

# The Forensic

## *of Pi Kappa Delta*

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**Conversation Starter: Image Prepare, Preemptive Image Repair, and Inoculation Theory in the Preface to Winans' (1938) *Speech-making***

JOSH COMPTON, DARTMOUTH COLLEGE

**A Call to Heterogeneity: The Implications of Political Discussion for Academic Debate**

REBECCA BORDER SIETMAN, WHEATON COLLEGE

**Historical Perspectives: Debate and Democracy**  
*Introduction*

**Training for Democracy (Re-Print, Volume 27.2, 1942)**

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The Editor and Editorial Board invite scholarly discussion of making competitive individual events and debate powerful tools for teaching essential citizenship practices, including clear and ethical communication. Topics of particular interest to the Editor and Editorial Board include, but are not limited to: ways to increase diversity in forensics, argumentation and advocacy pedagogy, integrations of forensics and communication/performance theories and perspectives, and transfer as it relates to forensics (e.g., transfer among individual events, debate, and interpretation; transfer between competition and the classroom, and vice versa; transfer between forensics and careers).

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**THE FORENSIC OF PI KAPPA DELTA** (ISSN:0015-735X) is published twice yearly, Spring and Fall, by Pi Kappa Delta Fraternal Society. Subscription price is part of membership dues. For alumni and non-members the rate is \$20.00 for 1 year, \$40.00 for 2 years, and \$60.00 for 3 years. Second class postage is paid at West Saint Paul, MN. Postmaster and subscribers: Please send all address change requests to: PKD, 1670 South Robert Street, #370, West Saint Paul, MN 55118. **THE FORENSIC** is also available on 16 mm microfilm, 35 mm microfilm, or 100 mm microfilm from University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Rd, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.



# Editor's Note

This is the last issue of volume 105, dated for Fall 2020. As we all know, a pandemic changed the face of intercollegiate forensics in March of 2020, literally days before post-season tournaments were about to begin. Forensics was not the only aspect of society to be impacted by this pandemic, but it certainly shouldered a number of challenges. The coach-educators and forensic program administrators joined their teaching colleagues in learning new ways to teach, advise students, coach, and compete. One of the implications of the pandemic was the receipt of submissions for consideration by the reviewers of *The Forensic of Pi Kappa Delta*. As a result, our publication schedule has been stalled. Efforts to expedite the issues in volume 106 include a special issue featuring student scholarship (call printed in this issue). I encourage you to submit your scholarship, teaching and coaching resources, reviews, and reflections for consideration. Our community is blessed with tremendous educators, scholars, and coaches who are poised to move our understanding of the forensic activity forward with their contributions. Please consider sharing your work with the community through submissions to our journal. With our submissions and expedited reviews, we will return to our normal publication schedule. In the meantime, enjoy this issue.

Scott Jensen  
Editor







# Conversation Starter: Image Prepare, Preemptive Image Repair, and Inoculation Theory in the Preface to Winans' (1938) *Speech-making*

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JOSH COMPTON, DARTMOUTH COLLEGE

**Abstract:** *Image prepare is the idea that a rhetor can preemptively use conventional image repair strategies to protect image against future attacks. One place we might find image prepare strategies is in a book's preface, which usually introduces a book's arguments and establishes a book's tone. In this present analysis, the preface to James Winans' Speech-making—an influential early text on public speaking—is analyzed from the perspective of image repair, with special attention to image building strategies used at the start of the book. Implications for introductory strategies, in general, are considered—strategies that might be at play in public speeches and other forms of communication.*

**Keywords:** *image prepare; image repair; inoculation theory; public speaking; James A. Winans; introductions*

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Book prefaces serve many important functions, including the obvious—getting a book started. These early pages also set a tone for a work, outline a key theme or thesis, offer some early clarifications, set some parameters, establish credibility, and so on. Like an introduction to a public speech prepares the listener, the book preface prepares the reader. Indeed, a preface is more at home in a speech, with the name “preface” deriving from the Latin *prae-fari*: *prae*—“before,” *fari*—“speak” (“Preface,” 2009). It is doubly appropriate, then, to think of the preface to a book on public speaking as akin to a speech’s introduction.

Such is the case with James Winans’ *Speech-making* (1938), an influential public speaking text that unapologetically approached the study and practice of public speaking as an academic, intellectual endeavor—one built from, and best understood by, theory. In particular, Winans builds a philosophy and pedagogy of public speaking on the premise that public speaking is dialogue, urging speakers to approach public speaking as “an enlarged conversation” (Winans, 1938, p. 11), that

[t]he young speaker can do no better for [themselves] than to fix firmly in mind that *a speech is a dialogue* [emphasis in original] and to emphasize constantly the part of the audience, anticipating and watching for its response. (Winans, 1938, p. 14)

Winans’ preface to *Speech-making*, then, is a sort of *conversation starter* about public speaking, which is to mean it is a sort of conversation starter about conversation itself, or a meta-conversation.

It is also a unique example of credibility building—both for Winans himself and for the thesis of the book. This essay takes a closer look at the rhetorical moves Winans makes in the preface to *Speech-making*, to determine—among other discoveries—whether Winans’ preface hews close to the notion of a speech introduction in more than etymological ways. That is, does the preface have something to teach about prefacing in general? Are the rhetorical moves in his preface a model for image building in other contexts? Is a preface an opportunity for a unique approach to

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*image prepare*—the building of an image before challenges to that image, as a sort of preemptive strategy, or an inoculation of sort against future attacks (see Compton, 2013, 2017; and see Benoit, 2014, & McGuire, 1964)?

### Winans' (1938) *Speech-making*

James Albert Winans was a pioneer of the academic teaching and study of public speaking. He took the lead in founding the first academic speech organizations and inspiring annual public speaking conferences (Keith, 2008). As Compton noted, "[T]hanks in large part to Winans, public speaking has become an academic discipline based on solid research" (Albright, 2019, para. 3). Winans taught public speaking at Cornell University, Dartmouth College, and the University of Missouri (Wichelns, 1957).

Winans textbook, *Speech-making* (a version of his earlier work, *Public Speaking*) was an influential guide for conceptualizing and teaching public speaking as a rich, theoretically informed liberal art. It carries copyright dates of 1915, 1917, 1933, 1934, and 1938, reflecting its longevity. *Public Speaking*—the precursor to *Speech-making*—"rediscovered the communicative function of speech...mark[ing] the break with elocution in the American classroom" (Crocker, 1958, p. 23). Winans further explains: "This book cannot justly be called a revision of my *Public Speaking*. Very few paragraphs are completely unchanged, and a great part of the book is new writing" (p. vii). Nevertheless, as far as copyright lineage suggests, *Public Speaking* was an early iteration of *Speech-making*.

One of the features of *Speech-making* is its embrace of an academic and intellectual depth of public speaking—or, at least, the potential to approach the teaching, researching, and doing of public speaking with academic, intellectual depth. Winans makes the point:

I make no apology to those who may complain—not in just these words—that this book is addressed to their intelligence rather than being a book of rules of thumb which tell them just what to do under all circumstances. The only way that promises success in the long run is to become intelligent about speech-making... (Winans, 1938, p. 8)

We can contrast Winans' approach with a more performative, elocutionist approach to public speaking (see Crocker, 1958), and we see reflected in these ideas that public speaking should be considered a discipline in and of itself (see Keith, 2008).

Winans' *Speech-making*, then, was an important, popular, influential work at a time when public speaking was defining itself as an academic discipline. (Of course, even before this time, public speaking has deep roots as rhetoric, one of the original liberal arts.) But in this essay, we turn to a specific part of *Speech-making*—its preface. To do so, we will use a theoretical perspective: *image prepare*.

### Image Prepare

Image prepare (Compton, 2017) is a way to look at two classic functions of image (re) building: Benoit's (2014) image repair and McGuire's (1964) inoculation theory. Image repair theory—a five-strategy typology of denial, evading responsibility, reducing offensiveness, corrective action, and mortification—is usually applied retroactively to repair reputational damage (Benoit, 2014). Inoculation theory—an explanation for how resistance to persuasion can be conferred in much the same way resistance to viruses can be conferred: pre-exposure to a weakened version of the impending challenge—is usually applied proactively to protect against reputational damage (McGuire, 1964; but see Compton, 2020, for how inoculation can also be used retroactively, or therapeutically). Compton's (2017) reframing of image prepare proposes a merging of the two moments in image protection/repair calculus—a preemptive image repair, or *image prepare*. What rhetorical moves can a rhetor make before an image attack, or attacks, to help mitigate damage to a rhetor's perceived credibility? Image prepare suggests that the same approaches used retroactively in image repair might be successful when used proactively to inoculate against reputational threats. One opportunity for image prepare would be at the start of a book, or its preface. Here, an author could prepare the reader in a way that preempts potential criticisms—either criticisms that the readers raise themselves, or criticisms that appear in reviews of the book—formal or otherwise—or, for that matter—criticisms that appear anywhere, from any source. Next, we consider whether there is evidence of image prepare in the Preface to Winans' *Speech-making*.



### Analysis of Winans' Preface to *Speech-making*

The first two sentences of Winans' preface serve a seemingly perfunctory purpose: an assertion that *Speech-making* is a different book from his earlier work, *Public Speaking*. He notes that nearly every paragraph from *Public Speaking* has been changed, and new work has been added (Winans, 1938). But perhaps there is more at work here. Winans' early clarification might serve as a type of preemptive denial (see Benoit, 2014) against the charge that this book is nothing new, or, at most, a minimally updated text. One might also notice the differences in titles, from the more conventional *Public Speaking* to the less conventional *Speech-making*. This is, Winans tells his readers, from the very first line, that this is something new—in content and title. He seems to be making an argument that not only clarifies the book that is to follow, but also, establishes its novelty. Novelty is often considered an expectation in evaluating communication in general, and public speaking in particular—for better or for worse (Compton, 2004a).

