

through advocacy and scholarship continue as the primary focus of student learning. The only element sacrificed by this model is the drive toward being overly competitive.

Our position meshes with recent recommendations by the forensic community. As those attending the 1989 Conference on Forensic Education noted:

Directors of forensic institutes and workshops should strive to reduce those aspects of competition which interfere with educational goals. Tactics might include incorporation of argument disclosure sessions prior to institute tournaments, separate divisions for experienced and inexperienced students, holding institute tournaments without elimination rounds, non-decision inter-lab debates in lieu of an institute tournament, and discussions centering on tournament decorum and placing competition in its proper perspective. (Kay, "Establishing" 9; Kay, Dialogue 63)

Indeed, some institutes, such as those hosted by Northwestern University, the University of Michigan, and Wake Forest University, either no longer hold tournaments at the end of the session, or have experimented with a tournament-free institute setting.

Some advocates of tournaments, however, maintain that tournaments have unique advantages, benefits foregone by relying solely on inter-squad practice sessions. First, some evidence suggests students perceive institute tournaments as helpful in analyzing topics, building experience, developing confidence in speaking, etc. (Pruett 280). However, the data does not support the conclusion that a tournament, per se, is the superior model. An intensive practice schedule could easily obtain the same benefits as tournament debates.

The second advantage at risk in this model is the opportunity for students to compete in elimination rounds. The assumption of those who advocate tournaments is that students at institutes can learn to adapt to the elimination round environment and three-person panels. This experience, in turn, improves the chance of student success during the school year.

However, this is a weak justification for institute tournaments. The students most likely to participate in the elimination rounds at institute tournaments are those who have already had extensive competitive experience. The rank novice is unlikely to participate in elimination rounds, even at an institute tournament (unless, of course, there is a separate novice division or the institute is for novices only). The students most likely to participate in institute elimination rounds have already experienced the "benefits" of competing in front of a panel of judges. Further "adaptation" is unlikely to provide significant rewards. Finally, other than encouraging "observation" of elimination rounds, institutes seldom provide structured activities for those students who fail to clear at the institute tournament.

Third, some might maintain that tournaments are necessary to motivate students to continue to work throughout the duration of the institute. While this may be true for a few students, most students attending workshops are self-motivated to improve their individual forensic skills. In addition, institute tournaments offset student motivation to work by increasing student and staff

burnout and fatigue. Further, students would still desire adequate preparation for inter-squad practice sessions. This desire would continue to motivate students to productive effort. If some sort of award is necessary to motivate students attending debate institutes, the workshop could provide alternative awards such as best researcher, best brief writer, most improved speaker, and so on.

Fourth, some suggest that institute tournaments are necessary as a tool allowing inexperienced coaches to better discriminate between student abilities at the beginning of a competitive season. The reasoning is that a student who cleared at "Institute A" should receive travel priority over a student who failed to clear at "Institute B." This position, however, is contrary to most goals of forensic education. Forensic institutes contain many variables which are not present during the normal school year. Colleagues who normally debate together during the academic year may be intentionally split during an institute. Staff members may purposefully pair a weak debater with a strong debater to maximize the educational experience for all students. One institute may draw a more experienced group of students than a second institute. Basing student travel solely on tournament success is not the preferred alternative. Under the model proposed here coaches would instead base initial travel decisions on the feedback provided via lab leader evaluations and any written comments from the inter-squad practice sessions.

Some data supports our position that institutes should increase the emphasis on practice rounds over tournament competition. Hinck and Hinck's data suggests that the role of competition at institutes, and the number of practice rounds, are factors that help to shape the decision of which institute to attend (77, 79, 83). Shoen and Matlon's data indicates that students spend relatively less time at institutes participating in practice debates than in tournament debates. Further, some evidence suggests that both students and their teachers desire more practice debates. Shoen and Matlon state the following when discussing the results of their survey: "a small number of participants and teachers (about 20% to 30%) preferred more decision debates during the workshops, and a larger number in each group (about 30% to 42%) desired a greater number of non-decision rounds. The latter attitude was especially prevalent among inexperienced students" (45-46). As noted earlier, the 1989 Conference on Forensic Education recommended decreasing the competitive pressures at institutes. Similarly, our proposal meshes with the wider perspective of many coaches. As Fisher argues, "the trend seems to be away from the [tournament] approach in part because the high school community became vocal in its criticism of this approach's effect on student attitudes" (30).

