

The FORENSIC of Pi Kappa Delta

OCTOBER 1979



The FORENSIC of Pi Kappa Delta

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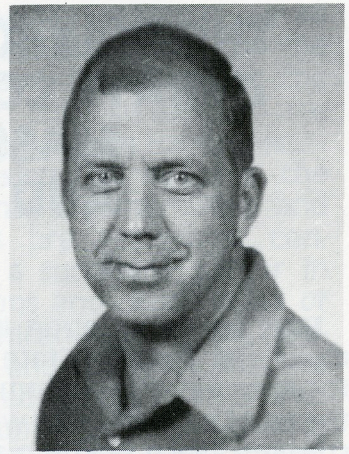
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The President's Message . . .

Roger Hufford



FREE REGISTRATION IN 1981?

As everybody knows by now, there is no such thing as a free lunch. Expense money has to be generated somewhere. Pi Kappa Delta is no exception. Still, the National Council proposes to act on the strongly expressed desire of the members gathered in St. Louis for lower fees.

I have proposed, and the National Council has authorized THE GREAT PI KAPPA DELTA REBATE. Beginning with September 1979, each chapter will earn \$5 credit on their 1981 registration fee for each new membership in the organization. The maximum a chapter can earn will be FREE registration, and any chapter not utilizing all the rebate they have earned will be able to carry the balance forward to 1983.

This proposal does not fulfill all our obligations to economic management. We plan, in addition, to carry out the recommendation to shorten the convention to three days in 1981. We hope to secure more agreeable hotel rates, without sacrificing comfort and convenience. I have set a **target** of \$25 registration fee, a substantial reduction from the \$40 each contestant was charged in St. Louis.

Economy is not the purpose of our organization. It is a necessary step to

keep our activity open to many of our chapters. Our 1981 convention will add a CEDA division of debate, duet interpretation, and impromptu speaking as events, despite the shortened time schedule. We believe the convention will be as attractive as ever, and scheduled so that those who can afford the "free" afternoon can arrive early, and have time before registration on the first evening. Those with less time or money can get by with just three nights in the hotel.

The REBATE will require strict economy by the National Council throughout the next two years. We willingly accept the challenge. It seems fair to offer the greatest reductions in fees to those who have supported the organization most actively during the two years between national conventions. We hope the plan will motivate everyone to earn the FREE registration we offer, because the activities required to earn your free registration are exactly those Pi Kappa Delta was formed to promote—participation in forensics, and the desire for closer ties with others who enjoy the activity.

There is no such thing as a free lunch, but we hope this morsel will be a pleasant one to swallow.

THE COLLEGE ARGUMENTATION AND DEBATE COURSE: APPLICATIONS TO MASS COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Phyllis B. Bosley

Mass communication is a popular major. At Towson State University, for example, mass communication is the third largest major with over 700 students. Each of the majors selects an area of specialization in public relations, journalism, broadcasting, or film. The Argumentation and Debate course is offered as an elective for majors within all of these areas of specialization.

Mass communication graduates who took the Argumentation and Debate course and who also participated in forensics indicate that the skills gained through argumentation and debate were probably the most valuable skills they acquired while in college. It appears that an argumentation and debate course can provide important training for mass communication students. If these students are made aware of the course's value, there should be increased course enrollment, including an increased interest in the entire forensics program. Mass communication majors include students who are active in the college media. If these students are positively involved in argumentation and debate, there could be a greater awareness and appreciation of forensics generated throughout the school.

Skills Related to Mass Communication and Public Relations

Mass communication graduates who are now enjoying successful careers in their chosen fields have in-

dicated the following skills as those they find to be the most valuable.

RESEARCH: Ability to use the many resources available for fact finding; to sift through the abundance of information and to select that which is important and relevant; to accurately document this information; and to file it for easy retrieval.

DECISION MAKING: Ability to utilize information acquired in order to make decisions and solve problems; to analyze critically and think strategically; to develop plans and programming.

ADVOCACY: Ability to prepare organized, persuasive written and oral proposals; to present these to decision makers; to listen with understanding while simultaneously preparing to speak; to think and speak under pressure; and to handle questions and attacks.