The next paragraph of the preface telegraphs even more clearly that the book is *going to* reflect an unconventional tone for an academic text. Winans explains to the reader what his preface was going to do—before he changed his mind, or, more to the point, his mind was changed by “dog-day weather and a wishful look in the eye of my editor” (Winans, 1938, p. vii). He explains:

For several years I have been making notes for a preface in which I should explain why I have done this and not that, included this and excluded that, anticipate criticisms sure to be made, and generally ‘carry the war into the enemy’s country.’ (Winans, 1938, p. vii)

In other words, it appears that Winans was preparing an inoculation theory-based approach to his preface (although, to be clear, inoculation theory as a formal theory was not introduced until the early 1960s; McGuire, 1964). A foundation of inoculation theory is that future counterarguments (or criticisms, as might be the case) can be preempted via exposure to weakened versions of those future counterarguments—in much the same way a body can be prepared against exposure to future viruses by preexposure to weakened forms of those viruses (Compton, 2013; McGuire, 1964).

Winans' approach was more Aristotelian (Compton, 2005)—reflecting the ancient rhetorical strategy of “refuting or pulling [counterarguments] to pieces beforehand” (Aristotle, 1994 translation), or, as Winans (1938) put it—presumably quoting Daniel Webster (*Register of Debates in Congress*, 1830, p. 70)—“carry[ing] the war into the enemy’s country.” Then, citing the aforementioned “dog-day weather and a wishful look in the eye of my editor,” Winans summarizes his preface like this: “Here is the book; I have worked long and hard on it; it is the best I can do just now, and I hope you like it” (1938, p. vii). This closing sentiment is straightforward and economical, and at the same time, says a lot.

First, in this closing sentiment, the book is characterized as a gift or an offering—*here it is, for you, the reader*. Second, the claim that Winans had “worked long and hard on it” could serve a bolstering effect, which is a tactic of reducing offensiveness (see Benoit, 2014). “It is the best I can do just now” seemed paired with an implicit refutation of potential criticism that the book did not do enough; in this usage, it might be serving the rhetorical function of defeasibility—a tactic of claiming not to have the resources to do things differently (see Benoit, 2014). Finally, the simple ending—“I hope you like it”—projects goodwill and, we might suppose, further bolstering. It is possible, too, that readers found some humor in the straightforward succinctness of these phrases—or, at least, responded with positive affect. Scholars have speculated that humor plays a unique role in inoculation theory (Compton, 2018, 2019), with some empirical evidence for this proposition (e.g., Compton, 2004b). Scholars have also explored humor in image repair, noting its unique influences on image repair efforts (e.g., Compton & Miller, 2011). We might imagine, then, humor playing a role in image prepare, too, since image repair is a synthesis of the two theoretical constructs.

Winans then offers a disclaimer in the form of an aside. “I will permit myself just one comment,” he begins, then noting:

If you do not find in this book certain topics, such as the special forms of speeches, it is because I find that brief, dogmatic discussion and scanty illustration of after-dinner speeches, occasional addresses and the like are rather more likely to be misleading than helpful, and a textbook of reasonable size cannot be an encyclopedia. (Winans, 1938, p. vii)

Perhaps this is the most clear-cut instance of a conventional inoculation strategy. Recall that in a prototypical inoculation message—a message presented to an audience in advance of expected at-



tacks against their position—counterarguments are raised and refuted, forming a two-sided message that both models how to respond to future challenges, and also, a message that elicits threat, or the recognition that one's existing position (attitude, belief, etc.) might be challenged (Compton, 2013; McGuire, 1964). What Winans does here seems to reflect this very approach. He raises a counterargument—*this book does not cover all that it needs to*—and then refutes the counterargument or more to the point, he justifies his decision not to include all topics. If this section of the preface is functioning as an inoculation strategy, the reader is now: 1) alerted to the notion that criticism might arise while reading the book; 2) provided a model of how to respond to such criticisms; 3) informed of the author's choice to knowingly not include certain topics; 4) informed of the metric the author used to make these decisions, and 5) offered a more practical justification for the decision to not include certain topics. Such content could elicit threat—the recognition of future challenges, and the reader's potential vulnerability in the face of such challenges (Compton, 2013; McGuire, 1964). Readers are also provided a response they could use to refute the specific challenge, were it to arise. But inoculation messages do more than teach specific refutations to specific counterarguments. Research shows that inoculation messages also generate more thinking about the issue. Those inoculated continue to raise and refute additional challenges to an existing position (Compton, 2013; McGuire, 1964).

It is helpful to clarify here what the "existing position" would likely be for readers of *Speech-making*. We do not know, of course, all of the reasons readers might have for reading *Speech-making*, but we can make some good guesses. First, some readers of *Speech-making* likely selected the book to meet a need—to become better public speakers. We could assume, then, that their attitudes toward the book—at least at the beginning—were positive. The expectation would be: This book will meet a need. Second, some readers of *Speech-making* might have selected the book because they had read earlier works by Winans and wanted to read more. Here, too, we could assume that the attitude toward the book was positive. In both instances, and in others like this (e.g., being intrigued by the topic), it stands to reason that readers had a positive attitude toward the book and/or the author. If so, then in these situations, conditions are met for prophylactic inoculation—or preventative, preemption protection against future criticisms. That is, there is an existing state that can be protected—the liking of the book and/or the author.

But we could also imagine another type of reader. Some readers—like a student assigned Winans' *Speech-making*—might have been assigned the text. It is probably not as simple to deduce that someone assigned a book to read has the same positive affect toward a book as someone choosing to read a book—although some students, certainly, enjoy their assigned readings. Nevertheless, if we assume that such a reader might not have the requisite position in place (i.e., have a positive affinity toward the book or author), we might conclude that an inoculation-based message would no longer be apt since inoculation is usually considered a preemptive, or prophylactic treatment. Inoculation, however, is not restricted to this more common prophylactic usage. Indeed, advancement in medical inoculations toward therapeutic applications parallels advancements in persuasion inoculations. Such therapeutic medical vaccines are of great interest to scientists because they could both heal a body and protect it against future infection (see Nossal, 1999). Something similar might be at work with persuasion inoculation treatments, too (see Compton, 2020)—a treatment that can move a position (e.g., an attitude, a feeling, a belief) toward an advocated position and make that new position more resilient to change. Perhaps we would find something similar with the rhetorical moves found in this preface—the counterattitudinal content both makes an otherwise apathetic reader more interested in the book and also, makes that new interest even more robust. The logic of such an effect, I argue, checks out, and there is growing empirical evidence for such therapeutic inoculation effects, too (e.g., van der Linden et al., 2017).

Next, Winans mentions that he might write another book someday that focuses on special speaking situations. He then alerts readers to the Appendix, where they can find information on parliamentary procedure, and to a chapter written by another author, on voice. These sections seem to extend the two-sided message content that preceded it. That is, he points toward opportunities to access more specialized content, for those who want it.



Winans' final paragraph of his preface contains customary thank yous—expressing appreciation to several colleagues. He begins this portion with:

In the older book I tried to thank all to whom I felt indebted; but no one can give credit to all who have helped him. To all to whom I was indebted then I am indebted now. (Winans, 1938, p. viii)

One could read this as consistent with image prepare. If one were to notice a name missing (which could function as a criticism, or in inoculation theory terms, a counterargument) there is a prebuttal provided—that “no one can give credit to all who have helped him.” In image repair terms, we might classify this as defeasibility, or more to the point, preemptive defeasibility (Benoit, 2014).

Then, after listing a few colleagues who had “given me unusual assistance” (Winans, 1938, p. viii), Winans concludes the preface with:

To these men I am deeply grateful; but, I hasten to add, they are not to be held responsible for the faults of this book; for they were dealing with a somewhat stubborn author. (p. viii)

Here, Winans makes some notable rhetorical choices. First, he does not qualify the line “for the faults of this book” with something like “for any faults of this book.” Instead, he admits—or, pre-admits—that the book will have faults. I contend that this line contributes to both inoculation and preemptive image repair: A threat is raised (this book will have faults), and a prebuttal is raised (the faults are my own). In terms of content, the prebuttal is not directly addressing the criticism—there are faults—but instead, there is likely a bolstering effect (see Benoit, 2014) from admitting to personal responsibility for the faults that lie ahead. Indeed, while one strategy of image repair is evading responsibility, Winans directly accepts responsibility—preemptively. Second, Winans' final phrase—“they were dealing with a somewhat stubborn author”—is self-deprecating, and, as noted earlier, seems to be functioning as a third-party preemptive image repair for his colleagues, absolving them of blame.

### Conclusions

A simplified version of the argument at the heart of this analysis is this: There is a lot going on in the preface to Winans' *Speech-making*. The preface is doing more than getting the book started; it is getting the reader prepared. Perhaps we could say that about nearly any preface, or nearly any introduction. But some of the rhetorical moves Winans makes, I contend, are doing particularly notable work, with a focus toward image prepare—the preemptive use of image-building strategies against anticipated attacks.

It seems that Winans is making good rhetorical choices here. He is potentially inoculating against criticism for readers already positive toward the book, and he is potentially persuading and then inoculating against criticism for readers either negative or neutral toward the book. Although we are without empirical evidence for such effects of a book's preface on readers, we can turn to work in other contexts—including public relations efforts—that find inoculation to be a low-risk rhetorical strategy. Wigley and Pfau (2010), for example, found little evidence for the risk of a corporation using an inoculation strategy—raising and refuting potential challenges to their image—even when no such challenges arose. I think Winans' preface has something to teach us about prefacing in general—that there is value in giving great care to prefacing content, to set the tone, to overview main themes, and all of the other customary objectives, but also, to engage in image prepare—to preemptively use the image (re)building strategies to inoculate against criticisms that could disrupt consideration of one's key arguments.

