winner. Often a theoretical departure is rewarded because the other team simply did not know how to respond. Furthermore, as knowledge that the theoretical departure has been rewarded spreads, the departure gradually is adopted by other teams and soon becomes accepted practice.

Reflect on what happened in academic debate around the time of the Kruger-Marsh-Newman controversy. To Kruger, there were good and bad debate propositions, and bad debate propositions were not worthy of debate. A good proposition lent itself to the development of causal inherency. *The evils cited as reasons for abandoning present policy were direct results of certain inherent factors within present policy.* Academic debaters—victims of national debate propositions—were not afforded the opportunity of rejecting bad propositions. Thus, when no causal inherency existed in a bad proposition, affirmative teams sought a new case form with a lesser burden of proof, and the comparative advantage case was introduced.

Ultimately, theorizing caught up with practice, and with it came recognition that causal inherency likewise operates in the comparative advantage approach. *Certain factors in the present policy inherently prevent it from producing the advantages the proposed policy allegedly will produce.* But some mighty flimsy comparative advantage cases had been rewarded by ballots, hardware, and championships by the time we achieved a theoretical foundation for evaluating the comparative advantage case.

#### THE DEBATE TOURNAMENT—A PARADOX

Intrinsically related to argumentation theory is the debate tournament, the laboratory in which skills in argumentation are developed. Without an opportunity to apply theory and to profit from critical evaluation, argumentation theory exists in a vacuum. Thus, the application becomes as vital as the theory itself.



For more than 50 years, the debate tournament has been the primary laboratory for developing skills in argumentation. The tournament is based on the assumption that an exchange of ideas among students from different schools and different sections of the country is a valuable educational experience, and has proved to be an economically feasible means of involving many students in academic debate.

Ironically, we know very little about what actually occurs in the debate tournament. McGlone characterizes "much of the published research about the effects of forensics participation in the same way that I [he] would characterize some debate handbooks. There is a lot of conflicting testimony from people who are too important to be objective and there is a bit of impressive looking statistical evidence which has such narrow application as to be virtually worthless."<sup>4</sup> Clearly, we must begin a systematic ongoing evaluation of the tournament experience. Behavioral objectives must be developed and performance evaluated in terms of those objectives. A wide range of quantitative research must be generated before assessing the merit of the debate tournament.

While waiting for that data to be developed, we can respond to several of the criticisms and concerns about academic debate as it is practiced. This paper will address three: the critique, the debate proposition, and the format of the debate. The comments on these topics can be meaningful only in the context of my philosophy.

While agreeing that the tournament should be augmented by a variety of forensics experiences, I perceive no viable substitute for the debate tournament. The problems we experience with tournament debating seem to result from the ways in which we use the tournament rather than the tournament itself. Too often we confuse undesirable behaviors with the setting in which they occur. Clearly, misrepresentation or fabrication of evidence is unethical. And it is clear that misrepresentation or fabrication of evidence has occurred in debate tournaments. Andersen notes:

The research on use of evidence by contest debaters shows an alarming pattern. Not only does much of the evidence used fall short of the standards of proper citation or paraphrase and much of it prove untraceable, but also consistent distortion, falsification of existing sources and fabrication of evidence from non-existent sources has existed over a period of time in the best competitive tournaments and among championship debaters.<sup>5</sup>

What is less clear is the motivation for this behavior. We have yet to establish that the tournament, the pressure of competition, the prestige of winning, or the glitter of trophies, motivated this unethical conduct. Is it a flaw in character that manifests itself in the debate tournament or is the tournament an insidious influence that flaws character? Until this question is answered, I find no reason for faulting the tournament.

I am willing to grant that the debate tournament has had an unwarranted and narrowing influence on the development of our scholarship. Academic debaters constitute a large market for works on argumentation and debate, and authors and publishers are influenced by economic realities. The answer to this problem is to be found in our view of the tournament. If the tournament is viewed as the laboratory in which theory is applied, then theory can be developed for the wide variety of settings in which debate is a vital tool in decision making. The result should be a healthy influence on both the scholarship and the quality of tournament debating.

*The Critique.* One means of enhancing the educational experience is to return to the practice of an oral critique by the critic-judge(s) following each round of debate. Oral criticism, once generally accepted practice, has largely been abandoned in favor of additional rounds of debate. While the lengthy ballot is helpful in understanding the reaction of the critic-judge, it does not provide the learning experience of the oral critique. During the oral critique, debaters can request clarification of points they do not understand; they are not left to puzzle over what the judge meant when he or she wrote the ballot. Especially important is the fact that mistakes can be detected early in the tournament, with an opportunity for correction, rather than at the conclusion of the tournament when the ballots are distributed. Finally, we can expand the learning experiences of debaters by enabling them to exchange ideas with a number of teachers.

*The Proposition.* Some of the more frequently mentioned suggestions for enriching academic debate relate to the process of framing the national debate proposition. There can be no doubt that limited or unusual interpretations of the proposition have generated concern in recent years. The problem we have experienced is a result not of the proposition but of the narrow view of public policy suggested by current argumentation theory. The development of argumentation theory has failed to keep pace with the development of public policy. We ask the affirmative to defend a *new* policy when in reality the government is involved in some way in every problem of national concern, and "the increased size and expanded jurisdiction of the federal government have blurred the lines between public and private policies as well as among federal, state, and local governments."<sup>6</sup> A more appropriate solution seems to rest with rethinking such traditional concepts as burden of proof and with adapting argumentation theory to the realities of the world in which policy decisions are deliberated.

*Format.* Finally, there are suggestions that we experiment with the speaking order, time limits, and format in an effort to enhance the quality of the



deliberation. Experimentation is always in order. If however, the purpose of experimentation is to prevent certain prevailing practices, a better answer would be to modify theory. For instance, if the use of the 15-minute negative block poses an unrealistic or impossible task for the first affirmative rebuttalist, then we should review the theory establishing the prerogatives of the negative team.

As we develop an ongoing systematic evaluation of the laboratory experience of tournament debating, we shall have bases for realistic evaluation. Until that time, it is more appropriate to examine argumentation theory in relation to the decision making that occurs in the determination of public policy, and to use the debate tournament as the laboratory for applying that theory.

#### TOWARD A PHILOSOPHY OF ACADEMIC DEBATE

Most would agree that debate is an intellectual conflict on an issue in controversy and may occur in many forms and many forums. In this paper, academic debate is viewed as a special form of debate designed to teach students how to analyze problems, develop and defend arguments, and communicate ideas in a manner others will find acceptable. It possesses an advocate-to-advocate relationship as opposed to an advocate-to-adversary relationship since each debater defends a point of view on the issues in controversy. Academic debate may take place in any number of forums although it most frequently occurs in the debate tournament or classroom.

The theoretical foundations of academic debate are to be found in the study of rhetoric, philosophy, and law. The debater will find useful the paradigms of several other disciplines in analyzing propositions and developing cases. A study of debate is a study of process, a process of advocacy in which one seeks approval of a point of view through means that are primarily logical. Academic debate seeks a reasoned judgment by either the parties to the dispute, as in parliamentary or deliberative debate, or by an impartial third party, as the critic-judge(s) in a tournament debate.

At issue in academic debate is a proposition, a positive statement setting forth a fact or a value, that invites reasoned discourse on opposing points of view. The proposition of policy is a specialized form of value proposition requiring defense of the worth or merit of a new course of action.

There exists for each party or team to the dispute a burden of proof—a burden of advocacy, if you will. (While this discussion will refer primarily to the “proposition of policy,” the approach is applicable equally to propositions of fact and other propositions of value.) At issue in the debate are disjuncts, an argument setting forth options or choices as the major premise.

*Disjuncts.* The term *disjunct* is used here as the philosopher would use it.

To philosopher and rhetorician, the disjunctive syllogism is an argument setting forth options or choices in the major premise. Beyond that, the disjunctive syllogism of the philosopher is quite different from the disjunctive syllogism of the rhetorician. The difference lies in the nature of the choice to be made.

To understand the difference, one must be able to distinguish between independent events and disjunctive events:

Two or more events are independent if occurrence of one is not affected by the occurrence or non-occurrence of the others.... Two or more events are disjunctive if the occurrence of one of them affects the occurrence or non-occurrence of the others so that if one occurs, the other cannot.<sup>7</sup>

The policy options set forth in academic debate are disjuncts because they are mutually exclusive. However, they are not necessarily all inclusive. Within any debate on a proposition of policy, certain choices are available to each team. When the affirmative operationally defines the resolution, it establishes the disjunct or policy option it will defend. When the negative team clarifies its position toward present policy, it defines the disjunct it will defend. Undoubtedly, additional policy options are available to each team. In the given debate, however, *stasis* exists between the stipulated disjuncts. The team that is more successful in advocating its point of view should be awarded the decision in the given debate.

Such a view of academic debate profoundly affects current emphases in argumentation theory and practice. By definition, argumentation becomes the practice of reasoned discourse. This essentially abrogates any artificial distinction between persuasion and argumentation. The distinction becomes the form in which the reasoned discourse occurs. Argumentation requires that there be parties to the disputed issue, that each party be heard, that the issues in dispute be examined by the opposing party. In persuasion the advocate may decide whether to present both sides of the issue but there is no spokesman for the opposing point of view.

This view of academic debate sets aside Whately's theory of presumption which has had such a profound effect on the literature in argumentation and debate. Rather than applying Whately's theory of occupation (or preoccupation) of the ground and, thus, creating artificial constraints for academic debate, we formulate different presumptions. We may argue that there is a presumption in favor of a more desirable policy option. We also may argue that there is a presumption in favor of consistent review of policy options. We may argue that there is a presumption in favor of change. Since the choice must be made between disjuncts, each given a value dimension by the advocates, occupation of the ground becomes irrelevant. This approach modifies burden of proof and removes any reason for distinguishing between *the* burden of proof and *a* burden of



proof. Each team has the burden of proof, the responsibility of proving its policy disjunct the wiser course of action.

The negative alternatives of direct refutation, defense of the status quo, defense of a revised status quo, and defense of a counterplan are modified. The alternative of direct refutation is eliminated. (For purposes of clarity, it should be emphasized that reference is made to the approach in which the negative refutes affirmative arguments and does not take a direct stand regarding any other policy option.) Few, I think will regret the demise of this negative alternative for inevitably discharging the burden of rebuttal results in an implied defense of the status quo. Direct refutation is a viable negative alternative only if debate is viewed as a quasi-judicial process in which the challenged should not be called upon to present a case until the *prima facie* evidence has been offered by the challenger.

The defense of the status quo or revised status quo is modified in terms of the burden of proof placed on the negative team. In defending present policy, the negative would be required to present a full defense of the policy rather than relying on presumption (occupation of the ground) when responding to affirmative arguments indicting present policy. *Minor repairs* or revised policy would necessitate an outline and defense of the proposed revisions of present policy. Because public policy is a dynamic process, revisions would constitute amendments to existing statutes. Thus, it would be necessary to describe the amendments and defend the policy as modified.

Very likely, this approach would tend to legitimize the counterplan, now treated obliquely in the literature and used hesitantly by debaters. Since presumption in favor of existing policy is not a factor, no strategic disadvantage would result from a failure to defend present policy. The negative could choose from a range of policy options; it would be precluded only from choosing the option selected by the affirmative.

The various approaches to case construction are accommodated within this approach to academic debate. Actually, in a given debate all of the more popular forms of cases could be included. The goals of a policy system and the criteria by which the system is to be evaluated become essential in defending the policy option. Since a policy must be viewed in terms of consequences, arguments could be cast in an advantage structure. If the negative elected to defend present policy, Second Affirmative Constructive speaker (2AC) could elect a traditional indictment of evils or harms causally related to certain intrinsic aspects of present policy.

Using the standard format and time limits, the debate might well develop along these lines. First Affirmative Constructive (1AC) would discuss objectives and standards, describe the policy option, show how the policy would achieve the objectives and meet the standards, and discuss the advantages

to be gained by adopting the policy system. First Negative Constructive (1NC) would respond to the objectives and criteria offered by the affirmative, either accepting them and ultimately arguing that affirmative policy could neither achieve the objectives nor meet the criteria nor offer different objectives and/or criteria. The negative policy option then would be described and discussed in terms of objectives, criteria, and advantages. At the conclusion of the 1NC the issue would be joined, the disjuncts outlined, and debate would proceed on the relative merits of the two policy systems. The "Second Affirmative Constructive 2AC would respond as appropriate to objectives and criteria, analyze the policy option selected by the negative, perhaps offer arguments of workability and/or disadvantage, and compare the policy options. Second Negative Constructive (2NC) would develop essentially the same lines of argument in responding to 2AC and in examining the affirmative's policy option. At the conclusion of the constructive speeches, each policy system would have been examined by the opposing team; the issues in controversy would have been clarified. The rebuttal speeches would be addressed to those issues and to the defense of the particular policy systems.

*Effect on academic debate.* What effect would this have on academic debate as we know it? Overall, academic debate would be more realistic. Policy systems are designed in terms of goals, evaluated in terms of criteria, and selected from among options. Just as value judgments are issues in decision making they would become issues in academic debate, for goals and criteria are value judgments. The debater would be forced to look beyond his evidence file for arguments supporting his claims that an objective is desirable and that the criteria are suitable measures for evaluating policy.

Perhaps the most important effect would be an in-depth analysis of two policy systems. The fifteen-minute negative block, viewed as offsetting the affirmative's advantage of opening and closing the debate, defining the terms, and setting the issues, no longer could be used as an obstacle course for the First Affirmative Rebuttal (1AR). Present practice of presenting ten minutes of argumentation in 2NC followed by a five-minute attack in First Negative Rebuttal (1NR) on the case as defended in 2AC inevitably reduces the defense of a new policy system in 1AR to something less than satisfactory. This technique by the negative, initiated approximately 15 years ago and accelerated in recent times, produces a mathematical impossibility. Because there appears to be an almost universal expectation that 1AR will in five minutes respond to ten minutes of negative constructive argumentation as well as defend the affirmative case as attacked in First Negative Rebuttal (1NR), the 1AR has lost in-depth analysis, arguments are reduced to a minimum, and the burden of response is discharged by reading evidence into the debate. Second Negative Rebuttal (2NR) has become



more a matter of resurrecting the arguments of 2NC on issues of consequence than dealing with a final refutation of basic affirmative analysis. The debate is scattered with minor issues but seldom are the major issues made the pivotal point of decision. The final rebuttal of the debate often seems suspended in limbo, and yet this represents five minutes in which the Second Affirmative Rebuttal (2AR) should have the same advantage as the other rebuttalists.

With a comparison of two policy systems, the negative would be forced to recast its lines of argument, for not only would the negative be arguing *against* a policy option it would be arguing *for* a policy option.

Very likely, this approach would make argument a more important aspect of debate than currently is the case. Arguments from sign, cause, and analogy would be imperatives for defending or opposing a policy system. An array of evidence, so often fragmented, would not suffice in exploring what a policy system does or can do.

The approach described here is merely one way of modifying current theory and practice to achieve compatibility with the realities of decision making in the determination of policy. If it invites discussion, then it will have achieved one of my objectives—the exploration of theory through forums such as the National Developmental Conference. If ultimately it is tested by applying appropriate qualitative and quantitative measures, we shall have a basis for judging its merit.

#### NOTES

1. Donald Douglas, "The Status of Historical Research in Argumentation," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 10 (Winter 1974):156-57.
2. Mark Arnold, "The 1974 Heart of America Final Round—Text and Critiques," mimeographed (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 1974), p. 12.
3. Kenneth E. Andersen, "A Critical Review of the Behavioral Research in Argumentation and Forensics," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 10 (Winter 1974):155.
4. Edward L. McGlone, "The Behavioral Effects of Forensics Participation," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 10 (Winter 1974): 140-41.
5. Andersen, "Critical Review," p. 152.
6. Bernard L. Brock, James W. Chesebro, John F. Cragan, and James F. Klumpp, *Public Policy Decision-Making: Systems Analysis and Comparative Advantages Debate* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), pp. 1-2.
7. Harold A. Larrabee, *Reliable Knowledge: Scientific Methods in the Social Studies*, rev. ed. (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1964), p. 316.

