

and relationships. Three-quarters of respondents agreed that work in forensics detracts from time available for family members or other quality relationships. Nearly an equal proportion perceived that people important to them believe that forensic detracts from quality relationships with them. While some respondents expressed in writing that forensics had contributed to valuable relationships (even a few marriages), 1 in 5 reported that work in forensics had contributed to the end of a marriage or significant relationship. Because so many respondents wrote comments in this section, I have elected to quote several in order to characterize the feelings expressed by respondents:

I married an ex-debater; no sane person would tolerate the schedule demanded of us.

I have lost much, but I have been rewarded with national titles, good friends, and the respect from my colleagues.

I love my work, but it is stressful to mind, body and family. I don't know how long I can continue at my present pace.

I think that debate is fun, tournaments are fun, and I should work as hard to be a good judge as the students work to be good debaters. . . . It is an honor to be involved with a community that is so intelligent and well-reasoned.

I'm still single because of it—and two assistants are in varying stages of divorce.

I have two children and a committed wife who need me at home. I'm getting out within this time frame. Once NEDA gets healthy I'm packing it in.

My wife . . . realized early on that, as long as I was committed to this job, she was going to have to get involved. She got some academic and professional training and occasionally travels with the team to judge. She has been accepted (for the most part) by the forensics community and it has meant a great deal to each of us that we are "in this" together. Without it, we would have ended up like many of my divorced colleagues.

I have developed an ulcer in three years.

The problems addressed here are probably real but our own fault—not that of forensics. I would not travel to more than 8 tournaments a year—more gets one out of balance and places excessive demand on students.

Most of my closest friendships are a direct, positive result of my forensics involvement.

F7. My forensic work detracts from quality family/relationship time.

Strongly agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	strongly disagree
	4	55	34	21	8	9	10	NR = 7
	26%	30%	18%	11%	4%	5%	5%	Mean 2.7



F8. Important people in my life believe my forensic work detracts from quality family/relationship time.

Strongly agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	strongly disagree
	41	50	41	17	9	17	12	NR = 6
	22%	27%	22%	9%	5%	9%	6%	Mean 3.0

F9. Coaching forensics has contributed to the end of a marriage or significant relationship in my life.

Strongly agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	strongly disagree
	1	9	9	15	10	21	102	NR = 12
	8%	5%	5%	8%	6%	12%	57%	Mean 5.6

Community Connection. Because forensic educators are “on the road” for a significant portion of each academic year, there is potential for them to feel disconnected from their local community or unable to participate as fully as they might in community events. The concept of “connectedness” was explored in the next segment of the survey. About the same proportion of respondents (near 40%) agreed that forensics detracted from political activity or religious commitments as disagreed with that assertion. More perceived forensics detract from community obligations (51%) than did not perceive such constraint (33%). Respondents saw social or entertainment opportunities most affected by forensics; 65% agreed that forensics limited social life while 22% disagreed. The survey did not inquire directly about perceptions of connection to academic colleagues, but one comment suggested this as an item for further study: “I have to make choices—probably I am most disenfranchised from the academic community. This may be problematic if the people I do spend time with (other coaches) follow the trend and are less likely to be Ph.Ds and MA and are just ‘hired guns.’ I really miss the opportunities to socialize with other communication scholars because I travel.”

F10. My forensic work detracts from religious commitments or obligations which I value.

Strongly agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	strongly disagree
	22	32	22	24	6	18	57	NR = 12
	12%	18%	12%	13%	3%	10%	32%	Mean 4.3

F11. Forensics detracts from community connections or obligations which I value.

Strongly agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	strongly disagree
	25	36	36	31	10	16	35	NR = 4
	13%	19%	19%	16%	5%	9%	19%	Mean 3.8

F12. Forensics detracts from political activity or involvement which I value.

Strongly agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	strongly disagree
	19	23	34	34	12	19	45	NR = 7
	10%	12%	18%	18%	7%	10%	24%	Mean 4.3



F13. Forensics detracts from social or entertainment opportunities which I value.

Strongly agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	strongly disagree
	32	43	37	24	6	14	21	NR = 6
	17%	23%	25%	13%	3%	8%	11%	Mean 3.3

**Longevity in Forensics.** Despite responses to prior questions in this section which point to areas of potential dissatisfaction with the lifestyle of forensic education, 50% of those surveyed agreed with the assertion that forensics is a humane activity while only 31% disagreed. Still, 63% did not expect to be coaching forensics more than five years from now. That nearly two-thirds of respondents plan to leave the forensic activity by the end of the century is cause for concern.

F14. Forensics is a humane activity.