An explanation of how these skills are used in public relations and mass communication should demonstrate their importance.

Public relations is a management function, often defined as "a planned effort to influence public opinion through socially responsible and acceptable performance based on two-way communication."¹

Phyllis Bosley, Ph.D., Bowling Green State University, is responsible for the Public Relations track of the Mass Communication major at Towson State University. She serves as a free lance public relations practitioner in addition to teaching public relations. Dr. Bosley was Director of Forensics at Towson for 14 years. This article was the basis of a presentation at the Speech Communication Association Convention, November 1978.

The public relations practitioner may be considered as a gatekeeper in charge of a gate which opens in both directions: in from the environment to the organization and out from the organization to the environment. The practitioner serves as a sensing device to obtain information about changes in the environment which may impact on the organization. This information, along with program recommendations, is then presented to the decision makers in the organization. After program decisions are made, the practitioner then interprets these to the organization's many publics. One vital public of large organizations is the government; therefore, lobbying is an essential tool used by practitioners who work with this public.

Mass communications fields of journalism, broadcasting, and film also rely upon the skills which can be developed through argumentation and debate courses. Certainly, a successful reporter needs good research and organizational skills. This is especially true of investigative reporters. In broadcasting, entry jobs are often in sales. Basically, sales presentations are patterned after a first affirmative speech, often a comparative advantages case. Development of a written proposal, complete with documentation and an action step, is followed by an oral defense of the proposal and the fielding of questions. The ability to quickly flip through a file and pick out essential information is important. Likewise, adaptation to the client is needed for success. In film, argumentation is visual. Commercials, for example, rely heavily on the use of enthymemes. Within a very brief period of time, a message (an image) must be conveyed. The commercial is competing with many other stimuli for the public's attention and the public isn't prepared to

give its undivided attention nor to develop a detailed analysis of the message. Again, adaptation to the public and the situation are necessary components for success.

Support exists to suggest the hypothesis that argumentation and debate skills are important contributors to a successful career in public relations and other areas of mass communication. Research, decision making, and advocacy skills are essential ingredients in these professions. An argumentation and debate course, therefore, has great potential for students in these majors. Even greater potential may be realized if course modifications are made in order to more clearly and directly meet the needs of these students.

Suggestions for Course Modifications

Changes in both the course title and course description might serve to convey a new image stressing the versatility of the course. Perhaps "Decision Making and Advocacy" would be a more meaningful course title.

Substantive changes within the course may also be helpful. The complexity of communication as it is defined through an eclectic, holistic perspective, should be stressed. Students may best acquire their needed argumentation and debate skills by studying communication through a symbolic, interactive, transactive, process-oriented framework where relational and situational aspects and cumulative efforts are highly relevant. A rhetorical sensitivity should be developed in which these students learn to purposively monitor themselves and adapt in order to accomplish predetermined goals. Students need to recognize the inevitability of conflict and the value of conflict management. Negotiation and bargaining, as studied

within a social-psychological framework, and assertiveness rather than aggressiveness are other aspects which could be included in the argumentation and debate course.

Course assignments may need to be adapted for broader applications. At the beginning of the semester, individual student inventories can be used to identify student needs and interests. Students from different majors can then be guided as they develop and pursue assignments related to their fields of study.

The following examples are offered to demonstrate how argumentation and debate course assignments can be adapted for students majoring in public relations. Similar assignments can be developed which relate to journalism, film and broadcasting.

An integral part of public relations training is the work with case studies in order to develop research, problem solving, planning and programming skills. Sources of case studies include books², professional journals³, professional associations⁴, and real clients on a local or a national level.

Standard Oil Company of Indiana provides an example of a national client. During the 1976-77 academic year, Standard Oil provided students with a case study project⁵. The students' role, as "public relation consultants" for Standard Oil, was to develop a proposal on how to deal with the lack of consumer confidence and, more specifically, with the potential divestiture legislation [the drive to break up "big oil."] Standard Oil provided students with background information on the company and with an extensive bibliography of sources supporting both sides of the divestiture issue. This type of project gives students a timely case study; facilitates an exchange of ideas between students and business, nonprofit, or govern-

ment executives; and allows students to apply their skills to important national or local issues.

