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Vol 98

## *of Pi Kappa Delta*

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# The Forensic

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The *Forensic of Pi Kappa Delta* invites authors to submit manuscripts related to scholarship, pedagogy, research and administration in competitive and non-competitive debate. The Editor and Editorial Board especially seek articles that are especially about ways to increase diversity in forensics. The Editorial Board will consider manuscripts of this nature of top priority. Manuscripts submitted by undergraduate students and previously unpublished scholars will also receive serious consideration.

This journal reflects the values of its supporting organization, *Pi Kappa Delta*, which is committed to promoting *the art of persuasion, beautiful and just*. The journal seeks to promote serious scholarly discussion of issues connected to making competitive debate and individual events a powerful tool for teaching students the skills necessary for becoming articulate citizens. The journal seeks essays reflecting perspectives from all current debate and individual events forms, including, but not limited to: NDT, CEDA, NEDA, NPDA, Lincoln-Douglas debate, as well as NIET, NFA, and nontraditional individual events.

Reviews of books, activities, and other educational materials will be published periodically (as submitted), and those submissions are also sought. Potential authors should contact the Editor regarding the choice of materials for review.

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All works must be original and not under review by other publishers. Submissions should conform to **APA guidelines** (Most recent edition). **Authors should E-mail submissions in Word format only with no specialized formatting.** (Hard copy submissions are acceptable; contact editor for directions for these submissions.) Manuscripts should not exceed 25 double-spaced typed pages, exclusive of tables and references; books reviews and educational materials should be 4-5 double-spaced pages. The title page should include the title, author(s), correspondence address, e-mail address, and telephone numbers. The second page should include an abstract of 75-100 words. The text of the manuscript (including its title) should begin on the next page (with no reference to author), with the remaining pages numbered consecutively. Avoid self-identification in the text of the manuscript. Notes and references should be typed and double spaced on pages following the text of the manuscript. Tables should be clearly marked regarding their placement in the manuscript.

**SEND MANUSCRIPTS TO: Joshua Compton: [Joshua.Compton@dartmouth.edu](mailto:Joshua.Compton@dartmouth.edu). Do not fax submissions.** Authors should have an editorial decision within 3 months.

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**Thanks to the following for their years of service;**

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**THE FORENSIC OF PI KAPPA DELTA** (ISSN:0015-735X) is published twice yearly, Winter and Summer, 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 Ripon, WI. Postmaster and subscribers: Please send all change requests to: PKD, 125 Watson St., P. O. Box 38, Ripon, WI 54971. **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.



## Parting Thoughts From The Editor

Over the last twelve years, I have had the honor and pleasure of serving as your Editor of *THE FORENSIC OF PI KAPPA DELTA*. I have enjoyed the journey! Thanks for allowing me the opportunity to serve.

At what was to be my last issue four years ago, I published an index of the scholarly articles in the area of forensics, just as my predecessor did. Since it is really too soon to publish such a volume once again, I decided to do an issue that includes articles of many areas of communication that I had hoped to publish during my tenure.

To begin with, my vision for *THE FORENSIC* has always been to publish good, scholarly material in the area of forensics. I believe this was accomplished over the last twelve years. Because of that, the first article in the issue is about creating a judging philosophy for individual events, written by Ben Walker of Southwest Minnesota State University.

Secondly, I had a vision of looking at how argumentation and persuasion play roles in every day life; in particular, I had always hoped to find an article that dealt with interpersonal persuasion and/or argumentation. The second article addresses those concepts; an article on spousal requests, written by a team of Susan I. Holt, Lynne M. Webb, Phillip L. Kropp, Mark L. Hans, Michelle Conty of the University of Arkansas, Sarah K. Chorley of University of Colorado-Boulder, and Megan L. Wilson of Ivy Technical Community College, Indiana.

Finally, I had always wanted to find an article that applies communication theories, especially ones dealing with interpersonal and societal issues that college students face, to real-world communication. The final article does just this, discussing how acceptance of rape myths by college students affects the truths, and myths, of rape situations, written by Crystal Lane Swift of Mt. San Antonio College and California State University-Northridge and James Honeycutt of Louisiana State University.

I now turn over the reins to Dr. Joshua Compton of Dartmouth College, a notable scholar himself. He is well-prepared to become your editor, he is efficient, organized, and one of the most ethical scholars I have had the pleasure to work with over the years.

Again, I thank you for all of your support over the past twelve years, and I hope to see you at future Pi Kappa Delta functions, proclaiming loudly, *The Art of Persuasion, Beautiful and Just!* I have immensely enjoyed the ride!!