Strongly agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	strongly disagree
	27	23	39	35	30	14	11	NR = 14
	15%	13%	22%	20%	17%	8%	6%	Mean 3.6

F15. I expect to be coaching forensics—years from now:

0 yrs	1-3 yrs	4-6 yrs	7-10 yrs	11-14 yrs	15-19 yrs	20+ yrs	
10	50	57	26	18	5	20	NR = 7
5%	27%	31%	14%	10%	3%	11%	Mean 3.5

### Diversity Issues

Some respondents expressed concern that “diversity” was not defined in the section of the survey which asked about discrimination, inclusiveness of participation, and tolerance for a range of approaches to teaching, communication style, and argument. Certainly a fuller treatment of any one of these issues would benefit from specific definitions as well as analysis of responses within particular demographic groups. In broad terms, the survey responses provide a starting point for further work.

**Discrimination.** Fourteen survey respondents (8%) indicated that they were a member of an ethnic or racial minority. One-third of the respondents (63) were women. While the majority of respondents (53%) perceived racial discrimination to be an insignificant problems in forensics, 17% reported experiencing racial discrimination in the forensic community. More respondents (52%) perceived gender discrimination to be a problem and 32% reported having experienced gender discrimination in forensics. About two-thirds of respondents agreed that the forensic community could do more to attract a more diverse range of student participants, a more diverse array of educators, and a more diverse judging pool. Written comments suggested some concerns about age and sexuality biases, as well as lack of tolerance for conservative political and religious perspectives.



H1. How serious a problem is racial discrimination in intercollegiate forensics?

Not significant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	very serious
	31	42	24	21	45	17	6	NR = 7
	17%	23%	13%	11%	24%	9%	3%	Mean 3.4

H2. I have experienced racial discrimination in intercollegiate forensics.

Strongly agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	strongly disagree
	7	9	14	14	10	28	95	NR = 16
	4%	5%	8%	8%	6%	16%	54%	Mean 5.7

H3. How serious a problem is gender discrimination in intercollegiate forensics?

Not significant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	very serious
	26	25	20	19	47	35	14	NR = 7
	14%	13%	11%	10%	25%	19%	8%	Mean 4.1

H4. I have experienced gender discrimination in intercollegiate forensics.

Strongly agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	strongly disagree
	15	17	27	23	14	18	66	NR = 13
	8%	9%	15%	13%	8%	10%	37%	Mean 4.8

H5. How would you assess the forensic community's efforts to attract diverse student participants?

Doing too little	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	doing too much
	29	37	52	37	17	5	6	NR = 10
	16%	20%	28%	20%	9%	3%	3%	Mean 3.1

H6. How would you assess the forensic community's efforts to attract diverse educators coaches?

Doing too little	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	doing too much
	35	38	47	3	15	3	6	NR = 14
	20%	21%	26%	20%	8%	2%	3%	Mean 2.9

H7. How would you assess the forensic community's efforts to attract a diverse judging pool?

Doing too little	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	doing too much
	47	34	43	34	14	6	3	NR = 12
	26%	19%	24%	19%	8%	3%	2%	Mean 2.8

**Diversity of Perspectives.** When we discuss issues of tolerance and diversity it is important both to consider differences of culture, ethnicity, and gender and to assess acceptance among a community (whatever its constituents) of a variety of perspectives. One might assume that a community devoted to speech and argumentation would be particularly tolerant of difference. Indeed, more



forensics educators perceived themselves as able to employ a range of approaches to teaching. Still, about one-third saw diversity in teaching as discouraged. In terms of norms guiding the forensics events, 72% of respondents have found diversity in communication styles to be discouraged and 66% have found diversity of argument to be discouraged in forensics events.

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H8. Is diversity in teaching encouraged or discouraged in the forensic community?

Encouraged	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	discouraged
	7	12	29	61	34	14	12	NR = 24
	4%	7%	17%	36%	20%	8%	7%	Mean 4.1

H9. Is diversity in communication styles encouraged or discouraged in forensic events?

Encouraged	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	discouraged
	4	6	7	36	37	52	44	NR = 7
	2%	3%	4%	19%	20%	8%	7%	Mean 5.3

H10. Is diversity of argument encouraged or discouraged in forensic events?

Encouraged	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	discouraged
	6	7	18	33	38	46	37	NR = 8
	3%	4%	10%	18%	21%	25%	20%	Mean 5.0

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In writing about reasons for negative assessments, some fault the restriction of judging pools and some fault event practices which homogenize presentations. The range of comments include:

We barely tolerate diversity in judging philosophies and we structure activities to let students self-select their critics (strikes, judge ranks, etc). Is it any wonder that limited tolerance for political diversity and argumentative diversity follows and lack of participatory diversity is not far behind?

