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# ARGUMENT SUPPORTING THE REQUIREMENT FOR DEBATE JUDGING PHILOSOPHY STATEMENTS AT THE PI KAPPA DELTA NATIONAL TOURNAMENT

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## Abstract

The use and utility of judging philosophy statements have long been issues in intercollegiate debate. The purpose of this paper is to examine the justification for using judging philosophy statements, their effectiveness, and finally, to advocate the use of a revised philosophy form at the Pi Kappa Delta (PKD) National Debate Tournament. Research indicates three benefits to be gained from the use of judging philosophy statements: (a) better audience analysis, (b) formalization of judges' evaluative positions, and (c) more effective coaching. While research has been inconclusive concerning the value of judging philosophy statements, the authors reason that making minor repairs to the existing form used in CEDA debate would result in more satisfying use of the statements. Specific conclusions are presented supporting the use of judging philosophy statements at the PKD national debate tournament.

## Introduction

The integration of judging philosophy statements into debate tournament competition has been a point of contention from its inception. To some members of the debate community such statements have represented a movement toward more specialization (e.g., elitist judging pools) (Gotcher & Greene, 1988). Others have offered compelling arguments about the benefits of judging philosophy statements (e.g., they allow for better audience adaptation) (Gill, 1988). Still others have contended the judging statements have not been used appropriately, but with revision they could offer specific value to the debate community. Regardless of the perspective one has adopted, the judging philosophy truly has been an artifact of the debate community that divides rather than unifies.

The two-fold purpose of this paper is to offer a discussion that addresses the major arguments surrounding the use of judging statements and the position supporting their use at debate tournaments. The authors advocate that judging philosophy statements may serve as effective, efficient, and consistent means by which judges can articulate their preferences at Pi Kappa Delta (PKD) National Debate Tournaments.

## The Debate Activity and Role of the Critic-Educator

Numerous scholars have identified the debate judge as the standard audience in an academic debate (Branham, 1991; Faules, Rieke, & Rhodes,

1976; Freeley, 1993; Fryar, Thomas, & Goodnight, 1987; Hanson, 1990; Hensley & Prentice, 1982; Klopff, 1982; Makau, 1990; Ulrich, in Thomas and Hart, 1992; Warnick & Inch, 1989; Wood & Goodnight, 1987). The critic is someone who has been charged with the two-fold responsibility of deciding which team won the debate and serving as an educator (Bartanen & Frank, 1991; Freeley, 1993; Hanson, 1990). Rowland (in Thomas & Hart, 1987) reminded us that the primary function of debate is to teach argumentation and he encouraged participants to approach each round with a shared acceptance of this position. Other perspectives, including the game metaphor, have upheld the criteria that debate critics "be honest, hardworking, and knowledgeable" presumably to provide the highest quality critique of the debate (Snyder, 1992, p. 325). Freeley implied that debate critics must attempt to provide the best educational environment for debaters. However, the ability to communicate the critic's educational philosophy has not been wholly effective.

### **Description of Judging Philosophy Statements**

As it has been operationalized by critics, theorists, debaters, and tournament directors, the judging philosophy questionnaire is a document listing a series of questions for the potential judge to answer and issues for the potential judge to comment upon. The judging philosophy statement has been used since the early 1970s in the NDT division of debate, and its integration into CEDA has occurred at the CEDA National Tournament (Brey, 1989; Pettus, 1991). Balthrop (in Thomas & Hart, 1987) suggested that the dominant theoretical issue today within the debate community centers on the critic's selection of a paradigm.

Traditional issues placed on the forms have centered around delivery standards of proof, procedural issues, common paradigms, and substantive issues on that semester's debate topic. In addition, the form has commonly asked for name, institution, position, years of judging debate, and the number of rounds heard on the semester's topic. Commonly, people completing the judging philosophy statement have been able to articulate their answers in one or two pages. The judging philosophy statement, while seemingly non-intrusive, has required the potential critic to respond very pointedly about attitudes and positions dealing with specific issues like tag-team debate, use of full source citations, and reading evidence at the conclusion of the debate. Although limited to one or two pages, the completed judging philosophy statements historically have communicated a wealth of information about potential critics. The judging philosophy statement form, once completed by the potential judge, is returned to the tournament director. The forms have then been disseminated to participants in two basic formats. First, and most commonly, tournament directors post the sheets on a wall or other conspicuous place where all participants in the debate tournament have access to the judging philosophy statements. The second alternative format for dissemination, while costly and labor intensive, has been to compile a judging philosophy statement "booklet" which is given to the participants at the tournament (i.e., at CEDA and NDT nationals). Regardless of the method, each has allowed for relatively open and free access to information about the judging philosophies of potential debate critics at various tournaments.