In conclusion, while forensic activities assume a benefit to competition, institute tournaments foster destructive competitive urges among students and staff. Competition at institute tournaments decreases the likelihood that students will fully realize the unique benefits of the institute setting. The substitution of tournaments with extensive inter-squad practice sessions would decrease the undesirable side effects of competition and increase student education.

WORKS CITED

- Balthrop, V. William. "Enhancing Summer Educational Opportunities." *American Forensics In Perspective*. Ed. Donn Parson. Annandale: Speech Communication Association, 1984, 59-64.
- Chandler, Robert C. "Achieving Pedagogic Objectives in Large Forensics Workshops: Pragmatic and Philosophic Concerns." *Journal of the Illinois Speech and Theatre Association*. 39 (1987): 47-55.
- Cutbirth, Craig W. "The Status of Summer Institutes." Second National Conference on Forensics. Evanston, IL. Sept. 1984.
- Edwards, Rich. "The Role and Function of the Debate Workshop." *The Forensic Educator* 5 (1990/91): 23-25.
- Fish, Duane R. "Strategies for the Weekend Forensic Workshop." Western Speech Communication Association Convention. Salt Lake City, UT. Feb. 1987.
- Fisher, Daryl J. "Remarks by Daryl J. Fisher." *Dialogue in the Forensic Community: Proceedings of the Conference on Forensic Education*. Ed. Jack Kay. Kansas City: National Federation, 1990, 25-30.
- Hinck, Edward A. "Curricular Concerns of High School Workshops." Western Speech Communication Association Convention. Salt Lake City, UT. Feb. 1987.
- Hinck, Edward A., and Shelly S. Hinck. "A Survey of Accreditation and Evaluation Issues for Summer Debate Institutes." *Dialogue in the Forensic Community: Proceedings of the Conference on Forensic Education*. Ed. Jack Kay. Kansas City: National Federation, 1990, 65-88.
- Hinck, Edward A., and Shelly L. Schaefer. "Perceptions of High School Instructors Regarding Practices and Effects of High School Debate Workshops." *American Forensics In Perspective*. Ed. Donn Parson. Annandale: Speech Communication Association, 1984, 68-86.
- Kalmon, Stevan. "Recommendations Regarding Summer Debate Institutes." *The Forensic Educator* 1 (1986/87): 20-21.
- Kay, Jack. "Establishing an Agenda for Interscholastic Speech and Debate Activities: The 1989 Conference on Forensic Education." *The Forensic Educator* 5 (1990/1991): 5-9.
- Kay, Jack, ed. *Dialogue in the Forensic Community: Proceedings of the Conference on Forensic Education*. Kansas City: National Federation, 1990.
- Louden, Allan, and Robert C. Chandler. "Improving Summer Debate Institutes." Second National Conference on Forensics. Evanston, IL. Sept. 1984.
- Matlon, Ronald J., and Richard L. Shoen. "Administration of Summer High School Debate Workshops: A National Poll." *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 10 (1974): 217-228.

- McBath, James H., ed. *Forensics as Communication*. Skokie: National Textbook, 1975.
- Naegelin, Lanny. "What Should a Summer Institute Provide? *The Forensic Educator* 5 (1990/1991): 10-11.
- Pruett, Robert. "The Student's Perception of the Effects of a Summer High School Debate Institute." *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 9 (1972): 279-281.
- Shoen, Richard L., and Ronald J. Matlon. "A Survey of Content and Teaching Methods in High School Summer Debate Workshops." *The Speech Teacher* 23 (1974): 40-50.

