

these forensic professionals 1) survived the "six year burnout" to defy the statistic advanced by Gill (1990) as the typical life-span for a DOF; 2) have long-term commitments to their continued professional education through competitive experience in a variety of styles and formats; and 3) continue to educate themselves and the forensic community through productive programs of forensic research, presentation and publication.

Second, even if someone thinks they cannot do all things well, should they not at least try? If some give up and compartmentalize their programs does that not make them all the more vulnerable to external critics who argue that they are educating within a very narrow band of experience? If forensic coaches, pursue only individual events, would it not be easier for colleagues who may already see the forensics budget as a waste of resources to suggest that a good Oral Interpretation class would efficiently replace an I.E. program and serve more students in the long run? Following that line of analysis, would an argumentation & debate class not efficiently replace a couple of CEDA teams serving more students for a lot less money? When our programs are compartmentalized and "compassionately specialized" it lessens what makes the activity independent and unique in its educational service when compared to individual classes within communication departments. In a climate of dwindling resources, with things more likely to get worse before they get better, can programs really afford to become more specialized and serve fewer students and educational outcomes in the bargain?

Conclusion

Several conclusions regarding the debate over the necessity of traditional research in intercollegiate competitive forensics can be reached. To begin with, research skills are absolutely critical to the "real world," post-graduation survival of students. As the new millenium dawns, the role of information and the ability to find, organize, assimilate and control its dissemination will increasingly translate into basic survival and future success. Students should not be allowed to lose sight of the need to develop their ability to successfully adapt their persuasive messages to a variety of audiences, and to communicate those messages in an effective manner. Students are best equipped through broad-based, foundational educational experiences that are then sharpened through the process of "specialization." Both areas are critical for effective higher-level thinking and the expression of ideas.

As a result, the forensic community should do more to promote "full service" programs that are sensitive to the various educational levels and needs of a variety of students. Every effort should be made to discourage the xenophobic, myopic defensive rhetoric of the content over form OR form over content advocates. The further fragmentation and compartmentalization of the forensic community will only serve to weaken the profession and academic positions.

The overall decline of the professional status of the Director of Forensics position should serve as a wake-up call for the forensics community. If forensic educators hope to successfully defend the profession, status and field, they must increase their overall commitment to a more rigorous program of research and publication. The role models that contemporary forensic professionals provide for the forensic directors of the future is absolutely critical to a positive result. The need for professional forensics research and publication is absolutely critical to the next generation of forensic professionals.

What can be done to effectively empower program directors to address these conclusions? This author advances five recommendations.

First, a commitment to pedagogy needs to restore a balance within the forensics community that has allowed the focus to tip the scales towards judging the effectiveness of what the DOF does through programs' relative competitive success. This dialectic tension has been with forensics from the beginning; it is an integral part of what we do. It cannot be allowed it to consume another generation of students. Present DOFs' examples are often the best teachers for the next generation of program directors. Is learning rewarded as much as winning is rewarded? If the forensic community continues to allow others to view the profession as a skill for hire, then it can expect no other result than to witness the virtual eradication of the status of DOFs as full-fledged, vested partners within departments of communication.

Second, Pi Kappa Delta should establish a mentorship program for new members of the coaching profession. Too often, new directors are left without access to the kind of wisdom that only seems to come through years of experience. A pool of volunteer mentors could be established and maintained by the PKD National Office and matched with new members of the coaching community with similar research interests, backgrounds and educational experiences. Joint grant and collaborative research opportunities could be encouraged and established. Mentors could share everything from classroom teaching notes to individual coaching styles to insights and advice on how to increase funding, or share ways to work with potentially difficult colleagues, as well as how to balance the demands and pressures of family life combined with forensics. Knowing that it can be done is often half the battle; knowing how to do it is the invaluable piece of a complicated puzzle that a mentor could provide.

Third, develop forensics programs that are based on the "generalization" to "specialization" model. Rather than succumbing to the urge to select one type or format of debate or individual events, keep your program's focus on gradual skill building. Begin with the basics. First year competitors could focus on their ability to think critically, respond logically, argue persuasively, develop a broad base of information, as well as the development of good work habits and ethics. These skills are best taught through training and participation in non-research intensive debate formats, such as, public and parliamentary

and through extemporaneous, persuasive, informative, and impromptu speaking. During their second year, we should focus on the development of research skills, organization, application, argument theory, hypothesis testing and information management could be emphasized. These skills are best taught through research intensive debate formats such as NDT, CEDA and NFA-LD. During the students' last two years with the team, they should be encouraged to pursue and further refine those skills that they find most potentially relevant for their futures. Slight modifications could be made to the model for transfer students or students who leave high school with forensics experience. Again, what are participants learning is a much more valid question than what are they winning.

