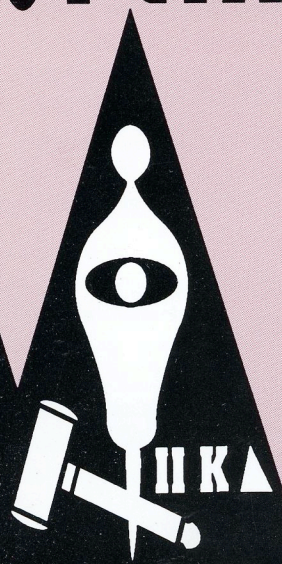


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RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION FOR COMPETITIVE FORENSICS AT AN URBAN COMMUTER UNIVERSITY

By C. Thomas Preston, Jr.

■ Of all of the challenges facing those involved in directing forensics, few are at once as challenging and vexing as finding and retaining qualified students. While controversies rage over recruiting practices in all schools (e.g., Bartanen, 1988), and over retention in some (e.g., Simerly & McGee, 1991), urban commuter universities face special circumstances that by necessity shape their approaches to recruiting. Although seemingly caught in a netherworld between programs situated in the dormitory four-year school and those at two-year community colleges, forensic programs at urban commuter institutions possess unique opportunities for developing a broad-based and diverse program.¹ Such opportunities shall be the focus of the present paper.²

Focusing primarily on participant observation during the past seven-year history of the development of the program at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, this paper does not suggest the definitive recruitment and retention model for all commuter campuses in the urban setting. However, it does provide a detailed example of how directors might take advantage of the location and commuter nature of a campus, as the essay a) outlines the opportunities afforded the director of forensics in the recruitment of students, b) describes ways in which directors can take advantage of those opportunities, and c) discusses how to retain students.

'Although Stovall's (1974) notion that forensics appears stronger in the suburban high schools still appears to be the case (Preston, 1989), this paper argues that the urban commuter university can still take advantage of and indeed promote greater and higher quality forensic participation through diversity grounded in a philosophy of cultural inclusion. In their discussion of the activity's future goals, Sillars and Zarefsky (1975) also noted the need for forensics to include and educate.

²For example, several urban universities, George Mason University, The Wichita State University, and the University of Missouri-Kansas City, whose student populations primarily commute to class have experienced extraordinary competitive and/or pedagogical success.

Tom Preston is an Associate Professor of Communication at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. He dedicates this article to the memory of the late UMSL Chancellor Marguerite Ross Barnett, from whose recruitment and retention initiatives this article takes its title. An earlier version was presented at the 1991 SCA convention.

RECRUITMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Although lacking the advantage of having students living together in an on-campus location, commuter campuses themselves offer five advantages to the director of forensics. First, they are typically located near many local high school forensic programs. In the case of UM-St. Louis and many other urban institutions, there are over 30 active high school NFL programs within a twenty-mile radius of campus. Since costs often make the public commuter campus the most economical choice for students choosing not to "go away" to college, many students with forensic experience will not only enroll at such universities by default, but will seek out a forensic program at a University and then compete. Even though urban areas also often contain dormitory universities, many of them are private and out of the cost-range of some potential students. Thus, despite the potential for competition from community colleges and other commuter universities alike, the number of nearby high school programs gives the urban commuter director ready access to recruits.

Second, the urban commuter campus typically finds itself surrounded by a rich diversity of secondary schools, and thus a rich diversity of students from which to recruit a team. In St. Louis, although as many schools do not offer forensics as the many who do, these schools, too, contribute to those who might catch on to this new activity in college. In St. Louis City and County alone, a host of various parochial, private, and public schools serve various groups, including the rich, the suburban middle class, the poor, the urban gentry, various religions, and a host of ethnic mixtures. The general student body of the urban commuter campus reflects this mix, thereby expanding and diversifying the pool of forensic recruits. Of course, this advantage is not unique to urban campuses without dormitories — although diversity is more possible from a cost-standpoint among students paying for tuition only.

Third, this geographical centrality to both forensic and non-forensic high schools affords the urban commuter campus the opportunity to maintain various sorts of constant partnerships with high schools more than most campuses. These "pipelines" enable the urban campus to not only publicize its program, but better serve the community.