## Justification for Judging Philosophy Statements

Judging philosophy statements have been used for many years at the local, regional, and national levels. Several lines of justification supporting their use at debate tournaments have emerged from the literature. Through a review of the literature three related justifications were discovered. First, judging philosophy statements have been advocated as a tool for facilitating audience analysis. Second, their use has been justified as a means of formalizing a judge's stance on theoretical and substantive issues (Ulrich, in Thomas & Hart, 1992). And, third, they have been favored as a tool for assisting in and improving the quality of coaching debaters receive.

## Audience Analysis

Hines (1994) asked "would it not be nice for the judge to recognize and reward the student for effective 'audience analysis'?" (p. 38). Many would say, "Yes". In fact, historically the central purpose of the judging philosophy statement has been for use in audience analysis. Gill (1988) reasoned that debaters must adapt to their audience. Gill's analysis was based on existing literature in the fields of debate and public speaking. The rationale favoring the use of judging philosophies was strengthened by the fact that debaters have often incorrectly analyzed the audience to whom they are speaking. The need to adapt was best expressed by Cirlin (1986). "There is nothing wrong with debaters who can speak like a machine gun, think like a computer, and cite evidence like a Supreme Court Justice, as long as they can also turn into a Daniel Webster when the occasion demands" (p. 89).

The problems of audience analysis are compounded when judges from many debate regions participate in the same tournament. In the past the "norms" of debating in one region have been radically different than in other regions. Gill (1988) argued that audience analysis was needed because of the broad diversity among potential judges. Miller (1988) cautioned that in the debate community there is limited agreement on debate paradigms. The writer further suggested that paradigms overlap thereby substantially resulting in even fewer critics that render decisions based exclusively on a given paradigm. The lack of agreement about the most appropriate debate judging paradigm and the lack of adherence to a given paradigm have served as support for the need for audience analysis in debate.

There are two primary arguments against audience analysis as a rationale for judging philosophy statements. Gotcher and Greene (1988) cautioned that audience adaptation does not always have positive outcomes in debating. They suggested that audience analysis promotes judge intervention and alters the terministic screen of debaters.

It has been noted by Gotcher and Greene (1988) "when the critic imposes a posture on the debate round, the judge's role is transformed from an evaluator of argument to an active participant in the creation, refutation, and even presentation of arguments" (p. 90). Denial of the need for audience adaptation has not taken away the potential for intervention nor does it make for better debaters or debate critics (Gill, 1988). Furthermore, it has been argued that in the real world where competing paradigms (and judges' interpretations of the various paradigms) seem to be commonplace, and the judging pool is very heterogeneous, audience adaptation is not only necessary, but vital.



Gill (1988) claimed a tool for doing effective audience analysis was the judging philosophy statement. Seemingly, judging philosophy statements have allowed debaters the opportunity to alter their persuasive strategies depending on the philosophy of various critics (Alspach, 1991; K. Bartanen, 1991; Gill, 1988; Henderson & Bowman, 1983; Hunt, 1993). In fact, Henderson and Bowman (1983) unequivocally concluded, "Since debate judges do follow the direction they identify in their philosophies, debaters can use philosophies as adaptation aids with confidence" (p. 197).

### **Formalization of Philosophy**

In their empirical work extending the validity of judging philosophies Henderson and Bowman (1983) indicated that such philosophy statements perform the function of a public commitment by the critic to the debate community. At some level the philosophy statements serve as social contracts. The open sharing of information contained in the judging philosophy statements play a role in validating the link between the judging statements and later the activity of completing the ballots. They have argued that one of the important qualities of all critics is the willingness to declare a philosophy by which they will consistently adjudicate debate rounds. Essentially, this "publicness" forces critics to behave consistently with their philosophy statements. Public commitment, according to Henderson and Bowman, has had the effect of making the declaration even more perceptually binding. K. Bartanen (1991) further articulated the importance of the public declaration by suggesting that "having critics articulate their judging frameworks could emphasize the importance of their role as educators" (p. 4). Seemingly, a convincing philosophy, publicly stated, further helps to create clearer standards for evaluating debates, a task consistent with K. Bartanen's analysis. The role of the judging philosophy statement is substantial in assisting a judge in the public declaration of one's explanation of the position taken when making ballot decisions.

