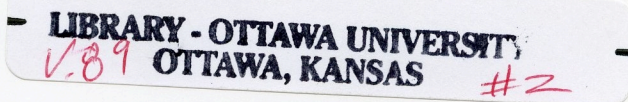


# The Forensic

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Reducing Uncertainty for College Students Making the  
Transition Between High School and Collegiate Individual  
Events Competition

ROBERT S. LITTLEFIELD and CINDY LARSON-CASSELTON

Evaluating Scarcity Beyond the Forensic Experience: Alumni  
Perspectives

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A Scarcity Principle Explanation of Novelty in Forensics  
Performance

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Musical Remakes: An Adaptation of the "Illusion of Life"  
Rhetorical Model

SUSAN P. MILLSAP



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Joyce Krueger  
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Ripon, WI 54971

nflpikappa@centurytel.net  
Phone: 920-748-7533  
Fax: 920-748-9478

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## *of Pi Kappa Delta*

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- 1 Reducing Uncertainty for College Students Making the Transition Between High School and Collegiate Individual Events Competition  
ROBERT S. LITTLEFIELD and CINDY LARSON-CASSELTON
- 15 Evaluating Scarcity Beyond the Forensic Experience: Alumni Perspectives  
SHANNON S. DYER
- 25 A Scarcity Principle Explanation of Novelty in Forensics Performance  
JOSHUA A. COMPTON
- 37 Musical Remakes: An Adaptation of the “Illusion of Life” Rhetorical Model  
SUSAN P. MILLSAP



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# Reducing Uncertainty for College Students Making the Transition Between High School and Collegiate Individual Events Competition

ROBERT S. LITTLEFIELD, PH.D., NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY AND CINDY LARSON-CASSELTON, M.A., CONCORDIA COLLEGE

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**Abstract:** *This study explores the transition experienced by students as they move between high school and collegiate individual events competition. Surveys were gathered from 273 individual events contestants at six collegiate forensic tournaments held throughout the central United States. The findings suggest that coaches and students begin to reduce uncertainty about each other as early as the initial meetings held during the recruitment process. In addition, the importance of timing is established when forensic directors provide information to potential team members.*

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Every year in the United States, thousands of students with forensic experience graduate from high schools and matriculate to post-secondary institutions with forensic programs. Upon arrival at their campuses, some decide to continue their involvement in forensics and join the school team. They view forensics as an on-going vehicle to enhance their academic performance, to network with others having similar interests, and to continue involvement with an activity they enjoy (Williams, McGee & Worth, 2001; Bartanen, 1998; Millsap, 1998; McMillan & Todd-Mancillas, 1991). Others, for a variety of reasons, choose to discontinue their participation in forensics. Among the possible reasons for avoidance may be preconceived negative impressions about collegiate forensics (Littlefield, 2001), uncertainty about what collegiate participation will entail (Williams et al., 2001), and how they will interact with a different forensic coach and members of the team (Littlefield & Casselton, 2004).

Also arriving on campus is the vast majority of first year students who do not have any high school forensic experience. While this group may not know much about forensics, they may share with their more forensic-minded peers uncertainty about what participation entails, how they would get along with the forensic coach and other team members, and if they would even be good enough to join the

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ROBERT S. LITTLEFIELD, PH.D., is a professor of communication at North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND. Cindy Larson-Casselton is an assistant professor of communication at Concordia College, Moorhead, MN, and a doctoral student at NDSU. The authors wish to thank Duane Fish, Joel Hefling, Michael Loy, Dan Smith, and Susan Millsap for their assistance in the data collection process.



team. For them, deciding to enter collegiate forensics is comparable to the process individuals go through when deciding to adopt an innovation or embrace a new idea (Rogers, 1995).