Fourth, develop supportive intramural forensics programs that reach out to nontraditional participants and audiences campus-wide and within the local community. If professional colleagues could but see the benefits of the tremendously effective training forensic educators have already discovered through forensics activities, they would be more likely to understand and reward what their colleagues and students do. The vast majority of the time, our colleagues may read a few lines in the campus newspaper regarding a recent trophy or tournament victory, but they have no idea what that victory reflects other than a brief moment of highly subjective glory. Forensic educators must make forensics education "real." Reach out to other professors across campus and offer to teach short seminars on research skills, critical thinking, and argumentation and debate. Students from several disciplines could benefit from what forensics teaches students: political science, pre-law, nursing & health professions, philosophy, education, theatre, and sociology, to name a few. A strong intramural program will also assist programs in fund-raising and recruitment. Simply put: cast a wider net and more students and colleagues will be impacted.

Finally, forensic educators must accept responsibility for the choice they made of entering this profession. Very few program directors/coaches were "pressed into service"; there is not a forensics "draft." Presumably, DOFs all joined the ranks of forensics professionals for all of the right reasons. Nothing is more disheartening to the forensic community, or potentially threatening to the well-being of a program, than a program director who has nothing but negative things to say or excuses to make for their shortcomings within the wider profession of teacher/scholar. If a program director is "burned out," then it is time to retire from the active ranks. That program director can still serve a vital function for the active forensic community. Forensic professionals should not "punish" colleagues for redirecting their priorities. Colleagues, department chairs, deans, and presidents with former forensics experience are absolutely vital to the profession's health and well-being; and in many cases, rise to serve as mentors and cheerleaders for those who remain active. Perhaps, Pi Kappa Delta should continue to track coaching alumni, inviting them to stay engaged with the forensics community through the mentor-

ship program.

In conclusion, the link between research and the overall perception of what forensic educators do cannot be ignored. The forensics community must come together in support of a model of forensics education that values students' educations more than their competitive capital. The forensic community must discontinue the xenophobic practice of devaluing other formats of debate that are somewhat dissimilar in what or how they teach. The skills that are rebuked simply because of their mode or model of delivery are admonished at our students' peril. Finally, there is no justification for forensic educators allowing themselves to accept a "lesser role" or "status" within academic departments, colleges and universities because of their coaching duties. One can never strive to be just practitioners of the forensic arts, and yet expect to be treated as forensic professionals. Forensic educators should be evaluated by the same standards and satisfy those standards at the same level of quality expected of their colleagues. To do less, would be to be less.

REFERENCES:

- Bennett, William. (1972). "The Role of Debate in Speech Communication," *Speech Teacher*, 21, pp. 281-288.
- Brand, Jeffery d. (1997) "Strengthening the Position of the DOF." *The Southern Journal of Forensics*, 2:3, 262-266.
- Chaffee, John. (2000) *Thinking Critically*, Sixth Edition. Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Cirlin, Alan. (1997) "Public Debate: A format for Making Global Connections," Paper presented at the 7th International Forensics Association's Convention, London, England.
- Cirlin, Alan & Jack E. Rogers. (2000) "The International Public Debate Association: The Pedagogy and Practice of Education-Based Outcomes Within the U.S. Intercollegiate Competitive Forensics Education Arena," Paper presented at the 2000 International Debate Education Association's International Conference, Budapest, Hungary, October 6-8, 2000.
- Cronn-Mills, Daniel & Kristin Cronn-Mills. (1997). "Institutional Circuit Rider is the Future of the DOF." *The Southern Journal of Forensics*, 2:3, 248-250.
- Dudczak, Craig A. and David Zarefsky. (1984). "Promotion and Tenure Standards in Forensics: An Agenda For Deliberation," Chapter. IV: Promotion and Tenure Standards, in *American Forensics in Perspective: Papers from the Second National Conference on Forensics*. Donn Parson (Ed). Anandale, VA.:Speech Communication Association, pp. 23-35.
- Epstein, S. B. (1996). "What about research?: How to be Well Read," *Parliamentary Debate*, 4, pp. 3-13.
- Gill, M. (1990). "Why Forensic Coaches Quit: A Replication and Extension." *National Forensics Journal*, 8:2, 179-188.
- Goodnight, G. Thomas. (1984). Chapter X: A View From Administrators in *American Forensics in Perspective: Papers from the Second National Conference on Forensics*. Anandale, VA: Speech Communication Association, pp. 95-98.
- Jarman, Jeff. (2000). "The Importance of Research and Evidence in Teaching New Debaters," Paper presented at the International Debate Education Association's 2000 Conference, Central European University, Budapest, Hungary, October 6-8,

2000.