### **Coaching**

Additionally, Henderson and Bowman (1983) advanced a rationale for using judging philosophy statements as a coaching tool. Without question, one of the major (although implicit) reasons for the prior dissemination of the judging statements at national debate tournaments has been the assistance they offer to coaches in advising strategies for debater adaptation to specific critics during the competition. Coaching has generally been dedicated to preparing debaters to respond strategically to debate judges they have not encountered at previous tournaments. They contended that "debate coaches can use philosophies with confidence to instruct debaters...The conscientious debate coach would be ill advised not to consider using debate judging philosophies as a pedagogical tool" (pp. 197-198). In summary, if the ability of the coach to prepare the debater is increased, then it seems logical that the adaptation to the individual critic should be better as well.

The writers of this article conclude that using judging philosophy statements assist debaters in adapting to their audience, allow debate critics to formalize their philosophy used to make ballot decisions, and aid coaches in preparing debate teams for competition. In order to fully understand the role of judging philosophy statements, the practical validity of the philosophy statements ought to be explored.



## Effectiveness of Judging Philosophy Statements

Several authors have supported the use of judging philosophy statements for a variety of reasons (Alspach, 1991; K. Bartanen, 1991; Gill, 1988; Gotcher & Greene, 1988). These writers have proposed that a basic efficacy for utilizing judging philosophies exists. The specific justifications, however, have tended to be anecdotal and based more on convention than empirical proof.

Henderson and Bowman (1983) supported the use of judging philosophy statements based on their empirical analysis of 26 NDT debate judges. The results of their analysis suggested that most judges have above 70% consistency (only six judges fell below this level). They contended that "on the basis of these results, debate judges can be expected to be consistent in ballot and philosophy statements" (p. 197). In addition to being somewhat dated, the Henderson and Bowman (1983) study was small and done at the NDT tournament limiting its applicability.

Brey (1989) briefly discussed the efficacy of the judging philosophy statement suggesting that there seems to be a lack of consensus about certain judging conventions as displayed on the judging philosophy form. Brey reasoned that "although it would be reasonable to expect a prevailing paradigm to emerge from the philosophy statements, one might expect a consistent interpretation of what it means to be *tabula rosa* or a critic of argumentation." (p. 76-77). Brey's criticisms stem mainly from the inconsistent application of the paradigm, rather than with other specific judging behaviors. Brey's noted inconsistencies emerge from the inappropriate application of the paradigm to a set of behaviors that tabula rasa or critic of argument does not commonly define.

Research by Dudczak and Day (1991a) indicated there was little connection between judging philosophies and balloting decisions. They found critics deviate from their statements as they conform to common conventions of the debate community. Their study involved a questionnaire devised by the researchers that provided results of judging behaviors by various critics. The self-reported data on the questionnaires were coded and compared to judging philosophy statements and comments written on the ballot. In a summary of their research program, Dudczak and Day (1991b) pointed out that there was "limited association between professed paradigms and subsequent ballot behavior..." (p. 7). Dudczak and Day (1991b) further contended that the methods that were used did not compare the reliability of the philosophy form to that of the questionnaire that was used in their research line at a national level. In a pilot study Dudczak and Day found that the judging philosophy statement had higher predictive power than did survey questionnaires. Dudczak and Day (1991b) crystallized their position on the issue of the paradigm by suggesting critics widely apply paradigms other than their professed decision making paradigm for the purpose of judging. Thus, the problem as Dudczak and Day inferred is based on the critic's inability to make decisions consistent with a paradigm. The problem is with the paradigm application rather than the vehicle on which that paradigm is manifest.