At the local level, nonprofit organizations are particularly eager to serve as clients. After students have developed a public relations proposal for a selected client, the proposal can be presented (both in writing and orally) to the client within a realistic context. Client feedback in the form of questions and of opposition to as well as support of the various segments of the proposal is immediately available. These presentations are most meaningful if they are made in a boardroom setting and in a formal atmosphere. An ideal audience consists of the client, fellow classmates, and a panel of academic evaluators who provide written critiques and grades. Written evaluations from the client are also sought. Quite often the proposals students prepare are accepted by their client and parts of the proposals are implemented. This provides students with a sense of accomplishment, added confidence in their abilities, and a valuable addition to their resumes.

A variation of this assignment would allow two groups (teams) of students to work for the same client. Each team would work separately without disclosing its activities to the other team. At the time of client presentations, each team would present its competing proposal and vie for the client's acceptance. The competitive element can be enormous since there is often more to gain than a good grade and a boost to one's ego. There may also be an opportunity for an internship or a part-time position with the client in order to assist in the implementation of the selected proposal.

Smaller assignments could include exercises on how to meet the press, focusing on the hostile press.

Reporters and newsmen from local media are usually cooperative and can provide a more realistic setting in which students can learn. Videotaping, playbacks, and structured self-reports are valuable elements of this exercise. Still other exercises could be developed which utilize roleplaying and simulation.

The type of activities just discussed should add relevancy to an argumentation and debate course while teaching basic argumentation skills and public relations majors. The problem remains, however, of how to initially attract these students to the course. Some of the following ideas may prove helpful.

Suggestions for Course Promotion

If public relations and other mass communication courses are taught within the speech-communication department, these suggestions may be applicable.

1. Inform appropriate faculty and students about the course. This may be done by preparing a flyer which explains course content and stresses its value to these majors. Case histories of successful mass-communication graduates who attest to the value of argumentation skills may be incorporated in the flyer. Individual meetings between the argumentation and debate instructor and fellow faculty members, including the department head, may also contribute to the information campaign.

2. Propose that the argumentation and debate course be made an elective (if not a required) course for all public relation and mass communication majors. Be prepared to adapt the course to meet the special needs of these people. Perhaps special course sections directed towards these majors could be offered.

3. Develop a special minimester or summer school argumentation course tailored to these majors. This

could be designed as a workshop and might incorporate a team teaching approach. By involving public relation and other mass communication instructors via teaching, these instructors may develop the desired understanding and appreciation of argumentation. Actively promote this new course.

4. Schedule presentations by recent successful mass communication graduates who can attest to the value of argumentation in their careers.

If public relation and other mass communication courses are not offered within the speech department, the above suggestions may have to be modified and additional steps may be needed. Publicity can be generated through press releases to the college media. Prepare informational brochures; schedule appointments with appropriate department heads and instructors and personally deliver these brochures. Feedback obtained from these meetings can be helpful. It may be possible to develop interdepartmental cooperation via team teaching and crossover courses offered as electives.

Summary

The skills developed through as argumentation course can contribute significantly towards a successful career in public relations and mass communication. Argumentation and debate instructors may promote the course through course modification, perhaps in name as well as content. This should be followed by an information campaign directed towards the appropriate faculty and students.

FOOTNOTES

¹Cutlip, Scott and Center, Allen. **Effective Public Relations.** Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1978. p. 16.

²See, for example: Center, Allen.

Public Relations Practices: Case Studies. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1975 and Simon, Raymond. **Public Relations Management: Cases and Simulations.** Columbus, Ohio: Grid, 1977.

³These include **Public Relations News**, 127 E. 80th Street, New York, NY 10021 (weekly) and **Public Relations Journal**, 845 Third Avenue,

New York, NY 10022 (monthly).

⁴PRSA Research Information Center, Public Relations Society of America, 845 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022.