I also think there is something particularly appropriate about the content and tone of Winans' preface launching a book on public speaking. As noted here, the preface meets the conventional goals of a preface—it outlines topics that will follow, it thanks some people who contributed to the book, and so on. But I also think his preface functions in many ways like a good speech introduction: it is attention-getting, it establishes credibility, it previews the main points, it makes connections with its listeners/readers (Harte, Keefe, & Derryberry, 1988) and, I am arguing here, it engages in *image prepare*: preemptively building perceptions of an image before challenges. The goal is not to make an author (or speaker, or any rhetor) immune from criticism, but instead, to create a more dialogic space for the reception of the message that follows—to create a framework of consideration. That is, image prepare prepares an audience to more carefully, more thoughtfully consider an image—even if the ultimate conclusions are not what the author (or speaker) has in mind. In these ways, a public



speaking book beginning with an introduction that would be fully at home in a public speech—and one that opens up space for dialogue, for an exchange of ideas—seems notably apt. Then, there is the *book* part of the public speaking book. That the medium for this message is a book matters because it allows freedom from the constraints of temporality—there is not a scarce amount of time to process the arguments, and so, there is time enough to give the material careful thought (see Compton, 2005).

None of these moves are probably much of a surprise to teachers and scholars of public speaking. Public speaking scholars have long explored the structure of speeches (e.g., Duke, 2015), teaching strategies of introduction (e.g., Beatty, 1988) and even using speech introductions as research stimuli (Perlich, 2018). And yet, I argue there is value in looking at familiar aspects of pedagogy from new perspectives, and particularly, from theoretical frameworks. In this case, approaching Winans' preface through the lens of image prepare—which itself is comprised of the lenses of inoculation theory and image repair—offers a richer understanding of the effects of such common introductory strategies.

Winans begins *Speech-making* as one might begin a conversation, which, as noted previously, is particularly apt for a preface to a book that builds on the fundamental premise that public speaking is like dialogue. Winans does not end his book, however, as one might expect a conversation to end. First, he gives the final chapter (Chapter 12: Voice and Speech) to another author (Charles Thomas of Cornell University). Second, he ends the penultimate chapter—the final chapter he authors—with a note about how to end a speech: “There should be some form of leave-taking, usually a bow at the end” (Winans, 1938, p. 451). Perhaps there is some irony that Winans does not seem to take his bow at the end of his book, nor any other conventional form of “leave-taking.” He just leaves. But if the rhetorical moves explored here were effective—if his (and his book's, and his arguments') image was well-prepared, perhaps he had already said enough.

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# A Call to Heterogeneity: The Implications of Political Discussion for Academic Debate

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**Abstract:** *Because the scholarship of political communication, with its emphasis on empirical studies, does not have significant overlap with forensic scholarship, which has a more rhetorical focus, this essay integrates these two areas by identifying specific implications from the political communication literature for the practice of academic debate. Drawing on literature from political communication—research regarding political discussion, learning, and network heterogeneity—this essay argues for a renewed focus within academic debate on practices that foster network heterogeneity, which includes but is not limited to diversity in gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and ideology. Implementing a renewed focus on network heterogeneity has implications for numerous micro and macro level aspects of the activity such as recruitment and retention, travel schedules, topic selection, discourse and judging within debate rounds, and mirroring forensics to non-forensic context political talk. The unique opportunities and challenges in a post COVID-19 era of debate are also considered.*

**Keywords:** *political discussion, debate, learning, network heterogeneity, diversity*

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Across various conceptualizations of political discussion and deliberation, a common theme is the role of argument and debate (Kim et al., 1999; Scheufele, 1999; Schudson, 1997). In fact, the political discussion that happens within the debate community, both within and outside of rounds, parallels what is often referred to as democratic talk because of its focus on problem-solving and its public nature (Schudson, 1997). However, the political communication literature, with its emphasis on empirical scholarship, does not have significant overlap with forensic scholarship, which understandably has a more rhetorical focus. More specifically, critical rhetorical scholarship and empirical political communication scholarship reach many similar conclusions (e.g., Allen, 2009; Danisch, 2011; Eveland & Appiah, 2019), but the two are not always in conversation within academic departments, conferences, and journals. Thus the purpose of this essay is to integrate these two areas by identifying specific implications of political communication scholarship for the practice of academic debate in an effort to challenge the forensic community to renew focus on and better apply the principles that we collectively affirm. While there are admittedly unique challenges inherent within a post COVID-19 context, the forensic community has an opportunity to lead by example in a national climate fraught with political divisions and racial injustice.

Numerous studies indicate that people learn from their political discussion with others (e.g., Bennett et al., 2000; Gastil & Dillard, 1999; Ryan, 2011; Scheufele, 2000, 2002; Thorson, 2014). Academic debate, as one context in which political discussion and deliberation occurs, has the potential to significantly increase the political sophistication of its participants. Relatedly, Zarefsky (2017) notes that he has never found a better means of achieving a civic education (defined as preparation for public life) than speech and debate. However, this outcome, according to the political com-

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munication literature, is largely dependent on the context of debate and the mix of people participating in debate. Heterogeneity is a term used to describe how people are distributed within a group and takes into consideration the number of groups within a particular community and how many people are members of each group (Blau, 1977). More specifically, network heterogeneity is used to describe the diversity of a person's discussion network in terms of exposure to diverse people with conflicting viewpoints (McLeod et al., 1999; Scheufele et al., 2004). While heterogeneity comes in many different forms along racial, cultural, religious, and geographical lines (Scheufele et al., 2004), what ultimately matters is that the heterogeneity of these social networks, regardless of the varying forms of diversity, results in a diversity of opinions that can be expressed during political discussions (Eveland & Shaw, 2003).

Research suggests that heterogeneous networks increase social awareness, helping citizens to become more knowledgeable about others' views and needs (MacKuen, 1990). Not only do people learn more about others' views in a heterogeneous network, but they are also challenged to re-evaluate their own views in light of the conflict between their own opinions and others' opinions (McPhee et al., 1963). In addition, heterogeneous networks, by their very nature, are more conducive to learning than homogeneous networks because it is more likely that new information will be available because of the diversity (Krassa, 1990). Indeed, research specifically examining political knowledge reveals that people in heterogeneous networks tend to learn more about politics than those in networks characterized by homophily (Krassa, 1990). In other words, network heterogeneity has a positive effect on political knowledge (Guidetti et al., 2016).

Since learning is an important pedagogical and participatory outcome of academic debate, national, regional, and local forensic organizations as well as teams and individuals should renew their focus on practices that foster network heterogeneity, which includes but is not limited to diversity in gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and ideology. While speech and debate are arguably one of the most diverse activities that students experience, challenges persist, and overcoming these challenges requires intentional effort (Zarefsky, 2017). Actively pursuing a debate community characterized by increasing levels of network heterogeneity has implications for numerous micro and macro level aspects of the activity such as recruitment and retention, travel schedules, topic selection, discourse and judging within debate rounds, and mirroring forensics to non-forensic context political talk.

This essay will first review literature pertaining to political discussion, learning, and network heterogeneity. Specifically, this essay will explore the concept of political discussion within the communication field. Then the essay will review the literature surrounding political discussion as it relates to learning and network heterogeneity. Throughout the review of literature, examples from forensics will highlight the interconnections between academic debate and political discussion. Following the review of literature, the essay will conclude by linking the political communication literature of political discussion, learning, and network heterogeneity to academic debate and identifying various implications of this body of literature for organizations, teams, and individuals within the debate community. In particular, the final section of this essay will identify specific actions as a proactive means of encouraging the heterogeneity of the debate activity, with implications for the broader forensics community and society as well.

## **Political Discussion and Academic Debate**

### **Conceptualizing Political Discussion**

Political discussion (Miller et al., 2015; Morey & Yamamoto, 2020; Song, 2015; Straits, 1991) is often referred to as political talk (Pennington & Winfrey, 2021; Morey et al., 2018; Scheufele, 2000; Shevchenko, 2001) or political conversation (Eliasoph, 2000; Eveland et al., 2020; Kim et al., 1999; Scruggs & Schrod, 2021). While certainly not a new concept, political discussion did not receive significant scholarly attention until the past several decades, and many of the attempts to conceptualize political discussion occurred during the earlier years of its research history. For example, Kim et al. (1999) characterize political conversation as including all types of spontaneous political discussions and arguments, some of which may be more casual in nature and some of which may be more intense and deliberative (Wyatt et al., 2000). These spontaneous political discussions and arguments often occur in the forensic context during road trips to and from tournaments and during meals after team practice. Academic debates on a variety of political topics will often



spark debates after the debate that give students opportunities to voice their perspectives in a less formal way without being assigned to defend a particular side.

Similar to what occurs in an ideal competitive debate round, Scheufele (1999) considers political talk to entail "a rational exchange of arguments about an issue of public interest with politically equally informed and interested others" (p. 29). Tracing his conceptualization to Noelle-Neumann's (1993) models of public opinion, Scheufele (1999) argues that political talk is the cognitive dimension of public discussion, while public opinion expression is an affective dimension. Scheufele (2000) also suggests that political talk is discussion that helps people to understand the political world around them. In presenting this conceptualization, Scheufele (2000) first argues that political discussion should not be treated as unidimensional but instead as a multidimensional construct consisting of where the conversation happens, who it happens with, and what is discussed. Building from Schudson (1997) but reaching a different conclusion, Scheufele (2000) then distinguishes political talk from casual conversation, suggesting that while both are important for a democracy, political talk and casual conversation serve different functions. In Scheufele's (2000) view, political talk has a manifest function in a democracy, helping citizens to understand the political world around them and giving them information that even the media does not provide. On the other hand, casual conversation serves a latent function of producing social capital, which helps to connect people to each other and to their communities. One could argue that academic debate affords students opportunities for both political talk in the form of debate rounds with assigned topics and sides as well as more casual political conversations within the forensic community where students and coaches connect with each other in a variety of social settings in preparation for, during, and following tournament competition.