In this section of the paper, we have looked at the issues of the effectiveness of judging philosophy statements. Our conclusion is that the available data is not conclusive at this time to support an indictment of the judging philosophy statement, though much evidence seems to support the unreliable nature of the judging paradigm. It is our contention that the



benefits to description of judging behaviors outweighs the potential drawbacks from a philosophy of judging, but the current reliance on the paradigm as a dominant focus on the philosophy makes the philosophy form more tenuous.

### **Why Use Judging Philosophy Statements at PKD Debate Nationals?**

Our rationale for integrating judging philosophies into the national debate tournament centered around the three benefits discussed above (i.e., audience analysis, public formalization of critic's judging philosophy, and coaching tool). K. Bartanen (1991) argued that the use of formal judging philosophy statements should be integrated into the PKD National Debate Tournament. The use of judging statements at PKD Nationals would be consistent to their use at both CEDA and NDT Nationals. Judging philosophy statements should be solicited from participating chapters prior to the national debate tournament or at registration during the national tournament. Thus, a judging philosophy statements booklet could be prepared and distributed at PKD Nationals. As noted by M. Bartanen and Frank (1991), judges too often enter the round with personal biases and using philosophy statements would "allow the debaters to debate about the decision-rules" (p. 163). An added advantage gained from their use at PKD Nationals, as well as CEDA and NDT nationals, would be their potential use at subsequent regional PKD tournaments.

### **Improvement of the Judging Philosophy Form**

Much of the critical commentary on judging philosophies has focused on the inadequacy of the questions on the philosophy form, specifically the paradigm. Dudczak and Day (1991a, 1991b) questioned the validity of the self-reporting of critics' judging paradigms. Further, they implied that the determination of paradigms used by critics is little more than chance since few distinctive elements discriminate the various paradigms at work in CEDA debate. Their position seemed even more compelling in light of Crawford's (1993) recent work on paradigm transience. According to Crawford, critics have the ability to change decision making lenses at will. However, the evidence has suggested that the philosophy statements, while they are not wholly reflective (e.g., tabula rasa is difficult to put down on paper), still may be the best method of gaining insight into a judge's decision calculus. We argue that if, in fact, the philosophy statements are the most effective method but still lack basic information, then revision of the form may be the most productive option.

Possible revision of the format should address the inadequacy of paradigm identification. On many judging philosophy statement forms the statement requesting the indication of paradigm used by the critic is one of the first questions listed. Brey (1989) as well as Dudczak and Day (1989) suggested that since paradigms are rather "porous and unreliable" (p. 24) in their interpretation and application, their predictive value is lessened. "While paradigms exist conceptually, they don't necessarily possess distinctive boundaries. Judges employ the label for a paradigm, but aren't obligated to adhere to any standard definition or use convention" (Dudczak & Day, 1991, p. 24). They posited that paradigm isolation is artificial due to the lack of distinctiveness between individual paradigms in CEDA. According to Crawford (1993), the reliance on tabula rasa as the judging paradigm of choice



within the debate community has allowed debate critics from round to round to vacillate widely on their decision making criteria. Also, Dudczak and Day (1990) pointed out that even if definitive paradigms existed in CEDA, one could not be assured that critics understood them well enough to apply the paradigms effectively when making balloting decisions in the debate round. Our point is that future judging philosophy statements should not emphasize the use of a "paradigm", but rather focus on common debate conventions, norms, and expectations. Instead of asking for exploration of the the unreliable paradigm, a new philosophy form could center on more definitive behaviors like problematic delivery styles, topic specific statements, personal dislikes, and the like (Crawford, 1994).

On a related point, we suggest that philosophy statement forms should encourage elaboration rather than succinctness. If short statements of philosophy were the norm, then debaters might be surprised and disappointed should the critic include unexpected elements in the decision calculus. Elaboration allows for development of the critic's decision making criteria and inclusion of extenuating situational circumstances that might enter into the debate round. The standard one page philosophy form could be elaborated by discussing possible exceptions to the stated norm making it possibly two or three pages. Crawford (1994) offers specific guidelines for a more effective philosophy statement, like: replacing the paradigm; explicating the standards for evaluation; focusing on topic specific issues; making them readable; making them recent, mandatory, and available. Individual items or simple questions could be placed on a philosophy form to give structure and focus the critic's attention. With changes in the form such philosophy statements could become voluminous. But we would argue that most debaters (and their coaches) would rather have more information than less information concerning the critic's decision making process.

