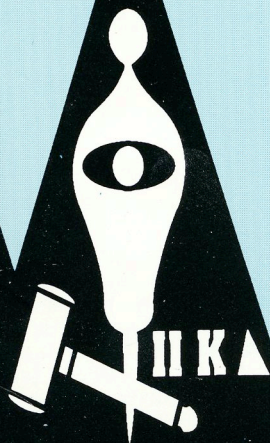


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JOB SATISFACTION OF FACULTY MEMBERS IN FORENSICS: A NATIONAL STUDY*

By Thomas L. Murphy and Anthony J. Ferri,
Greenspun School of Communication, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Unlike their counterparts in colleges and universities, faculty members in the forensics area are unique. In addition to the usual duties of a college faculty member, these faculty undertake the additional burden of forensics. The dichotomous educational/competitive nature of forensics places the faculty member in a critical role to the success of the program (Lybbert & Luck, 1975, p.190). As professor George Ziegelmuller of Wayne State University elaborates, "the nature, scope, and success of a forensic program are largely dependent upon the forensic director. His ability and view of his role as a coach will influence the program more than the size of the budget, the students' interest, or any other factor" (Lybbert & Luck, 1975, p.191).

Given the director's importance, issues concerning the job satisfaction of forensic faculty take on added significance. Porter (1986) observes that the faculty member in forensics might find their hard work ignored by others in the university (p.7). Long hours on campus, high teaching loads, high turnover, and hard travel schedules are a few characteristics that could lead one to the conclusion that many faculty members are not satisfied with the forensics assignment; indeed, there has been a perception in the speech communication field that forensics positions are merely stepping stones to regular tenure track positions. Certainly the employment concerns Klopf and Rives (1965) isolated 25 years ago are relevant today. This study investigates these questions.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

While there have been some surveys of the descriptive characteristics of forensics directors (Klopf and Rives, 1965; Lybbert and Luck, 1975; Prochaska, 1981; Porter, 1986), only one addresses the issue of job satisfaction. Klopf and Rives (1965) and Porter (1986) represent the most comprehensive attempts to describe the director of forensics. Lybbert and Luck (1975) and Prochaska (1981) included some characteristics as part of comprehensive program surveys.

The first national survey of college forensics directors was a response to a resolution passed at a meeting of the American Forensic Association in 1965 (Klopf and Rives, p.33). Concerned about differing employment practices in the nation's colleges and high schools, Klopf and Rives (1965) collected data for the purpose of developing a code of standards for teachers of forensics (p.33). They found that the average DOF received

* An earlier version of this article was presented at the SCA Convention, Chicago, IL, 1990.

a teaching reduction of 2 semester hours per term, while devoting 18.7 hours a week to forensics. The average DOF had taught 11.6 years total with 7.5 years in forensics.

In the closest examination to the present study, Klopff and Rives asked respondents whether they felt professionally limited by directing forensics. Forty-seven percent felt limited to "some" extent, and 38% answered "much" (p.34). In relation to their teaching colleagues most directors (62%) felt "equal" in academic respectability and 22 percent "less than" respectable (p.34).

Noting the same employment concerns Klopff and Rives raised, Porter (1986) surveyed National Individual Events Tournament and National Debate Tournament participants in 1984. While the focus of her study was the evaluation of forensic directors, she also formulated a "profile" of the forensic director. The descriptive data collected in these studies are compared with the present study in Table 2.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

While Porter (1986) attempted to profile the forensic director, her sample size was restricted to schools attending the NDT, NIET, or advertising in the American Forensic Association's yearly calendar of tournaments in 1984. Admittedly, the schools represented were associated with the AFA (p.9). With the exception of Klopff and Rives' (1965) comprehensive survey of 1200 universities, colleges, and community colleges, other surveys have been limited to NDT subscribers (Lybbert and Luck, 1975) and junior colleges (Prochaska, 1981).

Given the increase in schools that are primarily members of the Cross Examination Debate Association (CEDA), the National Forensic Association (NFA), and Phi Rho Pi (the junior college organization), there is a twenty-five year gap in knowledge about the typical faculty member in forensics. Our first research question attempts to fill that void:

RQ1: What are the characteristics of the average faculty member in forensics?