## THEORY AND PRACTICE IN FORENSICS

William Reynolds

A kind of Gresham's Law appears to be at work in competitive debate such that "bad argument drives out good" and poor communication tends to become the standard. It is not a recent phenomenon; its symptoms have been described and discussed in our literature for a number of decades. Nor can responsibility for its presence be assigned to any particular group or individuals or universities; all who have participated in the activity must in some measure share the blame.

#### INFLUENCE OF GRESHAM'S LAW

The perverse influences of the law most frequently are isolated in three problem areas. The first influence reflects a growing tolerance for marginal interpretations of topics (the so-called *squirrel case*) that permits propositions to become virtually all things to all men. A second influence has resulted in a sacrifice of quality of proof for quantity and bulk (the so-called *spread argument*). This practice has led not only to the habitual use of severely truncated arguments, lacking necessary explanation and logical development—in many instances, they are little more than mere assertions thinly supported by what passes for expert testimony—but also to the legitimization of case forms and structures whose efficacy appears to rest more on strategic concerns than on products of reasonable analysis. Finally, partially as an outgrowth of the spread, violence has been done to the communicative process itself. Clarity, precision, and impressiveness in style have given way to jargon—for example, the use of such words as *spread*, *squirrel*, *P.O.'s*, *disads*, *PMN's* to mention only a few—wordiness, and involuted syntax. Rate in delivery has surpassed the phenomenal, destroying in the process the unique dimension of meaning that is conveyed only through the oral expression of ideas.

A number of reasons have been given to explain these developments. Is the squirrel, as some suspect, a by-product of adopting open-ended, ambiguously worded national topics whose boundaries extend as far as ingenuous linguistic analysis can take them;<sup>1</sup> or is it the result, as others claim, of forcing students to continue debating a single question throughout the year, long after its "significant approaches have been exploited";<sup>2</sup> or is it, as still others maintain, a necessary counter to the spread?<sup>3</sup> In turn, is the pervasive use of squirrel cases and spread arguments explained by the fact that competitive debating has become a wayward game whose paramount end is winning and whose means characteristically include stratagems, tricks, and gimmicks?<sup>4</sup> Finally, are these problems



associated with efforts to wrest competitive debating from its historic moorings in rhetoric and to ally it more closely with the dialectical tradition? Are they the consequences, in short, of our turning away from rhetoric's concern for adapting ideas to popular audiences in order to establish an intellectual climate in which arguments can be explored and tested without regard to their ultimate use?<sup>5</sup>

These assessments, of course, all help to explain the operation in competitive debating of what I have termed Gresham's Law. However, they are, at best, only partial answers. Neither individually nor collectively do they account for the full impact of its influences. As a consequence, solutions based on these assessments—alterations in time limits, changes in debate formats, new procedures for formulating propositions, etc.—may not only be less than remedies, but actually may intensify existing malpractices.

Therefore, I should like to reexplore the problems in an attempt to set forth what I see as other causes and offer some proposals for correcting them.

In general, I hold that a kind of Gresham's Law operates in competitive debating because, in the given instance, it is nearly impossible to distinguish between the law and its influences and the genuine currency they replace. Currently we appear to lack the means of controlling and discouraging the use of misleading evidence, shoddy analysis, insufficient proofs, dubious case forms and structures, and substandard communication. Failing in this, we often are forced to accept the bad money represented by these abuses in order to protect the sound currency in debate theory and practice. This phenomenon seems to be at play principally in three areas:

1. Judging
2. Standards of proof
3. Development of case forms and structures

*Judging: the Standard of the Reasonable Person.* For obvious reasons, academic debate never can perfectly duplicate the environment in which argumentation occurs in the real world of people and affairs. Ultimately, its time limits and formats must be constructed and set artificially; severe limitations must be accepted in the composition and behavior of audiences; and the motivational factors that excite the student advocate must remain quite different from those that stimulate advocacy in the real world. Regardless of form, academic debate must operate within a more or less closed system, governed by its own rules and procedures. Given these factors, competitive debate must presume reasonableness on the part of the audience (critic or judge). It must create a reality of its own in which the judge is preeminently rational, not only capable of suspending his or her

own real-life prejudices and predilections but willing to reach a decision guided only by the arguments he or she hears in the course of the contest. The criterion for judgment is not, therefore, what influences behavior in the real world, but which side did the better job of debating. Quite obviously, abandonment of this standard of reasonableness in judging would promote chaos, since it would require debaters to adapt to psychological and non-rational factors that in turn would require a depth of audience analysis beyond the limits of practicality. Even if tournament formats could be devised that permitted audience analysis of this nature, the activity doubtless would become little more than an exercise in special pleading, the result of which would be a corresponding diminution in substantive research, critical analysis, and reasoned discourse.

But what is the reasonable person? Is he or she a *tabularosa*? Upon entering the room, must one shed all prior experiences and impressions, one's personal knowledge on the topic as well as biases, one's command of logical processes as well as one's propensity toward value judgments, one's appreciation for style as well as one's personal response to a speaker? In short, are judges to be viewed as computers whose decisions depend wholly upon the programming they receive in the course of the debate? Or, on the other hand, are they *critics* whose proper role includes more than merely adding up arguments? Have they the independent right to reject information that does not correspond to their own factual knowledge? Have they the power to reject arguments whose development violates both the canons of logic and common sense rules of evidence? Are they free to disregard approaches that run contrary to human behavior or common experience? Are they accountable for what they neither understand nor can remember?

Definitions of reasonableness in judging present competitive debating with a dilemma of the first magnitude. If judges computerize themselves so that their decisions reflect only the response and counterresponse that occurs in the debate, they tend to sanction the abuses described above. For, if judges are willing to entertain squirrels, spread arguments, and substandard communication, some debaters happily will oblige them and in consequence others will be forced into the same syndrome. Conversely, if we permit judges, in the guise of critics, to impose their own views on the argumentative process, whether in the form of judgments concerning evidence, reasoning, or the legitimacy of interpretations, we open the floodgates to biased and prejudiced decisions. Escape from this dilemma requires walking a tightrope; the judge simultaneously must neither intrude too much nor abdicate completely from his or her role as a critic.

I think that many of the problems in competitive debate can be traced to the fact that judges have been unwilling to walk the tightrope and consequently have abdicated from their role as critics. They have conformed to a style of computerized decision making in which they permit themselves to



be programmed by the flowsheet. Some rationalize their conformity in the name of fairness and impartiality; others conform out of fear of being branded old fashioned or of being excommunicated by the group. In turn, these rationalizations develop a momentum of their own that may culminate in a far more perverse self-deception: that which wins is right. While not endorsing it personally, A. Tennyson Williams described this aspect of the syndrome well:

If dictionaries report what "people" mean (i.e., words mean what the user communities say they mean), then perhaps debate propositions should mean what the debate community says they mean. Thus, while indirect legalization of marijuana would not appear to an outsider to be controlling the gathering and utilization of information, it does so appear to the community using the terms. The policy question is no less debatable and no less educational simply because there are many outside the debate community—and some within—who do not have the same meanings as the rest of the members of the community. Whether I am a judge concerned with literal definition or with the spirit, I must realize that both derive from the sense of the debate community. If a particular case is accepted by the debate community generally, then I should not decide it is not topical (unless of course there is a winning negative argument to that effect). This may well mean that I may vote against a case on topicality early in the year and reject the same negative arguments at a later tournament, once I find that the debate community has generally decided that the case is a reasonable interpretation of the resolution. Probably the most obvious shortcoming of this approach is that it does nothing to resolve the problem of loss of respect by important people outside the debate community.<sup>6</sup>

How do we regain our footing on the tightrope? Quite obviously, our standards of reasonableness must be reinterpreted in a manner that will restore the judge to the rightful role of critic. As critic, he or she must be encouraged to stand as a check against shoddy analysis, the use of misleading evidence and faulty reasoning, and practices that do violence to the communicative process. In changing the judge from computer to critic we shall increase somewhat the possibility of biased decisions. That risk is well worth taking if we can curb, even partially, the use of squirrels, spreads, and ineffective delivery.

*Standards of proof.* By any accounting, the argument from authority is the most widely used in debating today. Several reasons explain its preeminence. First, as knowledge becomes more and more specialized, our need to rely on experts in shaping our beliefs and opinions increases proportionately. In many circumstances we must trust the research of others because we cannot complete that research ourselves. Second, argument from authority offers a highly efficient and economical way of developing proof. It often appears far easier for one to assert a harm or a disadvantage, for example, and confirm it with the testimony of an expert than it is to develop the proof by other means. It is also far less time consuming in the presentational stage, since the thought of the expert

whether he or she is reporting data, drawing inferences, or expressing an opinion—usually can be compressed into several sentences. Moreover, as a genre of proof, it is particularly simple to defend because its probity is bound up inextricably with the reputation of the expert who may seem on the surface to be unimpeachable.

The argument from authority promotes spread argumentation since it often permits the initiation of more arguments than can be dealt with in the time span of the debate. Given this fact of contemporary competition, teams confronted by spread attacks usually and quite naturally respond in one of two ways. In the first instance, they attempt to circumvent the spread with squirrel cases. These are designed either to surprise an opponent or to severely limit the problem area; the effect in both cases is to reduce the volume of possible arguments. In the second and more common instance, they may attempt to respread by providing multiple answers to each argument advanced by their opponents in the original spread.

Are these two responses necessarily the only ways of countering a spread attack generated by the argument from authority? Why do debaters typically refuse to meet arguments from authority head on and subject them to critical analysis, as they certainly would do in the case of other forms of proof? More specifically, why do they fail normally to evaluate the argument by traditional tests of evidence? Why do they frequently refuse to probe the logical processes by which the authority reaches a conclusion? And why must conflicting arguments from authority be permitted to go unreconciled in the course of the debate?

Answers to these questions lie in the fact that our standards of proof with respect to the argument from authority have deteriorated. As employed now, the argument consists of little more than an assertion barely supported by the conclusionary opinions of so-called experts. Normally, the argument is insufficient in three ways. The authority is seldom qualified by the debater in terms that reveal his or her degree of expertise, special biases, methods of research, and the context in which the authority is reporting. Furthermore, the argument rarely contains an explanation of the expert's reasons for arriving at a conclusion. Finally the argument typically excludes the reservations and qualifications the authority may have placed on his or her findings. In short, the probity of the argument from authority which stands behind the spread rests almost exclusively on a judge's willingness to trust the expert and to trust the debater who is quoting the expert. The spread would be nearly impossible in most instances if the judge refused to credit arguments from authority that fail to describe fully who is speaking, why he or she has a right to speak, how he or she reaches conclusions, and the limits that he or she imposes on his or her claims. This is true because, in order to meet these demands, much of the alleged economy and efficiency of the argument from authority so essential to the spread would be lost.



The question now becomes, why have we allowed the standards of proof to deteriorate? The primary answer is linked to the concept of the reasonable person described above. Unwilling to intrude in the argumentative process, he or she accepts standards of proof that are less than sufficient at the logical and evidentiary levels. In consequence, the judge encourages quantity rather than quality of argument. And once this volume is translated into a spread, it virtually precludes the kind of in-depth analysis necessary to uncover deficiencies in a given argument because there are so many arguments that demand response. The result, quite simply, is the counterspread, the squirrel, resorts to stratagems, jargon, and rapid-fire delivery.

That authoritative evidence is a legitimate and important class of proof, of course, is undeniable. However, the risks involved in permitting others to form and shape our beliefs are all too patently clear. Hence, one who argues from authority should accept special responsibility for accuracy and fairness. Our failure to insist that debaters meet this responsibility is a basic cause of current difficulties.

*Forms and issues.* Among the instrumental disciplines, argumentation, like rhetoric of which it is a part, is unique because not only must it discover in the given case the relevant issues but it also must seek to uncover the appropriate method or form for organizing, presenting, and testing those issues. Until the appropriate organizational pattern emerges, the bases for rational choice in the decision-making process cannot be established. The search for appropriate organizational structures has led debate down a variety of paths in its theory and practice. The problem-solution format, the comparative advantage approach, the criteria case, and the alternative justification method are only a few of these. I have no trouble accepting the legitimacy of these forms and structures because I think that they are products of honest efforts in the past to highlight the issues implicit in propositions in a way that reveals the real base of choice. Three examples come to mind. Impetus for the *comparative advantage approach* was found in situations where two competing policy systems were indistinguishable with respect to their ability to solve compelling social problems. The *criteria case*, in one sense, evolved from a necessity to evaluate national objectives in terms of acknowledged social values and norms. The *alternative justification case* assumes that the manifestations of such complex social problems as the energy crisis are found in unique causal factors whose effects and solutions must be analyzed independently. However, I do have trouble accepting these structures as universal forms that are applicable to every debate proposition. Some of these forms, i.e., the problem-solution case, are, of course, more generally applicable than others; but none necessarily best facilitates decision making in every instance.

Efforts to universalize structural forms have contributed to many abuses. Take the spread argument for example. In the 1962-63 season, when the national college topic concerned a Common Market of the Free World, the spread constituted a highly efficacious method for developing the negative position. Quantity in argument recommended itself because the far-ranging fields of free trade and the Western alliance had been crossed and recrossed extensively over a prolonged period of time by experts until their scholarly dialogue had become assimilated into the popular controversy. Hence, arguments could be truncated because authorities and their positions were extremely well known. However, in 1963-64, when the topic dealt with federal aid to higher education, quite the contrary was true. Not only was the scope of the topic narrower, but the issues were far less defined and popularly understood. Yet, many negative teams, hoping to duplicate their successes of the previous year with the spread, attempted to contrive a volume of arguments that, unfortunately, often compelled them to engage in superficial analysis anchored in conclusionary evidence and shoddy reasoning. In this instance, negative teams carried over a structure for argumentation from the previous year whose relevance was at best uncertain and at worst entirely inappropriate. Lamentably the practice has been continued year in and year out since 1964 until the spread has gained paramount status in negative casing. So it is with each of the structural forms. Success one year with a particular structure (for instance, the comparative advantage, criteria, or alternative justification approaches) almost certainly guarantees its use in subsequent years regardless of whether it clearly and accurately organizes and expresses the issues implicit in the later propositions. This process encourages debaters to make the issues fit the format rather than the format fit the issues. When idea and form do not correspond, rational decision making must by necessity suffer.

Where does the fault lie? Much of the blame, of course, must be assigned to the gamesplayer who deliberately short-circuits the search for correct forms in order to gain a strategic advantage. The conservative coach, judge, or debater who consciously or unconsciously resists experimentation with new structures also shares responsibility. However, in my opinion, the fault lies principally in our lack of an adequate methodology for discovering forms. In most instances, competitive debate simply does not possess the tools for matching form with idea. Because of this deficiency, even the best intentioned debate team must on occasion express issues in structures that are wholly inadequate to contain the full message.

#### COMBATING GRESHAM'S LAW

How can we offset the perverse influences of Gresham's Law? I would like to explore three approaches. Probably, no single approach will in itself



effect an acceptable solution. However, in concert they may enable us to sort out much of the bad currency which now circulates in our field.

As I suggested earlier, Gresham's Law operates in competitive debating because we have tolerated for too long, and thus have sanctioned implicitly, wholesale and serious abuses of theory and practice. What we have lost through negligence can be regained only through reaffirmation of the abiding values and principles of the activity. Immediately, steps must be taken to restore the judge to his rightful role as critic; we must begin insisting that debaters meet acceptable standards of proof; and we must emphasize research that aims at improving our methodology. These measures can be accomplished without risk to the integrity of the debate process and without infringing on the prerogatives of the individual coach and debater. We can discover means for policing debates through the ballot without turning the ballot into an instrument of subjectivity. We can develop guidelines for the establishment of proofs that are both comprehensive and comprehensible. We can institute policies that will promote the systematic search for methodology.

