

pressures and occasional bewilderments of forensic participation allowed them to understand and even anticipate the problems their students encounter.

In addition to this rather traditional, teacher-oriented dimension, another objective of our forensic program is the construction of diverse formats for student involvement. To be successful as communicators, our students must be able to function in a multitude of situations. After graduation rarely will debaters face the NDT format for argument, and few orations or poetry interpretations will be delivered to audiences of six or seven people.

In the North Texas program debaters are encouraged to experiment in format and style. All debaters compete at both large and small, national and regional tournaments. Most have argued both the NDT policy and CEDA value topics. Since the courtroom is the most common forum for formal argumentation in society, many of our debaters have been involved in the mock trials we stage on campus. Consequently, the debaters have learned not only what skills are required by a particular situation, but also how to manifest those behaviors. To be competitively successful they have acquired the ability to adapt to the constraints of different audiences, evidentiary requirements, and rules of conduct.

The modern trend in competitive debate has been to de-emphasize oral advocacy and to stress public policy analysis. The issues are of primary importance, while the manner of presentation is often of little consequence. For some of our students this change has been ideal. These students are far more interested in developing their analytical abilities and their skills at research and rational decision-making than they are at improving their competence in public speaking. Unfortunately, academic debate does not facilitate useful practice at public policy analysis. Time limits restrain a complete investigation and comparison of all policy alternatives. The restricted need to demonstrate political feasibility moves debate away from a real world setting and often generates outlandish cases. To overcome these deficiencies we are now establishing links with both local legislators and a research group. Our aim is to transform the mountains of debate evidence into policy papers for the legislators. In this way the students can practice policy analysis in a realistic setting. Additionally, it is hoped that the debaters' intensive research efforts will last longer than next year's trash.

The debaters are not the only members of the forensic program whose participation reaches outside the tournament or festival format and the academic institution. Another member of the faculty, Dr. Ted Colson, has organized many of the students into a group known as the "Odeion." Named after the small, ancient Greek theatre where poets and musicians submitted their works for the approval of the public, the Odeion performs on campus at least once a month for the entertainment of students and faculty. Their 100-seat forum is always filled, with observers frequently sitting in the aisles. In addition to

providing an audience larger and more diverse than is usually found at festivals, the Odeion furnishes many students the chance to design and direct their own programs.

Campus audiences are not alone in enjoying the Odeion productions. Special performances are regularly scheduled for local groups. For example, a re-creation of important moments in Denton's past (a short program) was presented for the Denton Historical Society. Another reading was provided for the National Council of Teachers of English to demonstrate the teaching potential of the oral performance of literature. The success of the Odeion is dependent on adaptation to the different audiences.

It is the foundation of the North Texas forensic program that involvement in a wide variety of experiences is necessary for students to fully develop their oral and cognitive skills. Speech tournaments and festivals offer students an introduction to that education, and if that participation includes a broad spectrum of activities, then the learning experience can be generalized more readily to other communication situations. Supplementation with activity outside intercollegiate participation should add further to the forensic program's educational potential. That is our objective.

Marty Beasley
Louisiana Tech University

Spotlighted in the steady stares of top university administration and budget officials, the director of forensics awaits the question. Unfortunately, it's not a \$64,000 question — the forensic budget item is considerably less than that — but it is important nevertheless. "The Board of Trustees is picking at every little expenditure this year," the comptroller says. "How can we justify spending X amount on your program on educational grounds?"

At Louisiana Tech University, we have attempted to build a program that demonstrates our educational value and fully justifies the part of our very limited budget, which comes from the University, as well as the time, and effort we require from the participants. Most of us are already familiar with the potential educational benefits of forensic festivals and tournaments, although many other forensic directors and I are concerned that the potential value not be lessened by our toleration and even encouragement of poor communication, particularly in debate. Recent issues of *The Forensic* have dealt with this subject; I will discuss the educational values that come from non-competitive and non-classroom presentations.

Four years ago we founded a Student Speakers Bureau at Louisiana Tech. For years we had informally answered requests for programs for civic clubs on an "ad hoc" basis. Since forensic students were already partially prepared with presentations for competition, we used their work for civic club programs. We gave shortened debate demonstrations, panel discussions on the debate resolution and other topics,

and interpretation readings, orations, and after-dinner speeches developed to suit time limits and audience interests.