Schudson (1997) suggests an even more dichotomized view of conversation or talk that separates ordinary or social conversation from problem-solving conversation. He describes social conversation as more spontaneous, focused on pleasure and as being both contemporaneously and historically social. In contrast, he considers problem-solving conversation to be democratic talk because it is civil, governed by rules, and public. Democratic, problem-solving conversation often occurs among people who do not necessarily hold the same opinions and "focuses on argument, the conversational partners' capacity to formulate and respond to declarative views of what the world is and what it should be like" (Schudson, 1997, p. 300). In addition, Schudson (1997) argues that people who engage in democratic conversation talk about public matters that are in the news. Schudson's (1997) view of democratic talk approximates the aforementioned scholarly discussions of political talk: when specific topics are used in operationalizing political discussion, the topics are typically ones covered in the news (Kim et al., 1999; Scheufele, 1999; Wyatt et al., 2000). These descriptions of both political talk and democratic talk apply well to many forensic activities and academic debate in particular given the central focus on addressing public issues from the news. For example, recent academic debate topics in the United States, reflective of news topics, include restrictions on legal immigration, funding and regulation of elementary and secondary education, national health insurance, regulation of state and local police misconduct, climate policy and greenhouse gas emissions, requiring background checks for gun sales and transfers of ownership, and economic and diplomatic engagement with the People's Republic of China.

Despite the differences in terms, these scholars agree that political discussion is important for a democracy. What seems to be the area with the most interesting differences and similarities is the nature of political discussion (Kim et al., 1999; Scheufele, 2000; Schudson, 1997). Kim et al. (1999) describe political discussion as occurring in everyday, private conversations in contrast to formal, agenda-driven conversations. The latter contrast—what Kim et al. (1999) might say political discussion is not—seems to closely resemble Schudson's (1997) depiction of democratic talk as problem-solving, public, and formal (as implied by rules and civility). Yet at the same time, both Kim et al. (1999) and Schudson (1997) do include argument as either a feature or part of political discussion. Scheufele's (2000) portrayal of political talk (as one form of political discussion) seems to have more in common with Schudson's (1997) democratic talk. Both are said to include discussion of hard news topics, while Schudson's (1997) view of democratic talk as problem-solving might be seen as comparable with Scheufele's (2000) description of political talk as goal-oriented. Problem-solving is certainly one type of goal.

Another similarity between Scheufele (2000) and Schudson (1997) might be the con-



founding of message and impact. Scheufele (2000), for example, presents both political talk and casual conversations as forms of political discussion, yet describes them as having different outcomes, learning vs. creating social capital. Similarly, Schudson's (1997) democratic talk as being distinct from sociable conversation suggests that the act of communicating is fundamentally different when it is problem-solving vs. social, and hence democratic vs. not so democratic. Even Schmitt-Beck and Lup's (2013) recent review of political talk culture differentiates between political talk (informal, everyday exchanges between citizens) and political discussion (more formal exchanges with problem-solving goals), with deliberation (highly formal, rule-governed, public exchanges resulting in well-reasoned solutions) being a third type of interpersonal political communication.

The context of forensics broadly and academic debate specifically suggests that the political communication literature sets up a false dichotomy between ordinary political discussion that occurs in more informal, everyday contexts and more formalized, public discussion that has features such as argument. Political discussion does not have to be one or the other but can be both—political discussion in its various contexts comes in different shapes and sizes. If both are political discussion, political talk during debate rounds can create social capital and casual conversations among forensic students and coaches during a road trip can result in learning. Political discussion can be both ordinary and public at the same time, or can occur on a small forensic squad or in a debate partnership with people who disagree with one another.

### Political Discussion and Learning

Given the interconnectivity between political discussion and democracy, much of the literature has focused on the pro-social outcomes of vibrant political discussions between citizens such as political learning, interest, and participation (e.g., Eveland et al., 2015; Matthes et al., 2021; Ryan, 2011; Schäfer, 2015; Song, 2015; Thorson, 2014). Gastil and Dillard (1999) examine the effect of deliberation on political sophistication, defining political sophistication in terms of schema. According to Graber (1988), "a schema is a cognitive structure consisting of organized knowledge about situations and individuals that has been abstracted from prior experiences. It is used for processing new information and retrieving stored information" (p. 28). Gastil and Dillard's (1999) examination of political sophistication using the concept of schema is not surprising considering that Graber (1988) and others use this theoretical perspective to explain how learning occurs. These scholars offer two specific explanations for how deliberation can increase political sophistication: 1) learning through experience and imitating others will most likely have a positive effect on the internal consistency of one's beliefs (called schematic coherence) and on the confidence in one's own opinions; and 2) other learning processes (namely, instruction and inference) enable people to integrate and differentiate (Gastil & Dillard, 1999).

Both explanations from Gastil and Dillard (1999) relate well to forensics broadly and debate specifically—they describe well how students learn through the experience of debating and modeling after other coaches and more experienced debaters to have more consistent beliefs and more confidence in their beliefs. Debating well also requires students to integrate their knowledge of multiple disciplines, for example, in that students need a proper understanding of health, economics, and politics to have a vibrant debate about health care policy. The results of the Gastil and Dillard (1999) study indicate that deliberation increases political sophistication, suggesting that people do learn from their political discussions with others.

Gastil and Dillard's (1999) study is consistent with other research that indicates political discussion can enhance learning or political knowledge (e.g., Bennett et al., 2000; Kenamer, 1990; Ryan, 2010; Scheufele, 2000, 2002; Thorson, 2014). Even Gamson's (1992) work with focus groups suggests that political discussion has a strong influence on people's understanding of issues. While these studies do not definitively prove causation—that political discussion leads to learning—the researchers all seem to interpret the findings in this way, and there is evidence that the relationship is unidirectional (Eveland et al., 2005).

### Network Heterogeneity

Another concept in the political communication literature relating to political discussion and learning that is particularly relevant to forensics is network heterogeneity. According to Blau (1977), heterogeneity "refers to the distribution of people among different groups. The larger the



number of groups and the smaller the proportion of the population that belongs to one or a few, the greater the heterogeneity is in terms of a given nominal parameter, such as the ethnic heterogeneity of a community or the religious heterogeneity of a society" (p. 77). More specifically, network heterogeneity is the degree to which someone's discussion network includes people who differ in age, gender, education, and ideology or put more simply as the degree to which someone encounters opposing opinions (McLeod et al., 1999). Similarly, McLeod et al. (1998) consider network heterogeneity, or diversity, by assessing the extent to which people have discussions with people of differing views, while Scheufele et al. (2004) describe network heterogeneity as the level of exposure someone's social environment gives to diverse ideas. Consistent with these descriptions of heterogeneous networks, the forensic environment affords students some opportunities, even if not sufficient, to interact with others differing in gender, class, ethnicity, and race; debate competition requires students to think through, defend, and refute a variety of perspectives (Zarefsky, 2017).

Mutz (2002) even uses the terms network diversity and cross-cutting networks to refer to heterogeneous networks. As Blau (1977) explains it, "Cross-cutting group memberships enhance heterogeneity further by making it multiform, as indicated by various combinations of ethnic and religious background—Italian and Irish Catholics, Black and white Protestants, Russian and German Jews" (p. 77). Still others describe network heterogeneity in terms of conflict, including both conflicting opinions and political conflict (Leighley, 1990). Because it is within heterogeneous networks that people have social interactions with others who are different from themselves, these social interactions provide people with the opportunity to see problems and viewpoints from the perspective of diverse others (McLeod et al., 1998). Clearly diversity, or heterogeneity, comes in many forms along racial, cultural, religious, and geographical lines (Scheufele et al., 2004); but what ultimately matters is that the heterogeneity of these social networks, regardless of the form of diversity, results in a diversity of opinions than can be expressed during political discussions (Eveland & Shaw, 2003). Research indicates that the more heterogeneous a network such as the debate community is, the more diverse the discussions will be (McLeod et al., 1998).

### ***Network Heterogeneity and Learning***

For MacKuen (1990), a heterogeneous network is one that increases social awareness, helping citizens to become more knowledgeable about others' views and needs. Not only do people learn more about others' views in a heterogeneous network, but also they are challenged to re-evaluate their own views in light of the conflict between their own opinions and others' opinions (McPhee et al., 1963). From a similar perspective, Krassa (1990) argues that heterogeneous networks, by their very nature, are more conducive to learning than homogeneous networks because it is more likely that new information will be available because of the diversity.

Reagans and Zuckerman's (2001) research on successful organizational structures in corporations suggests that network heterogeneity increases learning. While not specific to political learning, one might reasonably argue that if being in a heterogeneous network can enhance non-political learning, this same context of heterogeneity should also enhance political learning. In fact, Neuman (1986) contends that network heterogeneity helps people to have more balance (breadth) and more thoughtfulness (depth) in their political views. Indeed, research specifically examining political knowledge reveals that people in heterogeneous networks tend to learn more about politics than those in more homogenous networks (Krassa, 1990). More recent research continues to affirm that network heterogeneity provides a context in which greater levels of political learning can occur (Eveland & Hively, 2009; Guidetti et al., 2016; Scheufele et al., 2006).

### ***Argumentation and Debate, Heterogeneous Networks, and Learning***

The political communication literature suggests the importance of considering the role of argumentation and debate within heterogeneous networks as a mechanism by which greater levels of political learning can occur. As previously stated, argument is included as either a feature or part of political discussion (e.g., Kim et al., 1999; Schudson, 1997) and is reflected across multiple conceptual definitions of political discussion (Kim et al., 1999; Scheufele, 1999; Wyatt et al., 2000). In addition, deliberation—a concept related to and sometimes used interchangeably with political discussion—includes both argument and reasoning (Knight & Johnson, 1994). Moreover, it is within heterogeneous networks that people often interact with others who have opposing views, which pro-



vides a context for openly discussing and debating those views (MacKuen, 1990). Krassa (1990) also supports this view that political arguments or debate among citizens is only possible when people interact in social networks that are diverse.