The study next turns to the issue of job satisfaction of faculty members in forensics. While the two items Klopff and Rives (1965) mention - professional limitation and academic responsibility - are noteworthy, there is again a present day lack of knowledge in the area.

RQ2: Are faculty members in forensics satisfied with their positions?

Finally, this study broadens the scope of existing research to investigate the relationship between these variables:

RQ3: What factors affect the satisfaction of the forensic faculty member?

METHOD

A survey was designed asking faculty members to respond about (1) the structure of their position, (2) their level of satisfaction, and (3) Personal characteristics. The questionnaire was piloted and reconstructed after feedback from pilot subjects. No significant changes were made in the instrument before mailing. The mailing list was checked and restructured to include school members of the NDT, NIET, NFA, CEDA,

and Phi Rho Pi. Three hundred subjects were chosen using systematic random sampling and the instrument was mailed in November 1988. A follow-up letter was mailed in December 1988. 112 completed surveys were returned for a response rate of 37 percent. The returned surveys were coded and the data analyzed using the ABSTAT rel of 6.02 statistical program.

RESULTS

Personal Characteristics

The average respondent age was 41.44 years (std dev = 10.57). Respondents included 82 males (74.5%) and 28 females (25.5%). Two respondents did not indicate gender. The average income was \$29,299.70 (std dev = 9,328.81).

Professional Characteristics

A majority of the subjects were tenured ($n = 56$, 51.8%) although some community college respondents noted an unavailability of tenure at their institutions. The distribution of academic ranks was relatively uniform: 17.9 percent professors ($n = 20$), 25.9 percent associate professors ($n = 30$) and 21.4 percent instructors/lecturers ($n = 24$), and the remainder "other." Educationally, 42.9 percent of forensic faculty have their PhD or doctorate degree, and 41 percent have the M.A./M.S. as their highest degree. Most (71.8%, $n = 79$) have degrees in speech communication.

Most respondents (63.3%, $n = 69$) receive some release time for forensic activities and teach an average of 10.23 hours per semester (6.60 hours per quarter). The average amount of release time received is 3.40 (4.25 quarter hours). The average respondent has coached forensics for 12.76 years with 9.02 years in their present position.

Most faculty members are directors of forensics or debate (81.3%, $n = 91$). Most are responsible for coaching debate (78.6%, $n = 88$) and individual events (81.3%, $n = 91$). The instrument also inquired about duties in addition to forensics. While most faculty members are required to teach (96.4%, $n = 108$), some are expected to conduct research (47.3%, $n = 53$), many are required to engage in service activities (69.6%, $n = 78$), and some have administrative duties like chairing departments or directing graduate students (23.2%, $n = 26$). There were four respondents responsible for some type of media production and three with theatre production responsibilities.

In order to better classify the relative placement of forensic activities in a professional context, respondents were asked how their involvement in forensics was counted. Most respondents indicated that forensics counted toward teaching (48.6%, $n = 54$), fewer towards service (32.4%, $n = 36$), and a small percentage toward research (3.6%, $n = 4$).

Institutional Characteristics

Forensic activities are usually housed in some type of communication department. The greatest number are in "speech" departments (31%, $n = 34$), while others include "communication" (25%, $n = 28$), "speech and theatre" (24.1%, $n = 27$), or some combination of the like. (15%, $n = 17$). There is one program located in an English department and

one in economics.

With respect to department and university characteristics, there is an average of 1.34 faculty members working with forensics per department. The average department size is 10.71 full-time faculty members with an average 7.98 tenure-track. Most respondents are from public institutions (72%) with an average enrollment of 10,724 students.

Forensic faculty from public institutions were more likely to receive release time than those from private colleges and universities. A full 65 percent of the public institution respondents reported receiving release time (51 of the 79 receiving release time) compared to 58 percent of the private faculty (18 of the 31 respondents). This difference is statistically significant (Chi Square = 74.65, $p < .001$).

Gender Differences

Some differences were found between male and female forensic faculty. The female faculty indicate they are more likely to receive release time than their male counterparts. Seventy-one percent of all the females ($n = 20$) receive release time compared to 60 percent of the males ($n = 49$); this difference is statistically significant (Chi Square = 75.20, $p < .001$). However, when comparing actual semester hour reductions male faculty receive a greater average reduction than female faculty (male reduction = 3.55 semester hours; female = 3.05). This difference is not statistically significant.