Fourth, the location of the urban university affords it opportunities to host major high school events in order to publicize its program. Typically, enough high school forensic programs exist in the metropolitan area that a high school tournament hosted by the college can be very successful, even if fewer than half of the programs within the urban radius show up. Such a negligible travel expense for the area high schools also makes the urban commuter campus an ideal place to hold workshops and NFL district tournaments, especially given the large number of parking spaces typically available over the weekends on commuter as opposed to dormitory campuses.

Fifth, at first glance, it would appear that since the student body lives off-campus, on-campus recruiting would be hampered.

Nonetheless, on-campus recruiting can be successful on the urban commuter campus, as each semester, a large number of new students — including the mature, non-traditional students — arrive.

Even with the advantages associated with working at an urban, commuter, or urban-commuter university, the director, staff, and squad members must still attract students to their program. At UM-St. Louis, we have attempted to capitalize on these advantages by establishing three general principles that form the philosophical underpinnings of the program. First, we seek to provide the greatest good for the greatest number of students by offering a wide variety of activities to our participants, including emphases solely on community service or on-campus activities for those students so inclined. Second, we strive to maintain a sense of diversity in the program, offering a variety of competitive and non-competitive activities that appeal to a wide variety of cultural tastes. Finally, and foremost, the philosophy of our program stresses pedagogy. While pedagogy does not have to conflict with competitive success (we tend to agree with Friedley's [1989] admonition that "learning is winning"), we do strive to produce students better able to perform, to speak, and to argue, and to do so effectively and ethically in a multicultural society. Although its conclusions focus on the universities situated in urban areas that serve mainly commuter student population, some of this essay's suggestions for recruitment and retention may be helpful for any type of forensic program.

CAPITALIZING ON THE OPPORTUNITIES

With the underpinnings in mind, the UM-St. Louis forensic program, having gone through the trials and errors of many developing programs, has found ways of capitalizing on the advantages afforded the urban commuter university. First, realizing the proximity to many high school forensic programs, UM-St. Louis instituted the Twin Rivers High School Classic in 1990 and has been hosting the Eastern Missouri National Forensic League District Championship Tournament since 1985. The summer Gateway Debate Institute, begun in 1985, has been able to run at a very low cost to the students attending. The close proximity to high schools gives urban commuter students many opportunities to judge at the tournaments which often occur weekly within the urban area. Just as in urban dormitory schools, such as the University of Pennsylvania, activities such as these afford urban commuter campuses a more constant, direct link to the active high school forensic programs than afforded the more isolated dormitory schools. Although the present study recommends a policy of not actively recruiting students during such meets, the extraordinary exposure provided by participating in so many local events certainly does inform prospective students that the program exists, should they attend our university.

Second, the UM-St. Louis program attempts and encourages other commuter universities to capitalize on the rich diversity of forensic and non-forensic schools alike within close proximity. While some recruiting activities noted in this report target general audiences, we

have found that three University-wide academic programs targeted at specific audiences help our forensic program achieve its objectives: a) advanced credit, b) bridge, and c) shared resources. The **advanced credit** program targets schools that have advanced speech courses for high school students that might be offered for college credit. Currently, the UM-St. Louis Communication Department, in cooperation with the forensic program, offers two such courses — Communication 194 (practicum in forensics, offered to advanced high school juniors and seniors for competing in forensics) and Communication 40 (usually entitled “advanced public speaking” for high schools, and transferable into the University’s basic public speaking course). We target this advanced credit toward the schools that have both active forensic programs and developed speech curricula — in other words, currently schools of the suburban districts. We do, however, caution universities considering or offering such credit which in some state and local forensic organizations results in banning students from high school competition. Also, some faculty — including a small minority on our campus — oppose **any** advanced credit for **any** high school student. We would urge such associations and opponents to abandon such rules and objections, because the advanced credit program helps not only the college program by providing exposure for direct recruitment, but has decided benefits. High school coaches can provide an additional incentive for students to compete. Students enjoy the research privileges of college students and in the long run save tuition money. The college director benefits by having continual contact with the many programs in his or her vicinity able to participate because of the proximity.