⁵For additional information, contact Standard Oil Company (Indiana), 200 East Randolph Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60601. Corporate Media Relations department.

REPORTS FROM RELIABLE SOURCES

A major concern of the National Council is budget management. With emphasis on reducing cost of the next Pi Kappa Delta Convention, and on cost control throughout the budget, a number of decisions have been made:

1. The "Nashville bid" has not yet been accepted. President Roger Hufford, with support of the National Council, is seeking a better bid. Other sites may be considered.
2. The student members of the National Council are appointed from the host province of the convention. Until that province is selected, Mike Gray is our "Acting Student Member."
3. To keep cost down, the Constitution of Pi Kappa Delta will

probably not be reprinted until the next convention adds its amendments. The editor of **The Forensic** can provide photocopies of the current constitution to those who must have them. Costs may have to be charged to those requesting copies.

President Hufford has announced several committee appointments. Bob Derryberry has been named chairman of the nominating committee. Jim Clymer has been named a member of that committee. Hufford has also announced the members of the charter and standards committee: Don Brownlee, North Texas State University; Francis Short, Pittsburg State University in Kansas; and Derald Harris, Central Missouri State University.

Points of View . . .

The Editor wants the opinion of Pi Kappa Deltans on the question:

"What should be the directions of debate and/or other forensic forensic activities in the 80's?"

Secretary's Page . . .

Theodore O.H. Karl



As we start the new school year, we in the national office are reminded that this is the year of the Province. We hope you are already planning to have your chapter represented. Many issues of importance to Pi Kappa Delta and your local chapter and province will be discussed and decided. Please do take part, be heard, and decide. As has been evident for years, the National Council and National Convention will listen. This has been the history of Pi Kappa Delta. The suggestions and eventual decisions usually come from the local and provincial meetings and conventions.

By the time you receive you FORENSIC, the Fall Report should be in your hands. Please help us to be more accurate, not only for the directory which we must publish in the

January issue of the FORENSIC, but to save costs on printing and publishing our magazine. The membership of some chapters is down from the previous years enabling us to mail fewer copies, while the membership of others is increased, which balances out the number of issues we need to have printed. We need to be accurate but we must also cut costs, and the care with which you report and order is extremely vital to our ability to hold the line.

We will continue the practice of sending out the invoice for the chapter fee of \$15.00, and in those cases where the fee was not paid last year, that fact will be noted on the invoice. Also included with the Fall Report and Annual Chapter Fee Invoice will be an order blank for your

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Forensic Forum I

Sandy Madsen

ALUMNI: RICH RESOURCE FOR PKD

'Tis been said, "Old debaters never die, they just lose their logic." While few of us actually subscribe to this witticism, neither do most of us pause to ask, "What exactly does happen to old debaters?" Forensics programs, quite naturally, serve the undergraduate population, and with graduation comes a severing of the relationship. But perhaps graduation should not separate talented people from the forensics program. Perhaps a valuable resource is wasted by not utilizing the talents of "old debaters." Pi Kappa Delta has a mechanism for maintaining contact with and participation by our graduates. This mechanism is known as an alumni chapter. The time has come to ask, "What is an alumni chapter and what purpose does it serve in Pi Kappa Delta?"

Some historical perspective might prove useful. The first alumni chapter was chartered at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater in 1967. Named the Robert C. Williams chapter in honor of a former chancellor at UW-W who was an honored member of Pi Kappa Delta, it began with about 40 members and a commitment to the art of persuasion, beautiful and just.

It was hoped by all those involved with the creation of this chapter that alumni chapters would rapidly appear across the nation and add a whole new dimension to Pi Kappa Delta. This goal seemed imminently practical, for what other natural resource is as inexhaustible as "old" forensics people.

Alumni chapters did appear thereafter, but in very limited numbers. And their impact on Pi Kappa Delta is yet to be felt. Some, like the founding Robert C. Williams chapter, have lost some of their vigor and sense of purpose, and have yet to find their place in the organizational structure. Their loss is our loss as well, for alumni members can be a tremendous asset to our organization.