For the most part, students with previous forensic experience who join a collegiate forensic team tend to self-select. That is, they decide to participate and search out the coach to sign up and get more information. As long as a steady stream of students finds its way to the office of the forensic director, there is little cause for concern. Reliance on this model, however, produces problems for forensic directors when the numbers of students who self-select falls below the number coaches believe they need in order to field a competitive team. When confronted with the problem of too few students, forensic directors must recruit students who have not previously participated. With this group, more attention must be paid by forensic directors to the dissemination of information about the program and how they communicate interpersonally as they meet and establish a relationship with the new students. Unfortunately, little research has been conducted in this area, particularly about how forensic directors are perceived by first-year students, and what they do to reduce uncertainty among these students. This is the focus of the present study.

### **Review of Related Literature**

While many argue that students benefit from high school and collegiate individual events competition (Pineda, n.d.; Plagge, Parrish, Clawson, & Boeder, 2002), the research has not focused on the transition between these two environments. While a few studies have addressed the link between high school and collegiate debate (Littlefield, 2001; Pruett, 1972; Thomas, 1965), no study has examined the transition between high school and collegiate individual events or the ways college forensic directors reduce uncertainty and recruit students who are unfamiliar with collegiate forensics. To increase our understanding of this transition, two established communication theories—uncertainty reduction and diffusion—provide insight into why students with or without forensic experience choose to compete or not compete at the collegiate level. While these theories have not traditionally been used in the forensic research, they are applicable since students experience uncertainty about participation and forensic directors must disseminate information through multiple channels to reduce that uncertainty if they want to recruit students successfully.

### **Uncertainty Reduction Theory**

One communication theory with applicability to the issue of recruiting students involves reducing uncertainty. Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT) is heuristic and explains how communication reduces uncertainty between strangers engaged in initial interactions. Developed by Berger and Calabrese (1975), and later modified (Berger, 1979; Berger & Bradac, 1982), URT provides a linear explanation of the nature of interpersonal communication between unfamiliar people. Essentially, strangers experience uncertainty and cognitive



stress in interpersonal settings. As they communicate interpersonally, their primary concern is to reduce their uncertainty. Information is shared over time, and through predictable stages, making it possible for strangers to decrease their uncertainty and predict each other's behavior (West & Turner, 2004). These assumptions produce seven axioms explaining how communication is used to reduce uncertainty in initial interactions.

*Axiom #1* proposes that when strangers meet, there is a high level of uncertainty. As they begin communicate with each other, the level of uncertainty for each person decreases, resulting in a further increase in the amount of verbal communication. The application of this axiom to the present study suggests that when potential collegiate forensic competitors arrive on campus, they primarily come as strangers and have cognitive uncertainty about what the nature of college forensic competition will be. They need information to overcome their uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1991), and upon meeting the collegiate forensic coach and receiving information about college tournaments and the actual expectations of team members, their level of uncertainty decreases. As the level of uncertainty is reduced, the more likely it is that they will share information with the coach or signal a prediction of what their participation decision will be.

*Axiom #2* suggests that as nonverbal affiliative expressiveness increases during initial interaction situations, uncertainty levels decrease producing further increases in nonverbal affiliative expressiveness. In the forensic context, when the potential collegiate forensic participants meet with the coach, the uncertainty levels experienced by both often decrease if they respond to each other in a cordial manner, show agreement through facial expressions, or shake hands when starting or concluding the interaction. As the student and coach come to know each other better, they likely will continue the positive nonverbal expressiveness in other contexts. For example, the coach may wave to the student across campus or the student may acknowledge the coach with a smile or nod of the head when passing in a hallway.

*Axiom #3* explains that high levels of uncertainty cause increases in information-seeking behavior, and as uncertainty levels decline, information-seeking behavior will also decrease. For potential collegiate forensic participants and the collegiate coaches who want to attract them to compete on the team, this axiom would suggest that information is necessary to determine subsequent behavior. As an example, the coach may want to find out more information about the student's background, schedule, major, and level of interest based upon some prior knowledge of the student's record at the high school level. The student with past high school forensic experience may have conflicting views about participating in collegiate forensics at the expense of other college activities. A high level of uncertainty about what collegiate forensics may involve for the student could result in her seeking information. Once both parties obtain their information, their uncer-



tainty about the other in the relationship will decrease information-seeking behavior. The coach may discover that the student is not really interested and discontinue persuasive efforts to recruit her. The student may learn that her misconceptions about collegiate forensics were not true and decide that she will give the team a try.