By **bridge**, we refer to the nationally-honored Bridge Program at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, in which the forensic program has participated since The Bridge Program’s inception 1987. Founded by the late Chancellor Marguerite Ross Barnett, the Bridge Program sought to “bridge” the gap between the minority inner-city high school student and the alien college environment. Although other universities may not offer a universal or campus-wide bridge program as does UM-St. Louis, forensic programs such as ours can often form their own “bridge” between their university and such schools. The urban setting has enabled UM-St. Louis to aid some of these schools in four areas — coaching mock trial, establishing formats for on-campus audience debates, forming a beginning debate league for junior high programs, and offering Bridge scholarships to the summer Gateway Speech and Mock Trial Institutes. The urban commuter program is encouraged to try to recruit some of such students to its squad. Opportunities to assist in the summer institute, an increased departmental emphasis on cross-cultural communication, and the opportunity for on-campus audience debating afforded to those taking forensic practicum credit at our university enable more students to participate fully and remain active in the program.

Forensic programs of all sorts should give back to those who sustain them. By **shared resources**, we mean utilizing students from our

program to volunteer to coach at area high schools desiring to start programs. Usually we depend upon the experienced, "core" members of our squad to serve as coaches. Coaching partnerships with many types of high schools — urban, suburban, public, private, and parochial — cannot help but enhance the image and thus the recruitment program of the urban commuter campus. Again, the close proximity of such schools makes sharing such resources possible.

Additionally, UM-St. Louis has established a number of service programs to enhance recruitment. For schools with active forensic programs, including many of the advanced credit schools, UM-St. Louis provides a list containing both the travelling and the non-travelling forensic students for high school tournament directors to contact as volunteer judges. The proximity to such high schools makes it easier for their forensic squad members to visit the major collegiate events sponsored by UM-St. Louis, thereby enabling them to come into contact with many top collegiate programs. Since the urban commuter campus usually consists of large classroom buildings in close proximity and plenty of parking space in a centralized location with easy access to air transportation, it often provides the ideal site for hosting national tournaments that attract top schools. In 1991, the Gateway Forensic Tournament attracted 46 colleges and universities, making it the nation's third largest regular season tournament (Hawkins, 1991). Because high school coaches are hired to judge at such events and their students come to observe, urban commuter programs may expand their recruiting exposure yet more.

Usually, commuter universities face challenges in sparking school spirit from a student population that deserts campus entirely at the end of a day. While on the surface this would tend to seem a hindrance, actually it provides another advantage to the **on-campus** recruiting program at the major urban campus. Referring to the massive student speeches made during the protest rallies of the sixties, Kleinau (1969) noted that the best opportunities for forensic recruitment are "smack in the middle of one's own campus," among members of groups such as student councils, the Students for a Democratic Society, and Blacks for Justice (p. 16). With the lack of dorm life, such organizations are particularly important in the life of the urban campus. Partly because campus activism may return in the 1990s, Kleinau's notion of on-campus recruitment rings doubly true for today's urban commuter university. For example, in order to address the problem of lack of spirit, during the day, such campuses often have student activity fairs where clubs such as those involved in debate can spark interest. Also, whatever social life does exist on campus, often centers more in the classroom than in fraternities and dormitories. Therefore, as in the case of rural and dormitory colleges and universities, the communication course classroom provides an excellent opportunity for the on-campus recruitment not only of recent high school graduates, but students from a wide number of traditional and non-traditional backgrounds. Such classrooms and fair activities have been a mainstay of recruiting at UM-St. Louis, for it is there that students interested in developing excellent

communication skills can both seek out forensics and be sought out. Not only each year, but each semester, there have always been a large number of new students desiring to participate in the UM-St. Louis forensic program.

It must be noted that offering Communication 194, or Practicum in Forensics, both to travelling students and on-campus students, enhances significantly the on-campus recruiting effort. For example, the 34 students who enrolled for such credit in Winter Semester 1991 at UM-St. Louis proved indispensable not only to the on-campus speech program and hosting Novice IE Nationals, but to the competitive squad as well. We must therefore recommend that any communication department at an urban campus not only require of all of its majors to take a large number of practicum hours, but offer forensics as one valuable way to fulfill that requirement. UM-St. Louis requires three hours, although a student can take up to a total of four. Proposals are under way to expand the total possible to eight, with students being able to earn credit for each of the semesters in which they participate.