NOTES

- 1 While our explicit focus in this paper is on the debate institute, many of the same arguments apply to individual events institutes.
- 2 Little empirical research to date examines high school forensic institutes. The few studies on institute practices usually do not specifically examine tournaments. For studies on institutes, see Hinck and Hinck; Hinck and Schaefer; Loudon and Chandler; Matlon and Shoen; Pruett; or Shoen and Matlon.
- 3 We are not advocating the creation of uniform standards prohibiting institute tournaments, or standards regulating any aspect of institute practice. We agree with numerous authors that the creation of certification standards is unnecessary (see, for example, Balthrop 59; Chandler 54; Cutbirth 5; or Hinck 10). Instead an informal consensus should develop regarding curricular concerns. This consensus should develop through closer interaction between the college and high school forensic communities. Such a consensus would allow the marketplace to regulate practices at forensic institutes (see Hinck for an in-depth discussion of consensus building).
- 4 Kalmon makes a similar argument, suggesting workshops should "eliminate the institute tournament, substituting practice debates with critiques and re-working of problem speeches and cases" (21). However, Kalmon's critique of competitive pressures extends beyond institute tournaments. We do not support most of his suggestions for decreasing competition.

ADVOCATING HUMANE DISCOURSE

Kristine Bartanen
Professor of Communication
University of Puget Sound

Jim Hanson
Assistant Professor of Communication
Whitman College

"Instead of attempting to curb, suppress, or coerce their opponents, debaters take pains to guarantee them the same rights and opportunities they reserve for themselves."

We are concerned about behavior in the forensic community which runs counter to Douglas Ehninger and Wayne Brockreide's (1978, p. 14) description of debate as a humane and humanizing activity. As James Boyd White (1988) has argued, our discourse is the means by which we constitute our community. Thus, how we talk about debate and how we enact talk in debate is constitutive of the activity of which we are a part. Discourse which demeans other people demeans the community. So, while we acknowledge our own imperfections, we are deeply troubled that in some college campus rooms under the auspices of an academic activity of which we are a part, some students and judges engage in verbally aggressive talk because they enjoy that kind of abuse. This essay will argue that the forensic community should speak out more clearly to counter discourse among its members that demeans participants rather than respecting them. We begin by discussing the nature of the problem, continue by reviewing important first amendment considerations, and conclude by suggesting specific recommendations for action.

Evidence of the Problem.

Even as colleges and universities across the nation are struggling to be more inclusive of traditionally marginalized voices, some forensics students, coaches and judges create and tolerate a culture of exclusion through abusive discourse and verbal aggression. Verbal aggression includes "character attacks, competence attacks, insults, maledictions, teasing, ridicule, profanity, threats, background attacks, physical appearance attacks, and nonverbal indicators" (Colbert, 1994, p. 2). Such talk "is designed to attack the self concept of the other individual as a means of inflicting psychological pain and may result in embarrassment, distrust or even physical violence" (Infante, Myers, and Buerkel, 1994, p. 75).

Unfortunately, this kind of abusive discourse is an experience that is too common in the forensic community. In accordance with the advocacy of Kareem and Sonja Foss (1994), and the words of Ursula LeGuin, a feminist author who urged listeners in a 1986 commencement address at Bryn Mawr College to "Offer your experience as your truth" (1989, p. 150), we offer evidence of problematic discourse including real examples of and empirical research on verbal aggression among debaters. Readers will respond to the examples in different ways, but variations in response do not deny the truth that those reporting the incidents found them offensive. Comments that we, our students and others have experienced include personal abuse such as the following:

A debater blurting out during cross-examination about her opponent's argument: "that was a fucking stupid argument."

A debater dismissing his opponent's argument with "they have no clue—god, these arguments are like novice high school presses" as he threw his opponent's brief toward a window.

Debaters telling a judge in response to his decision in a debate that "you have no clue—you have no fucking clue."