*Axiom #4* details that high uncertainty levels in a relationship decrease the intimacy level of the communication content and low levels of uncertainty produce high levels of intimacy. An application of this axiom to the present study suggests that when collegiate coaches and potential collegiate forensic participants meet for the first time, their high levels of uncertainty about the other often keep the discussion on general, factual topics pertaining to the student's previous record of participation, the tournament schedule, and issues of scheduling. As the levels of uncertainty experienced by the coach and student decrease, they may discuss more personal issues pertaining to goals, family, and relational issues.

*Axiom #5* claims that high levels of uncertainty produce high rates of communication reciprocity while low levels of uncertainty produce low levels of reciprocity. In the context of this study, during the initial meeting of the collegiate forensic coach and the potential collegiate forensic participant, it is likely that both will mirror each other's behavior. Since both coach and student may be uncertain about the intent of the other, they may remain reserved and treat each other politely. When coach and student experience less uncertainty about the intent of the other, they may be more willing to be honest with their reactions toward each other or about involvement in collegiate forensic activity.

*Axiom #6* illustrates that perceived similarities between people reduce uncertainty, whereas dissimilarities increase uncertainty. This axiom suggests that when collegiate forensic coaches and potential collegiate forensic participants initially interact, they are operating on their expectations of how the other will behave. If the coach and student discover through their initial conversation that they have similar interests, goals, and visions of what forensic participation at the collegiate level will entail, there will be less uncertainty for both because they will determine that there appears to be a "good fit." If the coach and student discover that they are dissimilar in too many ways, both may be more uncertain about whether collegiate forensic participation is likely for the student.

Finally, *Axiom #7* states that as high uncertainty levels produce decreases in liking, while decreases in uncertainty produce increases in liking. An application of this axiom suggests that if the student's uncertainty level increases about whether she likes the collegiate coach or collegiate forensic activity, she will be less likely to want to join the team. On the other hand, once the student reduces her uncertainty about what collegiate forensics will be like, she may be more interested in giving the team a try.



A number of studies have been conducted in interpersonal and small group settings to validate the claims represented in the axioms (Knobloch & Solomon, 2002; Cragan & Schields, 1999; Kramer, 1996; Douglas, 1994; and Kellerman & Reynolds, 1990). Analogical reasoning suggests they also may be applicable to the interaction between forensic coaches and incoming first year students during the recruitment process. No forensic studies have used URT to explain what happens during the initial interaction between coach and potential forensic participant, making this study useful to those seeking to understand the communication going on at this stage of the coach-student relationship.

### **Diffusion Theory**

When students make a decision to participate in an experience that is new to them, like joining a forensic team, they may be experiencing what Rogers (1995) described as the innovation-decision process. In his classic model, the individual passes through five phases: Knowledge of the innovation or new idea; attitude formation about whether or not the innovation or new idea is beneficial to the individual; decision of the individual to adopt or reject the innovation or new idea; implementation or putting the new idea into practice; and the confirmation of the decision to continue with the innovation or revert to previous ways of thinking or acting. This model has been applied successfully to a number of studies pertaining to the adoption of new practices in educational settings.

The perceived attributes of innovations are also factors that influence the decision to adopt a new behavior. These include: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability (Rogers, 1995). Most applicable to the present study are compatibility, trialability, and observability, since uncertainty among students about competing stems from questions related to these attributes: "Will my participation be compatible with my schedule and other interests?" "If I try college forensics, how will my skills stack up against others at the collegiate level?" and "Will I observe any differences between collegiate and high school competitions?" These attributes influence the rate of adoption, or relative speed with which an innovation or new behavior is adopted by members of a social system (p. 250).