These reforms will require concerted action by the total membership of our profession. Individuals will not discipline themselves as long as they are required to compete against others who refuse to accept discipline. The reforms must be universally applied, therefore, and universally enforced.

The second approach involves attempting to check present abuses through alterations in the format of competitive debate. The specifics of this approach—for example, elimination of the 15-minute negative time block, debating several propositions in the course of the year, introducing more audience debates in the tournament schedule, and experimenting with new structures—have been discussed so widely that they require no further elaboration here.

Unquestionably, this approach has merit and deserves careful consideration. However, in evaluating changes in format, one should keep in mind that measures of this nature represent only temporary solutions to the hard problems that face us. Since they do not operate directly on the underlying forces that presently cause malpractices, they cannot prevent those forces from reasserting themselves in the new formats. In view of this difficulty, it would appear that this approach must be coupled with other solutions.

The third and final approach seeks to change the basic assumptions that traditionally have governed the theory and practice of competitive debate. Annabel Hagood's provocative thesis is, I feel, of this nature. As I understand her message, Professor Hagood recommends that we significantly modify the historic notions of presumption and burden of proof in order to promote more flexibility in the decision-making process. Quite obviously, her suggestions would chart the activity in a wholly new direction, the effects and consequences of which are rather breathtaking in contemplation.

Another modification in the same vein would significantly affect the element of competition within debate. In this proposal, rather than pitting a team from one school against a team from another as is done now, affirmative and negative teams from the same school would debate each other before the critic-judge. At a typical tournament, the teams will debate each other, let us say eight times, before eight different critic-judges. Their performance would be scored in a manner similar to the judging system in a diving contest. Competitive diving is judged by a method of comparative ratings in which the contestants are ranked on a scale from 0 to 10. Each of the basic dives has its own scale of ten, and the diver is evaluated in accordance with how nearly he or she achieves perfection (or the classic form required for a particular dive), which is a score of 10. Likewise, under this system of debate, each school would be rated in accordance with how nearly, in the opinion of the critic-judge, the school achieved perfection when dealing with a chosen issue(s) within the confines of a specific form or structure. The school's performance would be graded, therefore, on the basis of how well it fulfilled the standards of responsible advocacy. Thus, the judge would evaluate the debate on how closely the school approximated excellence in the development of a *prima facie* case, the identification of issues, the use of proof, and the effectiveness of communication. At the conclusion of the tournament, the school with the greatest number of points would be declared the winner.

This reform obviously would remove many of the abuses that arise from interschool competition. Teams resorting to stratagems and tricks would be penalized as would slipshod argumentation and substandard delivery. The major drawbacks of the approach are equally apparent. It might well turn debating into a memorized performance rather than an intellectual contest. Moreover, this system might erode student motivation with a corresponding loss in research, hard analysis, and creative thinking.

The existence of Gresham's Law in competitive debate is undeniable. In full recognition of the crisis its perverse influences have produced, it seems clear to me that the National Developmental Conference must take some form of action. Now is not a time for hesitation. Immediate solutions must be sought whether in the forms I have discussed or in other proposals of which I am less aware. The proven value of competitive debate training demands no less.

## NOTES

1. Thomas Harris and A. Tennyson Williams each have isolated ambiguity in wording as a reason for the existence of the squirrel in papers they prepared for the National Developmental Conference.
2. Kassian Kovalchek, "Current Issues Debate: Prepare for the Blahs" (Paper delivered at the Southern Speech Communication Association Convention, Richmond, Virginia, April 10, 1974), p. 1-2.
3. Roger Hufford suggests exactly this in his paper "The Debate Tournament" (Paper



delivered at the Eastern Communication Association Convention, Washington, D.C., March 22, 1974).

4. Thomas Harris has provided the perspective of the wayward game. It is more completely analyzed in "Academic Debate from a Game Perspective" (Paper delivered at the Eastern Communication Association Convention, Washington, D.C., March 22, 1974).
5. Stanley G. Rives, "Rhetoric Project: Implications for Argumentation and Debate," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 8 (Spring 1972): 228-32.
6. A. Tennyson Williams, Jr., "Do Debate Resolutions Mean Anything: An Analysis of the Topicality Problem" (Paper delivered at the Southern Speech Communication Association Convention, Richmond, Virginia, April 10, 1974), pp. 2-3.

## RESPONSES TO

### *THEORY AND PRACTICE IN FORENSICS*

#### **Toward a Philosophy of Academic Debate**

STANLEY RIVES: Among recent events that have eroded a personal conviction that forensics activity will relate meaningfully to and serve the needs of our society was a telephone call from the Office of Emergency Preparedness, that arm of the federal executive responsible for administering national wage and price controls when utilized. The call requested a copy of the final national intercollegiate debate on the proposition that the federal government should adopt a program of compulsory wage and price controls. What a pleasure it would have been to forward a transcript of the final NDT debate that revealed an analysis of fundamental issues, that advanced cogent arguments supported by solid evidence for and against the establishment of wage and price controls as a national mechanism for controlling inflation. What a disappointment it was to inform OEP that the debate transcript dealt with the desirability of utilizing limited wage and price controls to benefit migrant farmworkers.

ROGER HUFFORD: There is nothing wrong with regarding debate as a game. A "professional" tournament was organized; those who chose competed for cash awards coming from entry fees paid by the players. It is a free country, and a professional debate tournament is at least as useful as a professional bowling tournament financed just the same way. If you want the colleges to finance your game, though, they have a right to ask why. At this point, the "game" theory appears to collapse. We need to look elsewhere for our identity.

JOHN DEBROSS: What we need most is a system of analysis for general argumentation. We must recognize the subjectivity of most argumentative situations as they are understood by the audience. It will be most helpful if we recognize intercollegiate and interscholastic forensics as one model of argumentation and not confuse it with our attempts to comment on general argumentation. We must recognize, as Perelman does, that special audiences exist and they often have a language of their own.

RONALD MALLON (UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS): In order to improve sloppy, disgraceful public discourse, the study of rhetorical argument is of major concern. Rhetorical argumentation has traditionally been concerned with



the giving of good reasons—good reasons why men should act, good reasons why one particular action rather than another should be taken, and good reasons why that action should be judged in a given way. Academic forensics is simply an application of theories of rhetorical argumentation.

M. JACK PARKER: There has been a tendency in forensics to treat the basic elements of argumentation—analysis, reasoning, use of evidence, etc.—as though they were separate processes that, when mastered, may be practiced in any argumentative situation. Only recently have we begun to face the fact that however significant its tangential benefits to prelaw students may be, contest debate does not deal with the kind of debating attorneys do. And there are even those who believe we do not do an adequate job of preparing students to engage in policy deliberations because subconsciously we have altered our treatment of policy questions to more nearly approximate legalistic debate.

JOHN DEBROSS: I tire of the struggle over whether academic debate is real. Believing academic debate to be more realistic because policy systems are designed in terms of goals, evaluated in terms of criteria, and selected from among options is asking us to swallow another fairy tale. This view is fantasy, as George Reedy points out in an analysis of presidential decision making:

It is assumed that there is something called a "decision-making process" which can be charted in much the same fashion as the table of organization for a business corporation. The fondest dream of the academic political scientist is to trace this flow chart in such a way that it will be available for study, comment, criticism, and possible improvement.

The fact is that a president makes his decisions as he wishes to make them, under conditions he himself has established and at times of his own determination. He decides what he wants to decide and any student of the White House who believes that he is making a contribution to political thought when he analyzes the process is sadly mistaken. (*The Twilight of the Presidency*, pp. 39-40).

At best, we can study the way policy seems to be made and possibly influence those who may one day participate in policy decisions to make them on the basis of theory proposed in our argumentation classes.

J.W. PATTERSON (UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY): The "crisis in identity" referred to has resulted largely from a lack of emphasis on the research and teaching of theory. The outcome, I think, is that many debate coaches who face

theoretical problems usually attempt to resolve them on a "guesswork" basis rather than through acceptable modes of inquiry. The growth of substantive theory in argumentation ultimately hinges on a reversal of this practice.

JOHN GREG (ST. JOHNS UNIVERSITY, NEW YORK): Although forensics directors are often specialists in argumentation, forensics is not coordinate with this specialization. Forensics is a laboratory experience usable by all teachers of speech communication. Thus, coaching and evaluating student performance in a particular forensics event is the responsibility of the teacher of speech communication in the specialization appropriate to the event.

### The Tournament As a Laboratory Experience

JOHN DEBROSS: Hagood's criticism of the academic debate tournament for testing new theories is unfair. By her own example, the Kruger-Marsh-Newman controversy, she reasons that a theoretical departure (the comparative advantage case) was introduced, rewarded, and eventually recognized in our theory. It is because few commonly agreed upon ground rules exist in our academic debate tournaments that theoretical departures are possible and when they are rewarded they become important enough to study in theory.

DONUS D. ROBERTS (WATERTOWN HIGH SCHOOL, SOUTH DAKOTA): As we search for solutions to the problems that confront us, we should not overlook the overkill possibilities of the eight-month season that begins in late September and concludes in early May. One has to question what educational value is being served when debate teams compete in more than 100 rounds of competitive debate per year.

JOHN GREG: We have become enamored with the standard debate format in its ultimate expression, the eight preliminary rounds plus four elimination rounds, three-day contest of intellectual and physical stamina. We have, in effect, told many students interested in developing skills in speech communication that they must become disputants and, more precisely, contest debaters. We have thereby deprived students of the fullest possible intensive training in speech communication and may have distorted their understanding of and attitudes toward what training we do provide.

ROGER HUFFORD: There is a vast untapped market of student interest in skills that we know very well how to develop. There is a market for debate tournaments that require a *limited time commitment* from students for research on a *limited question*, followed by debates in which both teams define the



question the same way and explore the inherent issues, not through grand stratagems, but through straightforward presentation of stock issues and refutation. There could be *limited theoretical approaches* allowed to affirmative cases, and *limited allowable strategies* for negatives.

JOHN DEBROSS: As for enhancing the educational experience at tournaments, let us hope we will investigate those and more. Oral critiques might be valuable and, where practical, might be encouraged. We could experiment with the propositions; in fact we are doing just that with the off-topic debate tournaments. We might do more with variations of the traditional debate format. The high schools provide us with an excellent opportunity to study cross-examination as an additional or replacement format to the traditional. Some tournaments have been held where participants are given materials at the time of registration and have been required to formulate cases after examination of such material. Tape recordings are exchanged in the mail and debates have been conducted by sending one speech at a time to a given school until a full debate is taped. The forensics community seems more aware of this need to enhance the educational experience and acts to improve it more often than credit is given.

### Controversial Practices in Forensics—Problems and Solutions

J.W. PATTERSON: My major disagreement with Professor Hagood is not in the problems she identifies. Rather, it is with her implied position that somehow the solution is to modify or correct some of the current abuses of the practice of debate, particularly the tournament situation. While I am not opposed to working on these problems, I feel that our thrust should be on research and teaching of theory.

BRO. RENE STERNER: The question of dealing with the fabrication of evidence is a crucial one. The problem as I see it is not so much whether there is a flaw in the character of the debater (or the coach) or the tournament that flaws the debater's (or the coach's) character. The question here seems to me to be more, "So what? What do we do when it happens?" I am concerned about the high school forensics community's inability to deal with this problem of fabricated or distorted evidence in any significant or collective way. Other than giving teams a loss, what can be done? Even then, many judges will give decisions to teams that fabricate or distort by simply saying the fabrication or distortion was not crucial to the debate. The unethical and questionable uses to which evidence and testimony have been put in the entire Watergate affair should cause all of us in debate coaching to stop and take stock of what we are about!

JOHN GREG: Unlike individual events contests, the competition inherent in the disputative process itself should preclude or punish unethical behavior in the debate tournament. Yet we are faced with examples in debate of misuse and distortion of evidence and the triumph of stratagem. Rather than recognizing these and other examples of unethical behavior as signs of weakness in the form, we have devised a special code of ethics in part to preserve the debate tournament and standard debate format as a useful laboratory experience. If the debate form has been manipulated to reward unethical behavior, then we ought to manipulate it, i.e., rework its form or experiment with others, to deprive unethical behavior of all but its just reward.

JACK HOWE (CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LONG BEACH): The practice of "seeding judges" is one of the most reprehensible on the contemporary tournament scene and can be justified only if we concede that a small elite among us have beheld the true Grail and thoroughly "appreciate" contemporary debate.

STANLEY RIVES: Significant modifications should be made in forensics judging practices, changes designed to establish standards of practice more in line with accepted theory. The idea that only a debate coach is qualified to judge a debate must be abandoned. The ideal panel judges for the NDT, for example, would be a subject matter expert (an economist in a debate on wage and price controls), an authority on communication, and an active director of forensics. Neither should the occasional use of lay judges, even audience ballots, be excluded. Persons expected to judge debates, when necessary, should receive appropriate orientation as to the standards of judgment to be utilized. Such practices would have at least two desirable effects in that they would create wider exposure to academic debate and would necessitate more reasonable patterns of communication behavior on the part of debaters. Critic-judges must also be more willing to rule out excessively narrow interpretations of the proposition—positively stated, be more insistent upon both affirmative and negative advocate obligations to address the broad issues inherent in a resolution.

J.W. PATTERSON: The suggested negative approach deserves special mention. Requiring the negative to make a full defense of a policy has certain merits. As is asserted, the approach holds promise for making academic debate more realistic. The approach also holds promise in terms of helping the debater meet his obligation to society, to stand for something.

But this approach also has several limitations. It just might destroy creative approaches to testing the resolution. One popular view of debate is simply that it is a procedure for obtaining probable truth with respect to a



given resolution. In this case, the resolution is a hypothesis to be tested. Debating policy options is only one way to make that test. Forcing the debate into a format in which the student must test the hypothesis by comparing the proposal to the negative option might mean that we lose other creative tests of the hypothesis—some of which might demonstrate that we should not adopt the resolution even though it might be superior to the negative options. Certainly, it is conceivable that a negative team forced to defend a “policy option” may not be able to argue the real or strongest reasons why the resolution should be rejected.

STANLEY RIVES: We should abandon the presumption that four ten-minute constructive and four five-minute rebuttals is *the* format for academic debate. Argumentation has been fragmented as a result of strategies built upon the 10-5 model. What would be desirable is probably a format that better allows both teams to set forth an entire case at the outset of the debate with subsequent opportunities for comparative analysis, refutation, and rebuttal. We need extended discussion of and experimentation with many alternative formats.

PAULA MILTON (MIAMI-DADE COMMUNITY COLLEGE, FLORIDA): Supposedly to change with the times, we have allowed debate, debaters, and ourselves, debate directors, to become artificial and mechanical. If I were asked to suggest the ideal college study to prepare forensics personnel for circuit competition, I would advise computer programming and data processing. Ask yourself when was the last tournament you really enjoyed or were refreshed by the human association, by the educational or social purpose, or by sheer mutual delight.

I *am* suggesting that our crisis is a crisis of value. I am *not* suggesting that competition is evil or without merit, but rather that competition as practiced is a dehumanizing, devitalizing, noncommunicative act. Neither am I suggesting that we turn the clock backwards; rather that we turn it forward for our second, human wind. Affirming the value of humanness and self-fulfillment should be our strength, not our weakness.



---

The art of debate must be practiced widely if its use is to achieve maximum results for us. It should be practiced not only on the level of Lincoln and Douglas, but also by the average citizen in his everyday public encounters. It is the natural state of man to be free, to govern himself, to entertain opinions on public questions, and to undertake to convert his neighbors to his point of view. Debating, then, is possibly the most widely practiced—and the most democratic—of arts in a free society.