Additionally, we propose the judging philosophy form ought to reflect issues that are important to debaters and their coaches. Too often tournament directors simply ask for written comments on debate theory and practice wherein some variance exists within the debate community. Presumably, debaters should be better able to identify theory, strategy, and topic issues they believe be important to their success in a debate round.

An argument against the use of the statements has been that debaters make little or no attempt to adapt to various critics anyway. Perhaps allowing debaters' input into what has been included in judging philosophy statements could help to alleviate this perceived problem (Crawford, 1994). First, debater participation at this level could send a signal that coaches value their input. Second, the inclusion of questions that debaters would like answers to would provide information needed for audience adaptation. Finally, future judging philosophy statement forms should include debater requested information because coaches value audience adaptation and use the information in working with their debaters. In summary, we contend that if debaters have participated in deciding what is included in judging philosophy statements, they will be more inclined to and better able to adapt to the desires of the critic. We encourage the debate community to include "student input" as a discussion item at the next PKD national debate tournament and convention.

### Conclusion

The use of judging philosophies has come under fire from some corners of the debate community because some research has suggested that critics do not understand or adhere to their written judging philosophy statements. As Brey (1989) reported, "If one can assume that judging philosophies are an accurate reflection of the nature of the activity, then a well defined lack of consensus seems to exist concerning several key aspects of the activity" (p. 76). He extended, "At this current theoretical stage of evolution, CEDA debate lacks a foundation or consensus along several argumentative and strategic lines" (p. 77). Therefore, he cautioned it was vital for debaters to be able to adapt to the individual preferences of a given critic. Brey (1990) further concluded that debaters' understanding of "the reservations and limitations judges place on topicality, debate theory arguments and evidence, counterwarrants and counter intuitive arguments, evidence, and style and delivery will surely benefit in the long run" (p. 79).

In this paper, we have argued that the use of judging philosophy statements would produce more audience adaptation, more consistency in ballot decisions by critics, and better coaching. Despite inconclusive research concerning the effectiveness of philosophy statements, support for their use comes from the fact that they have been widely and regularly used by the debate community (i.e., at CEDA and NDT nationals as well as numerous regional tournaments). Gotcher and Greene (1988) summarized:

Tournament directors, coaches, and judges must be vigilant in the collection and distribution of information concerning the critics evaluating the rounds. Judging philosophies, judge expectations, intervention techniques, and judge backgrounds must be made available to the participants... Procedures must be implemented to make this information available. For example, tournament directors should request a judging philosophy and background information on all judges. (p. 93)

It is our position that while judging philosophy statements are not perfect they are the best method of attaining the advantages of adaptation, judging consistency, and better coaching. "What is needed is a concerted effort by all concerned to provide the participants with essential information regarding the critics judging the debate rounds" (Gotcher & Greene, 1988, p. 93).

As suggested by Pettus (1991), "concerns of judges and debaters should also be concerns of the scholars writing about the activity" (p. 170). Therefore as Pi Kappa Delta enters the 21st century we encourage it to consider changes to match debate to the needs and desires of all its participants (coaches, debaters, critics, and alumni). The integration of judging philosophy statements at the PKD National Debate Tournament would benefit not only the activity of debate, but the organization. By being proactive in this area PKD will remain a vital force in the intercollegiate debate community.

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## “REPETITION AND THE RHETORICAL QUESTION: INTEGRATING THESE LEGAL CLOSING ARGUMENT STRATEGIES INTO PERSUASIVE ORATIONS”

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Persuasion is the oldest event in the history of intercollegiate speech, stemming back to the first Interstate Oratorical competition in 1874. Unfortunately, it has become one of the most calcified events. As Dean (1992) asserts, persuasive speaking is suffering from a condition in which rigid boundaries result in a predictable and static form of discourse that is by and large void of individuality (p. 38). Additional research affirms that contest persuasion is replete with predictable topics (Leiboff, 1991), a limited organizational structure (Sellnow and Ziegelmueller, 1988, Zizik, 1991, Friedley, 1992, Reynolds, 1992, Sellnow, 1992), and a lack of audience-centeredness (Reynolds, 1992). In an event where few students dare to deviate from the mainstream, persuasive speaking is stagnant and needs some revitalization. It was this same fear of breaking the status quo that mired the