There are two levels of diffusion theory applicable to the present study. Initially, since persuasion is involved when coaches attempt to recruit first-year students to join the forensic team, the dynamics of the interaction between coach and student can be studied. Also, as the student considers the information and weighs the arguments for and against joining the team, the decision made by the student must be acted upon and confirmed. No previous forensic studies have examined the recruitment process from this perspective, making the present study particularly useful as a means to apply diffusion theory to another context.



The relationship between URT and principles of diffusion theory provides insight for researchers as they consider how college students make their decision to compete on a collegiate speech team. Students need information about the new idea of joining the collegiate speech team. Based upon the knowledge they gather, their uncertainty is reduced; as they weigh the benefits and drawbacks, a decision is made about participation. Ultimately, they determine their level of satisfaction and confirm or revoke their decision to join.

### **Research Question**

Based upon these concepts, the present study explores the following research question:

What is the nature of the initial interaction between college forensic participants and their forensic coaches about joining collegiate individual events programs?

To this end, the researchers will identify the expectations of collegiate forensic participants about collegiate individual events and forensic competition and compare these perceptions with what they discovered; explore how collegiate forensic participants received information about their programs and responded during their initial interaction; and, identify to what extent collegiate forensic coaches made reference to similarities between high school and college forensics to establish positive expectations about collegiate competition.

### **Method**

The current study assesses the perceptions of college students about the transition between high school and collegiate individual events competition. The investigators secured the assistance of five Directors of Forensics to distribute the surveys to student participants at tournaments throughout the central portion of the United States.

### **Sample**

The sample includes 273 college students who competed at one of six individual events tournaments held in Wyoming, Nebraska, South Dakota, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Ohio during the 2003 fall semester of competition. More than 70 schools were represented at these tournaments coming from 16 states.<sup>1</sup> The quality of the sample was high for several reasons: All four undergraduate levels of study were represented (first year – 37.6%, sophomore – 21.5%, junior – 18.6%, and senior – 21.9%). A substantial number of women and men responded to the survey as the percentage of female to male respondents was 59.9% and 39.1%, respectively. The respondents had considerable forensic experience: 83.3% competed at the high school level (63.9% for more than three years) and 48.5% had two or more years of collegiate experience.

### **Instrument**

The researchers developed the instrument based upon the ones used by Williams, McGee & Worth (2001) and Littlefield (2001). The



survey had three sections: Demographic information; perceptions about the collegiate recruitment process; and perceptions about high school and collegiate individual events competition.<sup>2</sup> Once developed, the instrument was pre-tested with a group of six local collegiate forensic students. After reviewing their responses and comments, the investigators grouped some of the questions differently to reflect the sequential order of the recruitment process, followed by questions about competition and community. The revised instrument was then reviewed by three former collegiate forensic coaches for clarity and face validity. After this, the instrument was finalized and prepared for copying and distribution.

### **Data Collection**

Initially, managers of four college invitational IE tournaments held during fall semester in 2003 were identified and contacted to assist with the distribution and collection of surveys. Surveys were mailed to the managers prior to their tournaments, along with a summary sheet requesting demographic information about the tournament. From this initial set of four, data were collected from two of the tournaments. The other two managers were unable to conduct the survey as planned at their invitationals and distributed them to their own teams and to students from other schools competing at two subsequent tournaments in their regions of the country. To further broaden the sample geographically, an additional tournament manager was contacted and she agreed to distribute the survey at her tournament.

The completed surveys were sorted and the data coded for entry into an SPSS software package; both quantitative and qualitative data were examined. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The responses to open-ended questions were analyzed and intercoder reliability was calculated using Scott's pi, with any score above 0.70 considered acceptable (Neuendorf, 2002).