EDMUND S. MUSKIE  
United States Senator

I have deep and abiding faith in the personal value and social utility of courses in debate and forensic events which are something more than games in which to score points. Training and practice in debate enhance the indispensable resources of intellectual rigor, orderly analysis, rational and emotional discipline, sense of structure, and effective expression. A course in debate provides—at least it should—both a method and an ethic for a person's management of private and public discourse in a free society.

LESTER THONSEN  
Educator

The skills inherent in the forensic program are exactly those needed by those who occupy public office. Attention might well be given as to ways in which debate coaches with their particular skills might be utilized by those involved in the area of public policy. Indeed, the need for detailed research in forensic education at the graduate level might well be met by studies of the United States Congress, the various state legislatures, as well as local bodies of government.

MARVIN L. ESCH  
Member of Congress

---

## RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP IN FORENSICS

Richard D. Rieke and Bernard L. Brock

Last year the developmental conference on forensics initiated studies intended to define the current and future role of research and scholarship in forensics. Papers on the behavioral effects of forensics, behavioral research in forensics, and the status of historical research in argumentation provided an excellent review of literature.<sup>1</sup> In pointing to directions for future research and scholarship in forensics, we will address two basic questions: What are the problems and resulting issues of research and scholarship in forensics? What approaches toward resolution of the problems exist?

### PROBLEMS AND ISSUES IN FORENSICS SCHOLARSHIP

Probably the most critical problem hampering scholarship in forensics is the lack of identification between active forensics people and those in other academic fields of study. Although directors of forensics may have advanced degrees in speech communication, their fields of graduate study usually were not argumentation, decision making, forensics, etc. Graduate study in rhetoric and public address often emphasizes rhetorical criticism and the history of public address, providing few if any courses in the above-mentioned areas of investigation. In fact, surveys conducted for this conference conclude that forensics personnel perceive themselves and their programs as separate from the speech communication curriculum. For example, Anderson and Matlon found that high school coaches viewed debate and speech activities as "...separate from and independent of the classroom speech curriculum."<sup>2</sup> Many high school directors reported that their interest stemmed from their own participation in forensics and not necessarily from advanced study; almost 25 percent of them reported they were asked/pressured "to assume the forensics director positions even though they had no previous experience or special interest in the area."<sup>3</sup> Rieke found that:

---

<sup>1</sup>Richard D. Rieke is Professor of Speech Communication, University of Utah. Bernard L. Brock is Professor of Speech Communication, Wayne State University.



almost half of the college forensics programs in the country (45.7 percent) are generally independent of the speech-communication curriculum and two-thirds (65 percent) report that awarding of academic credit for forensics is about the extent of their involvement in speech-communication.<sup>4</sup>

He concluded that:

forensic programs must be described as extra-curricular rather than co-curricular.

Our own graduate students exhibit a split personality. Deeply committed to forensics largely because of their own participation in high school and college, they want to assume a faculty position as director of forensics, but find themselves intellectually engaged in studying other communication specialties.

Students who do want to emphasize forensics-related studies at the graduate level have difficulty doing so. Argumentation typically is taught at the undergraduate level; many schools do not offer an advanced course for graduate students. Decision making—if taught at all—probably is taught from a group communication perspective with little attention to the variables relevant to forensics. Persuasion theory probably has a heavy orientation toward attitude change, focusing upon situations of general persuasion rather than more selective deliberative situations. Rhetorical theory probably is related heavily to history and criticism.

While exceptions to these generalizations undoubtedly exist, estrangement exists between the forensics community and a scholarly discipline. Thomas Schelling in *The Strategy of Conflict* notes an alarming lack of theoretical development in military and diplomatic strategy with particular regard to the concept of deterrence. He asks:

How do we account for this lack of theoretical development? I think one significant fact is that the military services, in contrast to almost any other sizable and respectable profession, have no identifiable academic counterpart.

He continues:

Those who make policy in the fields of economics, medicine, public health, soil conservation, education, or criminal law, can readily identify their scholarly counterpart in the academic world... But where is the academic counterpart of the military profession?<sup>6</sup>

With regard to deterrence, Schelling felt it was unlikely that the military practitioner would generate a theory. The forensics community appears to comprise a group of practitioners who lack an identifiable academic counterpart. As a gulf has widened between the activity of forensics and the

scholarly discipline of speech communication, the expected result would be (and has been) a diminution of scholarship by those in forensics and the concomitant lessening of academic rejuvenation through research.

If this analysis is accepted, some issues emerge. Is forensics properly related to the discipline of speech communication? Should forensics seek affiliation with a broader discipline? Can forensics specialists generate a body of scholarship without an interrelationship with a broader discipline?

A second problem is the lack of commitment to basic research and scholarship on the part of specialists in forensics. The now famous assertion by Wayne Thompson must be repeated:

Perhaps no potentially major area for quantitative study in the speech field has produced research so banal and provincial as has debate. Most of the studies have dealt with intercollegiate competition, and the principal secondary interest has been the effects and the values. These investigations, although of considerable interest to student debaters and coaches, do not illuminate general psychological or rhetorical issues.<sup>7</sup>

Currently McGlone finds little change, characterizing some research as having "a bit of impressive looking statistical evidence which has such narrow application as to be virtually worthless."<sup>8</sup> He further charges some articles as being motivated by a desire to prove the worth of forensics rather than to investigate it with an open mind. Andersen agrees with McGlone as he eliminates from his concept of research "surveys of the status of programs including budgets, distances traveled, number of participations, varieties of activities...."<sup>9</sup> He observes that:

Theory about argumentation and forensics can no more be built from such surveys than a theory of sociology can be derived from public opinion polling.<sup>10</sup>

Those in the forensics community do not seem currently to be conducting any significant amount of the behavioral research in logic and logical appeals.<sup>11</sup>

Notice that no one asserts that those active in forensics are not investigating and reporting their results. Instead, the charge is that what they do does not qualify as basic research. Andersen concludes:

This leaves the forensic community with concerns that are unique to it: the study of the activity in which they are engaged, increasingly contest debate. It leaves the community with the study of a restricted form in a restricted setting. To a large degree, recent research conducted in the area of debate and forensics has no interest in and no generalizability beyond that narrow situation.<sup>12</sup>

Douglas seems to concur. He notes a lack of scholarship in argumentation and concludes that one major factor accounting for it is "the almost exclusive association of argument with intercollegiate debate. . . ."<sup>13</sup>

Permit some speculation. If forensics activities are viewed as an end in themselves, as an opportunity for students to engage in a persistently pop-



ular activity with no particular goal or instrumentality, they may be defended on that ground. One merely argues that continued student interest in forensics is proof enough that they should continue. Entirely introspective research also can be defended if we are committed to forensics activities as they have existed for years, since our research goal is simply to examine how they are working and what minor refinements might be instituted. For example, the tournament emerged after relatively inexpensive automobile transportation developed, but it may change if the energy shortage continues. The tournament diminished audience debating and restricted time limits for speakers. If the tournament changes, perhaps these variables can change as well. Much attention has been given to whether the stock issues case is properly replaced by a comparative advantages case, and what implications this might have on such concepts as inherency or burden of proof, all relevant only to intercollegiate debates.

However, if forensics activities are perceived as a simulation of argumentation, speaking, and decision-making procedures in our society for which we are preparing our students, a totally different set of demands occurs. First, continued operation of forensics programs must be defended on grounds of effective simulation and education. Second, the introspective research described above becomes not only secondary, but perhaps not relevant enough to merit the name research. Then forensics scholars would become impatient with inquiries into the negative 15-minute block, the mean tenure of debate coaches, and ways of interpreting topicality. They would prefer to examine the relationship between what was being taught in forensics activities and the world for which the students were being prepared.

Ultimately, this raises the difficult question as to whether or not we in forensics want to exercise the genuine intellectual curiosity that could lead to drastic modification of many current debate practices. Research necessarily means risking that old paradigms and practices may give way to new ones.

The issues emerging from this broad problem area already have been suggested. Is forensics an end in itself to be studied introspectively? Is forensics an educational instrumentality requiring research that promises to extend and modify present boundaries, practices, and expectations? Are specialists in forensics genuinely committed to engaging in research? Should forensics specialists study political, legislative, organizational, and courtroom argument?

A third problem important to scholarship in forensics is our prescriptive approach to a single purpose model. Committed to the notion that democratic societies should operate through free debate, that reasoned discourse is the proper vehicle of open debate, and that we should stress logical appeals over their opposites, formal logic has continued to be our

model. That is, we seem to agree with many philosophers that human discourse typically falls short of the rigor of formal logic, but we still seek that rigor and believe that to the extent that we attain it our arguments will be better. We feel that evidence of the type we specify should be employed in a proper argumentative speech. These prescriptions arise from our model of reasoned discourse in a democratic society.

When we discover that students and other citizens do not conform to the rules of formal logic, we plan ways of improving their logic. When we discover widespread misuse of our forms of evidence, we complain of a lack of ethics. When we discover that in our society it is quite difficult to find formal debate used to make decisions, we deplore the situation. One would expect the typical scholar, upon finding that his paradigm was widely divergent from practice, to reexamine the paradigm or even search for a new one. An educator would modify his simulation to conform to changes observed in society.

There is something inherently antagonistic between a highly prescriptive posture and excellence in scholarship. In argumentation and public speaking classes, we tell students *how* a speech is structured; *how* an argument is formed; *how* evidence is used; *how* to refute a case; *how* to analyze a proposition, etc. Employing a nonprescriptive approach would change that behavior into examination of the process of speech structure and how various people perceive it and what research has told us. We would consider arguments as discussed by various scholars and invite students to form their own opinions about the value of formal logic.

Issues here stem from a narrow, prescriptive approach. Can forensics have more than one theoretical model? What criteria should be appropriate for evaluating different models? Can forensics maintain its prescriptive approach and develop strong scholarship as well? What form will research take if the prescriptive approach is dropped?

A fourth problem results from confusion over the goals of forensics. One school of thought assumes that the activities include all that is essential for the student's training. Following this assumption people in forensics have devised studies and exercises that, while they do not duplicate any particular behavior within society, supposedly provide basic ingredients out of which students will be able to abstract the application to their particular role in life. For example, while forensics activities are not really like legal argument or political argument or business decision making, they are assumed to have the essential ingredients of them. Therefore, a student who has participated in forensics and then goes to law, graduate, or business school is expected to apply his knowledge of forensics to his later situation. Another school of thought suggests that we observe argumentative, speaking, and decision-making situations in the so-called real world and then simulate them rather closely in the classroom or laboratory. In this event,



we in forensics would observe political decision making and then construct simulations such as student congresses or a model United Nations. We would observe legal decision making and then devise moot court experiences for students. We would watch the presenting and arguing of cases in business and other organizations, and then create such simulations as group discussions. In both approaches the forensics activities are means to an end rather than ends in themselves.

Important to this paper is the fact that, no matter which of these approaches is used, specialists in forensics must have detailed knowledge of the processes of argumentation, speaking, decision making, etc., as they occur in the various fields into which our students go. In the first approach, in which we presume that forensics experience contains the basic ingredients out of which students will be able to make specific application, we must fully understand what these basic ingredients are. In the second approach, we obviously must keep the simulation in conformity with the process as found in society.

Scholarship in forensics seems dedicated to the proposition that we know what the basic ingredients are and we know what is happening in the processes we simulate. Our research investigates the extent to which we teach reflective thinking, organization of ideas, use of evidence, and so forth. It is virtually impossible to find research asking whether or not these are indeed the basic ingredients we should be teaching. We construct student congresses, model United Nations, discussion contests, extemporaneous speaking contests, and debates as if they truly were modeled on what does happen in their counterparts elsewhere. Yet, it is uncommon to find research in forensics inquiring into the actual operation of these processes we claim to simulate. On the contrary, there is some writing to suggest we simulate *ideal* versions of the processes—the way we think they ought to be run—rather than the *actual* operation.

From this problem a variety of issues emerges. First, what should be the structure of forensics activities—simulation, generalization of basic ingredients, or ends in themselves? Should directors of forensics become specialists in the communication-related decision-making processes in society so as to improve the quality of instruction? Perhaps more basic, can forensics activities be perpetuated in the absence of ongoing knowledge about the communication-related processes in society about which we want to teach?

A final problem is the ability of forensics to adapt to changing conditions and concepts. Already discussed is the question of whether we perceive ourselves as directors of forensics activities or teachers of certain communication processes. But, no matter which of these alternatives is chosen, some attention must be given to the scope of forensics. To illustrate a representative of the telephone company once commented that people in

his industry had expressed a different self-perception from those in railroading. He said:

When asked, those people said they were in the railroad business. Now that railroading is out of date, so are the railroad companies. Instead, if you ask me what business I'm in, I'll say communication. Then even when there are no lines from house to house and town to town, and all messages are sent by microwave or even coaxial cable, we'll still be going strong.

The moral of the story should be clear. Once, when asked, we said we were teachers of oratorical declamation, manuscript reading, folktale telling, extemporaneous speaking, debate, oratory, and so forth. Now, when some of those forms of communication seem to be less relevant to modern society, we still tend to be in the same business. Will we go the way of the railroads? On the other hand, argumentation, persuasion, analysis, decision making, etc., are very much alive today and show no signs of diminishing. Although one hears few orations today, there are many words exchanged with a view toward influence and decision. Although formal debate on the floor of legislatures seems to have been reduced in influence, there is no lack of communication, argument, case making, and decision making among legislators. Although most legal action now takes place outside the courtroom, and even there little opportunity exists for stirring speeches to the jury, lawyers still rely upon a vast array of communication behaviors. Persistence in defining forensics as the engaging in a particular set of activities deeply influences the character of scholarship in the field. The introspective research mentioned earlier is a natural outgrowth of this perception. On the other hand, if we were to define ourselves differently, it most likely would lead to a series of new questions for study.

In recent years a large body of research in theories of persuasion has grown up leading to some of the issues related to this problem. Where does forensics fit into this literature? To what extent is there a viable difference between argumentation and persuasion? Is there a different set of processes involved when arguments lead to decisions than when persuasions lead to attitude change? Modern writers are inclined to view rhetoric as argument. Do we subscribe to this perception? Many of the distinctions among persuasion, decision making, argumentation, debate, and forensics lie in an artificial discrimination that emerged between those who were oriented toward behavioral and social science methodologies and perspectives and those who were more inclined toward philosophical, critical, historical methods and perspectives. Do those in forensics wish to be identified exclusively with nonquantitative research methods? Is that the self-perception we wish? The issue must be stated in an open-ended fashion. What definition of forensics do we want to work with?



NOTES

1. Edward L. McGlone, "The Behavioral Research Effects of Forensics"; Kenneth E. Andersen, "A Critical Review of the Behavioral Research in Argumentation and Forensics"; and Donald Douglas, "The Status of Historical Research in Argumentation," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 10 (Winter 1974): 140-174.
2. Betty Anderson and Irene Matlon, "A Description of High School Forensic Programs," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 10 (Winter 1974): 123.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 124.
4. Richard D. Rieke, "College Forensics in the United States—1973," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 10 (Winter 1974): 128.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 8.
7. Wayne N. Thompson, *Quantitative Research in Public Address and Communication* (New York: Random House 1967), p. 109.
8. McGlone, "Behavioral Effects," p. 141.
9. Andersen, "Critical Review," p. 147.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 155.
13. Douglas, "Historical Research," p. 157.

RESPONSES TO

RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP IN FORENSICS

Degree of Commitment to Research and Scholarship

LEE POLK (BAYLOR UNIVERSITY) AND DONN PARSON (UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS): It is appropriate that the National Developmental Conference on Forensics consider research as a major focus of forensics pedagogy. Hopefully, the quest to detail this focus will begin with the recognition that a large forensics community already exists, and that this community is comprised of persons who have certain interests, goals, and life habits that will not be overhauled by this conference. It is the task of the conference to suggest how the talents, goals, and needs of present and future forensics educators can and should be applied to the educational process. Certainly, the role of research in forensics should be modified and improved, but the kind of research must be consistent with the interests and abilities of the educators in forensics. We must focus on the questions that need to be asked, and the best way to get those answers.