A male critic telling a female competitor after a round that her speaker points went up because she had spilled water on her blouse, apparently rendering it see-through, much to the amusement of the critic.

A team loudly pronouncing at the end of the round that their opponents "took it up the ass."

A round at nationals punctuated by one debater's ridiculing response to an argument that, "His argument is as long as his penis."

Additional examples illustrate attitudes which suggest that certain groups of people are inferior or should not be taken seriously in intercollegiate debate:

Two male debaters who prescribe a "fraternity criteria" which consists of always lying to women and referring to them as "bitches" in bars.

A male critic telling four male debaters to "prove you have balls and run impacts" before the round.

A coach reading one of his team's briefs that responded to AIDS arguments titled "fags get what they deserve."

A male debater proclaiming in a final round against a female competitor, "If we lose to women, I'll quit debate."

Women on mixed gender teams hearing some coaches/judges comment that the team is "well balanced" because the "more emotional" female balances the "more rational" male.

"Two-woman teams are accepted in novice and junior division (where debate is 'only a hobby') but not fully accepted in senior division (where debate 'is a sport')."

Such verbal aggression is not argument. Rather, these examples exhibit the characteristics of attack, insult, and ridicule. Unfortunately, they are not isolated, random incidences. Kent Colbert's most recent study of argumentativeness and verbal aggression in debaters from twenty-nine states showed that students with debate experience had significantly higher verbal aggression scores than students without debate experience (p. 6). Consistent

with studies of verbal aggression generally, Colbert's study also found that male debaters are more verbally aggressive than females (p. 6). The prevalence of verbal aggression in the debate community led Rebecca Bjork to conclude that "it is imperative that we critically examine our own discourse practices with an eye to how our language does violence to others" (Bjork and Ouding, 1992, p. A10).

Causal Factors.

The two most common contributors to verbal aggression are social learning and argumentative skill deficiency. Infante, Rancer, and Womack explain "Social learning means people use verbal aggression because they are rewarded for using it; e.g., people laugh when one person 'puts down' another person. Also, people learn things vicariously by observing someone 'modeling' the behavior" (p. 160). At present, some judges and debaters reward other debaters who engage in verbally aggressive behaviors. Some find such confrontation humorous and enjoyable. It may even be the case that, mostly for males, verbally aggressive arguing is a kind of competitive ritual that develops closeness among participants (Droge and Starr, 1994, p. 25-26; Ong, 1981, pp. 75-80). Unfortunately, those who are "in" and "cool" not only discursively construct an exclusive community but also model for aspiring debaters, even unintentionally, a style of debate in which verbal aggression is valued.

Infante, Rancer, and Womack go on to explain that argumentative skill deficiency is also a significant cause of verbal aggression: "If people do not know how to argue skillfully, they resort to attacking self-concepts because they are unable to attack positions on topics. This 'misdirected' attack is less likely when one is skilled at arguing positions" (p. 161). Droge and Starr suggest that, in light of cultural inhibitions against aggressive displays by women, "men who find themselves at a loss for arguments will be more likely to engage in verbal aggression" (p. 23). In debate, then, verbal aggression appears to be rewarded among some skilled arguers, who in turn model such behavior for less skilled arguers, some of whom may already be more inclined to fall back on personal attacks when their developing argumentative skills come up short. While the research on argumentativeness and verbal aggression is complex and raises many questions as yet unanswered, verbal aggression in debate is nonetheless a problem in our community which needs attention.

Effects.

Whatever the causal factors, those who are the targets of verbal abuse, or who do not wish to participate in profane and demeaning talk, or who do not wish to listen to verbal aggression or hear stories of such attacks, may well find debate an activity in which they feel unwelcome. Why add the psychological pain of personal embarrassment, distrust, or verbal violence to already difficult barriers of jargon, workload, and travel schedules? Jenn Ouding described her decision not to debate as follows:

"When men are aggressive in cross-x, they look dominant; when women are aggressive, they look like bitches." I'll never forget these words—spoken to me four years ago by a female judge after a rather heated debate. At the time, I saw this view as an unfair double

standard, yet reflected upon the implications of that statement, I began to question my role and abilities as a female debater. When I graduated from high school, I was convinced that I would never amount to anything as a college debater, and decided not to try (Bjork and Ouding, 1992, p. A13).