What, you ask, can alumni do for Pi Kappa Delta? At the local level, an alumni chapter can have tremendous impact, especially in these times of shrinking dollars and over-extended staff. An alumni chapter provides a pool of talented judges for both on-campus tournaments and off-campus travel. Even practice rounds could benefit from a critique by someone who doesn't work with a steady diet of contest events.

Alumni members can also be a vital link in the recruitment process. Those in high school teaching can and do recommend their alma mater to their students, but people in the professions can be no less influential in steering bright people into the program.

Athletic directors have long been aware of the influence which can be brought to bear in the college community by booster clubs and prominent alumni. Forensics programs, often less visible than athletics, can also benefit from such support groups.

In addition to moral support, there

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Forensic Forum II

Ralph R. Behnke, Michael J. Beatty

HUMANISTIC FORENSICS ACTIVITIES FOR NURSING HOMES

The purpose of this article is to describe the inception, development and implementation of a forensic activities program for nursing home audiences. This ongoing program has been evaluated over a two-year period and has drawn favorable responses from student performers, residents, and school and nursing home administrators.

The nature and scope of high school and college-level forensics programs is, and should be, undergoing continual review. When program activities are restricted to tournament competition, the broadest range of options for students engaged in extra-curricular speech and drama activities is not provided. David A. Thomas urges program directors to make speech experiences more relevant through "public forensics," encouraging participants to speak to a broader range of audiences than typically encountered in tournament activities.¹ In addition to broadening the student speaker's experience, we believe that forensics performances should be valuable to **audiences** as well as performers.

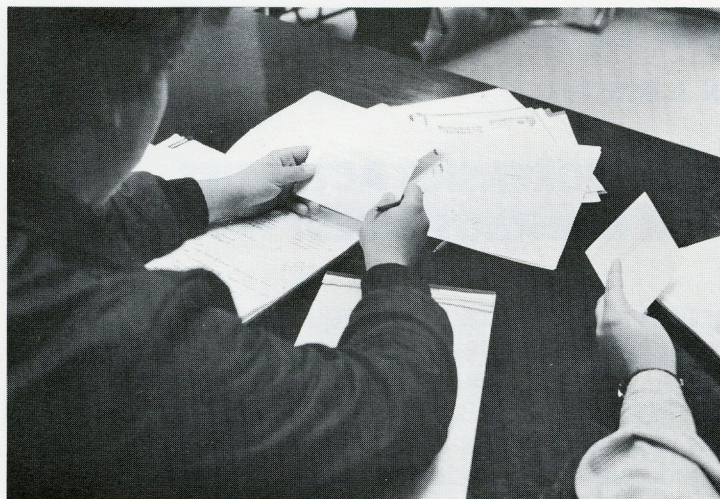
There are numerous public audiences for whom students could perform. However, nursing home residents probably benefit more than most audiences since their opportunities for communication are limited to interactions with staff members, television sets, and occasionally, with members of their families. The range and duration of personal contact in these settings is

often inadequate for maintaining levels of motivation and self-worth required to inhibit premature senility. Based on early conversations with nursing home activity directors, we concluded that taking student performers to nursing homes on a regular basis could provide additional personal contact needed by these residents.

During preliminary planning meetings with nursing home administrators, a number of suggestions regarding program content and format emerged: [1] programs should not exceed 30 minutes in length; [2] programs should not depend upon audience participation; [3] prose readings will be preferred to poetry; and [4] opportunity for residents to meet informally with student performers, after the program, is desirable. Based upon these suggestions, early programs utilized 3-5 students reading prose selections with only an occasional poetry reading.