J. ROBERT COX (UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, CHAPEL HILL): The impetus for research comes from an intellectual curiosity about the nature and goals of an activity. We appear to be held captive, as Wittgenstein said of his early view of language, by our "mental picture" of the problem. Too often we have conceived of "forensics" simply as what coaches and participants in forensics *do*—research in a circumscribed area, construction of speeches or cases, rehearsal of highly stylized communicative behaviors, and travel to tournaments where these same performances are judged by quasi-judicial or legislative criteria that have been adapted to a contest format.

Conceptually restricted, at times we are obsessed with self-justificatory goals: How may we protect forensics budgets? Should the size and success of a competitive program constitute one basis for tenure decisions? Or with questions arising from a parochial concern: Does forensics "belong" to the speech communication field? Doubtless the inordinate amount of time required of forensics directors detracts from the opportunity for basic research. Yet, this same immersion in the daily concerns of an active forensics program affects the saliency of research questions. "Persistence in defining forensics as the engaging in a particular set of activities," write Rieke and Brock, "deeply influences the character of scholarship in the field." I strongly agree.



## Models and Methods

AUSTIN J. FREELEY (JOHN CARROLL UNIVERSITY): What should be our model for debate? This question is at least as old as modern forensics. The model we chose long ago and for good and sufficient reason was the courtroom. This model has served, and will continue to serve us well. It is a model readily understood by us, our students, and the academic community.

It is *not* the function of an educator to teach students how to replicate the activity of the lowest common denominator in society. Rather, it is to teach his or her students that "this is the way thoughtful men dedicated to democratic values believe it should be done." Clearly we must strike a careful balance between prescription and description.

LEE POLK AND DONN PARSON: One problem with the essay by Rieke and Brock is that there is little in the suggestion of method by which questions should be answered. There seems to be the assumption that epistemology is at best quantitative, and that we have failed in the questions and rigor of method to provide satisfactory answers. While quantitative method may be one way of dealing with forensics, it is not the only way, nor in the preparation of many directors is it the most propitious way. One of the primary functions of the forensics educator is that of a critic, an evaluator of symbolic acts called debate.

J. ROBERT COX: Forensics, even in its more competitive moments, is concerned with *human judgment*. We are asked by the parties involved to evaluate and make choices—choices between the accuracy of competing views of reality (problems, causes, and past remedies); choices among values and the ordering of preferences; and choices among acts that attempt to influence future states of affairs. The essential nature of the forensics process lies in the presentation and analysis of propositions that illuminate fundamental choices.

Forensics often presupposes a prescriptive approach that relies upon the rigorous (and sometimes irrelevant) standards of formal logic. Rieke and Brock observe: "There is something inherently antagonistic between a highly prescriptive posture and excellence in scholarship." Certainly, the paradigm of formal validity in argumentation and debate should be reexamined. Nevertheless, I am disturbed by the implications of nonprescriptive models in the areas of human judgment. Do we seek merely to discover through behavioral research what variables contribute to attitude change, "using" such findings to influence choice?

DONALD DOUGLAS (UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON): Much scholarship in argumentation is devoted almost exclusively to the explicit demands con-

cealed in the structural model of the syllogism and gives only scant attention, if any, to the substance of arguments taken up in the lives people live. Thus, tacit support frequently is given to the assumption that logical modes of reasoning, although only a small part of deductive systems, are the best method of analysis and proof. For the most part, research and scholarship in argumentation have failed to recognize the importance of substantive and value issues in either clarifying or obscuring understanding of logical forms.

## Means vs. Ends in Forensics

AUSTIN J. FREELEY: It is unfortunate that we have practices in debate that are unique to the tournament round and have no analogy in the real world. Such practices, and research focused on them, cause us to be perceived in an unfavorable way by our academic colleagues. By our own behavior we confess we cannot justify these practices. When we arrange a campus debate, or a debate before a service club, or for radio or television we often find it necessary to drastically modify the debaters' behavior and case because we know that what we could get away with in a tournament round is unacceptable in the real world. I suggest this double standard is indefensible.

DONALD DOUGLAS: The central claim of this present response paper is that, if research and scholarship in argumentation were directed more toward the employment of argument as social criticism, they could better contribute toward providing information and the testing of the intersubjective reliability of public thinking—and hence, contribute to a more dependable understanding of complex issues confounding large segments of the public—than they presently do.

Argumentation is a fundamental methodology of inquiry, of judgment, of disposition, and of organization that takes place in a social context. As such, societal needs dictate that future scholarship and research in argumentation must be taken out of the classroom and directed toward real world problems and toward communities where real people live.

## Resolution of the Problems

J. ROBERT COX: The practices and theory of decision making in other fields may serve as sources of theory and as process models for forensics activity. Certainly, we have a need for comparative studies in a variety of decision-making environments. For instance, economists and social psychologists have produced a large body of theory (based upon rigorous experimental evidence) regarding individual decision making. Are the bases for making a



policy decision in debate akin to the Bayesian notion of "utility": the calculation of preference for a commodity or state of affairs and the likelihood of obtaining it? And what of decision strategies like Savage's "regret" criterion? Are the conceptual approaches currently being used by affirmative teams capable of discussing choices that ensure policymakers against maximum regret, rather than increase simple utility? Such determinants of choice appear to be the "basic ingredients" that students abstract from the forensics process. Yet, we have little scholarly evidence that these practices are generalizable to business, political, or legal judgment.

AUSTIN J. FREELEY: We should keep in close touch with the argumentative speaking in decision-making situations of business, industry, politics and the courts. We should conduct an ongoing analysis of these processes and discover what we can learn from them and adapt to our teaching. Our teaching of argumentation and debate, at least on the undergraduate level, must be of the general or liberal arts type. It seems likely that our greatest contribution to education would be to develop a broader, richer, deeper general theory of argumentation. We should discover what rational people do when they make decisions through oral argument. We might find it profitable to explore the hypothesis that when rational people make decisions through argument they behave in much the same way whether they are lawyers, accountants, or surgeons. The subject matter of the argument will, of course, be different, but the process of discovering issues, testing evidence, weighing advantages and disadvantages, and doing all of the other things we do in educational debate comes from a general theory of argument.

DONALD DOUGLAS: Employing argumentation as a research methodology for responsibly investigating real world problems offers many advantages. Perhaps the most obvious concerns the role of communication in responsible decision making. From Aristotle to John Dewey to the present, rhetorical theorists invariably have recognized the function of argument and claimed for it the role of practical decision making; "the art of utility" is the claim for argument found in most textbooks. Although they may draw information from the physical and social sciences, many problems of a social, political, and economic nature, problems requiring investigation and demanding solution, cannot be dealt with under the present practices of physical or behavioral research. These problems are policy-type problems and can be investigated adequately only through the dialectical methodologies systematically treated in argumentation. Furthermore, through the responsible employment of argument as policy dialectic, forensics studies may perform as the functional hub for drawing together

scholars and scholarship in both the social and behavioral sciences.

J. ROBERT COX: As scholars in speech communication, we can and should fashion an alternative model to formal logic, an understanding of human decision making that is essentially rhetorical. A paradigm for forensics (especially debate) would describe the interrelation of variables that compose "reasonable" judgment: analysis of a problem area and its causes, determination of the desirability and likelihood associated with possible outcomes of proposed acts, and a scheme for preference rankings. This perspective "reaffirms the hope that in rhetoric might be found a logic of decision consistent with the materials out of which decisions must in public affairs be generated." The forensics process becomes an instrument for decision making in the arena of human values and contingent events. Discourse is seen as rhetorical (rather than logical) as experimental statements are arranged to increase the probability of belief in a further proposition. Although our inferences may assume a hypothetico-deductive form, argument is more than a mere logical exercise; the arguer vouches for the truth-value of premises and, by way of them, constructs a phenomenological view that fosters new belief.



---

As ideas proliferate, as facts multiply, it is more important than ever that a young man or woman know how to talk or write about them easily and understandably.

In today's world we must be verbally articulate. To express one's thinking and be clearly understood is vital to almost everything we do. A truly educated person must have this ability.

TERREL H. BELL

United States Commissioner of  
Education

I think the greatest effect of my own forensic experience has been on my writing, much of which is really forensic in nature. In both editorials and other writing, I write first to clarify an issue, and then to present and defend a point of view. Debating is particularly good preparation for editorial writing because an editorial writer also works within a space limitation—often a single page of a magazine. He, too, must select the strongest arguments and support them with evidence before coming to a conclusion. He must be able to see both sides of an issue, deal fairly with opposing arguments, and then to select the major arguments that support his own position.

PAUL WOODRING

Former Education Editor, *Saturday Review*

There is conclusive evidence that the student society itself is one of the strongest teaching forces on any campus. Those passing through debate and discussion out onto the local academic rialto raise the level of the rap session, have an impact upon the learning process which takes place in student groups, and can even affect the quality of class discussion in other fields. A college or university which does not want what forensics does for a campus or which ignores what it means to the continuing growth of the student-alumnus or which "costs it out of existence" rather publicly commits itself to a second-rate educational venture.

J. GARBER DRUSHAL

College President

---

## PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION, STATUS, AND REWARDS

Lucy M. Keele and Kenneth E. Andersen

Inevitably, the four topic areas being addressed in the National Developmental Conference on Forensics are interrelated. But questions of professional preparation, status, and rewards of forensics personnel are markedly interrelated with the other topic areas. The status and rewards accorded to professionals in terms of promotion, tenure, and salary, public and peer approbation, and self-satisfaction depend in part upon the goals defined for forensics and the success of individuals in achieving them. The preparation necessary for a career in directing forensics obviously depends upon the theory and practice of the activities. Finally, in the academic world research and scholarship are often seen as the essence of professional status and become the criteria for merit.

### PROBLEMS

Five major problems serve as parameters for a discussion of professional preparation, status, and rewards.

1. *The breadth of academic preparation required.* George Ziegelmüller defines three main roles for the director of forensics: teacher, counselor, and professional.<sup>1</sup> These dimensions alone should discourage many from working with educational forensics. The many demands add up to a staggering list of requirements for being a "good" director of forensics: command of argumentation theory, logic systems, speech communication theory and practice, and more than passing knowledge of political theory, social problems, and economics. At most colleges the forensics director is required to have at least a master's degree, and usually the job description lists the doctorate. Typically, the candidate needs competitive experience as a participant, special training in administering a program, and graduate work in the philosophical and curricular aspects of forensics.

Forensics educators must be as eclectic as any of their colleagues; few faculty members must be conversant with so many areas in order to tackle one specific teaching assignment. The forensics educator must keep abreast

---

Lucy M. Keele is Associate Professor of Speech and Director of Forensics, California State University, Fullerton. Kenneth E. Andersen is Professor and Director of Graduate Study in Speech Communication, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



of newspapers, magazines, journals, and books in politics, economics, and sociology in order to fulfill his or her assignments of providing guidance for students' research and preparation and of judging the comparative merits of others' students.

The requirements for the ideal high school speech activities person are not fewer in kind, only in degree. The only significant difference is that the high school forensics director need not necessarily have earned an advanced degree. Many states require postbaccalaureate work, however, and secondary areas of emphasis. Obviously, not everyone has the breadth and depth of preparation just described and therein lies the second major problem area.

2. *Unqualified persons participate in forensics.* "Unqualified" does not mean someone outside the umbrella of speech; rather it is a person who is unprepared in most of the areas outlined above. All too often the high school teacher is assigned forensics in much the same way as someone is assigned to monitor the study hall, or the college teacher becomes the director of debate because there is no one else available or because that is the only job available.

Anderson and Matlon's 1973 survey reported that 70 percent of the responding high school forensics personnel reported either an undergraduate major or minor, a master's degree, or a doctoral degree in some aspect of the speech discipline. However, "nearly one-fourth of all coaches indicated that they were asked/pressured to assume the forensics director positions even though they had no previous experience or special interest in the area."<sup>2</sup> Rieke's study of college coaches noted that, while 85 percent had studied argumentation, debate, or directing forensics in school, only 42.5 percent considered argument, debate, or forensics to be their primary subject.<sup>3</sup>

Those of us with experience in forensics confirm these surveys. We too often encounter the layman who has no training in logic or argumentation judging debate; the layman with no training in communication principles judging the various individual events; the totally unprepared individual assuming the role as director of forensics and expecting the same professional respect as the person with special preparation in forensics. What often occurs is not that the unqualified person is granted respect, but that the qualified person loses respect by association with his unprepared colleagues. If anyone, however unprepared, *can* direct a program, *can* judge dialectic, *can* judge and grade six speakers addressing crucial social issues, then involvement in forensics is not very special.

3. *Forensics is regarded as nonacademic.* One manifestation of this problem is the confusion surrounding the term "coach" applied to an individual working with forensics.<sup>4</sup> The label itself conjures up many images,

few if any of them connoting scholarship or professionalism. Speech communication scholars often lack respect for forensics as an academic area of endeavor.<sup>5</sup> If forensics is not respected, it follows that those involved will not be able to claim respect either.

One result of forensics not being accorded positive academic status is that forensics personnel expend excessive time and energy defending the activity. A disproportionate share of the Division of Forensics business meetings for the past three years has been consumed wording appropriate responses to challenges from other segments of the SCA. Charges that may be based on limited and nonrepresentative observation have been offered as indictments of forensics.<sup>6</sup>

Interestingly, the idea for the National Developmental Conference on Forensics came from within the active coaching ranks. The regional conference that fostered the idea was held with some 30 people in attendance, most of whom traveled a great distance at their own expense to scrutinize forensics and to begin to set in order that which was not defensible.

4. *Forensics personnel are measured by the same criteria as their colleagues.* For the majority of persons involved in forensics, promotion, tenure, and salary increases are awarded if the forensics educators meet the criteria applied to their colleagues. No defense is envisioned for the position that the forensics person be divorced from the criteria for excellence set by the department. Forensics educators must read journals, attend conventions, and share their thoughts via convention papers. Many in forensics somehow manage to be all things—a contributor to the department, a publishing scholar, a popular teacher of classes who receives excellent student reviews, *and* a dedicated forensics educator. But forensics educators should not be evaluated in terms of the identical criteria applied to their colleagues any more than they should be evaluated in terms of criteria proper for forensics personnel. Because forensics is valuable to the department/school, the persons involved should be given credit for and evaluated in terms of the specific requirements of their jobs. The failure to do so is one clear reason for the exodus of good forensics personnel as a means of professional survival. Forensics, as a result, tends to become populated with young, relatively inexperienced, and often unqualified persons.

On the other hand, not infrequently forensics directors are rewarded (salary and/or promotion) on the exclusive dimension of their forensics work. While given credit for the special demands of their position, they should be held responsible for fulfilling the basic criteria required of their colleagues.

A serious obstacle in evaluating forensics directors is the absence of accepted criteria for measuring excellence in forensics. Compounding the problem is the wide array of programs that cannot be judged against a single set of standards.



5. *Instability of forensics program.* During a time of scarce resources, forensics is an easy target for criticism because of its visibility and because of a climate that encourages criticism. Two years ago James McBath speculated that forensics in the aggregate is the second most expensive special education offering in the country.<sup>7</sup> Little wonder that critics within and outside of departments hack away. Some student-sponsored and college/departmentally funded programs have been cut back or totally denied funds.

Basic to all of the major problems with regard to professional preparation, status, and rewards is the vulnerability of forensics to extinction. While the recent attempt to discover the bases for budgeting of forensics was inconclusive,<sup>8</sup> it is clear that all methods of financing permit funds to be discontinued at a moment's notice. Many campuses fund forensics from student fees, and each year a new student senate evaluates forensics against criteria impossible to anticipate. The paradox lies in the fact that, even if we could agree on criteria for the evaluation of forensics and of the persons involved therein, the funding source most likely would not subscribe to those criteria. The best program in the country, directed by a well-prepared educator, can be discontinued tomorrow if the student senate or the appropriate dean opts for alternative priorities that are waiting eagerly in the wings.