Innovation is almost always rewarded. The important thing to remember is that a good argument has several strong components—diversity should be considered a multi-layered arsenal of attack routes. Lots of different kinds of arguments are smarter in terms of time trade off and are better suited to a partner situation.

The questions in this segment of the survey would have been clearer and the results more useful if diversity would have been defined more clearly.

### Political Issues

This portion of the survey sought a snapshot of opinion on some of the controversial global assertions bandied about in the forensic community. The results charted below indicated that nearly a third of respondents agreed that college forensics is in crisis. Some written comments suggested, however, that the forensic activity has long been haven for “doom” and “gloom” and that participants should focus more attention on education of students than on complaints. Results showed that large numbers of those surveyed perceived



that college forensics is too factionalized and that most would like to see forensic educators play a larger role in charting the future of the activity. A majority (about 55%) reported perceiving the activity to be in a time of trouble or crisis. About the same proportion (45%) agreed that there is open discussion in intercollegiate forensics as disagreed with that assertion. Perceptions about a "generation gap" and the "national circuit" were mixed.

J1. College forensics is in crisis.

Strongly agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	strongly disagree
	22	34	49	32	25	17	10	NR = 4
	12%	18%	26%	17%	13%	9%	5%	Mean 3.5

J2. High school forensics is in crisis.

Strongly agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	strongly disagree
	17	20	29	59	11	16	12	NR = 1
	10%	12%	18%	36%	7%	10%	7%	Mean 3.8

J3. College forensics is in a time of healthy transition.

Strongly agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	strongly disagree
	4	8	23	50	47	28	23	NR = 10
	2%	4%	13%	27%	26%	15%	13%	Mean 4.7

J4. High school forensics is in a time of healthy transition.

Strongly agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	strongly disagree
	1	3	7	78	28	20	24	NR = 32
	1%	2%	4%	48%	17%	12%	15%	Mean 4.8

J5. There is an atmosphere of open dialogue and discussion in intercollegiate forensics.

Strongly agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	strongly disagree
	7	31	48	20	31	35	17	NR = 4
	4%	16%	25%	11%	16%	19%	9%	Mean 4.1

J6. The "generation gap" in forensic education

is								enhances the
harmful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	activity
to the	17	18	36	56	18	23	9	NR = 16
activity	10%	10%	20%	32%	10%	13%	6%	Mean 3.8

J7. College forensics is too factionalized.

Strongly agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	strongly disagree
	44	46	46	28	7	8	4	NR = 10
	24%	25%	25%	15%	4%	4%	2%	Mean 2.7



J8. The existence of a "national circuit" affects my program by

enhancing education	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	detracting from education
	15	28	16	49	16	32	31	NR = 6
	8%	15%	9%	26%	9%	17%	17%	Mean 4.3

J9. In the future of the activity, forensic educators should play a

larger role	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	lesser role
	46	65	27	40	2	0	3	NR = 10
	25%	36%	15%	22%	1%	0%	2%	Mean 2.4

### Morale

If forensic educators are to build on the strengths of the activity and overcome weaknesses, they must find the motivation within themselves for such work. The final section of the survey thus inquired about morale. Of course, this single snapshot reveals neither whether members of the forensic community are happier today than in the past, nor whether they are less satisfied in their work than other academics. The results do show a significant core of confidence among forensic educators.

Respect. Most forensic educators (93%) agreed that the students they coach and judge respect them. Sixty percent perceived their work to be appreciated by departmental colleagues, yet 33% agreed that the speech communication discipline views them as second-class citizens. Some written comments suggested that this is a problem of the discipline, not forensics. Among students, colleagues, disciplinary peers, and school administrators, respondents reported feeling least valued by college and university administrators. The most supportive comments in this section suggested that maintaining a central focus on education makes overcoming obstacles possible.

K1. In terms of perceptions within the communication profession generally, I feel my position as forensic educator makes me a "second class citizen".

Strongly agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	strongly disagree
	26	23	12	27	32	44	22	NR = 7
	14%	12%	7%	15%	17%	24%	12%	Mean 4.3

K2. The students I coach respect me.

Strongly agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	strongly disagree
	80	78	19	7	2	3	3	NR = 1
	42%	41%	10%	4%	1%	2%	2%	Mean 1.9

K3. The students I judge respect me.

Strongly agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	strongly disagree
	35	76	43	19	10	4	2	NR = 4
	19%	40%	23%	10%	5%	2%	1%	Mean 2.5



K4. My departmental colleagues appreciate the demands of directing a forensic program.

Strongly agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	strongly disagree
	38	41	39	17	23	15	19	NR = 1
	20%	21%	20%	9%	12%	8%	10%	Mean 3.3

K5. My administration appreciates the demands of directing a forensic program.