The female faculty also teach a greater number of semester hours than male faculty. The difference between the 9.74 hours for men and the 11.19 hours for women was statistically significant ($t = -1.84$, $p < .05$).

No significant differences were found between men and women faculty in terms of age and salary. Male respondents reported an average annual salary of \$29,384 compared to 29,082 for females. The average reported age was 41.69 for male respondents and 40.75 for female respondents.

Job Satisfaction and Career Attitudes

Respondents were asked to evaluate five statements on a five-point Likert-type scale about their job satisfaction and career attitudes. Those statements and results appear in Table 1.

TABLE 1

**Job Satisfaction and Career Attitudes of Forensic Faculty:
Percentages and Raw Scores**

	Female (n = 28)	Male (n = 82)	Total* (n = 112)
1. I consider my present position to be at the appropriate level for this stage in my career.			
Strongly Agree	35.7 (10)	29.3 (24)	30.6 (34)
Agree	39.3 (11)	40.2 (33)	40.5 (45)
Undecided	10.7 (3)	7.3 (6)	9.0 (10)
Disagree	14.3 (4)	18.3 (15)	17.1 (19)
Strongly Disagree	0.0 (0)	3.7 (3)	2.7 (3)
2. My department colleagues appreciate my work.			
Strongly Agree	21.4 (6)	23.2 (19)	22.3 (25)
Agree	50.0 (14)	45.1 (37)	47.3 (53)
Undecided	10.7 (3)	15.9 (13)	14.3 (16)
Disagree	14.3 (4)	9.8 (8)	10.1 (12)
Strongly Disagree	3.6 (1)	6.1 (5)	5.4 (6)
3. I personally enjoy my work.			
Strongly Agree	57.1 (16)	45.1 (37)	48.2 (54)
Agree	39.3 (11)	42.7 (35)	42.6 (47)
Undecided	3.6 (1)	4.9 (4)	4.5 (5)
Disagree	0.0 (0)	6.1 (5)	4.5 (5)
Strongly Disagree	0.0 (0)	1.2 (1)	0.9 (1)
4. My efforts are appreciated by the university administration.			
Strongly Agree	17.9 (5)	24.4 (20)	22.3 (25)
Agree	39.3 (11)	35.4 (29)	36.6 (41)
Undecided	32.1 (9)	18.3 (14)	22.3 (25)
Disagree	7.1 (2)	12.2 (10)	10.7 (12)
Strongly Disagree	3.6 (1)	9.8 (8)	8.0 (9)
5. I feel professionally limited because of my involvement with forensics.			
Strongly Agree	10.7 (3)	14.6 (12)	21.4 (24)
Agree	14.3 (4)	42.7 (35)	37.5 (42)
Undecided	10.7 (3)	11.0 (9)	11.6 (13)
Disagree	25.0 (7)	19.5 (16)	17.9 (20)
Strongly Disagree	39.3 (11)	12.2 (10)	11.6 (13)

* two respondents did not indicate gender

Most respondents feel that their current positions are appropriate for this stage of their career (statement 1, Table 1). About 75 percent of the female respondents "agree" or "strongly agree" with this assessment and about 70 percent of their male counterparts.

A similar percentage of respondents believe their departmental colleagues appreciate their work (statement 2, Table 1). Nearly 72 percent of the female faculty agree or strongly agree with this assertion while a lesser number of male forensic faculty members feel this way (68%). This difference is not statistically significant (Chi square = 3.43).

Forensic faculty members generally enjoy their jobs (statement 3, Table 1). Just over 96 percent of the female respondents agree or strongly agree that they enjoy their work while a lesser but large number of males do (88%).

When it comes to feeling appreciated by the university administration, there are mixed reactions (statement 4, Table 1). The female faculty agree that they are appreciated, but a large number are unsure (32%). A large number of male faculty feel they are not appreciated by the university administration (22%). Overall, most subjects do feel appreciated (59%).