Those who remain in the activity face instances when verbal abuse makes it difficult for debaters to proceed with the round or gain educational benefit from it. Women, in particular, often face the decision of "talking like a man" or saying nothing, a dilemma which inhibits development of an authentic voice. For example, Vivan DeRlerk (1991) explains:

Expletives carry a powerful emotional and psychological charge, contravening social taboos and frequently used for shocking people, or indicating contempt or disregard for them. As a result they have become associated with strength and masculinity in Western cultures...while expletives are condoned in males, their use by females is generally condemned, seen as presumptuous and inappropriate (pp. 157-158).

Thus, the forensics community's condoning of profanity may well validate a mode of communication that excludes women and others who are not "permitted" to participate.

In settings where profanity or other forms of verbal aggression are the norm, to speak out against such talk is tantamount to expressing that you are not part of the "in" group and hence subject to its reprimanding assault. Some students, judges and coaches do not feel like they can speak out. Some feel threatened by the perception that they will speak alone. Bjork has noted that "women debaters are marginalized and rendered voiceless in such a discourse community (p. A10). For some, to speak out against a sexually harassing comment is to revisit the sexual violation and the shame of the attack (NacRinnon, 1993, p. 66). Even those with a great deal of experience can find themselves in highly uncomfortable situations where speaking out requires a great deal of courage.

Freedom of Speech.

We believe that academic debate is not an activity for the exclusionary talk of one group of people, for example, white, straight, male talk. Rather, debate is an activity in which everyone should be able to participate with equal opportunity, an activity devoted to argument about ideas rather than attacks against people. We are confident that many readers would affirm these principles. At the same time, we are confident that many readers share our commitment to protection of First Amendment freedoms. The task our community faces is how to protect both values, how to protect both equal opportunity and freedom of expression.

We wish to be very clear: We do not want a "speech code" that mandates what can and cannot be said at a debate tournament. Such a code, by attempting to prohibit certain types of speech, would likely be unconstitutional (*Doe v. University of Michigan* (1989) and *UWM Post Inc. v. Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System* (1991) cited in Gill, 1993). In addition,

speech codes merely coerce compliance rather than attempting to reform offensive attitudes. Speech codes do little to teach people how to respond constructively to verbal aggression. We do want, however, to reaffirm for all participants in debate tournaments—students, coaches, and judges—the freedom to speak up when they are being attacked and the freedom to reject abusive behavior when they observe it. We want people to learn to communicate more effectively about perceptions and ideas so that those who speak in such a way as to reduce free lines of communication, who use words that inflict injury or abuse, will rethink what they are saying and thinking.

The Tournament Speech Statement.

Professor Ann Gill (1993), in writing about alternatives to campus speech codes, provides a model which we believe can be adapted by tournament directors who wish to advocate on behalf of humane discourse at events they sponsor. Gill notes:

The Campus Speech Doctrine is less a rule or regulation than a declaration or manifesto of the position of the university and a pledge to counter particular types of speech. The Doctrine makes clear the position of the institution regarding the rights and dignity of all persons and states the institutional policy of response to particular offensive speech (p. 126).

We suggest that tournament directors draft Speech Statements appropriate to their campuses and hosted events. One model of such a statement follows:

Tournament Speech Statement

This tournament affirms the importance of all tournament participants' cooperation in creating an educational and competitive environment that is fair, humane and responsible while, at the same time, encouraging debates that are devoted to full and robust argument about a diverse range of ideas. Specifically, this tournament affirms that:

1. Judges and students are encouraged to talk about the expectations that they have for creating a debate that focuses on ideas instead of personal attacks.
2. Debaters are encouraged to communicate with respect, not attacking each other or the judge.
3. Judges are encouraged to communicate with respect, not attacking or devaluing students.
4. Debaters and judges are encouraged to reject discourse which devalues other members of our community based on their race, age, gender, class, sexual or religious orientation, or any reason that is not directly related to the arguments that they present.
5. Students and judges are encouraged to communicate with each other when they observe instances of verbally aggressive attacks rather than silently watching something happen before them to which they object.