Strongly agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	strongly disagree
	23	31	37	21	23	35	22	NR = 1
	12%	16%	19%	11%	12%	18%	12%	Mean 4.0

**Morale.** While only 33% of respondents reported feeling low morale themselves, 53% agreed that morale of regional colleagues was somewhat to very low. 63% viewed morale of national colleagues to be somewhat to very low. College educators' perceptions of the status of high school forensics were more favorable than their perceptions of college forensics. About 40% perceived high school forensics to be in crisis, compared to about 50% who found the same condition for the college activity. Fewer respondents saw low morale among high school coaches than among college coaches.

K6. What is your perception of the morale of forensics educator, as a whole, at the college level?

High	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	low
	0	12	19	41	50	57	14	NR = 0
	0%	6%	10%	21%	26%	30%	7%	Mean 4.8

K7. What is your perception of the morale of forensic educators at the college level in your region?

High	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	low
	3	23	27	36	50	37	14	NR = 3
	2%	12%	14%	19%	26%	20%	7%	Mean 4.4

K8. What is your perception of the morale of forensic educators at the high school level in your state?

High	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	low
	4	10	19	50	24	30	18	NR = 38
	3%	7%	12%	32%	16%	19%	12%	Mean 4.6

K9. What is your own level of morale?

High	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	low
	18	46	39	24	29	18	18	NR = 1
	9%	24%	20%	13%	15%	9%	9%	Mean 3.7

## Conclusion

As noted in Part I of the report, this assessment of the professional climate of forensics education is a work in progress. Further analysis of the data would be useful, for example, to learn about the interaction of lifestyle and political



issues with morale and intent to leave the activity. This initial review of survey results, however, reveals areas for optimism and areas for continued work.

Optimism is warranted by the results which show that forensic educators perceive themselves to be well-respected by the students they coach and judge, value their contributions to improving students' communication and critical thinking skills, and are motivated to give back to the forensic activity from which they benefited as students. Forensic educators are generally satisfied with the quality of student performance in forensic events and find good support for their work among departmental colleagues. While perceiving some weakness in morale among forensic colleagues nationally and regionally, more respondents reported their own morale to be high than low.

In addition to suggestions regarding professional development offered at the conclusion of Part I of this report, several observations about areas for improvement emerge from the survey data on the broader climate of forensic education. First, the survey results are consistent with those of Gill (1990), who reported that her study of the problem of coach retention showed time, travel, and training to be the most important correlates of job satisfaction. Improvements in the tournament model, whether those suggested by Littlefield and Sellnow (1992), Hunt (1993), or other revisions yet to be imagined, need to be implemented in order to improve the health and wellness of the profession.

A second suggestion is that the forensic activity needs to be more accepting of diversity—and I purposefully use that term in its very broadest sense. New coaches, new programs, and new students need to be able to access the activity and to bring new perspectives into its governance. More variety needs to be welcomed in teaching styles, in communication styles, and in argumentation, both for the intrinsic value of a diversity of experience and for the prospect of greater inclusiveness of a wider range of student participants (Bartanen, 1995). Perhaps, for example, fewer survey respondents perceived improvement in public speaking events over the past five years because there has been less change in those events; the momentum in support of experimental individual events seems to have waned in the face of strong norms for national success.

The survey results also demonstrate that there is room for improvement in the openness of dialogue and discussion among forensic educators about issues facing the activity and the profession. Energy directed to factions and competitive divisiveness could be directed toward greater support of colleagues, novice and experienced, and toward consideration of how the forensic activity can provide the best education for students. One element of that support is celebration of a diversity of models for what makes a 'good' program. Murphy (1992) gives us a picture of what a 'top 50' CEDA program looks like, while Derryberry (1991) shows us one example of a combined individual events and debate program and Engleberg (1993) gives us a glimpse of one community college program. Pi Kappa Delta chapter awards celebrate still other models. 'Good programs' are those which fulfill their missions and which match their aspirations to their resources. The survey results reported above suggest that the human resources—students, colleague support, personal wellness, respect and morale—need to be protected in equations of success.



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# INTRODUCING PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE IN THE ARGUMENTATION AND DEBATE COURSE

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The argumentation and debate course has been a mainstay in many communication departments across the country. While some departments have turned the focus of this course toward argumentation theory with emphasis on Chaim Perelman, Olbrechts-Tyteca, and Stephen Toulmin, others have tailored the course toward a study of the argumentativeness construct. However, the majority of these courses continue to teach the practice of argumentation with the use of in-class debates.

This essay will suggest the use of parliamentary debate as a complement to the more familiar cross-examination team debate format used in high school and college argumentation and debate courses. While the cross-examination