Nina-Jo Moore, Ph. D.  
Editor of *The Forensic*  
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# Constructing a Personal Individual Events Judging Philosophy

BENJAMIN WALKER, SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

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**Abstract:** *This article reviews the forensic discussion on tournament judging, frames the ballot as an assessment tool, and argues that individual event judges should create an individualized judging philosophy similar to debate judges' paradigms to increase pedagogical gains. The author compares the individual event ballot to the traditional classroom assessment tool (known as a rubric), juxtaposes IE judging with debate judging, before finally outlining a method for judges to construct a personal individual event judging philosophy. Suggestions for implementation are discussed along with potential benefits and drawbacks of such an approach.*

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## Introduction

Aspects of collegiate forensic competition are criticized by forensic professionals for a variety of reasons; coaches often wish to make the competition fairer or they wish to increase the pedagogical outcomes of the activity. Criticism can be a healthy activity in which to engage in order to enhance the experience both forensic professionals and student-competitors have while participating in the activity. Forms of criticism may range from casual, which involves friendly banter and gossip about the activity, to formal, which more often entails scholarly writing and discussion at conferences and in scholarly journals. While many issues in forensics are important, one of the most commonly addressed issues is how judges interact with students through ballot writing. For example, in one analysis of ballots from interpretation events, Pelias (1984) found 55% of judges' comments emphasize performance techniques and only 14% addressed issues with the literature selection choice. Other ballot analyses (Cronn-Mills & Croucher, 2001; Edwards & Thompson, 2001; Klosa & DuBois, 2001) have also been conducted to determine judging behaviors. More recently, Crawford and Moser (2008) conducted a ballot analysis for all categories, categorizing helpful and non-helpful comments. The issue of how judges evaluate a round of competition is clearly considered important by forensic scholars who often are also the coaches of students who receive judges' ballots in the first place.

This criticism of judges is only natural; not only do we want expla-

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nations for why our students were not ranked the best, but we also want solid feedback from judges because of what the students can learn from the ballots to make performances better, even if our students did take first in the round. As Mills (1983) pointed out, "One of the educational benefits to be derived from intercollegiate forensic activities is the ability to receive, adjust to, and learn from criticism" (p.19). McBath (1975) and Mills argue that every forensic judge should demonstrate honesty, a sense of responsibility, and an ability to suspend judgment on the subject matter being considered. Judges, however, often do not live up to our expectations. Mills noted that "Comments on ballots are often unclear and incomplete" (p. 19); unfortunately, not much has changed in this area since 1983, even with many attempts made to unify or direct approaches to judging for the better (e.g.: Gaskill, 1998; Kuster, 1998; Morris, 2005; Paine, 2005; Pratt, 1998; Wakefield, 2008).

One single approach to judging may not work since a variety of opinions are generally desired to provide a deeper educational experience; therefore, we must be willing to accept varying interpretations of rules and norms. There does, however, need to be some sort of stability; the known in the activity can be found in the rules. If there is anything certain about all categories it is that they all have maximum time limits. The rules prohibit speeches and interpretations from exceeding specific time guidelines, although there are no penalization rules to accompany these regulations. If a judge knows this is one of the few rules, comments about being overtime should be expected; however, norms provide a grey area open to interpretation. Different judges approach even a rule such as time in unique ways; one judge might overlook a beautiful performance that was 5 seconds over in a Dramatic Interpretation, while another judge might severely punish the same performance through ranking it at the bottom of the round because it broke a rule. Since norms are often grounded in some sort of communication theory, it all depends on how a judge can explain their comments and actions. With maximum time limit, the argumentation typically goes as follows: learning to speak within a certain time frame is an important skill to learn for public speaking, and while grace periods exist in the "real world," for competitive fairness and comparative ease, a maximum limit is provided for time a speaker is allowed to present. Even something like time limits, which is often cited as one of the only rules, can make judging a complicated endeavor. A further example of this is while there is a rule for maximum time usage, there currently is no rule for minimum use by a speaker. Most judges would agree that if a student spoke for 3 minutes in Informative Speaking, that would seriously impact their rank and rating even though there is no rule against a student speaking for that amount of time. A judge can explain, however, that using most the time given to you can be advantageous because it provides more time to inform the audience on the topic, thus making for a more complete presentation.