6. Judges are encouraged to reward courteous and respectful behavior toward the judge and other competitors in awarding speaker points.
7. If serious and/or repeated demeaning speech materially or substantially disrupts the opportunity for debaters to compete fairly or the judge to evaluate fairly, judges are encouraged to dock speaker points or give a team a loss.

We suggest that tournament directors include these statements in their tournament invitations, post copies along with round schedules, and attach copies to the front page of ballots for the judges and competitors.

We believe that publication of a Tournament Speech Statement will not only set forth aspirations for humane discourse, but will give community support to those wish to voice their opposition to abusive behaviors through open discussion, individual judging philosophy statements, oral critiques, and/or comments on ballots. We believe use of such a Statement will encourage debaters and judges to feel communally obligated (though not forced) to act in response to verbal aggression when it occurs in debate rounds.

We believe, further, that use of such a Statement will draw attention to the problem of verbal aggression so that it becomes a topic for coaching sessions. The model statement affirms positions already articulated in statements of ethical principles adopted by forensic organizations such as the Cross Examination Debate Association, the Guild of American Forensic Educators, the American Forensic Association, and the Northwest Forensic Conference. Unfortunately, many people are not aware of the contents of these documents, do not read them, or do not take the time to integrate them into their teaching. The Tournament Speech Statement can be a brief but eloquent reminder that it is not a preferred norm to devalue your opponent, to lash out at judges for their decisions, or to swear profusely in a manner exclusionary of others.

We hope that the use of such a statement of affirmation will encourage both education about constructive response to verbal aggression and personal modeling of discourse which respects and reflects the variety of voices which are often stifled amid demeaning, profane, and abusive talk. We suggest, in short, that use of a Tournament Speech Statement is one means by which our community can advocate with humane discourse.

References

- Bjork, R. and Ouding, J. (1992). "Symposium: Women in debate—Reflections on the ongoing struggle." In R. R. Smith and R. E. Solt (eds.), *Effluents and Affluence: The Global Pollution Debate*. Winston-Salem, NC: Wake Forest University.
- Brockriede, W. and Ehninger, D. (1978). *Decision by Debate*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: Harper and Row.
- Colbert, K. R. (1994). "Replicating the effects of debate participation on argumentativeness and verbal aggression." *The Forensic of Pi Kappa Delta* 79, 1-13.
- DeKlerk, V. (1991). "Expletives: Men only?" *Communication Monographs* 58, 156-169.

- Droge, D. and Starr, B. (1994). "Gender, argumentativeness, and verbal aggression: A re examination." Paper presented to the Northwest Communication Association Convention.
- Foss, K. A. and Foss, S. K. (1994). "Personal experience as evidence in feminist scholarship." *Western Journal of Communication*, 58, 39-43.
- Gill, A. M. (1993). "Revising campus speech codes." *Free Speech Yearbook*, 31, 124-137.
- Infante, D. A., Myers, S. A. and Buerkel, R. A. (1994). "Argument and verbal aggression in constructive and destructive family and organizational disagreements." *Western Journal of Communication* 58, 73-84.
- Infante, D. A., Rancer, A. S., and Womack, D. F. (1990). *Building Communication Theory*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland.
- Le Guin, U. K. (1989). *Dancing at the Edge of the World: Thoughts on words, women, places* (pp. 147-160). New York, NY: Grove.
- MacKinnon, C. A. (1993). *Only Words*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Ong, W. J. (1981). *Fighting for Life: Contest, sexuality, and consciousness*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University.
- White, J. B. ~1985). *Heracles' Bow*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press; and "Law as rhetoric, rhetoric as law: The arts of cultural and communal life." *The University of Chicago Law Review*, 52, 684-702.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

by Dr. Sally A. Roden
University of Central Arkansas

C'est la rentrée des classes! Comienza el año escolar!