In sum, the nature of the urban commuter campus not only makes the university ideal for forming myriad partnerships with area high schools for off-campus recruiting, but provides a great influx of new students each semester for on-campus recruiting. Today's trend toward students transferring during their college careers for academic and financial reasons is magnified at the urban commuter university. A vast majority of UM-St. Louis graduates began their college careers at other universities, and less than twenty percent who enter UM-St. Louis as traditional freshmen graduate from UM-St. Louis within **five** years. This "water mill" of students always provides a fresh "supply" into which to "dip" for recruits. Programs suffering from an "off" semester thereby have an opportunity to rebuild participation in the program at all levels quickly.

RETENTION

Even though the situation of the major urban university situation favors the recruiting program, it poses challenges in terms of retention. These challenges are five-fold. First, the fact that all students leave campus during the day challenges the director to maintain a diverse and exciting program — one that motivates students to stay on campus longer (or to return in the evenings) just because of the forensic activity itself. On a campus without major athletic events, limited social fraternity or sorority life, and no dorm life, the urban commuter program must offer much more than just competitive travel if it hopes to retain students. As Kleinau (1969) noted, any program whose major goal is to win one or two tournaments may "find itself disbanding again" before long (p. 15). With goals of diversity with pedagogy in mind, the urban commuter campus can utilize its position to capitalize on opportunities available to non-urban and non-commuter campuses as well:

1. Hosting audience debates, possibly televised.³
2. Hosting a variety of college and high school tournaments.
3. Holding a variety of creative fundraising activities.
4. Holding team-building activities.
5. Providing liberal opportunities for club members to help run summer high school institutes.
6. Hosting a variety of literary reading hours.
7. Co-sponsoring activities with other campus groups.
8. Hosting national tournaments.

As an additional bonus, each of these opportunities enhances an atmosphere whereby interdepartmental feedback (Derryberry, 1991) can benefit the forensic program.⁴ Such feedback cannot help but enhance the diversity of knowledge gained by the forensic students. Once such students recognize the benefits, retention is enhanced.

Second, attrition poses a challenge. Just as many students arrive each semester, students in the program leave. Some leave through graduation (many of UM-St. Louis's competitive performers actually arrived in the program as juniors and seniors). Others plan to transfer to a dormitory school out of town after a brief stay. Unlike the first challenge to retention, this inherent difficulty cannot be handled directly — students who leave in this fashion **must** leave. At the same time, directors can address this revolving door in three ways: a) make the recruiting program ongoing and constant, by establishing an active on-going, on-campus recruiting program. Again, activity fairs, classroom visitations, and a habit of seeking talent constantly within the department and recruiting at the on-campus activities can prove most successful. For example, during the 1988 visit by the Soviet Debate Team sponsored by the Speech Communication Association, Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville, another urban commuter campus in the St. Louis area, handed out program flyers and distributed sign-up sheets that attracted several students to its debate program; b) train recruits quickly, because they will compete against students who have been travelling the collegiate circuit for several years. Otherwise, such

³For a discussion of the value of televised debates to enhance the forensic activity, see Walsh (1969, p. 13), and for a discussion of the value of audience debates in general, see Swanson (1968, pp. 10-11).

⁴In this particular case, the University of Missouri-St. Louis has tried to accomplish these goals 1) by hosting international audience debates, including a televised debate with the Oxford Union Society, the British National Debate team (twice since 1984), and the Soviet National Team, 2) by hosting a variety of tournaments, 3) by selling flowers in the student Union on St. Valentine's day, 4) by holding an off-campus team retreat at the beginning of each school year, 5) by offering an on-campus intercollegiate novice tournament for students enrolled in the basic debate course, 6) by providing liberal tutoring opportunities at the Gateway High School Institute, 7) by offering literary reading hours of various sorts, 8) by co-sponsoring Midwest Model UN, 9) by hosting national tournaments (such as the 1989 Pi Kappa Delta tournament, the Novice National Individual Events tournament 1991 to date, and the 1992 American Forensic Association's National Individual Events Tournament), 10) and by co-sponsoring a plethora of events with other campus organizations such as the Political Science Academy, University Programming Board, Student Government Association, Women's Center, Television Club, and sundry other departments including Communication.

students may become demoralized; c) place extra emphasis on variegating the difficulty in the travel schedule, especially seeking tournaments that offer novice awards and divisions, while at the same time offering divisions where students can learn quickly by examples the skills necessary to compete favorably on the forensic and debate circuit.