Furthermore, to the extent that diverse arguments are being articulated among individuals, heterogeneous networks can potentially produce greater learning than that which occurs in a more homogenous network. This contention is supported by the aforementioned political discussion literature and network heterogeneity literature. Previous research indicates that political discussion can enhance learning (e.g., Bennett et al., 2000; Gastil & Dillard, 1999; Kennamer, 1990; Ryan, 2011; Scheufele, 2000, 2002; Thorson, 2014) and that people in heterogeneous networks tend to learn more about politics (Krassa, 1990; Guidetti et al., 2016; Scheufele et al., 2006). Since both political discussion and network heterogeneity are associated with increases in political learning, debate (as one feature or form of political discussion) occurring within heterogeneous networks can also have a positive effect on political learning.

Increased political learning as a result of debate within heterogeneous networks can be observed for a number of reasons, several of which will be suggested here. First, people can learn more about others' views (MacKuen, 1990) and be challenged to re-evaluate their own views in light of the conflict between their own opinions and others' opinions (McPhee et al., 1963). In addition, exposure to diverse ideas leads people to more breadth and depth in their political views. A third explanation for an increase in learning stems from the nature of arguments—that the ideas discussed in a debate must be supported or refuted with reasoning (Knight & Johnson, 1994). Based on Eveland's (2003) explanation of motivation to use media in anticipation of discussion, people in heterogeneous networks may prepare to defend their political views through media use. In fact, discussion within heterogeneous networks has an indirect positive effect on political knowledge by increasing attention to news media (Scheufele et al., 2006). Finally, people who debate within heterogeneous networks generally learn more from the news because their political thinking has been broadened by the diverse perspectives they encounter regularly (see Neuman, 1986).

### **Implications for Academic Debate**

While many of these conclusions supported by political communication scholarship are perceived strengths or features of academic debate, as Zarefsky (2017) notes, there can be a disconnect between good intentions and actual practices. In light of the political communication literature reviewed in this essay and the current national climate of political divisions and racial injustice, forensic organizations, teams, and individuals should renew their focus on practices that foster network heterogeneity or diversity. Heterogeneous networks include but are not limited to diversity in gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and ideology. A renewed focus on pursuing this type of forensic community has implications for numerous aspects of the debate activity, which will be discussed throughout this final section. In particular, careful attention should be given to both micro and macro level concerns within the debate activity. As these concerns are addressed, the forensic community will be better equipped to foster heterogeneity, learning, and civic engagement outside of the competitive context.

### **Micro-level Concerns within Debate**

Within the debate activity, several micro-level practices should be examined based on the political communication literature, especially as it pertains to network heterogeneity and learning. Both recruitment and retention practices as well as the travel schedules of individual squads may seem overly intuitive places to apply the political discussion literature, but many of the challenges facing the forensic community at large stem from seemingly small, day-to-day decisions (Zarefsky, 2017).

### **Recruitment and Retention**

Directors, coaches, and students within forensic organizations should consider implementing recruitment and retention practices that foster diversity in as many areas as possible. For example, if team membership is competitive, directors and coaches should consider multiple factors during the recruitment and/or audition phase—not just past competitive speech and debate success. This requires actively recruiting students across racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, religious,



socioeconomic, and political lines. This requires looking for ways to encourage students who are different from each other in other important ways to join debate—different majors, geographical regions, personalities, hobbies and interests. Professor Kenneth Newby, Director of Forensics at Morehouse College, has suggested that directors go to black student unions on their campus to introduce students to debate travel and competition opportunities and encourage them to join (K. Newby, personal communication, April 23, 2021). No doubt, recruitment in a post-COVID-19 era will continue to evolve as some institutions resume in-person travel and competition while other institutions continue hosting and competing primarily online. The challenge will be to use the new normal—however that takes shape—in creative ways to recruit students that might not have considered or could not consider collegiate forensics before such as student athletes who no longer compete in their sport due to high-risk medical conditions, students who are taking classes remotely and do not have a means of connecting with their typical social circles, or students who cannot study abroad or complete their intended internship.

Even when these kinds of recruitment efforts are prioritized, additional measures will be needed to deepen respect for diverse others on a team and retain a diverse group of students. Anyone who by role or status has more power and influence within the team should be careful to encourage minorities or less experienced team members to share their perspectives during team practices, drills, and other activities. In my own work with students, I have repeatedly observed how well-meaning coaches and student leaders who are influential because of their debate experience and success have been unintentionally dismissive of less experienced teammates with unpopular or non-traditional viewpoints, especially political ones. The unintended consequence is that, rather than challenging students to deepen their arguments through research, these perspectives are silenced. Relatedly, the mentoring that can and should take place within a team—where more experienced debaters invest in novice debaters—can foster a relationship in which the experienced debaters serve as opinion leaders (see Karlsen, 2015; Richey, 2009; Shah & Scheufele, 2006). In the context of a team, less experienced students may value expert debaters as opinion leaders and assume that because person A is an expert in debate, person A must also be an expert in other areas, including but not limited to politics. And as Ryan's (2011) research suggests, the perception of expertise is more influential than actual expertise. This dynamic has unintended consequences for recruitment and retention in that students with particular views are unintentionally pushed out of the activity, making the debate space more homogeneous. If directors, coaches, and students will actively fight against this form of homogeneity by encouraging all students to share their diverse perspectives, teams can instead foster a climate of inclusiveness. As teams within the academic debate community are characterized by more network heterogeneity (Scheufele et al., 2004), the formal and informal debates that occur will result in more learning opportunities for everyone (Guidetti et al., 2016), with implications for a more robust civic education (Zarefsky, 2017).

### ***Travel Schedules***

As teams make travel decisions each academic year, directors and coaches should consider how to make their school's travel schedule more diverse. Local tournaments, regional tournaments, and tournaments outside of one's region provide opportunities for students to interact with different kinds of teams and judges. While geography is just one form of heterogeneity, geography is key in the political communication and learning processes (Liu, 2019; Wells et al., 2021). A geographically diverse travel schedule will provide increased opportunities for having debates and other forms of political talk characterized by racial, cultural, and religious heterogeneity (Scheufele et al., 2004), which in turn enhances what students learn, especially in highly political contexts such as debate (Song & Eveland, 2015). When possible, having students participate in one or more tournaments that have an alternate form of debate or follow a slightly different set of rules or procedures can both broaden and deepen a student's experience within the community. Top-ranked programs and teams might consider how to incorporate a tournament into their schedule that typically does not attract any or many other top-ranked programs, not to dominate the competition but to increase interaction with teams that may be disadvantaged economically, structurally, or otherwise. Including tournaments hosted by an institution with a student-run debate program or with a limited travel budget are additional ways of diversifying a travel schedule.

While COVID-19 has significantly disrupted traditional schedules, the forensic community has potentially more opportunities for a diverse competition schedule than ever before due



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to online tournaments. Online tournaments allow for virtual attendance from teams across the globe and hired judges from different time zones. While structural inequities will unfortunately still exist, the online tournament environment does eliminate the travel cost barriers that have prevented some teams from competing extensively at regional, national, or international tournaments. The desire to resume in-person competition with familiar faces is understandable, but forensic coaches and directors should not miss the unique opportunity to implement renewed priorities during this historic time. As teams and judges experience what it is like to be an outsider, in the minority, or out of their comfort zone, directors and coaches should encourage each other and their students to reflect on how everyone individually and collectively can actively contribute to a healthier debate environment where diverse others can thrive, rather than perpetuating a homogeneous community that can lead to polarization and larger perceived divisions with those outside the speech and debate community (Pattie & Johnston, 2016).

### **Macro-level Concerns within Debate**

In addition to micro-level concerns such as recruitment and travel schedules, the debate community should renew their focus on fostering heterogeneity by paying careful attention to several macro-level concerns such as membership, topic selection, round discourse and judging.

#### ***Membership***

While national forensic and debate organizations typically include institutions representing the geographical diversity of the United States, member institutions vary in their levels of participation at local and regional tournaments as well as the national championship associated with that organization. Within certain organizations, membership involvement may even over-represent certain geographical regions. For example, the National Parliamentary Debate Association has historically had more member institution participation from the West coast as compared to the East coast (Johnson, 1999), with the opposite being true of the American Parliamentary Debate Association ([www.apda.online](http://www.apda.online)). Given the origins of these organizations, the membership composition is organic and not a reason to be critical of either organization. Rather, this exemplifies that all forensic organizations will naturally develop based on a number of factors, with unintended consequences for membership composition and participation. In addition to some geographical homogeneity within organizations, member participation can be affected by socioeconomic factors. Some institutions have completely cut their forensic programs, enacted significant budget cuts, or never provided their forensic team with a substantial enough budget to allow for travel to and competition at a national tournament. For example, when I coached in Ohio, we regularly attended tournaments in Kentucky where we interacted with teams who were unable to compete outside of their own state due to budgetary constraints.

To encourage network heterogeneity along geographical and socioeconomic lines (Scheufele et al., 2004), forensic organization leaders as well as directors, coaches, and students should intentionally reach out to schools that participate less within their organization. It is especially important to contact schools from regions who participate less to determine the reason(s) for their lack of participation and implement strategies designed to encourage more participation. If certain schools are unable to participate due to financial constraints, organizations should offer scholarships or discounts to schools who have not competed in recent years. Indeed, Pi Kappa Delta offers a scholarship to help teams participate in the National Comprehensive Tournament, and the National Parliamentary Tournament of Excellence has recently provided fee waivers for teams facing financial hardship including community colleges and student-run programs. While these are just two examples of recent efforts, the forensic community should continue efforts to increase geographical and socioeconomic inclusivity.