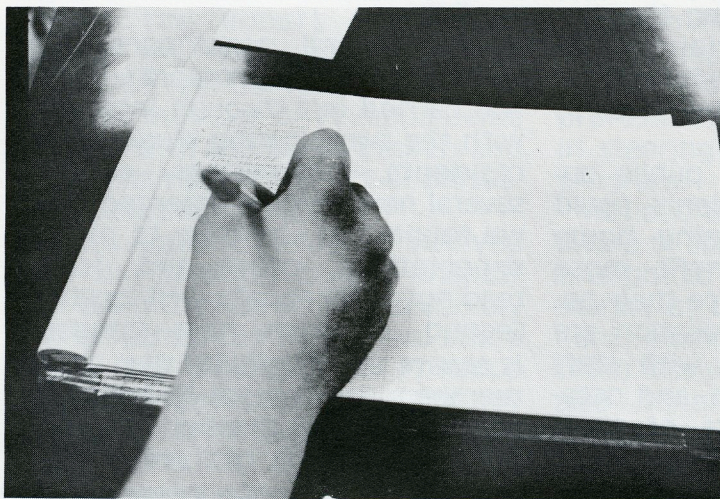
After several performances, an evaluation of the program's impact was carried out through interviews with the participating students and residents. Interestingly enough, several new insights emerged. First, we found that, contrary to original expectations, prose and poetry readings were equally well received. Second, although high standards is always the possibility that alumni members can provide financial support to the local chapter, for special programs, awards, or travel.

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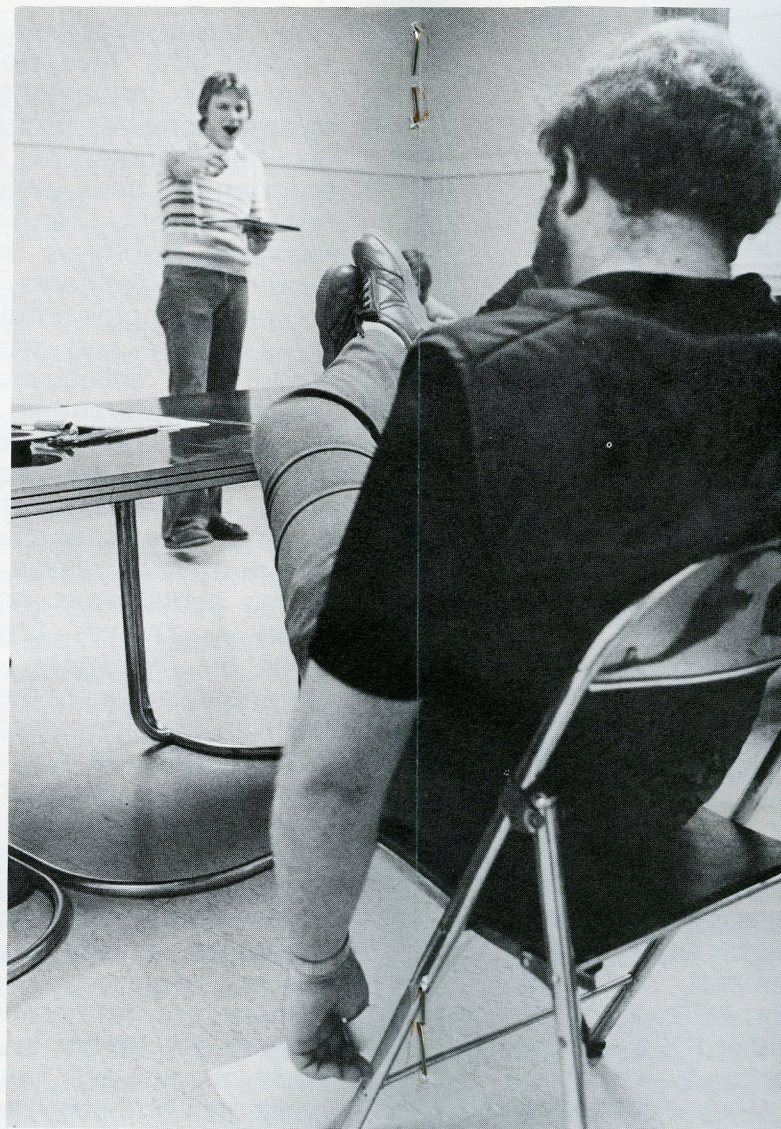


RESEARCH

FLOWING



**DEBATE
IS**



JUDGING?