Third, rapid change in student personnel can play havoc if the commuter campus relies on student leadership. Thus, the director at such a program must establish by-laws that allows for student input into decision making (keeping in mind the adult nature of the student population), yet capable of ready comprehension and flexibility, ensuring a continuity of leadership. Because of the state of flux, the director must play an active role at every level of the fluid organization. In order to take advantage of the desirable tournament hosting situation, for example, the forensic club, while fluid, must remain organized at all times. The director and his or her permanent staff, therefore, must be regarded as the leaders of the program, in order to assure that strong underpinning keeps the students in the program, as long as they attend the university.

Fourth, some commuter programs exist in relatively young schools. For example, the University of Missouri-St. Louis was founded in 1963. This may pose a challenge to fundraising for scholarships. However, realize the reward value of offering relatively inexpensive scholarships to students enables the commuter program to use such scholarships as a way to retain students in the program. Although some programs are just beginning to use this method, the reward value may enhance the utility of the commuter campus offering even partial scholarships for participation in the program.

Fifth, maintaining the "teamness" of the squad challenges the urban director. Unity must come for a widely varying group of students with very different views about the world, the forensic competition, and themselves. The fluid situation noted above can change leadership patterns quickly. As well, as in other institutions, new members may have different competitive goals in joining the squad. To meet these demands, the directors must explain thoroughly the rationale behind the multi-tiered program through detailed syllabi, the expectations of those participating at various levels of the forensics activities, the ethical standards, and the enforcement of expectations and standards in order to address these issues. At the same time, the director needs to be sensitive to situations ranging from students having to dodge the bullets of gang members on the way to campus to problems stemming from the parenting of children or the management of a business operated by a non-traditional member of the squad. An ability to listen and a knowledge of the appropriate counseling services (abundant in the urban area) can help the director to manage crisis situations in a way such that the squad remains as unified as possible, despite some members occasionally missing meetings to attend to the crises afflicting modern day urban America. In the absence of a strong campus identity such as exists at most dormitory schools, UM-St. Louis has been able to promote some

sense of teamness by its active involvement in Pi Kappa Delta. This fraternity is best suited for the urban commuter campus because it addresses diversity by offering a wide variety of events. Furthermore, it rewards students for participation at many levels. Membership in this fraternity provides a vital way to promote unity and continuity in a program where both are challenged by the inherent nature of a diverse and constantly changing general student population. It also provides a means whereby a program can provide the greatest rewards for the greatest number — Pi Kappa Delta membership degrees not only reward winning, but participating responsibly while maintaining sound academic standards. Such rewards cannot help but promote continuity in a program where new students enter constantly.

LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

As noted earlier, the present study does not provide the definitive answer to recruitment and retention at the major urban commuter campus, but rather offers a glimpse at some options that the director might take in assuring the greatest benefit for the greatest number in such a situation. The experience of the successful audience debate program at Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville, the extraordinary NDT debate and AFA-Individual Events programs at George Mason University, the tournament-hosting success of Indiana-Purdue University at Indianapolis, and the successful CEDA program at the University of Missouri-Kansas City provide just a few examples illustrative of the many different, successful avenues that can enhance recruitment and retention at the major urban commuter university. Although the programs mentioned in this article are similar in some ways, each has chosen a different — and successful — avenue toward recruitment and retention. A comparative study of such programs could augment this study and better differentiate the recruitment and retention strategies of the four-year commuter university from the two-year community college and the four-year dormitory institution.

The present study first outlined the benefits enjoyed by the forensic program on the urban commuter campus. Second, it pointed out five ways in which the focal program has capitalized on these advantages in ways consistent with three underpinnings of the program's philosophy — doing the greatest good for the greatest number, cultural diversity, and effective and ethically sound forensic pedagogy. Third, it delineated the challenges of retention that may be addressed directly from those inherent to the urban commuter campus general student body population, and suggested ways to promote retention.

Above all, forensic directors should never sell short the ability of the activity to benefit its participants once they have left college. The social, educational, and competitive benefits of forensics at any school cannot help but enhance recruitment and retention on our campuses. Even as we have listed many ways to recruit and retain students on the commuter campus, as on any campus, there is no substitute for

running a program generally capable of empowering its students for future life.