Es ist wieder Studienzeit! A new academic year! Pi Kappa Delta's new academic year, 1994-1995, is both a beginning and an ending. In fact, the new year may be the "beginning of the end." Two years ago plans were started to hold the national convention and tournament in Shreveport/Bossier City, Louisiana in March, 1995. The "end" will come when we finally get together for the bi-annual PKD nationals. Everyone needs to make his/her



calendars now for March, 1995. The tournament will be held on the campus of Louisiana State University—Shreveport. The space will be great for a tournament, with only short walking distances between buildings and with covered walkways. So let it rain or let it shine, we will be “covered” either way.

The concept of bringing students and faculty together from across this nation was the very basis of forming Pi Kappa Delta. It was not formed only for competition or the quality of competition, but first and foremost it was formed as a fraternity. At the time of origination it was to bring the “men” together from different universities who had a common interest of promoting persuasion “beautiful and just.” The whole idea of fraternity is still the guiding concept as national council members and PKD committee members plan the 1995 Pi Kappa Delta National Convention and Tournament in Shreveport. The fact that PKD combines the convention with a tournament, with both given equal importance, is unique to “national competition.” When PKD uses the term, “national competition,” the intent is that “everyone” in PKD is invited to participate. What an opportunity for young people to come together from across this nation to share experiences. As coaches, all of us can recall a first trip for students who had never been out of their home states until participation in PKD forensic teams allowed them to travel to places they had never seen before. That’s why PKD has a site rotation system of west coast, central, east coast, and back to central states for the national convention and tournament. This site selection tradition is a form of education that PKD is able to offer students along with competition and fraternity. These are three great reasons, then, that all of us should plan on attending the PKD National Convention and Tournament: the common bond of the PKD fraternity, the opportunity for competition, and the educational benefits of traveling to new places.

The host schools, LSU—Shreveport and Louisiana Tech, have been working to make the site of the convention and tournament memorable. The PKD National Council members and the host institutions want us to be together in March.

Since Bossier City and Shreveport are divided by the Red River and since Shreve was an early steamboat captain on the river, the slogan for the national convention and tournament is a reference to the river. Louisiana State University—Shreveport, Louisiana Tech, the National Council and the Province of the Lower Mississippi would like for all the chapters east and west, north and south, to join to make 1995’s National Convention and Tournament one of the largest and best. We encourage all members to make this a special year by plotting and planning and saving for the 1995 Pi Kappa Delta National Convention and Tournament so that we may join to enjoy “Rolling on the Red, PKD Style.”

THE PI KAPPA DELTA ALUMNI CHAPTER: ORGANIZING ITSELF WITH A CONSTITUTION

Carolyn Keefe
Professor Emerita of Communication Studies
West Chester University

Within the past half dozen years the purpose and function of alumni membership in Pi Kappa Delta has come under serious discussion. One such exchange took place at the PKD Developmental Conference, March 17, 1993, in Tacoma, Washington. The Alumni Task Force, one of the four conference sections, shared ideas on the question, "Should Pi Kappa Delta Develop a National Alumni Association?" Although the recommendations of the participants fail to provide a definitive answer to the query, they show some movement in the national direction, while acknowledging the need to strengthen the local chapter. What follows herein is intended as a continuation of the Tacoma discussion, particularly in reference to alumni on the most basic organizational level of PKD.

This article is the first of three about the genus called the PKD alumni chapter. As the title indicates, this discussion concerns the chapter's responsibility to draw up a constitution.¹ The second article will focus on chapter maintenance and development, and the third will give an historical account of the West Chester University chapter. The triad is aimed at providing information and direction for Pi Kappa Deltans who are or want to be involved in alumni service within the fraternity.