In addition to scholarships and fee waivers, forensic organizations should expand financial assistance to include travel and lodging expenses for teams to participate in in-person tournaments. While not a forensic organization, the American Enterprise Institute partnered with National Parliamentary Debate Association schools for several years to offer the Values and Capitalism Debates with travel vouchers for each two-person team. The travel voucher amount increased based on the number of miles travelled to participate in the tournament. Forensic organizations and directors could adopt a similar model for national and invitational tournaments, providing this type of assistance along with housing for a select number of teams with demonstrated financial need,



especially teams from regions that participate less within an organization.

To increase participation at regional and local tournaments, tournament directors, especially those hosting the largest and most competitive tournaments, should implement something similar (reduced fees) and offer crash housing (when applicable) to teams competing from outside the host's region who historically do not attend that tournament. Organization council or board members should reach out to directors from under-represented regions to find out what non-financial barriers exist. Strengthening and increasing the participation of member institutions will encourage the growth of academic debate overall, especially in regions where tournament participation is declining for a variety of reasons. While encouraging geographical and socioeconomic diversity of organizational membership and participation at local, regional, and national tournaments are not the only means of fostering network heterogeneity, they are important ones as evidenced by the divergent political norms as well as the varying levels of socioeconomic status seen across the geographical regions of the U.S. COVID-19 has only heightened these differences (Chu et al., 2021; Montanaro, 2021).

In addition, forensic organizations should consider how they can strengthen ties within their own organization while simultaneously strengthening ties with other organizations. As Zarefsky (2017) notes,

Too often ... [organizational] differences are seen not as reflecting matters of taste but as embodying righteous indignation. It is not necessary to castigate proponents of a different approach to speech and debate in order to champion one's own. The speech and debate community is not so large that it can afford civil wars without losing sight of the larger goal of preparing students to understand and experience public life. Against that goal, the quarrels of the community can seem incredibly petty, if not altogether quaint (p. 8).

In an attempt to address these quarrels, Bergmaier and Johnson (2017) call for a re-imagining of debate by advocating for the collaborative paradigm as a means of unifying the debate community across various styles and judging paradigms. At the 2021 National Debate Development Conference hosted by the American Forensics Association, co-organizers Dr. Kelly Young and Dr. David Cram Helwich welcomed and encouraged participation from individuals representing institutions outside of AFA by adding a working group focused on British Parliamentary Debate. Whether or not creative solutions such as the collaborative paradigm are adopted or inclusive debate development conferences occur more frequently, organizational leaders should set a positive tone in how they communicate to and about others within and outside their community. Coaches and competitors should speak up when they hear belittling or otherizing comments being made about stylistic or other differences within or outside of debate rounds. The goal should not be to end debate or discussion of conflicting viewpoints as that is the mechanism for greater learning to occur within a heterogeneous network (Eveland & Hively, 2009; Guidetti et al., 2016; Scheufele et al., 2006). Rather, the goal should be to avoid pushing out people with diverse ideas, creating a homogeneous echo chamber where learning is limited (Guidetti et al., 2016; Scheufele et al., 2006; Schmitt-Beck & Lup, 2013).

### ***Topic Selection***

Directors and coaches who are on topic committees or who are responsible for selecting resolutions in any context across debate formats should be careful to craft propositions that will foster debates with diverse perspectives and ideas. Themed tournaments or tournaments focusing on specific types of resolutions have merit within the context of certain debate formats, but the topics chosen at most tournaments or within a national organization should reflect a diversity in wording, content, and ideology. While certain topics and debate styles might not reflect current trends within the community, organization leaders, directors, and coaches must balance the desires and needs of the community with good faith efforts to implement best practices informed by academic scholarship. When feasible, topic committees comprised of heterogeneous perspectives (Guidetti et al., 2016) should be preferred over a single individual generating resolutions. However, individuals can certainly improve their topic selection process by consulting others with different expertise, lived experiences, and political viewpoints than their own (Pattie & Johnston, 2008).

For example, the issues of police brutality and racial injustice are at the forefront of national political conversations and media attention. Most within the forensic community have heard or participated in countless debates about these issues in recent years but have not necessarily heard these topics debated from the perspective of Blacks, seen a Black director or coach judge a debate on



this topic, or had a Black individual be responsible for or consulted in crafting the proposition that was debated. While some data suggests that minority participation in debate within the United States has increased over time, the rate of success lags significantly behind white males (Stepp & Gardner, 2001). Current scholarship also highlights the differences between Blacks and Whites in discussing racial topics such as police brutality (Eveland & Appiah, 2021). As such, Blacks within the forensics community should be at the forefront of crafting resolutions for debates about police brutality and racial injustice. When a Black director or coach is not available to serve on a topic committee, it is important for those involved in the topic selection process to seek out Black debate alums, Black colleagues within academia, and/or Blacks within an individual's local community for feedback on potential resolutions relating to policy brutality and racial injustice. This is not to suggest that Whites having conversations (or debates) with other Whites about police brutality and racial injustice is a waste of time or should be discouraged (Eveland & Appiah, 2021). Rather, we cannot be satisfied that these debates have occurred and should instead be proactive in encouraging more conversations and more debates between Blacks and Whites on these issues, given how rarely these political conversations occur and given the importance of these conversations in the current context of racial unrest (Eveland & Appiah, 2021).

Undoubtedly, there are organizational, institutional, or other logistical barriers to implementing a heterogeneous committee or topic generation process, but efforts to overcome these barriers are critical for the health of the debate community. National organizations who utilize voting or other forms of community feedback to select a topic for the year or for the national tournament may need to adjust their by-laws to require or allow topic committee members to consult diverse perspectives outside of the committee and the debate community when choosing the final wording of a proposition. In debate formats utilizing multiple resolutions per tournament, a heterogeneous topic generation process for every topic might be unattainable, especially for smaller tournaments with limited staffing and significant budget concerns. Working toward a more heterogeneous topic generation process for even the final round and/or break rounds would be a significant step. Without these types of efforts, the debate community risks becoming an echo chamber. As Schmitt-Beck and Lup (2013) argue, "moderate disagreement [within political discussions] rather than 'echo chamber'-style conversations help [in] clarifying issues and increasing understanding" (p. 527). Empirical research indicates that most people prefer to select complete similarity or homogeneity in their political discussions across most contexts (Morey et al., 2018). Thus one cannot assume that members of the forensic community are significantly different, even if the community aspires to be different. Intentional efforts to bring heterogeneous perspectives into the topic selection process are an important means of combating the tendency toward homogeneity that can encourage an echo chamber within debate spaces.

### ***Round Discourse and Judging***

While macro-level concerns relating to membership and topic selection present significant challenges, arguably a more difficult endeavor is creating a welcoming debate atmosphere or culture that celebrates diverse people and ideas in the context of round discourse and judging. As a starting point, directors and coaches who are hosting tournaments or attempting to cover their entries for a debate competition should re-evaluate the process of recruiting judges. In many instances, tournament hosts are already going to great lengths to hire exceptional judges who are as diverse as possible across gender and race. When possible, additional forms of heterogeneity such as socioeconomic status, religious views, and political ideology (Scheufele et al., 2004) should be considered in reaching out to potential judges. Directors and coaches should also evaluate the merits of other creative suggestions for broadening a judging pool, including ideas from forensic scholarship such as Butler (2002) who suggests recruiting judges from academic disciplines outside of debate.

While judge recruitment procedures are a starting point, what happens during and immediately following a debate is of equal importance in supporting heterogeneity. In a competitive context, debates are rarely focused on solving actual problems but are instead (understandably) focused on winning the ballot or getting a higher ranking (Eckstein & Bartanen, 2015; Littlefield, 2006; Sciallo, 2016). Even so, teams and judges should critically examine their own contributions to consider how they might better sustain a debate climate that encourages all forms of heterogeneity (Scheufele et al., 2004). Judges should take note of and affirm differences in debate style or preferences before, during, and/or after a debate is finished. Relatedly, teams and judges should be mindful



of the different experiences and perspectives represented within a given debate round and be more proactive in showing respect for and celebrating those differences.

To facilitate the time needed to affirm and celebrate differences respectfully, tournament hosts should consider providing a scheduled post-round feedback opportunity after the debate decision has been made and the ballot has been submitted. For debate formats and tournaments that include oral adjudication or disclosure, a portion of that time could be set aside for this feedback. During the time allocated for this feedback, judges should point out when debates have been unnecessarily limited in perspective and should offer suggestions for how the debate could have incorporated a wider range of perspectives. In addition, judges and teams should 1) provide feedback about how well others represented and seemed to understand their arguments and 2) share their perspective or expertise briefly, if appropriate. As Vats (2010) argues (citing Breger, 1998), "Debaters that are exposed to and take the time to understand the experiences of their fellow competitors are more likely to be welcoming instead of adversarial and purely competitive" (p. 246). Based on Richey's (2009) work, judges should avoid using most of the feedback time talking to the debaters—this does not encourage learning and can result in hierarchical pressure, especially for women and younger debaters. Judges talking with debaters will more likely lead to increased learning and other desired outcomes relating to civic education such as increased tolerance for diverse views, political efficacy, political interest, and political participation (Eveland & Hively, 2009; Guidetti et al., 2016; Pattie & Johnston, 2008; Zarefsky, 2017). While taking time for post-round discussions will not solve all problems relating to tournament judging and round discourse, "fostering connections between debaters ... encourages students from diverse backgrounds who might otherwise quit debate to stay in the activity despite its flaws, again helping to promote positive values in the ... debate community" (Vats, 2010, p. 246). As diverse individuals within a debate community actively and respectfully listen to one another, both competitive debates for a win or loss/ranking and discussions after a debate can be contexts where network heterogeneity thrives and learning is contagious.