- Makino, Yukari. (2000). "Tradition and Transitions of Debate Education in the United States," *Proceedings of the 1st Tokyo Conference on Argumentation*, Tokyo: Japan Debate Association, 2000, pp. 113-118.
- McGee, Brian R. & Gregory Simerly (1997). "On Compassionate Specialization." *The Southern Journal of Forensics*, 1:4, 282-285.
- Panetta, Edward. (1990). "A rationale for developing a nationally competitive national debate tournament oriented program," *Argument and Advocacy*, 27, pp. 68-77.
- Parson, Donn (Ed.). (1984). *American Forensics in Perspective: Papers from the Second National Conference on Forensics*. Anandale, VA: Speech Communication Association.
- Rogers, Jack E. (1991). "What do they Have that I Haven't Got? Comparison Survey Data of the Resources and Support Systems of Top CEDA Programs and Directors," *CEDA Yearbook*, Volume 12, pp 95-105.
- Rogers, Jack E. (2001). "Public Debate: Educating Students to be Superior Advocates for Change within the Social Persuasion Movement," Paper presented at the 2001 International Debate Education Association's International Conference, Prague, Czech Republic, October 12-14, 2001.
- Vennette, Steven J. & Patricia Vennette. (1997). "Too Much of a Good Thing: The Director of Forensics and Wellness." *The Southern Journal of Forensics*, 2:3, 244-247.
- Ziegelmueller, G. (1990). "Policy Debate: A retrospective and prospective view," *Argument and Advocacy*, 27, pp 26-31.



Missing

Preserving History: Why and How to Write a History of Your Forensics Program

CLAY W. REDDING, BLINN COLLEGE AND JEFFREY DALE
HOBBS, PH. D. THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER

Abstract: *Pi Kappa Delta has a history of preserving its past and encouraging local chapters to do the same. A history of your forensics program is a way of gathering and presenting evidence to justify your program's existence by providing a narrative that features the benefits of participation in forensics to the school's students. It is important that evidence of success be recorded in writing for those who follow in the steps of those who went before them. Thus, written histories are a way of preserving the culture and philosophy of the team. A person with good research and communication skills, skills forensics teaches, should be able to write an excellent history.*

Pi Kappa Delta has a history of preserving its past and encouraging local chapters to do the same. Efforts to preserve the organization's history include having an Historian on the National Council, the Pi Kappa Delta Hall of Fame, and chapter history competitions at the National Tournament and Convention. The purpose of this essay is to provide a rationale for writing a local history of your forensics program and to provide a brief outline of how to write such a history.

A Rationale for Writing a History of Your Forensics Program

A forensic program, like all other aspects of the Academy, is constantly asked to justify its existence. Does forensics provide significant and unique benefits to the students of the college or university? Considering the budget constraints faced by many institutions of higher learning, do the benefits of a forensics program warrant the resources spent? These questions are fair and reasonable and every program needs to be prepared to justify the funds spent traveling to tournaments. A history of your forensics program is a way of both gathering and presenting evidence to justify your program's existence.

A history provides a narrative of the role of forensics at your college or university. A historical narrative documents the importance of a program to the school and to the students who have participated in

*CLAY W. REDDING is an Instructor of Communication at Blinn College, Brenham Texas; he is a graduate of Abilene Christian University's undergraduate and graduate programs, where he participated in forensics. Jeffrey Dale Hobbs is an Associate Professor of Communication and the Director of Forensics at The University of Texas at Tyler. Hobbs also served as the Director of Forensics at Abilene Christian University for 13 years.

debate and individual events at that school. Narratives are persuasive arguments that ask us to reason, value, and act in certain ways (Fisher xi). Fisher writes, "The narrative paradigm implies that human communication should be viewed as historical as well as situational, as stories or accounts competing with other stories or accounts purportedly constituted by good reasons, . . . and as inevitably moral inducements" (58). In other words, a chapter history becomes an "Aesop's fable" where the moral of the story is the wisdom of continuing to provide students the opportunity to compete on the school's speech and debate team.