In a time of restrictive budgets, a department has to consider very seriously the granting of tenure to a person, however well-qualified and valued in forensics, who may have to function in a very different role if funds for the program are not forthcoming. If the faculty member is well-educated and amply prepared, there are other opportunities to contribute to the department. But the person who has spent such a disproportionate amount of time in forensics that he or she is out of touch with other aspects of the field and has not researched and/or published may not meet the criteria for retention and promotion set for other positions.

#### CURRENT STATUS OF FORENSICS PERSONNEL/PROGRAMS

The problem areas noted above are related intimately to the current perception of the status of teachers working with forensics. A sense of the current status enjoyed by debate and forensics people at the high school and college level is basic to the identification of the issues that must be addressed in determining needed changes in professional preparation, status, and rewards.

Forensics endeavors, particularly debate, enjoyed a central place in the curricular and cocurricular programs of colleges and universities well into this century. At many institutions the literary societies involved most students in one or more forensics activities. Home-and-home debates were popular attractions and important public occasions. The successful debater

and the effective teacher-coach were highly regarded by student and faculty colleagues. Indeed, many speech departments came into being in response to student interests in forensics and debate.<sup>9</sup> Many high school speech programs gained curricular status by building upon cocurricular forensics.

Debate and forensics activities were seen to epitomize many of the goals of education. Careful research, sound analytic and reasoning ability, and an insightful understanding of a contemporary issue were demonstrated in public debate before large numbers of people. Speech departments perceived debate and forensics as conferring prestige upon their field. Forensics demonstrated to colleagues and the public the values of the discipline, attracted students to graduate work in speech, and was a means through which the speech teacher influenced many of the top undergraduates.

Today there is a changing attitude toward forensics evidenced by common threads that emerged in the discussions and papers preceding this conference. Forensics has become peripheral to the interests of many speech communication educators; concern is expressed about the dominance of the traditional debate format and the emphasis upon national tournament competition. Fewer and fewer of the faculty in or outside the speech department have had any exposure to forensics or have much understanding of its role. At a time when the goals of higher education seem to be shifting from a concern with those who are academically elite to a concern with those who are academically deprived, forensics is seen as serving a rather elite minority. Many have come to question the desirability of a model of rational decision making—let alone believe it is feasible for students or the public as a whole to employ it. Many question the ability of forensics educators to define their goals and to demonstrate that forensics is instrumental in obtaining these goals—much less that the activity is more effective on a comparative cost basis than a wide range of alternatives. A wide gap divides those who are involved in contemporary forensics and those who are not. Rarely is a contemporary forensics educator asked to provide a rationale for some facet of debate that is different from a period remembered by the critics, and far too infrequently does the forensics community voluntarily provide explanation for the differences. Research indicating that debate and forensics are respected<sup>10</sup> has not laid to rest the concerns about the status of forensics.

One clear indication of the status of forensics programs at the high school level is the fact that almost no teachers at this level are given released time to compensate for their work with forensics,<sup>11</sup> and at most they are paid a few hundred dollars extra for the work. The failure to recognize debate and forensics as essential to the teaching responsibility by according preparation time and released class time is indicative that forensics is not seen as important to the curriculum. Indeed, one must question whether the reward of spending countless hours working and traveling with



students, weekdays and weekends, is not largely the teacher's own insistence that these activities are worthy, the students' growth significant, or the awards and trophies sufficient reward. Many high school forensics people have the luxury of being the only teachers with a background in speech communication so they can define for themselves what constitutes a quality program.<sup>12</sup>

In contrast, those at the college level must define their status not only in terms of their own self-perception but also in terms of the perceptions of their colleagues who are presumably—although not always—equally competent to evaluate the desirability of particular activities and who determine many of the rewards the forensics educator will receive. Even outside the department, the value of the forensics program may be called into question. In the last analysis, the forensics person is vulnerable to being asked to account to a department in which he or she resides, to a school or student committee that provides travel funds, and to persons within the profession who comment on the person's work.

Within the department of speech communication, forensics directors see many evidences that lead them to question the status accorded them by their faculty peers.

1. Increasingly, fellow teachers in speech communication have had little exposure to debate either as an extracurricular activity or as a part of the curriculum, and they manifest even less interest in it. Rather than seeing forensics as central, as attracting students to the program, and recruiting future professionals for the discipline, they see it as serving students who are not interested in speech communication.
2. Undergraduate and graduate curricula alike are placing less emphasis upon debate and argumentation and reflective thinking skills. Indeed, as the curriculum has become more and more diversified, argumentation has tended to retreat from being relatively central to being peripheral.
3. Graduate programs, particularly at the Ph.D. level, ordinarily direct students away from research relating to forensics and from a career aspiration involving emphasis upon debate and forensics work. At one time argumentation and forensics paradigms were rich sources of research hypotheses and popular settings for research.
4. Increasingly, those who have a long-term association with debate, forensics, and argumentation see themselves as outside the current stream of contest activity. They define themselves as "incompetent judges"<sup>13</sup> and divorce their writing and theorizing from competitive debate as it is currently practiced.
5. In institution after institution the direction of the forensics program has moved from a senior faculty member to a junior faculty member

- to an instructor to a teaching assistant and then, in some instances, to extinction. Many institutions, including some of the most prestigious, have reduced, altered, or eliminated the debate program.
6. As economic resources become more limited, pressure is being placed upon forensics directors to define their objectives, demonstrate the program's accomplishment, and justify the cost.

Forensics personnel themselves seem to be increasingly unsure of the rationale for their activity. Some have sought to redefine intercollegiate debate as a game that certain people enjoy much as many people enjoy chess.<sup>14</sup> Another view is that debate involves training in systems of information retrieval and in the management of large amounts of information much in the manner of the computer.<sup>15</sup> Still others suggest that debate should have little to do with public communication on problems of importance—or indeed that debate has much to do with communication at all. Unfortunately, those who define their goals as training in rational decision making, thorough research, and improvement of critical thinking and analysis rarely make a public statement or publish what they think to be obvious.<sup>16</sup>

#### ISSUES TO BE ANSWERED

At least five major issues need to be addressed in seeking answers to the questions of professional preparation, status, and rewards for forensics faculty:

1. What should be the role of the forensics program in relation to the school as a whole? Is forensics an essential program for an educational institution? How closely should the forensics program be related to the role, mission, and announced goals of the school? To what degree should the program be supported by the school as a whole as contrasted to department or student resources?
2. What should be the role of the forensics program in relation to the department in which the faculty member is appointed? How should the program serve the role, objectives, and announced goals of the department? Specifically, what is the role of the department in setting the goals, philosophy, and procedures of the program? How is the program perceived by the other members of the department and its administrator? How is the program seen in relationship to the teaching mission of the department? How and in what senses should a department be involved in the program? What of programs where the forensics director is not appointed by a department?



3. What is the proper preparation for the forensics educator given the answers to issues 1 and 2? Do high school forensics personnel need a major in speech communication and minors in subject matter areas other than English? Does the college forensics educator need a Ph.D.? If so, in what areas? Can Ph.D. programs and research be linked directly to a career in forensics? Do forensics personnel need actual participation in competitive debate and forensics? Is such participation sufficient preparation for directing and judging? What specific courses should forensics personnel complete: argumentation, debate, logic, methods *and* philosophy of directing forensics?
4. What serves to confer "status" or what serves as a "reward"? To what degree does one's self-perception of his or her role and contribution confer status and constitute sufficient reward and status? Do the frequently warm, close, and desirable relationships established with students and/or colleagues from other schools provide a reward or status? Do trophies, awards, and successful teams confer status or constitute a reward? Is forensics work seen within the teaching, the service, or the research and scholarship reference frame? What basis should be used for compensating forensics personnel in terms of teaching load, salary, tenure, promotion? To what degree do forensics people indicate bases for evaluation and demonstrate success and accomplishment in terms of these frames of reference?
5. Do forensics personnel perceive themselves as professionals in forensics, in education, or in speech communication as a field? Do they utilize available opportunities for professional growth by participating actively in professional associations and contributing to the research, scholarship, and intellectual development of their specialties? Do they need more opportunities for professionalism? Do they need to increase productivity in terms of teaching, service, or research? Finally, should they accept such additional responsibilities as determining standards for required preparation, an affirmative statement of goals for the activity, etc.?

#### POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Basic to any discussion of recommendations for professional preparation, status, and rewards is acceptance of the view that there is no one ideal model of a forensics program. Different schools have widely differing goals and needs, and programs at those institutions must respond to those differences. Thus, we must maintain a pluralistic, multifaceted approach.

A second presupposition is that forensics must be seen as part of the teaching function of the school, department, and the individual working with the program. The conference should explore the viability of several different approaches to organizing and locating a forensics program, recognizing that, while one approach may seem optimal, there must be others that are acceptable.

*Responsibility for the program.* Both for historical and practical reasons, the responsibility for a forensics program should be located within the department of speech communication—the department concerned with rhetoric, persuasion and public decision making, and all forms of oral discourse. However, to the extent that departments of speech communication are deemphasizing argumentation and training in critical thinking as central to the curriculum, the relationship of forensics to speech needs to be reexamined. The authors remain confident that this is the most reasonable and defensible place for forensics, but a thorough-going discussion is overdue.

In a recently published debate critique, one critic asserted that forensics had only accidentally been housed within the department of speech communication.<sup>17</sup> This statement is indicative of one prevailing attitude. Certainly, there are notable examples of functioning forensics programs that exist outside a speech communication department: Harvard and Stanford are two illustrations of programs endorsed by the institution and directed by persons from the law school. An infrequent model (an example is the University of California at Riverside) is the forensics program conducted entirely by students with no faculty input. Continuity, consistency, and educational foundation are scarce ingredients in most of the student-run programs. From time to time such various departments as history, political science, prelaw, or English express confidence in the goals of the forensics program, and the possibility of housing forensics within one of these could be explored. However, with little tradition for forensics in any one of these alternatives and during a time of scarce resources, it is unlikely that forensics would be welcomed.

Given the diversity of schools, it is inevitable and fully defensible that some will emphasize serving the campus and the students while others will place greater stress upon serving the communities by providing public debates, discussions, forums and other activities. The forensics community should see itself as benefiting from this diversity of programs and responses rather than arguing about the diverse models.

Teaching in forensics is not identical to teaching in a traditional course. The unique educational opportunities available in a forensics program make it a special learning opportunity. The conference should evaluate different models for organizing and directing the forensics program. Ob-



viously, suitable preparation and rewards may differ depending on the sponsoring department.

*Role of the forensics educator.* Starting from these two presuppositions, it is possible to generate some proposals relative to the issues of professional preparation, status, and rewards. The forensics program at any institution ought to be a result of the relevant departmental faculty determining the philosophy and goals of the forensics program for that institution. While the forensics educator will necessarily have a leading part in this discussion, the entire faculty should be involved. No teacher can hope to pursue a program that is unrelated to that which the department desires and/or is prepared to reward. Furthermore, the forensics director should not accord to a department a program significantly better than it is willing to support.

In the research-oriented university it is highly probable that, whatever the departmental view about the proper rewards for forensics, the college and the university as a whole will be reluctant to offer promotion and tenure without evidence of scholarly and professional activity and involvement.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, while the teaching and service functions of the forensics director's role must be performed, a research obligation must be accepted. For the department not to admit this to the candidate is to lie to him or her; for the candidate not to recognize it is to insure a period of increasing bitterness, lowered morale, and discontent. In contrast, secondary school personnel normally are not expected to be involved in research and scholarly activity and, indeed, are not necessarily rewarded—at least in the short run—for professional activity. However, the secondary school should regard forensics personnel as performing in a teaching role and give compensatory time adjustments in teaching load.

No one denies that directors of forensics are frequently held to criteria identical to those for colleagues while also expected to spend extra hours with participants, travel on weekends, manage tournaments, and judge in high school tournaments. Forensics personnel should be admonished, however, for too long claiming that they had no time for any professional involvement. If forensics is primarily a teaching function, attending conventions, reading the journals, preparing papers, and being active in related professional organizations is part of the job of a responsible educator. Directors of forensics must also discharge their teaching function in another way—attending tournaments with their debaters and serving as the critics for other teams. When directors sit behind their desks and send graduate assistants, debaters are robbed of the superior contribution of the most knowledgeable theorists. Some of the practices found objectionable in competitive forensics would be eliminated if all directors were more actively involved in the coaching and critiquing of debate and related events.

The forensics educator must acknowledge that the forensics program is subject to evaluation in the same way that other teaching responsibilities are subject to evaluation. Forensics directors must be willing to define objectives and be prepared to demonstrate their achievement. In addition, they must be willing to accommodate cost effectiveness comparisons and be able to manage the program and the scope of its activity accordingly. However, no more rigid accountability should be applied to forensics directors than to other colleagues and programs.

As a professional educator, the forensics person has the right to ask for reasonable guarantee of continuity and support for the program. Some of what we have conventionally viewed as rewards or matters of status should be reinterpreted to be proper educational requirements for a particular program. The high school teacher should have released time for this important educational activity. The person asked to direct forensics in the research-oriented university should have sufficient teaching assistants to handle some of the traveling and day-to-day coaching and all of the travel arrangements. Adequate clerical support should be offered so that the teacher is not doing what a student assistant and/or a secretary should do. This support must be provided if forensics personnel are to participate in all aspects of academic life.

*Forensics organizations.* The role of the forensics organizations should and must be strengthened. There have been limited efforts within the forensics community to assist those members who are not prepared to work with forensics programs. The Speech Communication Association's Division of Forensics sponsored four workshops for high school speech activities personnel in 1973; five workshops were conducted in 1974. Such belated responses, while very worthwhile, never can catch up with the problem. The recommendation adopted by some state, regional, and national associations that a high school forensics director have at least a minor in speech communication and experience in forensics is not being actively supported by our professional associations.

Forensics organizations should develop professional standards relative to preparation and appropriate working conditions. Such guidelines can be of value both to the employing institution and to the forensics community as a whole. Professional organizations also should assume the responsibility for clearly articulating the educational aspects of forensics. This involves conducting research on both means and accomplishment of ends.

Too often we emphasize the abuses rather than stating positively what forensics is doing. Administrators are much more likely to consider supporting a good forensics program if they read a statement of its objectives coupled with evidence of meeting those objectives rather than if they read a code reminding them that liquor is consumed at tournaments. This does



not deny that forensics professionals need to maintain high standards for their activity.

A wide variety of honorary organizations exists in forensics—local, state, and national organizations that exist solely because of forensics, and a number of others in which forensics plays an important part. The forensics professional can participate in the policy making of these bodies, hold offices, and utilize the publication outlets. Many forensics personnel are prone to complain that they do not receive recognition. Others acknowledge they have gained recognition largely because of forensics work. A teacher does not gain status merely because he or she meets classes and does the job assigned. The person who does excellent teaching and influences others through demonstration, research, or writing inevitably gains recognition.

The fundamental goal of any serious discussion of the preparation, status, and rewards of forensics personnel must be to emphasize again the educational perspective in which forensics functions. Forensics is an educational activity and its goals and objectives must be defined accordingly. Concomitantly, the director of forensics is an educator and must be evaluated accordingly. These two premises form the basis from which recommendations relative to preparation, status, and rewards can be drawn.