### **Learning Beyond Academic Collegiate Debate**

As the forensic community renews their focus on better addressing various micro-level and macro-level concerns within debate, individuals will be better equipped to foster heterogeneity, learning, and civic engagement outside of the competitive context. Davis (2010) argues for the importance of promoting "debate as a necessary component of a well-functioning society. ... Debate programs are and should be key players in efforts to foster civic engagement and democratic responsibility" (pp. 275-276). While many non-competitive contexts could be addressed, this section will focus on the implications for mirroring forensics to non-forensic context political talk.

### ***Mirroring Political Talk***

Over the years, forensic scholars such as Mitchell (1998) have expressed concerns that debaters often lack empathy or moral sensitivity because it is easy for them to take on a spectator mindset and to think of tragic news concerning human suffering from the perspective of bolstering evidence for an argument. However, scholars have proposed increased involvement with the community through public debates and other forms of service (Derryberry, 1998) and have documented movement in the direction of a civic-engagement model of debate (Vats, 2010). Using involvement in urban debate leagues (UDLs) and prison debates as examples, Vats (2010) argues that civic engagement within debate encourages inclusivity, empathy, and diversity. Each one of these—public debates, community service, and involvement in UDLs and prison debates—are all contexts in which the political talk that occurs within debate spaces can be extended beyond to foster political talk among non-forensic members of society. Undoubtedly, increased political discussions in these various contexts should foster pro-social outcomes such as political learning, interest, and participation (Eveland et al., 2015; Matthes et al., 2021; Ryan, 2011; Schäfer, 2015; Song, 2015; Thorson, 2014). And to the extent that the forensic community facilitates these discussions in a heterogeneous way, greater levels of these pro-social outcomes can occur (Eveland & Hively, 2009; Guidetti et al., 2016; Scheufele et al., 2006).



While these civic-engagement efforts should continue and be expanded, the greatest need for debaters and their coaches to mirror forensic political talk to non-forensic context political talk is interpersonally within friend groups, families, school boards, community centers, houses of worship, and legislatures. While increased political discussion in general is associated with positive outcomes (Eveland & Hively, 2009; Klostad, 2015; Pattie & Johnston, 2008; Schäfer, 2015; Schmitt-Beck & Lup, 2013; Wyatt et al., 2000), two contemporary issues at the forefront of national and international focus highlight the need for more civil political talk: racial injustice and COVID-19. As previously described, Blacks and Whites discuss racial topics such as police brutality differently and rarely have political conversations with each other (Eveland & Appiah, 2021). Within the context of families residing in counties with higher numbers of Whites, Black parents discuss racism with their children more, whereas white parents discuss racism with their children less (Eveland & Nathanson, 2020). Even though political talk on social media can have positive effects (Bode, 2016; de Zúñiga et al., 2017; Macafee, 2018), social media is also a context for racial hostility and hate speech (Linville, 2019). While an extensive literature review on the specific topic of political talk about race is outside the scope of this paper, these examples coupled with recent current events illustrate well that more and better conversations on race-related issues among people who have divergent experiences and views is warranted. And to the extent that the forensic community is a place where individuals engage in heterogeneous political discussions, debaters and those who coach them can be at the forefront of political talk about race that has positive outcomes in the lives of friends, family members, and community members across a variety of contexts.

While discussions about race are an ongoing concern, COVID-19 has brought new challenges for heterogeneous political talk (Apuke & Omar, 2021; Bonnevie et al., 2021; Buturoiu & Gavrilescu, 2021; Flew, 2021; Jiang & Dodoo, 2021; Young & Bleakley, 2020). Given the polarized nature of attitudes toward COVID-19 (Chu et al., 2021) and the pandemic's status as an infodemic consisting of (true) information, misinformation, and disinformation (Glasdam & Stjernswärd, 2020), it is difficult to find examples of individuals or communities engaging in heterogeneous COVID-19 talk that is civil. People readily turn to other people and sources that will validate their personal views rather than seeking perspectives that would help them to better understand a diversity of viewpoints (Glasdam & Stjernswärd, 2020). Public and private disagreements over mask mandates (Jiang & Dodoo, 2021) and the COVID vaccine (Bonnevie et al., 2021; Lăzăroiu et al., 2021) persist. As more individuals from the debate community model how to "deal with a diversity of viewpoints" (Goodwin, 2003, p. 163), heterogeneous political talk about COVID-19 within friend groups, families, school boards, community centers, houses of worship, and legislatures will be contexts more conducive for solving problems (Schudson, 1997) than creating problems, for increased political listening (Eveland et al., 2020) than increased political shouting.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The implications of political discussion literature for academic debate suggested here are not intended to be an exhaustive list nor are they intended as simplistic action steps that trivialize significant, complicated problems. However, solutions to the serious problems within the forensic community and within broader society begin with change—each person, each squad, each region—the large reach of past, present, and future debaters making life-giving choices each day, over time. While anger, hatred, and fear at times dominate discourse within society and unfortunately even within the forensic community, debate taught me a better way. For me, debate is ultimately not about being right or proving that I have all the answers. Rather, debate is about realizing how little I know, how much I should learn, and how much I can learn from others. Fighting to prove I am right is exhausting. But fighting to listen better to more voices, different from me in every way possible, leads to a true civic education for myself and those around me. And that is something worth fighting for.



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# Historical Perspectives Debate and Democracy

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As we reflect on truly unique times in our forensic community, it is both interesting and valuable to look back to our issues of *The Forensic of Pi Kappa Delta* to see the connections our leaders made between the world of forensics and the world in which we all lived. In our well over 100 years, Pi Kappa Delta has navigated myriad political and social periods in which forensic students and educators no doubt used “the art of persuasion, beautiful and just” to understand and impact their world. At the same time, these were periods in which our world exerted profound influence on our forensic community. National tournaments were cancelled. The power of debates, speeches, and performances to be informed by headlines and very real struggles for voice was clear. Fast-forward to 2020, we see an activity re-defining itself in terms of inclusiveness, equity, and its potential to help calm a world that mirrors less of the beauty and justice to which Pi Kappa Delta aspires. Added to the tenor and substance of what we now advocate is a world pandemic that has, once again, led to the cancellation of tournaments and the re-shaping of how we view and manage competitive events.

For the next two issues of *The Forensic*, we will reflect on historical periods in our honorary’s history through the re-printing of select articles that speak to the causes and challenges that, in many ways, look like our present-day world of forensics. At the same time, some of these reflections provide sharp contrast to how we once viewed debate and those who participate in it, as opposed to today’s effort to maximize diversity, equity, and inclusion. In this issue forensic and debate experiences are noted in terms of the value participants and society reap from the essence of debate. Additionally, a reflection on a ground-breaking international debate experience brings attention to many things we now take for granted. Looking at the beginning of international debate exchanges through the eyes of a debater coming to America and reflecting on education and debate exchanges through that perspective is intriguing. As we contemplate how the activity about which so many of us are so passionate is impacted by changes in its culture and normative practices, there is value in looking back to a time when we were coming to understand the values of the activity, as well as the dynamics of its practices.

I hope you enjoy these visits through our history, and perhaps take the time to reflect on the resilience of our activity, as well as the paramount role it plays in both reflecting our world, and preparing our students to impact that same world in enduring and positive ways.

Scott Jensen,  
Editor





# Training for Democracy

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HILLIER MCC. BURROWES, GROVE CITY COLLEGE

*(Reprinted from Volume 27.2, 1942)*

Just thirty-two minutes ago I arose from my desk, where I was still wrestling with the details in an outline for the article requisitioned some weeks back by the Editor of *THE FORENSIC*. An old line of Bret Harte's was jingling through my head:

"We couldn't help perceivin',  
When we took to inkstand heavin',  
That, the process was reliev'in'  
To the sharpness of debate."

I stopped by the radio to tune in the beginning of the Pittsburgh symphony; but as the tubes warned, the first words ended a news broadcast: "...that Churchill will declare war on Japan within the hour."

Curiosity aroused, I turned to the symphony, caught the last phrase of the National Anthem, listened rather idly to the opening number, and at 3:15 went back to KDKA for Kaltenborn.

For fifteen minutes I have listened to the precise, restrained words of the commentator, and I am back at my desk—but in a different world. With the first announcement of the attacks upon Pearl Harbor and Manila has come a sharp snapping of long tension. There is something fiercely animal in most of us, something that welcomes the end of debate and the beginning of "inkstand heavin'." (What strange telepathy could have brought the old phrase to my mind in just this hour?) But I have found myself mounting the stairs slowly, and a stinging blur keeps returning to my sight. For I have known war.

And now you would have me write of the value of debating experience in life after college. Well, since we are to have another war, to me at least one thing is sure: we are still striving by every means, even by violence itself, to preserve against the rule of force a way of life that we call democracy. And discussion—or, if you will, debate—is the very means by which democracy lives and works; but debate must be informed, it must be skillful, it must be sympathetic. For if I speak in ignorance, I shall breed error or—when I am found out—disgust; if I speak unskillfully, I shall confuse and weary; and if, when I dispute with another, I do not honor him with a sympathetic effort to learn how much of truth may be seen from his point of view that is not visible from mine, I shall never help to reach the orderly, harmonious decision that is the objective of our democratic processes. Like King David I must ruefully admit, "I am for peace, but when I speak, they are all for war."

A few weeks ago another editor requested that I seek information from alumni as to what they felt they had gained from undergraduate forensics. One with whom I talked was a young lawyer some ten years out of college and half a dozen out of law school, working independently and evidently with growing success, mixing a little in politics. "First of all," he told me, "we learned how to study a question. Next, we learned how to think and speak on our feet. And finally, I at least, learned not to jump too quickly to conclusions."

He went on to amplify the last point: "Often as I began work on a question, I found my mind quite made up on one side. But by the time I had been battered about in a few intercollegiate debates, I began to discover that the other fellow might have something on his side too. The worst



mistake a lawyer can make," he went on, "is to assume that there is nothing to be said on the other side."