Finally, female faculty do not feel limited professionally because of their involvement in forensics (statement 5, Table 1). About 64 percent of the female respondents disagree with the assertion that forensics limited their professional status compared to only 32 percent of the males. While there is a difference, the Chi Square of 12.75 is not significant. Overall, almost 59 percent of all faculty do feel limited due to involvement with forensics.

Further statistical analysis was conducted on the evaluative items related to job satisfaction. There is a relatively strong positive relationship between assessment of present position (statement 1, Table 1) and feeling appreciated by the university administration (statement 4, Table 1) (Spearman Rank correlation = .41). A strong relationship also exists between enjoyment of work (statement 3, Table 1) and feeling appreciated by the university administration (Spearman Rank = .41).

Multiple linear regression analysis was employed to assess the best predictors for sense of current job satisfaction (statement 1, Table 1) and their sense of enjoyment (statement 2, Table 1). The variables investigated as predictors were perceived appreciation by department (statement 2, Table 1), perceived appreciation by the university administration (statement 4, Table 1), and belief that involvement with forensics was a professional limitation (statement 3, Table 1), as well as some of the descriptive data (annual salary, amount of release time).

The only significant predictor for respondents' current satisfaction with their position was perceived appreciation by the university administration ($R^2 = .23$, regression coefficient = .47, $p < .05$). For enjoyment of their position, the significant predictors were their perception of appreciation by the university administration ($r^2 = .11$, regression coefficient = .20, $p < .05$) and feeling limited because of involvement in forensics ($R^2 = .24$, regression coefficient = .14, $p < .05$).

DISCUSSION

Characteristics of Forensic Faculty

The first research question in this study attempts to characterize the average faculty member in forensics. Table 2 compares the descriptive finding of this study to previous studies (Klopf and Rives, 1965; Porter, 1986). While the percentage of faculty members with doctoral degrees has increased from the Klopf and Rives study, from 38 percent to almost 43 percent, there remains a high number of forensic faculty holding the M.A. or M.S. as their highest degree (41%) in relation to the total percentage of tenure track positions (77%). This possibility indicates a demand situation with respect to Ph.D.s in the forensic area.

TABLE 2

Comparisons of Studies of Forensic Directors:
Percentages

Variable	Current Study	Porter (1986)	Klopf and Rives (1965)
Highest Degree Earned			
Ph.D.	42.9	48	38
M.A./M.S.	41.0	37	58
Average Years Coached	12.76		11.6
Average Years at Current Program	9.01		7.5
Rank			
Instructor	21.4	23	
Assistant Professor	26.8	32	
Association Professor	25.9	12	
Professor	17.9	12	
Tenured	51.8	49	
Status of Position			
Tenure-track	77.0	73	
Non-tenure-track	14.0	25	
Other	9.0		
Expected to Publish	47.3	52	
Average Release Time for Forensics (Semester Hours)	3.4		2.0

Other findings build a favorable position for forensic faculty. While Klopff and Rives found the average DOF received 2 semester hours release for forensics, the current study showed a higher figure of 3.4 semester hours and 4.25 quarter hours. In addition, while we showed a higher percentage of tenure track positions (77%) than Porter (73%), only 47.3 percent of the respondents are expected to publish to earn tenure.

Another interesting comparison is Porter's findings concerning academic rank. This study found a higher percentage of forensic faculty at the professor/associate professor level (43.8%) than the AFA sample (38%) and Porter found a higher percentage of assistant professors (32% to 26.8%). This might be explained by a greater difficulty in earning tenure at schools active in the AFA. Porter also found that 52% of the AFA respondents were expected to publish to gain tenure.

A final comparison is likewise intriguing. While Kopf and Rives found the average DOF had been teaching 11.6 years with 7.5 in their current position, the present study implies forensic faculty remaining in forensics longer. The average respondent has been coaching 12.76 years and have held their current position for 9.02 years.

Job Satisfaction of Forensic Faculty

The second research question documents the extent of job satisfaction among forensic faculty. Most faculty members in forensics are satisfied with their positions. The highest percentage of respondents indicate they enjoy their work (90.8%). This is especially true of women forensic faculty; 96.4 percent agreed or strongly agreed their work is enjoyable. Likewise, high percentages of forensic faculty indicate their position is at the appropriate level for their career (70.11%) and their colleagues appreciate them (69.6%).