### **Findings**

*Axiom 1: Given the high level of uncertainty present at the onset of the entry phase, as the amount of verbal communication between strangers increases, the level of uncertainty for each interactant in the relationship decreases. As uncertainty is further reduced, the amount of verbal communication increases.*

The data from the present study supports this axiom that face-to-face interaction reduces uncertainty and increases the sharing of information. When asked, "What was the form of the first information you received about your collegiate individual events team," 62.1% of the respondents indicated the information came through face-to-face interaction where they could ask questions and get direct information. Printed material (22.6%) and mediated or electronic communication (10.5%) were the other major forms of information used to provide information to prospective members. For the 54 respondents with the most uncertainty about joining a collegiate individual events team, 31 (49.2%) indicated that upon having face-



to-face interaction with teammates, coaches, or others in the supportive team environment, they revealed their own inclinations about participation and chose to join the team.

*Axiom 2: As nonverbal affiliative expressiveness increases, uncertainty levels decrease in an initial interaction situation. In addition, decreases in uncertainty level will cause increases in nonverbal affiliative expressiveness.* The nonverbal expressiveness of forensic coaches was clearly reflected in the present study by 226 (82.5%) of those responding who provided examples of a memorable nonverbal characteristic demonstrated by their primary individual events coach during their initial face-to-face meeting.<sup>3</sup> While the reader might be cautioned that the examples were based upon the memory of the participants, their vividness in the minds of the students clearly reflects how memorable they were. These examples were first sorted by valence and then grouped into traditional categories of nonverbal communication. Of the 238 examples, 185 (77.7%) were positive, compared with 7 (2.9%) negative and 46 (19.3%) neutral. Intercoder reliability for valence was established ( $\pi = .818$ ). Table 1 provides a breakdown of how the examples were identified by category of nonverbal communication. Intercoder reliability for category placement was established ( $\pi = .922$ ). The data suggest that the facial expressiveness and paralanguage of the IE coach was most often memorable to the student. Since the majority of the examples were perceived by the students as positive or neutral, the outcome should be a decrease in uncertainty about the disposition and intention of the IE coach toward the student seeking information about joining the forensic team.

Table 1

*Categories of Memorable Nonverbal Characteristics Displayed by the Primary IE Coach During Initial Face-to-Face Meetings with Potential Team Members*

Category	Examples	
Facial Expressiveness	128	(50.1%)
Paralanguage	59	(23.1%)
Haptics	28	(10.9%)
Kinesics	19	(7.4%)
Objectics	11	(4.3%)
Proxemics	6	(2.3%)
Other	4	(1.5%)

n = 255

*Axiom 3: High levels of uncertainty cause increases in information-seeking behavior. As uncertainty levels decline, information-seeking behavior decreases.*

While the data are not conclusive, there is evidence in the present study that among the 248 students who responded to the question, "When did you first get information about your current individual events team," 143 (56.9%) sought and received information prior to arrival on campus, compared with 105 (41.8%) who got their information upon arrival to campus. Since the initial decision to compete



was confirmed through the students' participation at the tournament where they completed the surveys, no additional information was needed. Further, once the students obtained the information and decided to compete, participants appeared to recognize what was involved. When asked if collegiate individual events competition was what they expected it to be, of the 62 students who were the least certain about competing, 22 (35.4%) found it better, 13 (20.9%) found it worse, and 21 (33.8%) found it different. Intercoder reliability for responses indicating valence was determined ( $\pi = .875$ ). The inference to be drawn from these findings is that once the students started participating, they had their own perspective about competition, and because of their experience, they no longer needed to seek information about collegiate individual events competition.