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A FOCUS ON FORENSIC DEVELOPMENTAL CONFERENCES

By Don R. Swanson

■ In 1992 intercollegiate forensics is comprised of diverse activities, philosophies and rhetorical practices. Those of us who can look back more than a quarter of century, remember that then the vast majority of forensic tournaments offered one form of debate and only two or three individual events. In the 1960s debate was oxford style (team policy debate without cross-examination) and the individual events were oratory, extemporaneous speaking and programmed oral interpretation. Contrast that with today's plethora of individual events and forms of debate, often differing in competitive philosophy and practices, and it is obvious that a great deal of change has occurred. A tremendous number of new participants have engaged in an ever increasing diversity of intercollegiate forensic events. New forensic organizations such as the National Forensic Association, the Cross-Examination Debate Association, and the American Debate Association, were formed to respond to the desires of forensic educators to promulgate and operationalize particular philosophies and practices in intercollegiate competition. What had once been a kind of loose knit unity within the community of forensic educators, with the American Forensic Association and the forensic honoraries providing an organizational focus, later became more diverse and splintered. Programs increasingly tended to specialize in particular activities that were promoted by a particular forensic organization.

In order to clarify what was happening to forensics and to forecast the future, concerned forensic educators decided to hold a developmental conference in 1974. For the first time a unified definition of forensics and its role in education was articulated. This was an important achievement. However, the conferees didn't address or clearly forecast the rapid growth of individual events and alternative forms of debate. So when the second developmental conference was held in 1984 the intercollegiate forensic arena was drastically different than it had been a decade before. The 1984 Evanston conference attempted to bring together a diverse group of forensic educators, but that conference did not draw significant representation from some segments of the forensic community. There was a need for further discussion in a forum of this type. As Schnoor and Karns point out in their following essay: "There was clear consensus at the 1984 conference that a conference devoted to individual events should be considered." Also as Bartanen points out in his accompanying paper, "The conference was characterized by acrimony and a fundamental inability to find common ground between the various competing views of forensics." The years following the conference demonstrated that there was a significant need for additional study of forensic pedagogy and the role of forensic organizations such as Pi Kappa Delta. Consequently, during the last

five years five important developmental forensic conferences have been held: individual events conferences in 1988 and 1990, a CEDA conference in 1991, and Pi Kappa Delta developmental conferences in 1989 and 1991. The conference planners for each of these five conferences have graciously contributed essays to this issue to discuss the history, background, planning, format, and results of their developmental conferences.

The intent of these essays is to bring the value of these unique academic forensic events to the awareness of Pi Kappa Delta members. The educational activity of forensics probably can not survive without constant assessment of its goals, methods and outcomes. Bartanen is blunt in his essay: "The forensics activity is threatened as it never has been threatened before." Developmental conferences provide an opportunity to do intense and unified study of the practices and educational value of forensics. The many thoughtful papers and research studies that are presented at these conferences elucidate issues and propose alternative approaches. Valuable new insights evolve in spirited discussions. Forensic educators find the published proceedings of these conferences to be invaluable in their research and reexamination of their pedagogy. It is for these reasons that *The Forensic* presents this symposia on the recent forensic developmental conferences.

It is important to note that in the "Fraternally Speaking" section of this issue, Ed Inch, the developmental conference planner for the 1993 Pi Kappa Delta Developmental Conference, issues a call for programs and paper submissions for the upcoming Tacoma conference.

Don Swanson, editor of The Forensic, was a participant in all of the conferences considered in the following essays.

THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTAL CONFERENCES ON INDIVIDUAL EVENTS

By Larry Schnoor and Vicki L. Karns

■ **HISTORY:** In August, 1988 and 1990, coaches of individual events met in Denver, Colorado, for the first two National Developmental Conferences which were concerned with the area of individual events. These conferences were the outgrowth of discussions which had taken place in 1984 at the second National Developmental Conference on Forensics held at Evanston, Illinois. There was a clear consensus at the 1984 conference that a conference devoted to Individual Events should be considered.

After several months of deliberation and exploration, we volunteered to take it upon ourselves to forge ahead to determine if there was a real interest in holding such a Conference. Backed with the support and approval of several major forensic organizations, a survey was designed to determine areas of interest, appropriate dates and times, and individual interests. The survey was mailed to all schools/universities on the AFA and NFA mailing lists, as well as any other names/addresses we could obtain. The response to the survey clearly indicated that the interest was there to hold such a conference, and the dates were selected for the first conference to be held in August of 1988 in Denver, Colorado.