A historical narrative can provide a story that features the benefits of participation in forensics to a school's students. The best way to demonstrate this point may be to provide examples of the type of information that can be gathered from former students. The examples shared here come from two histories of Abilene Christian University's Forensic team (See Beck and Redding).

First, when telling the stories of student success, it is helpful to demonstrate how this success fits in with the mission or purpose statement of the school. For example, the mission of Abilene Christian University is to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world. Beck writes:

The advantage of a progressive forensic program can best be measured in the manner in which the speech training is reflected in the attainments of former students. For example, Jack Pope, a former college debater and the first graduate of the speech department (at Abilene Christian College), is a successful and well known circuit court judge in San Antonio, Texas. (Jack Pope eventually became a member of the Texas Supreme Court). In addition, the following men, all former debaters and speech students, have achieved prominent positions in Christian education: Don H. Morris, President, W. R. Smith, Vice President, Walter H. Adams, Dean, Fred J. Barton, Dean of the Graduate School, Rex Kyker, Head, Department of Speech, and John C. Stevens, Assistant President (and, eventually, President), all of Abilene Christian College; Norvel Young, President of George Pepperdine College; Otis Gatewood, President of North Central Christian College; J. Harold Thomas, President of Northeastern Institute For Christian Education; Batsell Barret Baxter, Head of the Department of Bible, David Lipscomb College; Jack Bates, Dean of Lubbock Christian College; and Stafford North, Dean of Oklahoma Christian College. Speech education at Abilene Christian College has made a valuable contribution to Christian education. (153-154)

Second, making ample use of the testimony of former students helps to strengthen the psychological appeal of your historical narrative. For Campbell, testimonies serve as a type of example. She writes,

"An example is a case or an instance, real or hypothetical, detailed or undetailed, used to illustrate an idea or to prove that a particular kind of event has happened or could happen" (178). She continues by explaining that the: "... capacity to stimulate identification . . . makes examples . . . powerful pieces of evidence psychologically" (179). Former students of Abilene Christian University (ACU) provided the following testimonies in an effort to help preserve the history of the ACU forensic program.

Alan Isbell debated at ACU from 1955-1959. Isbell is senior partner in the Isbell and Brass law firm in Houston. He also is the Sunday morning pulpit minister at the Broadway Church of Christ in Galveston, Texas—a position he has held since 1977. Isbell says that debate "prepared me for both careers better than any other course or activity. I learned to organize thoughts, analyze thoughts, listen critically, and view every problem from different perspectives. The experience inspired confidence in public speaking" (A. Isbell, personal e-mail communication, June 14, 1999). Isbell shares the following memory from his days in debate:

Many of us had preaching assignments on Sunday morning and we would not return to campus until late Saturday. On the way back from the tournaments, we would share sermons while driving down the highway. Sometimes, one of the men would "preach" his sermon in the car. The next day, all four or six of us would be preaching the same sermon in some small church in West Texas. (A. Isbell, personal e-mail communication, June 14, 1999)

George Foster Takemoto debated at ACU from 1955 to 1958. Takemoto works as a management consultant and as a part-time interim associate pastor for education and family ministry at her church in Baton Rouge. She states that "my training in debate taught me how to do research, how to analyze an issue, and how to organize an argument. These are basic skills I use daily. My forensic skills helped me as a professor, as a consultant, and now as a pastor" (G. Takemoto, personal e-mail communication, June 28, 1999).

Hal Sanders debated at ACU from 1967 to 1971. Sanders says that "several University of Texas, University of Houston and Baylor debaters are lawyers that I still come into contact with after all these years" (H. Sanders, personal e-mail communication, June 10, 1999). Sanders said he participated in academic debate because "I enjoyed the competition and the challenge of matching wits with the best and brightest minds across the country, despite being from a small town in Texas and a small private college" (H. Sanders, personal e-mail communication, June 10, 1999). Currently, Hal Sanders is a partner in the law firm of Strasburger and Price, L.L.P. He says that debate helped him with his professional development because "debate taught me critical thinking which made graduate school and law school much easier. It taught me to organize massive amounts of information and to speak and think on my feet which has served me well as a trial

attorney. It also taught me to logically organize and express positions and to relate to a variety of people" (H. Sanders, personal e-mail communication, June 10, 1999).