While these descriptive data might paint a rosy picture of the faculty member in forensics, it is interesting to note that the two lowest scoring items were appreciation by the university administration and whether respondents feel professionally limited by their involvement in forensics.

This area presents another interesting comparison to the Klopff and Rives study. They found, in 1964, that 83 percent of the DOFs felt their academic respectability was equal to or greater than their colleagues. This study finds close to 70 percent of forensic faculty feel their colleagues appreciate their work and 59 percent feel their efforts are appreciated by their administration. This might be explained by a greater emphasis on research in some universities.

Klopff and Rives also found that 85 percent of DOFs in their sample felt professionally limited by directing forensics. While the percentage of those feeling professionally limited is high - 59 percent - the current figure is lower than the early study. An explanation might be a greater number of tenure track positions available in forensics or possibly an increase in support for available forensic faculty (e.g., graduate assistants).

Gender Differences and Job Satisfaction

There are differences between male and female faculty members in forensics regarding job satisfaction, but none reached statistical significance. They are reported here because, though differences are not significant, a clear pattern is visible. To summarize these attitudinal differences, female faculty are more likely to feel limited by their involvement in forensics than their male counterparts. Otherwise, female faculty are more likely to feel their present position is appropriate for this stage in their career, are more likely to feel appreciated by their department and administration, and enjoy their work more than their male colleagues.

Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction

After analyzing all potential variables, this study could not isolate many relationships between those variables and most items concerning job satisfaction. Multiple linear regression, however, did find that the best predictors of enjoyment and success were appreciation by the university administration and feeling limited by involvement in forensics. There are possible explanations for this relationship.

The first explanation is the close ties between many forensic programs and college or university administrations. In some programs, the administration directly controls many facets of the forensic program: the structure of the position, tenure of the forensic faculty, program budget, and public relations are among the possible links between forensic faculty and administration.

Second, the administration often provides feedback critical to the forensic positions. This may be through a college or university information office. If, for example, the school is promoting athletics over forensics, the faculty member may perceive less success or enjoyment in his/her position. As a college or university program, departmental feedback may not suffice for forensic faculty.

This may be related to the notion that many directors of forensic programs set their goals with the university in mind. While a director might not be caught telling his/her colleague about the success in teaching students in a public speaking class, they might tell an administrator about a recent debate tournament. Defining program goals in a competitive sense shifts the feedback expected from the department to the university.

CONCLUSION

While the present study provides valuable insight into issues concerning faculty members in forensics, several limitations should be noted. First, the response rate for the sample size was low. Only 37 percent of the questionnaires were returned. This compares with Porter's 63 percent. The implication of this lower rate would be that the descriptive data should not be taken as a comprehensive view of the forensic position. This is certainly a ripe area for future research given the last such survey (Klopf and Rives, 1965). Second, while many differences were noted among the job satisfaction items, few of them reached statistical significance.

The possibilities for future research in this area are many. Studies should be done to examine the possible gender differences in forensic faculty in order to assess equality and other relevant issues. The finding that female faculty enjoy their work more than male faculty deserves further attention.

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APPLYING QUASIPOLICY DEBATE THEORY TO ARGUMENTATION IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

By Dr. C. Thomas Preston, Jr., Assistant Professor of Speech Communication
University of Missouri, St. Louis.

■ Coaches, participants, and scholars of Cross Examination Debate Association debate have long promoted the idea that intercollegiate debate should be relevant to the here-and-now world (e.g., Colbert, 1987; Freeley, 1989). Much attention has been paid to the theory behind CEDA debate (e.g., Church & Wilbanks, 1989; Freeley, 1989; Midgley & Woods, 1986, 1989). On most semesters, CEDA topics call for quasipolicy debate. By quasipolicy debate, practitioners and scholars generally mean debate which focuses on values, which both imply and underlie the policies that shape our everyday world.¹

Though scholars have stressed the need for quasipolicy debate to be relevant, they have made little if any effort to apply this body of theory to phenomena outside the scope of academic debate. The present study seeks to fill this research void by applying quasipolicy debate theory to a 1990 North Carolina senatorial race termed the "parable" (Gaillard,