THE FIRST CONFERENCE, 1988:

The results of the survey were tabulated and ten areas of interest and/or concentration were established:

- standards for evaluation/judging of individual events;
- role of research in individual events;
- tournament management practices;
- high school-college connection in individual events;
- use of workshops for training judges/coaches;
- creative events/original material in individual events;
- role of graduate assistants in the individual events program;
- administrative support/publicity;
- ethical questions for coaches and competitors; and
- a rationale for events to be included in IE competition.

Participants in the conference were given the choice of being assigned to work groups or being an observer and free to participate in any group. Each group was concerned with one of the topic areas and given the task of coming up with recommendations that would be presented at a final session for all conference attendees to consider. Participants in each group were asked to prepare papers which were concerned with the general topic area of their group assignment. At the conference, individual papers were presented in the first session, with the second and third sessions being devoted to discussion and the development of recommendations for the entire conference and the forensic community in general to consider. The final session allowed for the suggestions to be presented for discussion, and all of the discussion was published in the Conference Proceedings. While some individuals disagreed with this decision and felt mere suggestions carried no weight, others liked the idea of the entire group meeting together for discussion and sharing. One of the final decisions of the conference was to hold a second conference in 1990.

THE SECOND CONFERENCE, 1990:

Based upon the evaluations from the first conference, several changes were made for the conference to be held in 1990. The 1990 meeting was also held in Denver, Colorado, primarily because of its central location. The format of holding the meeting over two days was continued, however, factors did differ from the first conference. The second conference was designed to continue the exploration and examination of the current state of Individual Events, and to offer new directions for the activity. The conference included two major areas of concentration and several sub-categories within each area. They were:

PHILOSOPHICAL CONCERNS:

- What are the implications of the informal training procedures for coaches/judges in Individual Events?
- What are the implications of the organizational hierarchy of Individual Events Associations?
- What are the implications of the dual educational/competitive aspects of Individual Events for students and coaches?

PRACTICAL CONCERNS:

- What should be done to improve public address events in Individual Events?
- What should be done to improve oral interpretation events in Individual Events?
- What should be done to assist in the formation of new Individual Events Programs?

Just as with the First Conference, participants were asked to select

a work group and prepare a paper for presentation to that group. Observers could attend work groups and participate in the group discussion and decision-making process.

The format featured substantial interaction between the individuals attending. Each person was encouraged to attend one work group in each area. The first session was devoted to the presentation of papers; the second session focused on discussion of the papers by presenters; and the third and final session was devoted to the development of recommendations which were considered at a parliamentary-style session on the final day of the conference. The final product of the conference was a set of recommendations for the forensic community. It was also decided at this meeting that a third developmental conference should be held, but that a greater period of time should pass before it is held. It was decided that a four year period would allow time for the recommendations to be fully considered by the forensic community at large.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE CONFERENCES:

The two conferences allowed representatives of the individual events area of forensics, to express a number of concerns and issues. In many cases, the discussion has led to direct results in more experimentation being conducted at various tournaments with procedures and event descriptions/practices. In other cases, the conferences have been an instrumental factor in the increase of forensic programs concerned with individual events at state, regional and national speech conventions. The spirit of cooperation and reconciliation between forensic organizations was very encouraging. People worked together regardless of affiliations and philosophies. Numerous research projects have been based on one or several of the recommendations. New suggestions have been incorporated into tournament rules and regulations. Perhaps one of the most significant outcomes of the Second Conference is related to the revision of the AFA constitution and the creation of an Executive Secretary for that organization.

PROCEEDINGS:

The proceedings of the First Conference were printed and made available to all participants. This publication is available in limited number and may be obtained by contacting Larry Schnoor at Mankato State University. The proceedings from the Second Conference are in the final stages of being prepared for delivery to the participants. Dr. Vicky Karns of Suffolk University is the contact person for the proceedings from the Second Conference.

FUTURE CONFERENCES:

At this point in time, no definite plans have been developed for a third conference. Given the recommendation from the Second Conference, it is likely that a third conference will held at some time during 1994 at a location and time still to be determined.