***Axiom 4:** High levels of uncertainty in a relationship cause decreases in the intimacy level of the communication content. Low levels of uncertainty produce high levels of intimacy.*

The survey did not seek specific information about self-disclosure or levels of intimacy demonstrated by students or coaches; however, the data do suggest that in the initial meeting, two nonverbal dimensions of intimacy (haptics and objectics) were recognized by the students. Of the 255 examples of memorable nonverbal characteristics of individual events coaches during the initial meeting with the student, 28 (10.9%) identified use of touch and 11 (4.3%) mentioned objects. Because a handshake or pat on the back is regarded as expected behavior, and what the coach is wearing, has done to her body, or has in the office would be observable to more than the student during the initial meeting, these are considered as examples of low intimacy. The low number of examples within the nonverbal categories for haptics and objectics also suggest high uncertainty about acceptable levels of intimacy between strangers (student and coach at first meeting). As the students lower their uncertainty about their coach and the acceptable levels of intimacy, their willingness to engage in higher levels of intimacy increases. For example, one respondent indicated that his coach "winked" at him. Another wrote that his former coach "hugged" everyone on the team when she came back to judge at a tournament.

***Axiom 5:** High levels of uncertainty produce high rates of reciprocity. Low levels of uncertainty produce low levels of reciprocity.*

Because the survey was administered only to students, there is no way to determine if matching levels of reciprocity existed between the student and coach; however, the data do provide insight into the notion of reciprocity. Intuitively, one would expect that the coach would have low uncertainty about encouraging students to join the individual events team and would be nonverbally and verbally encouraging since recruitment is a major part of building a program. The positive examples provided by the students of their coaches' nonverbal expressiveness supports this notion.



In addition, of the 273 students who responded to the question, “Before you actually joined your college individual events team, how certain were you that you wanted to compete in collegiate forensics,” 186 (67.9%) were very certain or certain, compared with 54 (19.7%) who were uncertain or very uncertain. This would suggest that in the vast majority of cases, reciprocity may have occurred between student and coach during their initial meeting.

*Axiom 6: Similarities between people reduce uncertainty, whereas dissimilarities increase uncertainty.*

The findings are relevant to this axiom in several ways. The initial similarity for many students and coaches is their connection to high school forensics. Of the 273 student respondents, 229 (83.8%) were involved in high school forensics. When asked if their coach made reference to their past high school experience as a way to reduce uncertainty about what collegiate competition would be like, 147 (53.6%) responded “yes.” In Table 2, the respondents provided their impressions of high school and collegiate individual events competition. For both communities, the majority of the respondents had similarly favorable or very favorable impressions. One aspect of the findings confounds the axiom. While 126 (46.1%) respondents were unsure or did not find collegiate individual events competition to be what they expected, it is not clear that the dissimilarity increased their uncertainty about being on a speech team since they were actively competing at the time they completed the survey.

Table 2

*Collegiate Individual Events Participants’ Impressions of High School and Collegiate Individual Events Competition and these Respective Forensic Communities*

Impression	High School Competition & Community	Collegiate Competition & Community
Very Favorable	57 (20.8 %)	93 (33.9 %)
Favorable	100 (36.5 %)	142 (51.8 %)
Neutral	84 (30.7 %)	28 (10.2 %)
Unfavorable	19 ( 6.9 %)	3 ( 1.1 %)
Very Unfavorable	7 ( 2.6 %)	5 ( 1.8 %)
Not Responding	6 ( 2.2 %)	2 ( .7 %)

N = 273

*Axiom 7: Increases in uncertainty level produce decreases in liking; decreases in uncertainty produce increases in liking.*

It would be safe to say that every college or university campus with a forensic program has students who did not join because they were uncertain if they would like participating at the college level. The underlying assumption of this axiom is that as uncertainty reduces, an increase in liking will result about joining the team. The data provide some support for this axiom. Of the 65 students who did not find collegiate individual events to be what they expected, the largest



group (33.8%) found it to be better or at least different (32.3%) from what they originally thought. Only 13 (20%) found it worse than expected.

## Conclusions

Just as Berger and Calabrese (1975) combined their seven axioms to produce 21 theorems, the combination of particular axioms are useful to produce forensic theorems to explain the initial interaction between collegiate forensic coaches and potential team members. The following forensic theorems are offered as insight to coaches seeking to reduce uncertainty among students about joining the forensic team.