The chief values of debate work in after life may well be just these three that my friend summarized: training in the study of a question, training in the technique of discussion, training in getting at the other man's point of view.

I have just come back from the first tournament of our season, and in retrospect a few points that I noted there seem appropriate to the three-fold summary just presented.

First as to the study of the question. We college-bred folk will always be readers and listeners, eyes and ears alert to catch information from newspaper, radio, magazine, lecturer, the dust-covered volume off the top shelf, or the latest book-of-the-month. Facts, principles, arguments, pleas, from all angles, from all sorts of authors—they come to us. In debate work as nowhere else we should learn to winnow wheat from chaff. William James wrote once that the chief benefit of a college education is that "it teaches us to know a good man when we see him." So the debater should learn to know a reliable authority, to recognize sound reasoning.

Often I could wish, however, that debaters would not stop with applying the tests of authority and of reasoning as formally laid down in our texts. The shrewd debater never fails to use his imagination. How often we hear, especially in affirmative cases, the confident assertion that a certain plan will remedy a certain evil. One team narrates the conviction of union leaders for racketeering in the movie industry, and then promises that federal incorporation of the unions with the consequent audit of union funds will end the evil. But in post-debate discussion it is evident that neither affirmative speaker has formed any mental image as to how the racketeer has worked; he has not realized, consequently, that the bribe never passes into the union funds, but goes direct into the pocket of the racketeer, and that no C.P.A. audit of the union's accounts would ever reveal the crime.

As to training in the technique of discussion, we all can see the value of debate in the practice of thought and speech while on our feet, a value more evident with the disappearance of "canned" speeches, delivered fluently—or laboriously—from obvious memory. But in developing swiftness and flexibility, especially in the stream-lined one-hour contest now most generally employed, sometimes we may have gone too far in eliminating old practices of parliamentary utterance.

Finally, the former debater's feeling that debating teaches one to get the other man's point of view was well justified. Herein may lie one reason for keeping a certain number of decision debates on every schedule. The debater who sets out cocksure that his is the only answer to the question may be a headache to his colleagues and a thorn in the flesh of his coach. One remedy is that he be required to prepare a brief for the other side; but often this exercise will be only perfunctory until the season has advanced to the point where the better teams are put in training for the tournaments in which each will have to debate both sides of the question. For the bigoted debater, a couple of adverse decisions will often work wonders, especially when a sharp critique has rubbed his nose against the points he has missed.

Government by the people—democracy—can be carried on only through free discussion. And it is essential that when discussion ends and the votes are counted, the decision of the majority shall be cheerfully accepted by all, and that there shall be unity of action. If college men and women practice the friendly rivalries of debate, they cannot but find themselves better prepared for our democratic way of life.





# Understanding and Cooperation Fostered by International Debate

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COUNT HANS-JUERGEN VON BLUMENTHAL

*(Reprinted from Volume 16.3, 1931)*

Public speaking and debating is an old art in American universities and colleges. The autumn of this year saw a new step forward in the development of this art. On the 27th of October happened the first international debate in which American students met debaters from a non-English speaking country. This was really an important fact in the history of debating because it means an enlargement of the basis of international understanding and cooperation. At the same time it was a very difficult task for the National Student Federation of America, as well as for the Duetsche Studentenschaft, for the National Union of German Students had to elect the two German representatives for the international debates. The German students had to debate in a foreign language, with no experience in the American method of team debating, using five different subjects in twenty-six debates over a period of fifty-two days. This proved pretty big work. But the National Union of German Students accepted the invitation of the National Student Federation of America and on the 10th of October my colleague, Herbert Schaumann, a student of philosophy, and I, a student of law, left Hamburg in order to represent our country in debating with our American comrades.

After having spent some very interesting days in New York City, we went first to Maine, then to Massachusetts, to New York state, to Pennsylvania, Maryland, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, and Kansas. We had everywhere a most interesting and wonderful time; we found everywhere so much hospitality and real friendship that we might report only about our trip. The best discussion grew out of the subject, "The Foreign Indictment of American Culture," which was one of the subjects of our debates.

It was most interesting for me to compare the American universities and institutions with those of Germany. The chief difference is that our universities are not institutions of general education. In Germany that is the subject of the gymnasium. The university has only the task to instruct the students in their special majors as, for example, law, medicine, philosophy, etc. The result is that we have not so much social life and not so much sport at our universities. The students live mostly in towns in their own homes. The result of this system is that students do not have the association of comrades in Germany as they do in America.

I like the system of the American universities and colleges because I think it is a perfect education to get comradeship and team spirit and to fight against an over-development of individualism. Such an education is necessary in order to get the right spirit in national and international questions. In former times we did not need such an education at the German universities because in the army, as formerly organized we had a democratic institution.

Each boy without regard to his social position or education had to enter and there he lived with all sorts of people, all of whom had the same food, the same clothes, and the same work. By the treaty of Versailles we lost this great school of education and it seems to me that we should try to find a new one by accepting some of the institutions of American universities, for example, the dormitories.

Debating is not so popular in German universities as it is in America. Especially, the method of team debating is quite unknown in Germany. We know only the open discussion. The reason is, as it seems to me, that a German student would never defend or attack a problem without his true personal convictions. That has, of course, many advantages with regard to the education of the character, but it hinders at the same time, the introduction of team debating because the opinions of the students are not so very different. It seems to me the system of team debating provides



perfect oratorical training. That was shown to me during my debating trip through America. We met everywhere very good and fair debaters. Five times we had to debate against girls and I enjoyed that very much. They knew their field, joined logic with charm, and by this way they are very dangerous opponents.

A lot of private talks with American students in the dormitories and fraternity houses and on beautiful evenings in man private homes gave me the occasion to recognize the problem of the United States; made me acquainted with the soul and character of a distinguished and energetic nation. I got the impression that we were successful in our chief task, that of furthering international understanding and cooperation and I leave this country with the conviction that the United States of America and Germany are not only connected by blood and history but also by a language—the language of the heart.





# Call for Papers

## Special Issue

### *Volume 106.2—Scholarship From the Future*

*The Forensic of Pi Kappa Delta* invites submissions from student authors for a special issue dedicated to scholarship authored by students. The same general call for submissions that guides work considered by *The Forensic* is being used for this special issue; a wide range of submissions will be considered. Authors may be undergraduate or graduate students. Submissions should be work completed during the pursuit of a degree by students who have not yet held full-time teaching or coaching positions. Authors who are presently teaching or coaching but who's primary role is that of a student are encouraged to submit their work for consideration. While submissions may have received editorial suggestions from mentor faculty and coaches, all authors should be students.

Submissions will be reviewed upon receipt. Please contact Scott Jensen at [jensensc@webster.edu](mailto:jensensc@webster.edu) with any questions.

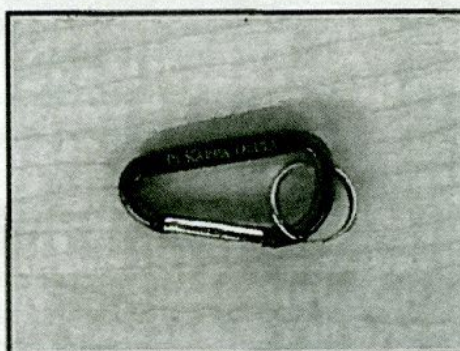


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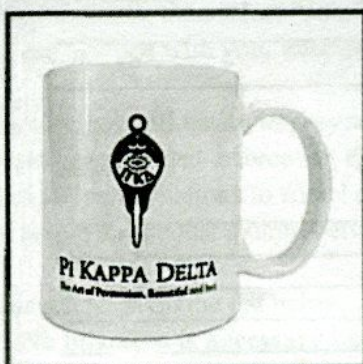
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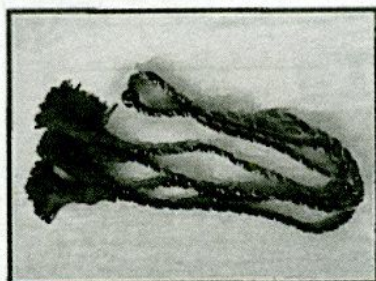
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## Every PKD School Should Have an Alumni Chapter

Pi Kappa Delta's new website has been designed to improve alumni relations at both the local and national chapter level. These features include affinity grouping opportunities, fundraising and development opportunities, a wide variety of electronic messaging tools. Over the next several years, these features will be developed and rolled-out, but to take full advantage of them, local chapters need to create PKD Alumni Chapters. Alumni Chapters do not pay annual dues, but there is a one-time, \$75.00 charge to establish a new PKD Alumni Chapter. To create an Alumni chapter, go to [www.pkd.clubexpress.com](http://www.pkd.clubexpress.com), click on "Join Now," and then select "Alumni Chapter" from the drop-down menu. The whole process should take less than 5 minutes to complete.

None of the old PKD data migrated from our old website, which was managed by the NSDA. Therefore, if your local chapter already had an Alumni Chapter (see the list below), and you have not already entered the chapter data in the new PKD Club Express Website, **you do not need to pay, but you DO NEED to go to the website and enter your contact data.** At the end of the process, simply click "pay by cash or check" and your chapter will be activated with no further payment required.

Once your chapter is established, please encourage your existing alumni to enter their contact information by joining your alumni chapter on the PKD Website. To join, have them visit [www.pkd.clubexpress.com](http://www.pkd.clubexpress.com), then select "Join Now" and then "Alumni Member" from the drop-down menu. They can affiliate with your chapter by selecting it from the drop-down menu.

These changes will vastly improve Pi Kappa Delta's ability to reach alumni at both the local and national chapter level. Moreover, they will open the door to frequent reunions, specialized travel opportunities, invitations to social events at NCA and at PKD National Tournaments, and a generally more active and robust alumni network.

If your school is on the list below, all you need to do is create the Alumni Chapter in the new database. **No payment is necessary because your institution has an active chapter.**















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