Forensic students began to comment on the benefits of learning to make adjustments or changes necessary for audiences composed of others than fellow students and contest competitors. They stressed the values of speaking before a "regular" audience in a "real" situation rather than to their fellow classmates. (I am sure they did not mean to imply that class members are irregular; we know what they meant.) We began to feel that our program should be more purposeful in designing programs for audiences of our area and in actually seeking experiences with these "regular" audiences for our students. Since the clubs who had invited us before seemed pleased with our programs, we felt that we would not be imposing. One of the organizations we spoke to had even passed a resolution thanking us for our efforts in the continuing education of community adults. We felt that we were justified in taking our potential educational value more seriously.

We designed a series of programs on controversial topics and programs for holidays and other special occasions. We offered a selection of formats, personnel, time limits, and age level presentations. The Student Speakers Bureau was officially designated an agency of the Forensic Program after we received approval from the speech department head to "carry on." We sent out brochures (really mimeographed letters) describing our program to area schools, churches, and civic and social organizations. Newspapers and radio stations in the area carried news stories about our program, and we were almost overwhelmed with requests. Word spread beyond the local community, and we began to travel as much as two hundred miles round trip for programs. We ask that groups that can help with our expenses do so; if they cannot, we pick up the tab. Sometimes we get donations above our expenses to put into the program. In the past three years our fifteen to twenty forensic students who serve as Speakers Bureau personnel have performed in forty to fifty programs each year, used as two to six-person teams.

To enhance the educational benefits of our speaking experiences, we always orally evaluate our performance on the trip home or, if the trip is short, in a meeting after the performance. As director, I serve as introducer, moderator, or narrator, but always as observer. The students are also encouraged to monitor themselves and to talk with the audience after their performance, if possible. Often there is an informal refreshments period after our performance so that we can meet and interact with audience members. My introduction of programs always includes a reminder that the speakers are first of all students who should learn and grow with every performance. I ask the audience to help me evaluate the students orally or in written form, whichever is appropriate for the situation. We have written evaluation forms to use where appropriate. An additional public relations advantage, besides the usual advantages of stressing evaluation, is that often copies of the thank-yous that we receive go also to the department

head, dean, and University president, with positive evaluations of the program as educational.

To reflect our belief that this "lab" program is actually educational, we have arranged that our students may earn up to four hours of academic credit, one for each of four quarters. The credit hours and grades help emphasize to them the educational-academic nature of their work. Periodically I ask fellow speech faculty members to accompany us on trips and make an evaluation of the program to help me guard against becoming too subjective about "my own program."

In addition, our students also learn to enjoy serving the community through the Student Speakers Bureau. Besides our regular programs, we have recently expanded our service, responding to requests last year to write and tape radio announcements promoting anti-litter campaigns for the city. We did some clever dialogues (if we do, say so ourselves) that got good response. The announcements were later used in other communities in the state. We also made radio spots for the local Chamber of Commerce and for a "get out the vote" campaign. We made persuasive telephone calls for the Alumni Scholarship Fund at the request of the University, and collected thousands of dollars for the Fund. These satisfying experiences should help our students want to engage in service to their communities after graduation.

Participating students who critique the program each year identify the major educational benefits of our Student Speakers Bureau as these, listed in the order of importance to the students: analysis of widely varying audiences and learning appropriate adjustment of content and delivery based on the analysis; more effective monitoring of their own performances and adjustment to feedback during performance; ability to discuss content and delivery with audience members after the program and take positive and negative criticism well from audience members and the director; ability to speak in widely different settings with and without the aid of microphones; program organization skills; and ability to interact with other performers in a group. Of course there are the usual individual educational benefits as well, but those listed above grow out of the group experiences.

Educational benefits for our audiences are also many. We "double our pleasure" when teachers and librarians tell us that young students are demanding the stories from which we read excerpts, when the students want to perform also, and when comments from adult audiences read like these: "What an enjoyable way to learn about economics - it's not a 'dismal science' the way you give it"; ". . . your students really knew their subject, and helped us learn, too"; "we learned a lot from your program"; and "we were glad to have such entertaining and informative student-teachers."

As a student and teacher who has gained much from our Student Speakers Bureau work, I recommend such a program to other forensic directors for its educational value and for the satisfaction it can bring to us and our students.

Lawrence Woodard
Southeastern Louisiana University

My single most educational goal is to provide competitive forensic opportunities for those students enrolled at Southeastern Louisiana University who want them and are willing to work for that opportunity.

The second educational goal is to help those forensic competitors achieve a maximum in personal satisfaction.

A third educational goal is to contribute - within the limitations of time, budget, and administrative support - to the forensic excellence of those students from other schools who find competitive forensics fun.

I find these three goals are best achieved simultaneously. Indeed, they perpetuate each other.