*Forensic Theorem #1: Providing information about the nature of collegiate forensic competition, the requirements of participation, and the expectations of competing to potential team members should decrease uncertainty, increase a liking for, and create an increase in participation levels.* In an ideal situation, if an increase in the amount of information that potential collegiate forensic participants receive about collegiate forensics decreases uncertainty, and if decreased levels of uncertainty among potential collegiate forensic participants produce increases in liking for the forensic activity, then giving potential collegiate forensic participants accurate information about what collegiate forensics entails should result in an increased level of participation in college forensics.

*Forensic Theorem #2: Finding similarities with familiar forensic settings should decrease uncertainty about the nature of collegiate forensics, increase a liking for, and increase participation in forensics.* If similarities between people reduce uncertainty, and if decreased levels of uncertainty produce increases in liking, then appealing to what potential collegiate forensic participants liked about their forensic experience in high school should result in an increased level of participation in college forensics.

*Forensic Theorem #3: Coaches should be expedient and proactive in providing information about the nature of collegiate forensics, the requirements of participation, and the expectations of competing to decrease uncertainty, foster awareness of similarities, and increase participation.* If high levels of uncertainty cause increases in information-seeking behavior, and if increased information about collegiate forensics decreases uncertainty about what high school and collegiate forensics are like, and if information-seeking behavior about collegiate forensic participation decreases when uncertainty levels about competing in collegiate forensic activities decline, then finding the most expedient ways to establish similarities between college and high school forensic experiences should be the goal of collegiate forensic coaches. If collegiate coaches focus on reducing levels of uncertainty about what collegiate forensics will be like for the potential collegiate forensic participants, levels of participation should increase based upon the similarities established and the levels of liking that are attained.



In addition to suggestions pertaining to how a coach might reduce uncertainty, the process used to recruit students to join a collegiate individual events team can benefit from additional focus on the decision-making process the entering students encounter. Students experience uncertainty regarding a number of issues, including the compatibility of forensics with their schedules, if they will fit in with the team and collegiate forensic community, whether they will like the coach, and if they will be good enough to be successful. If forensic directors want to persuade students to join the individual events team, they must provide the students with information while they are still uncertain about many aspects of college life. Once the students get to campus and are exposed to the wide range of opportunities available, they make their decisions based upon different attributes (relative advantages) that make the option of competing no longer compatible with their schedules or trialable. By increasing the amount of information and the manner in which they communicate about their programs with first-year students, Directors of Forensics can reduce uncertainty about joining the team because most students do not seek out this information on their own. Since information-gathering is the first step in the innovation-decision process, students should receive sufficient information to reduce their high uncertainty. While face-to-face interaction is the most common form of communication used by forensic directors with potential team members, printed materials and mediated communication offer alternative ways to provide information and reduce uncertainty.

### **Directions for Future Research**

While the findings of this study provide useful information pertaining to the nature of the initial interaction between college forensic participants and their coaches about joining collegiate individual events programs, the need for additional study exists. A further examination of the axioms explaining URT is necessary. For example, it is unclear if certainty about the decision to compete actually decreases information seeking behavior in forensics. Rogers (1995) suggested that at the confirmation stage of the innovation-decision process, the continuation of a decision is no longer contingent upon information sought from others, but rather is based upon information gained through experience or observation. This might also be related to satisfaction levels with competition. For example, as long as students are satisfied with their level of involvement, they may not need additional information; however, if students become dissatisfied, the need to gather additional information about other programs or options may arise.

Regarding Axiom 4, the data from the present study were unclear as to whether the intimacy level increased with greater certainty. The data suggest coaches are more likely to demonstrate supportive behaviors due to decreased uncertainty about the nature of the student-coach relationship. To more fully examine this issue, future studies might seek the perceptions of college coaches regarding acceptable or appropriate levels of intimacy and disclosure among team members