Forensic judges must make judgment calls about student perfor-



manances in every round, and all judges base their decisions and comments on their own personal beliefs of what the performance should be. This is how we, as critics or educators, subjectively assess performances. Imagine public speaking teachers; they often will have rubrics to assist in the assessment of speeches performed by students. The rubric serves multiple purposes; not only does the student understand what they are being graded on, but also the instructor has clearly articulated the criteria for evaluation, thus providing easy explanation for grades and feedback given. Forensic competition can have similar benefits if individual coaches and judges took the time to create and write down their own judging philosophy. Since it is impossible to know what every judge thinks (and one could question whether this would be a positive thing to know, given the potential competitive implications), the benefits tilt initially toward the judge. Much like a public speaking teacher, if the judge knew what they were looking for going into the speech, the justification for the grade (rank/rate) and comments would be that much easier. Judges that embraced a personal judging philosophy would be able to provide more pedagogically sound ballots backed with rationales, thus allowing for more learning by the student-competitors. The situation is a win-win, ideally fixing the problem Mills (1983) identified as incomplete justifications and comments from judges.

The debate community has embraced this idea with the concept of judging paradigms (similar to a philosophy), an idea which is an important part of the activity and has been discussed in scholarly work (Buckley, 1983; Freeley, 1981; Swift, 2007). Even though there is often an unfortunate divide between the debate and individual events (IE) communities, this is something about which both groups can come together. While this paper does not advocate for the IE community to adopt the same format that the debate community uses with the judging paradigm, advantages can still be gained and the use of the judging philosophy can be based on the debate model.

Getting started is tough, however. One must take the time to learn why one believes certain things, otherwise judging can simply be reinforcing what has been done before without reason. Morris (2005) noted this pitfall is particularly relevant to recent graduates and graduate students. Judges with less time to reflect on the activity often default to how they competed, perpetuating norms without understanding them. The blame is not only on the less experienced, but also anyone who refuses to critically reflect on the activity and instead relies on cultural inertia as justification. Regardless, most would be hard-pressed to find many judges at a tournament whom can provide a detailed explanation and justification for what they look for in an event that reflects pedagogical goals. Many coaches are able to articulate some aspects of what they look for in each event, but often they cannot articulate these goals on the spot at a tournament; as a whole, this sort of self-awareness as a judge is rare.

Hoffman (1996) realized student-competitors who had received her



ballots probably knew more about her judging philosophy than she did. Recognizing the potential benefits of having an understanding of one's own reasoning, Hoffman outlined a judging philosophy to help her in judging and to assist in her coaching. Soon after, Przybylo (1997) called for an embrace of an individual event judging philosophy. Unfortunately, 16 years have passed and little discussion has emerged on individual event judging philosophies. Even though Przybylo's definition of an IE judging philosophy was essentially framed as answering the question "What criteria do I use to judge forensic events and why?," Przybylo's shared IE judging philosophy failed to offer explanations for many of his judging criteria. Hoffman was a bit more detailed. When explanations were present, both Hoffman and Przybylo neglected to provide any rationale grounded in communication theory or in best-practice. Justifications are needed to insure that what we are teaching students matches our learning objectives for forensics.

This paper will pick up where Hoffman (1996) and Przybylo (1997) left off, providing a rationale for a personal *Individual Event Judging Philosophy* (IEJP) and suggestions for how to craft an initial IEJP. While we cannot mandate what others must do, forensic professionals can take it upon themselves to create their own personal IEJP to increase their effectiveness as coaches and as judges. This paper will review literature available in educational assessment and speech and debate judging philosophies, then offer suggestions for creating an IEJP.

### **Evaluative Criteria in the Traditional Classroom**

The similarities between evaluation as a judge and evaluation as an educator should be evident. When a speech is given in a classroom, most often an assessment form called a rubric is crafted. A rubric is often defined as a document stating the assignment expectations by listing the grading criteria and describing levels of quality from excellent to poor (Andrade 2000; Arter and Chappuis 2007; Reddy & Andrade, 2010; Stiggins 2001). Rubrics are used by educators to determine student achievement and often to provide valuable feedback to students. They also can help measure student performance beyond the data that can be collected using a standardized test (Arter & McTighe, 2001). Rubrics essentially reflect the philosophy of the teacher; they show how a student performance will be evaluated based on the learning objectives assigned by the teacher for the speech. Rubrics offer an excellent point of comparison with forensic judging philosophies, because both should provide the outline for grading/judging criteria, and thus, the opportunity for valuable specific feedback for students pertaining to the stated criteria.

Some instructors resist using rubrics (Bolton, 2006; Parkes, 2006) when there are many potential benefits. Burke (2011) noted that those who have gone through the education system before often claim they did fine without rubrics, and thus they question the need for such complex assessment techniques. Even though rubrics are