## NOTES

1. George Ziegelmüller, "The Role of the Coach," in *Directing Forensics: Debate and Contest Speaking*, edited by Don Faules and Richard Rieke (Scranton, Pa.: International Textbook Co., 1968), pp. 79-94.
2. Betty Anderson and Irene Matlon, "A Description of High School Forensic Programs: Report on a National Survey," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 10 (Winter 1974): 123-24. This optimism must be qualified by the self-selecting nature of the sample derived in the Anderson and Matlon study. Only 28 percent of the questionnaires were returned. Of the 50 states included in the sample, only 26 were represented in the responses and a few with active programs dominated the returns. Since the schools sampled were sometimes those known to have active programs, and since teachers more committed to and interested in forensics are likely to return the questionnaire, this sample probably reflects the conditions existing among the schools with the more active programs.
3. Richard Rieke, "College Forensics in the United States—1973," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 10 (Winter 1974): 129.
4. Ziegelmüller, "Role of the Coach," p. 79.
5. Robert Kully, "Forensics and the Speech Communication Discipline: An Analysis of an Estrangement," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 8 (Spring 1972): 192-99.
6. For example, a controversy has revolved around the position paper by Barbara Seng prepared for the Airlie Conference, sponsored by SCA, Summer 1972.
7. James H. McBath, "Beyond the Seventies," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 8 (Spring 1972): 176.
8. Rieke, "College Forensics," p. 13.
9. See articles by David Potter, L. Leroy Cowperthwaite, and A. Craig Buird, Donald K. Smith, and others in *A History of Speech Education in America*, edited by Karl Wallace (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1954).

10. W. Barnett Pearce, "Attitudes Towards Forensics," pp. 134-39, and Kenneth E. Andersen, "A Critical Review of the Behavioral Research," pp. 150-53, *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 10 (Winter 1974).
11. Anderson and Matlon, "High School Forensics Programs," p. 124.
12. Those who are committed to and well prepared for forensics work probably derive a high degree of self-satisfaction. Those who are poorly prepared are less likely to feel a high degree of satisfaction despite the effort they must extend.
13. Robert P. Friedman, "Reflections of an Incompetent Judge," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 8 (Winter 1972): 123-26.
14. Theodore Clevenger, Jr., "Toward a Point of View for Contest Debate," *Speech Teacher* 12 (Autumn 1960): 21-26.
15. Theodore J. Walwik and R. Samuel Mehrley, "Intercollegiate Debate: An Intrapersonal View," *Speech Teacher* 20 (September 1971): 192-93.
16. Compare attitudes as recorded by Pearce, "Attitudes Toward Forensics," and findings noted by Andersen, "A Critical Review of Behavioral Research in Argumentation and Forensics," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 8 (Spring 1972): 149-51.
17. Mark Arnold, "Heart of America Final Round-Text and Critiques," mimeographed (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 1974, p. 12).
18. Such activity is not limited to the publication of original research. It includes holding of office in professional associations; service on an editorial board or as an editor; articles of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation; critiques; book reviews; and convention presentations and demonstrations.



*PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION, STATUS, AND REWARDS*

**Relation to Speech Communication Academic Program**

B. WAYNE CALLAWAY (UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING): Facing reality, directors of forensics should reverse the trend toward isolation and independence from our own departments. Too long has forensics maintained an attitude of expecting financial support in a "hands-off operation." We have done little to build a position in the department for forensics; we have done little to expand course offerings; we have done little to integrate with the total communication field.

Directors of forensics spend far more time in gaining status for their programs from other directors than in establishing forensics in their own academic community. We are more motivated by perceptions of other directors than by college administrators. In the same way, we relate to the outside observer that which we feel is important and never include him in a complete understanding of the aspects of the forensics field.

JACK H. HOWE: I wish to take vigorous exception to one of the proposed solutions included by Keele and Andersen, although probably not supported by them. This was to the effect that a forensics area can "go it alone" and does not need to be part of a department of speech. The examples cited in support of this idea are themselves enough to disprove its worth. Several are based upon demonstrably incomplete or inaccurate information. If these are the examples that can be supplied, it seems evident that a forensics area vitally needs the contacts and support it can derive from association with a department of speech, and we are engaging in dangerous reverie if we contemplate an independent existence.

RONALD J. MATLON: We must obtain solid evidence demonstrating the value of forensics training to our students. We have affected the lives of thousands of our students in a rather dramatic and lasting way. We can cite observations from coaches and testimony from participants regarding the intellectual and social advantages of forensics activity. But that alone does not satisfy criteria for accountability and cost effectiveness. We need to develop defensible behavioral objectives for our students. Then we need hard proof that they are reaching those objectives through forensics participation.

**Preparation**

RONALD J. MATLON: *Some* forensics background is necessary before one becomes a director of forensics. Whether it be participation, a major in,

communication education, or extensive supervised judging ought to depend on the nature of the hiring institution and the demands of the job. But we should not press for certification. It is better, in my mind, to suggest minimal requirements for employment and maximum opportunities for continuing education programs.

JACK H. HOWE: An undergraduate major or minor or an advanced degree in "some aspect of the speech discipline" does not qualify a person for work in forensics. Countless students who graduate with majors in speech communication have had no contact whatsoever with the forensics area of their departments. Some of these, one shudders to say, eventually assume responsibility for the forensics work at whatever school employs them. One must sympathize with any teacher, whether in high school or college, who is pressured into forensics work. But there are cases where applicants aware of their shortcomings apply for a forensics position with every intention of doing as little as possible with forensics if they obtain the job. A major aspect of the problem of "unqualified" personnel in forensics is lack of knowledge or concern about what constitutes "qualified forensics personnel" on the part of school administrators. A minor or major or even a degree in speech does not necessarily provide proper training for forensics.

DONUS D. ROBERTS: The achievement of high standards for forensics directors should be a goal for all of us. But we should not categorically castigate the incompletely prepared coach. The question must always be asked, "Which is better, an imperfectly directed forensics program or no forensics program at all?" Academic preparation for numerous professions, forensics included, can be gained from the classroom of life as well as from the university. My experience on the high school level suggests that the unprepared forensics director either leaves shortly or becomes prepared in vital areas through individual efforts.

PAULA MILTON: When we assert that we "must be more eclectic" than our colleagues we plummet ourselves into vainglory. We can never come to a realistic, systematic statement of our needs if we persist in deceiving ourselves. You ask: "What other faculty member must be conversant with so many areas in order to tackle one specific teaching assignment?" Answer: the art history instructor, the social science instructor, the journalism adviser, the play director, and the 6th grade elementary schoolteacher, to name only a few.

B. WAYNE CALLAWAY: Classes in forensics that prepare future educators for their work are almost nonexistent. With the exception of undergraduate basic argumentation classes and an occasional methods course in directing forensics, the would-be director of forensics has few classroom opportunities for preparation. The established means of preparation has been to



"come up through the ranks," leaving academic qualifications at a minimum. Class offerings, particularly on the graduate level, need to be expanded. How can an area show growth without support and training available in graduate programs?

RONALD J. MATLON: Attempts must be made to discourage the increasing tendency to replace tenured and professorial rank forensics personnel with graduate students or nonfaculty personnel. The loss of experienced people may cause a loss in the educational quality of programs. Graduate students working with the program may have no one specifically assigned to evaluate their work; if they do not recognize or know how to solve a problem, they may continue to teach and administer in ignorance; there is no incentive to look on forensics as a profession. Leaders in speech communication often are heard to say that standards in academic debate have declined and that good people "wise up" and do not stay with forensics very long. These are usually the same individuals who hire constantly rotating directors of inexperience. We must figure out how to halt this trend toward nonprofessionalism.

JACK H. HOWE: Entrusting forensics programs to individuals who cannot command rank and seniority in their institution may well result in weakened forensics programs. Yet, work in forensics is essentially a young person's activity. The continual weekends spent attending tournaments are not appealing to a married person with a family, nor do the long trips by automobile, many of them undertaken at night, appeal to an older individual.

### Potential for Improvement

DONUS D. ROBERTS: Unlike colleges, the nationally recognized high school forensics programs are almost all broad-based, involving vast numbers of students. Perhaps the issue revolves around the intense NDT win-ethic on the college level. The forensics director can prepare 12 good debaters to win more easily than he or she can prepare 50 debaters who may not be all that good. The criticism of forensics would diminish if many forensics programs would broaden and involve more students. Debate is a major anchor of forensics, but it is too often treated as if it were the sum total of a forensics program. Forensics can discover meaningful dimension, for example, by expanding further into community service projects.

PAULA M. MILTON: What debate, debaters, and debating is and becomes is ultimately in the control of professional forensics personnel. We are the practitioners, the regulators, the commentators, the educators—the movers, the makers, the breakers. It is not the discipline of debate that is flounder-

ing, it is how we use, misuse, and abuse that discipline which has created our problems.

RONALD J. MATLON: If we secure qualified forensics personnel, insure fair criteria for rewarding these individuals, encourage them and assist them in guaranteeing academic respectability for forensics as an activity, and decide how we might provide the structure and services within our professional organizations to help our own people, then we will have made great strides in the advancement of forensics education.

### Evaluation and Reward

RONALD J. MATLON: We must think of ourselves as academic professionals. Brooks Quimby once wrote:

I believe that directing of forensics should be, and can be, a profession. This presumes . . . some set of qualifications to be met before being admitted into the fraternity of the profession, an interest in maintaining standards and developing and sharing of the professional knowledge of the group, a willingness to subscribe to a code of ethics, and a sincere desire not only to make a living, but to accomplish some benefit to society. (*Speech Teacher*, January 1963, p. 41).

Individuals who stand up to Quimby's test of professionalism should be rewarded with merit pay, tenure, and promotions. The major criterion for rewarding these professionals should be teaching effectiveness. We should develop tests by which to measure effective teaching, and they ought to be used in making decisions regarding rewards for forensics faculty. If research and service are to be used as additional criteria, then the faculty member ought to know this in advance.

JACK H. HOWE: I wish to underscore the deleterious effect of applying to ourselves and each other the term *coach* rather than *director of forensics*. The word *coach* and the analogy to athletics conjure a mental image that equates success with winning. Hopefully, all of us in forensics feel there is more to our successful teaching than winning a tournament or having a "championship season."

B. WAYNE CALLAWAY: The area of status is directly related to that of rewards. A careful examination of the sought-after rewards of the director may give a new insight on the present status of our programs. Too frequently, the rewards of forensics have been based on a different standard of values from those of related academic fields. Since rewards have a different base, it is only natural that status may be perceived in a different light. Perhaps this conference will closely examine the values that have served forensics in the past, and suggest a different means of measurement in the future.

M. JACK PARKER: A number of writers propose that professionals in the field



be viewed as teachers and scholars in argumentation, in the broadest sense. And yet, that is not necessarily the way others see us. While these authors make no explicit reference to a perceptual discrepancy, they do recognize it indirectly by offering exciting and comprehensive suggestions for greatly expanding the role of forensics, including an enlarged and strengthened curriculum within speech communication, the extension of forensics training into fields of history, government, management, and prelaw education, and more sophisticated research in theory and pedagogy.

At the same time, however, the competitive program is endorsed as being "central to the goals we have described." Herein lies the crux of the perceptual problem. In the past, we have attempted to achieve the educational goals of forensics almost exclusively through what is commonly called an extracurricular activity. It is not surprising then that others, and perhaps we ourselves, see directors of forensics primarily "as administrators of activity programs," contrary to what the proponents would wish.

## V

---

## PROSPECT



## PROSPECT

Forensics activity long has been part of the academic tradition in the United States. In colonial America debating societies, organized by and for students, became a principal setting for the competition of ideas and the development of skills in argument. With the introduction of a broader curriculum, elective subjects for students, and a more diverse undergraduate population, the societies gave way to new structures and forms for forensics experience. Speech departments themselves were stimulated by students' interest in expanding their education in forensics. A remarkable share of the speech communication leadership has been drawn from the field of argumentation and forensics.

The National Developmental Conference on Forensics was convened to decide on ways to enrich and extend the forensics tradition. Agreement was reached that the distinguishing educational substance of *forensics* is its focus on argumentative perspective in examining problems and communicating with people. *Argumentation* was defined as *the study of reason giving by people as justification for acts, beliefs, attitudes, and values*. Forensics activities were viewed as laboratory experiences for helping students to understand and communicate various forms of argument more effectively in a variety of context with a variety of audiences.

Forensics education, in the conference's view, is education in the comparative communication of arguments. Academic alliance with the field of speech communication is logical and mutually beneficial. Forensics education is not just for the academically talented, but may be pursued profitably by students of varying abilities. Moreover, an argumentative perspective is appropriate to a wide range of issues, activities, and programs, both within and outside the school. It is useful wherever people are examining the bases of reliable belief or justifiable action. Argumentation provides a means by which new ideas may be brought into confrontation with the old, and both may be tested on their merits.

Forensics education integrates subject matter from a number of academic fields, including speech communication, and possesses a generative capacity in that its skills and concepts can be applied to other subjects and fields. Analysis, research, communication, and criticism are universal tools, tested and sharpened in the forensics laboratory. A good program in argumentation and forensics meets a standard by which John W. Gardner would judge the effectiveness of all education:



If we indoctrinate the young person in an elaborate set of fixed beliefs, we are ensuring his early obsolescence. The alternative is to develop skills, attitudes, habits of mind, and the kinds of knowledge and understanding that will be the instruments of continuous change and growth on the part of the young person.

A concept of forensics as communication greatly expands the prospect of forensics education. We can speculate about some of the potentials for development. One possibility would be to broaden argumentation by employing alternative forms for debate, focusing on policy issues of varying context and impact, and reaching diverse audiences. Students would be expected to learn what arguments and evidence are effective on what issues to what audiences. Audiences could be defined by social group (middle class, WASPS; blacks, chicanos), educational level, discipline (legal, scientific, journalistic, literary), or in other ways. Study of the interaction of argument and audience will inform us about the role of reason giving as decisions are made in the broader community.

Another possibility for widening the horizons of forensics education is to recognize situations other than those that obviously fall into the debate paradigm. Our students should be able to apply the forensics skills they are developing in the worlds of advertising, politics, voluntary associations, and academia, as well as in judicial and legislative debating situations. Forensics educators should help introduce the public to a debate model capable of testing arguments outside debate settings. Suppose people in general, like affirmative debaters, were taught to analyze their cases for change with the expectation that such proposals would be scrutinized carefully by their peers and would have to be defended. Suppose people, like negative debaters, were taught to search for objections to proposals for change. The object would be improvement in the quality of personal and social decision making. Only an outlook on forensics that transcends the rules and norms of intercollegiate competition can extend the province of forensics beyond the tournament.

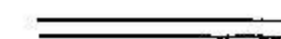
Potentials for applying an argumentative perspective to academic subject matter are limitless. We assume that the function of education is not to inculcate truth or to process information, but rather to facilitate the search for reliable knowledge. Through argument students and scholars can make more intelligent choices about alternative positions to take on controversies in any subject field, including speech communication. Seminars can be viewed as informal settings where philosophical, theoretical, and practical issues in a discipline are debated. Even term papers and examinations can be seen as opportunities for students to demonstrate their skills in arguing problematic matters. The educational uses of argument are most apparent when there is need to communicate comparative judgments about ideas and values.

The National Developmental Conference on Forensics sought to expand

the uses and therefore the prospect of forensics. The conference advanced a philosophy of forensics education addressed to the needs of students while they are students and also to the ways they can use argumentation knowledge and skills when they have graduated to the benefit of themselves and others. Forensics as communication is a concept of forensics appropriate to the needs of contemporary education and society.