The information and ideas presented in this article come mainly from two sources. The first is my own experience. I have worked with alumni on all three levels of PKD and also have served as parliamentarian for the West Chester University Alumni Association and the WCU Council of Trustees. The second source is the results from chapter surveys conducted in 1988, 1992-93, and 1994.² A writer on PKD alumni chapters does not have a wealth of materials from which to draw.

Having mentioned my background in alumni work, I want the reader to understand that I make no pretence of expertise therein. Never have I been employed in the field, not even taken a course or attended a seminar on the subject. Instead, I have been schooled by trial and error, informed by publications borrowed from professionals,³ and encouraged by alumni with a perennial commitment to PKD.⁴ My guess is that we have no alumni experts among our sponsor ranks. Therefore, prudence suggests that, as we struggle together in PKD alumni service, we should confer with professionals whose success at tapping alumni potential far exceeds ours.

This discussion starts with another beginning—that of a chapter.

Forming an Alumni Chapter

Some degree of postgraduate loyalty to an undergraduate chapter—and often to the sponsor—is most commonly the generating force behind an alumni chapter. To apply for chapter status, someone must gather on a petition at

least ten signatures of those interested in membership, and, along with the petition, send a \$25.00 charter fee to the National Office. According to the petition form, a copy of the chapter constitution is also supposed to be included. Then at the National Convention subsequent to approval of the petition, the charter is presented to a representative of the new chapter.

Attached to the petition form is a second notice of the need for a chapter to write its constitution. The sheet quotes directly from the National Constitution, Art. III, 320.4: "Each Alumni Chapter shall provide itself with a constitution..." In spite of the twice-stated imperative, noncompliance among the chapters is high. A number of chapters considered in the 1992-93 survey as "functioning" have never drawn up a constitution.⁵ An attempt this year (1994) to collect constitutions from the 28 chapters listed in the current *Pi Kappa Delta Directory* has produced only five documents.

If for no other reason than compliance—and that value is foundational to a well-functioning organization—the development of alumni chapter constitutions should be implemented across the fraternity. Toward that end this article will discuss (1) the impediments that confound the task, (2) steps that produce the document, and (3) the benefits that can accrue from the process.

Impediments to Writing a Constitution

Even if we set out with zealous intention, we can be diverted from what we purpose to do. Writing a chapter constitution is a case in point. Some of the obstacles to this work (and to alumni activities in general) come from the very nature of being alumni. Graduation imposes major shifts. For alumni, unless they are graduate students at their undergraduate university, the campus is no longer their daily destination. Thus, finding a place and time for meetings looms as a chapter problem. Then, too, the relationship with the sponsor changes. Professor-to-student becomes sponsor-to-volunteer. Serving as a forensic volunteer brings little recognition and usually no hardware. Unless former team members have strong loyalty and altruism, coupled with proximity to the school, they will vanish from the scene, leaving only the tarnishing trophies to represent them.

For the alumni who remain visible, there are additional factors that discourage the preparation of a constitution. Among the many factors that could be mentioned, four seem most accountable.

1. *No perceived need*—Two conditions within a chapter can act as disincentives: (1) a minimal number of chapter activities and services, and (2) fixed rather than evolving leadership. A group with these characteristics tends to perpetuate itself on ease of operation and custom and consequently may fail to recognize the need for and the benefits of written regulations.

2. *No time*—The precious commodity of time is in short supply for the director of forensics⁶ (the usual sponsor of the alumni chapter)⁷ and for the alumni, both of whom are involved in professional, family, and community activities. Immediate needs take precedence over writing a constitution, a job that requires more than one meeting and has no official deadline.

3. *No guidance*—Inasmuch as most chapter leaders have had no training for and little experience in alumni work, they need help in their endeavors. One area of need is how to structure a chapter. A useful tool would be a model such as the one that exists for undergraduate chapters.⁸ When the West