First and foremost, forensics should be fun! In my many years (perhaps too many) of teaching forensics, I have preached to debaters and competitive individual events speakers this aphorism with conviction. Whatever metamorphosis may have taken place in my coaching philosophy as I have taught high school and collegiate competitors from California to Virginia, I still believe that forensics should first and foremost be fun. I usually add that it is more fun when you are winning. But first it should be fun. If it is fun only when you are winning, then this is sad indeed.

I welcome anyone to the forensic team who enjoys the activity. I never discourage anyone who likes the activity, even though I may not personally believe that person has much ability. I have had many people who loved forensics, stayed with it, and far surpassed my expectations of them. Therefore, I never tell anyone who loves forensics that I, their coach, do not believe in them.

On the other hand, I constantly tell people who show potential how good they can become, if they find forensics fun and are willing to work at it.

In the beginning debate class we always spend our Oxford debate time debating the national topic. This makes it easier for the student who finds debate fun and suddenly wishes to compete in tournaments to do so. However, even with my top teams, I never exert anything but positive pressure upon a student to compete. I believe that this is of critical importance to whatever success I may have achieved in recruiting and holding the interest of students in forensics. No one is under any obligation to compete in a given tournament until the actual entry is mailed. They are not competing for me at my behest. They compete for themselves and I try to assist them to achieve their goals. Of course, I counsel them and give them the benefit of my experience, and we jointly (most often) select the goals. This is true for both the squad and individual members of that squad.

For example, last season I counseled the team of Barry Drufner and Phil Secord that they could probably qualify for NDT Districts, something that no team from Southeastern Louisiana had previously done. They committed themselves to work for that goal, and we achieved it. In 1969, I told my veteran squad at Excelsior High School in California that we could win the state championship if they really wanted to. We made this a goal, planned our season accordingly, and achieved it. But it is always something they want to do, for themselves, not for me, although sometimes we become friends and they want to achieve something for the coach, but it is their idea, not mine.

I encourage my teams to run true affirmative cases that are beyond reasonable topicality questions. I encourage them to run *prima facie* arguments. If we are beaten, let us be beaten because we have been out-analyzed or because of superior evidence. I try to judge the fine young men and women from other institutions accordingly.

I am not naive! Sometimes a team from my school does not run a true case, and frequently they do not have good evidence or true analysis, but that is not how I try to teach them to debate. Also, sometimes I, as a judge, give a team a win who is guilty of those errors of reason, topicality, and evidence I abhor, but this is usually done because the losing team has been even more guilty of those errors previously cited.

We always host from two to three tournaments a year, one for the high schools. We also host a debate clinic for high schools.

As for community service, we do not have a speakers' bureau *per se*, largely because apart from me there is no staff or even graduate assistants. But I believe in the concept, and opportunities for public, non-competitive debates, as well as for other types of noncompetitive speaking, do arise for me as well as for my students. We do those on the same voluntary basis on which we do our competitive speaking.

With unpretentious candor I can say that Pi Kappa Delta is an ally to our squad in all these efforts. In this Pi Kappa Delta is not unique, for the NFL was helpful to our high school squads, and DSR-TKA has been an ally to me on other campuses. Membership in a national fraternity has been a positive educational incentive for my students everywhere I have taught. Like everything else they do, they join Pi Kappa Delta because they want to, because they see its worth. Pi Kappa Delta is a vital ally in helping us progress towards all our educational goals simultaneously.

The Forensic of Pi Kappa Delta

LIBRARY RECOMMENDATION FORM

(copy and forward to your library acquisition officer)

Name _____

Department _____

Institution _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Please enter a subscription to **THE FORENSIC** at the subscriber rate of \$20 per year. Unless otherwise specified, your subscription is for a complete series which begins July 1st of each year. At the time of subscription, you will receive all previous issues that have been published during the subscription year.

Check one:

____ One Year \$20 ____ Two Years \$40 ____ Three Years \$60

On subscriptions outside of the United States, add \$15 per year for foreign postage.

Prices effective through June 30, 2002

Make checks or money orders payable to PI KAPPA DELTA NATIONAL

Order from your subscription agent or directly from:

Pi Kappa Delta National Headquarters

125 Watson Street, P.O. Box 38

Ripon, Wisconsin 54971

Other Pi Kappa Delta publications available through the National Headquarters

THE HISTORY OF PI KAPPA DELTA by Larry Norton

____ copies @ \$7.50/each

THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE 1998 DEVELOPMENTAL CONFERENCE

edited by Robert S. Littlefield - ____ copies @ \$5/each

THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE 1995 DEVELOPMENTAL CONFERENCE

edited by Scott Jensen - ____ copies @ \$5/each

Articles from past issues of THE FORENSIC are available upon request.