# VI



## APPENDIX



NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTAL CONFERENCE ON FORENSICS  
TIMETABLE OF MAJOR EVENTS

- May 1971**—Western Forensic Conference issues call for a national developmental conference on forensics.
- December 1971**—American Forensic Association, Speech Communication Association, and forensics honorary organizations endorse concept of a national conference on forensics.
- Spring 1972**—The presidents of the American Forensic Association and the Speech Communication Association establish a joint planning committee.
- Fall 1972**—The planning committee holds its first meeting.
- December 1972**—Six background papers commissioned.
- Jan.-Feb. 1973**—Grant proposal prepared.
- November 1973**—Special Developmental Conference on Forensics program held at the convention of the Western Speech Communication Association.
- December 1973**—The National Developmental Conference on Forensics Year begins. Special kickoff program held at the national convention of the Speech Communication Association at which commissioned background papers are presented. A call for nominations of individuals to participate in the Task Force Assembly is issued.
- January 1974**—A \$17,600 supporting grant is received from the Axe-Houghton Foundation.
- February 1974**—Commissioned background papers are published in a special winter issue of the *Journal of the American Forensic Association*.
- April 1974**—Developmental Conference on Forensic programs is held at the conventions of the Southern Speech Communication Association, the Eastern Communication Association, and the Central States Speech Communication Association.
- May 1974**—Participants in the Task Force Assembly are announced.
- June 1974**—Position papers are due in the hands of the Project Director.
- July-August 1974**—Project Delphi questionnaires are circulated.



**August 1974**—Response papers are due in the hands of the Project Director.

**September 1-6, 1974**—National Task Force Assembly convenes at Sedalia Retreat House near Denver, Colorado.

**November**—A program at the Western Speech Communication Association Convention reports on the recommendations of the Task Force Assembly.

**December 1974**—The National Developmental Conference on Forensics Year ends. A program at the Speech Communication Association Convention reports on the recommendations of the Task Force Assembly.

**April 1975**—Programs at the conventions of the Southern Speech Association, Central States Speech Communication Association, and the Eastern Communication Association discuss the recommendations of the Task Force Assembly.

**July 1975**—Full report of the National Developmental Conference on Forensics is published.

## CRITERIA FOR SELECTING TASK FORCE ASSEMBLY PARTICIPANTS

The procedures for selecting participants for the Task Force Assembly involved three steps:

1. The receipt of a letter of nomination
2. The filing of a professional vita
3. The screening of nominees by the Planning Committee.

In screening nominees, the committee sought to arrive at a total group of participants who would be both outstanding and representative of the diversity of interests within the forensics community. The committee's selections were based on the following criteria:

- A. All participants in the final task force assembly must be persons who are active in the coaching, teaching, or scholarship of argumentation, debate, and forensics and who are in a position to influence the development of forensics education. In other words, all participants must be professionally committed to forensics.
- B. As a group:
  1. Participants should represent all major levels of forensics education.
  2. Participants should represent a variety of forensics orientations.
  3. Participants should represent a variety of geographical areas and degree-granting institutions.

## TASK FORCE PARTICIPANTS

Kenneth E. Andersen, Professor and Director of Graduate Study in Speech Communication, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois 61801

John Baird, Professor of Speech and Director of Forensics, California State University, Hayward, California 94542 (President, Pi Kappa Delta)\*

Samuel L. Becker,<sup>1</sup> Professor and Chairman of Speech Communication, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52240 (President, Speech Communication Association)\*

Bernard Brock, Professor of Speech Communication, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan 48202

Wayne Brockriede, Professor of Communication, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado 80302

B. Wayne Callaway, Assistant Professor of Speech Communication and Director of Forensics, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming 82070

Stephen Collins,<sup>2</sup> Instructor of Speech and Director of Forensics, Modesto Junior



- College, Modesto, California 95350 (Vice-President, Association, Phi Rho Pi)\*
- J. Robert Cox, Jr., Assistant Professor of English (Speech Division) and Director of Forensics, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514
- Nicholas M. Cripe, Professor and Head of Speech and Director of Forensics, Butler University, Indianapolis, Indiana 46205 (President, Delta Sigma Rho-Tau Kappa Alpha)\*
- John C. DeBross, Instructor in Speech Communication and Director of Forensics, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California 90007
- Donald G. Douglas, Assistant Professor of Speech and Director, Program of Forensic Studies, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington 98105
- Austin J. Freeley, Professor of Speech Communication and Director of Forensics, John Carroll University, Cleveland, Ohio 44118
- John B. Greg, Assistant Professor of Speech Communication and Associate Director of Forensics, St. John's University, Jamaica, New York 11439
- Halbert E. Gulley, Professor and Chairman of Speech Communication, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois 60115 (President, Association of Departments and Administrators in Speech Communication)\*
- Annabel Dunham Hagood, Professor of Speech and Director of Forensics, University of Alabama, University, Alabama 35486
- James F. Hawker, Debate and Speech Director, Jefferson High School, Lafayette, Indiana 47905 (President, National Forensic League)
- Jack H. Howe, Professor of Speech Communication and Director of Forensics, California State University, Long Beach, California 90801
- Roger Hufford, Professor of Speech Communication and Director of Forensics, Clarion State College, Clarion, Pennsylvania 16214
- Lucy M. Keele, Associate Professor of Speech Communication and Director of Forensics, California State University, Fullerton, California 92634
- Ronald J. Matlon, Associate Professor of Communication Studies and Director of Forensics, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts 01002
- Paula M. Milton, Associate Professor of Speech and Drama and Director of Interpretive Reading, Miami-Dade Community College (North Campus), Miami, Florida 33167
- Scott Nobles, Professor of Speech and Director of Forensics, Macalester College, St. Paul, Minnesota 55105 (President, American Forensic Association)\*
- M. Jack Parker, Associate Professor of Speech Communication and Director of Forensics, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois 60115
- Donn W. Parson, Professor and Head of Speech Communication and Human Relations and Director of Forensics, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas 66044
- J. W. Patterson, Associate Professor of Speech and Director of Forensics, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky 40506
- Lee R. Polk, Associate Professor of Oral Communication and Director of Forensics, Baylor University, Waco, Texas 76710
- William M. Reynolds, Professor of Speech Communication and Director of Forensics, George Washington University, Washington, D.C. 20052

- Richard Rieke, Professor and Chairman of Communication, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah 84112
- Stanley G. Rives, Professor of Speech and Dean of Undergraduate Instruction, Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois 61761
- Donus D. Roberts,<sup>4</sup> Chairman of the Language Arts Department and Director of Forensics, Watertown High School, Watertown, South Dakota 57201
- Malcolm O. Sillars, Dean of Humanities and Professor of Communication, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah 84112
- Brother Rene Sterner, Director of Forensics, Central Catholic High School, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213
- David A. Thomas, Assistant Professor of Speech Communication and Director of Forensics, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama 36830 /
- David Zarefsky, Assistant Professor of Communication Studies and Director of Forensics, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois 60201
- Raymond (Bud) Zeuschner, Assistant Professor of Speech Communication and Director of Forensics, California State University, Northridge, California 91324

\*Participant in miniconference of forensics leaders.

1. Professor Becker prepared an opening statement but was unable to participate due to illness. William Work represented the Speech Communication Association at the miniconference.
2. James Collie, President of Phi Rho Pi, was originally invited but withdrew in favor of Mr. Collins.
3. Professor Reynolds prepared a position statement but was unable to attend the Conference.
4. Mr. Roberts prepared a response paper but was unable to participate due to illness.



## CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Robert Boren, Professor and Chairman of Communication, Boise State University, Boise, Idaho 83725  
 Forrest Conklin, Professor of Speech and Director of Forensics, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613  
 Donald P. Cushman, Assistant Professor of Communication and Director of Forensics, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan 48824  
 James H. McBath, Professor and Chairman of Speech Communication and Chairman, Graduate Program in Communication, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California 90007  
 Frank Sferra, Chairman of Communication and Director of Forensics, J. K. Mullen Prep School, Denver, Colorado 80236  
 George W. Ziegelmüller, Professor of Speech Communication and Head, Area of Communication, Rhetoric, and Public Address, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan 48202 (Chairman)  
 Robert N. Hall, Associate Executive Secretary, Speech Communication Association, New York, New York 10001 (*ex officio*)

## INVITED OBSERVERS

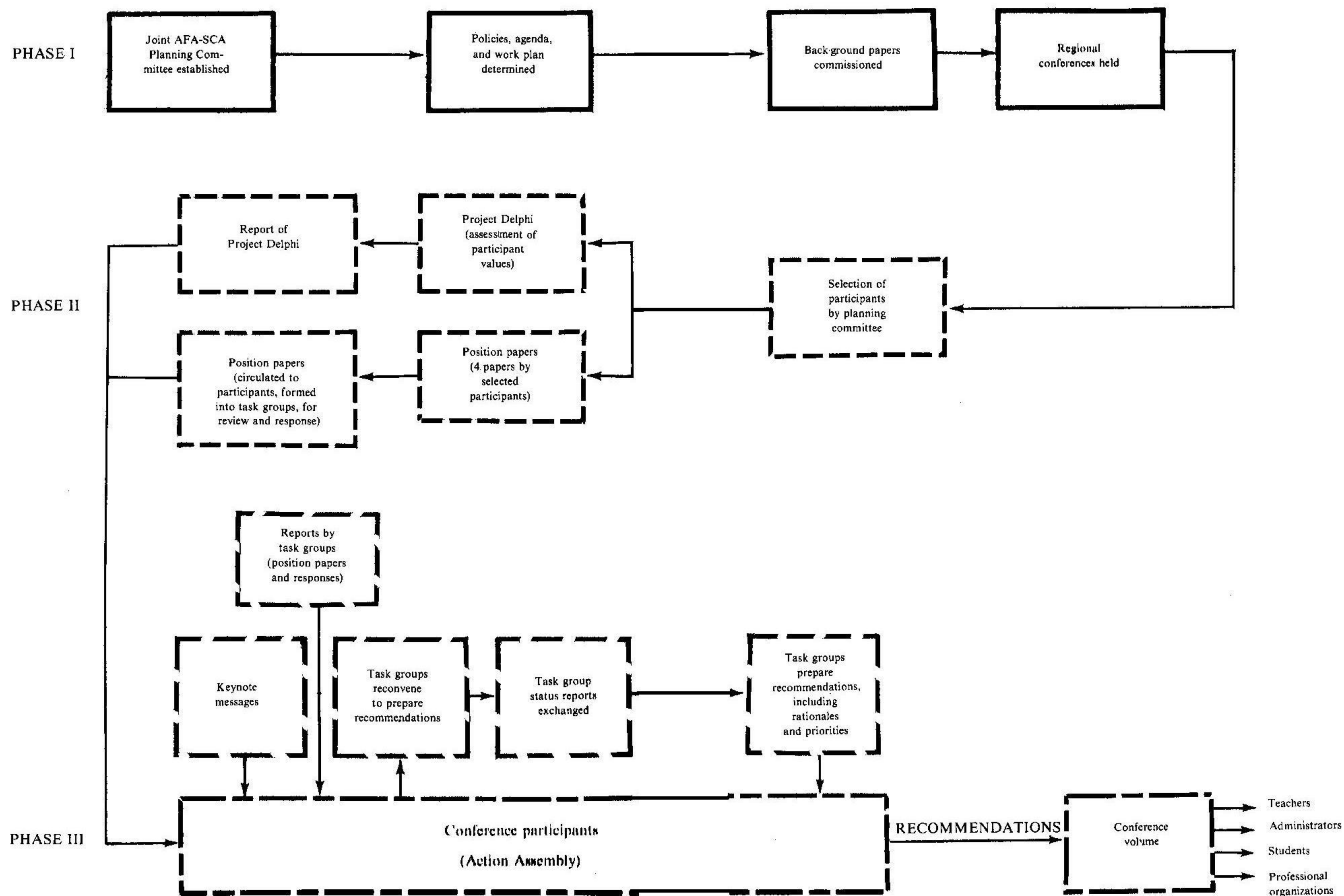
Richard Huseman, Project Director, Bicentennial Youth Debates, Washington, D.C. 20026  
 William Work, Executive Secretary, Speech Communication Association, New York, New York 10001

## SPECIAL RULES FOR THE ACTION ASSEMBLY

1. A steering committee composed of the chairman of the planning committee, a parliamentarian, the editor, and chairmen of each of the task groups will supervise the procedures of the Task Force Assembly.
2. Each task group must priority-rank its recommendations. The assembly will consider resolutions in the order ranked, alternating from one task report to another. If there are sequential resolutions that when approved should be considered as a package, the steering committee may approve deviating from the established procedure.
3. Resolutions submitted from the task groups will be considered before any resolution submitted by single individuals. All resolutions must be presented in written form.
4. The assembly will approve only the action recommendations. The supporting rationale is not a subject for assembly action. The editor will prepare a single rationale for all approved recommendations in which he will attempt to incorporate the spirit of the group's discussion as well as the original rationale of the task groups.
5. If the need for extensive rewriting of a resolution occurs, action on that resolution may be deferred until a subcommittee has redrawn the original resolution.
6. The steering committee may establish rules to limit debate commensurate with the number of resolutions to be considered.
7. Once an individual has spoken on a given issue, the chairman will not recognize that individual again until all others have been given an opportunity to speak on that issue.
8. A majority vote will be sufficient to pass a resolution in the Action Assembly. The final report will, however, reflect a general sense of the degree of support for each recommendation.
9. The chairman of the assembly will not cast a deciding vote. In the event of tie votes, the resolution will be reported in the final report, but will not be listed as a recommendation of the conference.
10. *Robert's Rules of Order*, Newly Revised, will be the final parliamentary authority for the assembly.



NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTAL CONFERENCE ON FORENSICS  
Sedalia, Colorado September 1—6, 1974





## SUMMARY OF LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE DISCUSSIONS

The Leadership Conference members consisted of presidents, or their representatives, from six forensic-related organizations. They were John Baird, Pi Kappa Delta; Steve Collins, Phi Rho Pi; Nicholas Cripe, Delta Sigma Rho-Tau Kappa Alpha; Halbert Gulley, Association of Departments and Administrators of Speech Communication; Scott Nobles, American Forensic Association; and William Work, Speech Communication Association. Our agenda was divided into three areas: improving communications relations between and among the organizations represented, improving relationships and status within the academic community, and discovering methods for promoting and implementing the work of the Developmental Conference.

Under organizational relationships the following topics were discussed:

SCA and the forensic community  
AFA and the forensic honoraries  
AFA and the SCA Forensic Division  
AFA and the National Forensic Association.

Under relationships and status within the academic community we discussed:

Improving relationships with speech communication departments  
Need for more extensive graduate courses for forensics specialists  
Need for study of standards of preparation for secondary school directors of forensics  
Need for several "ideal models" for forensics programs.

Under methods for promoting constructive followup to the National Developmental Conference we discussed:

Means for achieving wide dissemination of all reports of the conference  
Discussion and possible endorsement of all conference recommendations by our respective organizations.

Early in our progress through our tentative agenda, the following additional topics were suggested and later discussed:

Revisions in procedures of the debate proposition selection committee  
Need for indexing all forensic journals  
Organizational participation in planning and executing the Bicentennial Youth Debates.

Our group approved the following actions:

1. Requested that Halbert Gulley carry to ADASC our recommendation that more graduate courses be made available to forensics specialists.
2. Agreed to ask the Task Force on Professional Preparation, Status, and Rewards to recommend that model forensics programs be prepared and made available to speech communication departments.
3. Recommended to officers of SCA, AFA, and SCA Forensic Division that they consult together about ways to relieve ambiguity and to prevent overlap between AFA and SCA-FD.
4. Request of Sam Becker, SCA president, that he arrange a coordinating meeting for the presidents, or their representatives, of all national forensics organizations at the 1974 Annual Convention. This meeting might become an annual event.

Unless anticipated resolutions fail to come from the task groups, our committee will present only one resolution to this conference:

This conference recommends to the organizations appointing members to the SCA committee which selects intercollegiate debate topics that this committee be instructed to include with each of the topics submitted for final vote a brief statement of the substantive parameters of that topic.

This group of organizational leaders commends the planning committee of this conference for its efforts in arranging our one-day meeting. We believe improved communication, rapport, and cooperation between and among forensics organizations has occurred and that they will continue to improve as a result of this beginning.