Dena Davis Counts competed in interpretation events at ACU from 1986 to 1990. Counts is now a Human Resource and Training professional for Bexar Electric in San Antonio. Forensics has helped her in her career by molding "... my presentation skills. It gave me confidence and an air of approachability. I think forensics, out of anything in college, prepared me most for the work force" (D. Counts, personal e-mail communication, June 28, 1999).

Diane St. Clair Saari competed in interpretation events at ACU from 1989 to 1993. She reveals that she competed in forensics because "I knew that I wanted to be able to create or give presentations and training courses for a job. To do this successfully, I needed to be able to captivate audiences and have something to say of importance" (D. Saari,, personal e-mail communication, June 30, 1999). Saari, at the time of her interview, worked for Arthur Andersen in a position that involved developing and conducting training, preparing company communications, managing people and projects, and working with computer networks.

Lance Caughfield debated at ACU from 1991 to 1993. Caughfield is an associate attorney for Fletcher and Springer, L.L.P. in the Dallas area. He practices law in the areas of complex litigation and civil appeals. He says that "debate helped hone my critical thinking skills, my audience analysis, and my gift for arguing both sides of any question. I rely on the rhetorical skills that my debate experience developed on a daily basis" (L. Caughfield, personal e-mail communication, July 6, 1999).

Mandy Wilkins debated at ACU from 1995 to 1997. She has completed a degree in political communication at Emerson University and has been accepted into the law school at the University of Texas. She says that debate helped "... shape my interests in academia. The people that I met on the circuit and the research skills I learned through debate have sharpened my appreciation for academic work. The skills I acquired—i.e. the ability to think on my feet, work under pressure, and feel confident in presenting arguments to an audience—are priceless" (M. Wilkins, personal e-mail communication, July 6, 1999).

The above examples clearly illustrate the ability of team histories to document the value of forensics training to a school's students and the ability of a forensics team to help the school meet its mission statement. Students, directors, coaches, and administrators all change over time. It is important that evidence of success be recorded in writing for those who follow in the steps of those who went before them.

Written histories are also a way of helping preserve the culture and philosophy of the team. That is, histories can help in the enculturation process of new team members, new directors, new coaches, and

new administrators—showing them the way forensics should function at your school. Organizational stories serve as guidelines for organizational behavior. Boje states, “when a decision is at hand, the old stories are recounted and compared to unfolding story lines to keep the organization from repeating historically bad choices and to invite the repetition of past successes” (p. 106). Albert adds that stories provide “role models of desirable behavior by teaching employees about actual organizational events, managerial practices, and employee behaviors that directly support an organization’s philosophy and values” (p. 71). Since some of the benefits of writing a history of your forensics program have been examined, it is now time to explore methods of writing such a history.

A Methodology: How to Write a History of Your Forensics Program

Creating a written record of the history of your forensics program can be divided into two components—research and writing. It is helpful to view these tasks as matters to be done simultaneously. As research is conducted, the writing of the history can begin, which helps the project move along and prevents the researcher from forgetting critical information discovered during the research phase of the project. It is a wise choice to work from the beginning of the time period to be covered and proceed in chronological order in both the research and writing of the history. This allows the researcher to determine new developments or trends in the forensics program.

Dr. Fred M. Fling, former professor of European history at the University of Nebraska, summarizes an appropriate sequence of steps which guide the writing of a history. He states:

The first step taken by the historian in the attempt to reconstruct man’s [sic] unique social past is to bring together all the sources that can be discovered containing any information on the period under investigation. Once collected, the sources must be submitted to a rigorous criticism to determine the value of the affirmations in each tradition and the relation of the affirmations to each other. *For historical truth is established by the agreement of the affirmations of well-informed, independent witnesses.* After the facts have been established, they are grouped in logical and chronological order to form a complex whole, and a narrative, based on the outline and accompanied by notes in proof of the affirmations contained in the text, completes the work of the historian. In a word, the process is this: the historical event takes place and leaves its deposit of sources behind it; the historian collects the sources, criticizes them, compares the affirmations contained in the traditions, groups the facts and writes his [sic] narrative. (Italics in original) (25-26)

How a researcher works through the steps that Fling establishes for the historian is discussed in the remainder of this essay. Issues relat-