came in for coaching and left immediately afterwards. Because of this, the team had little interaction outside of tournament venues, meaning that we had no sense of one another as normal, non-suit-wearing individuals. At the first meeting, we proposed to "take back the team room" and spend more time there, especially on Mondays, after the weekly meeting (email correspondence, 21 January 2010). The idea was that socializing with the team in a non-competitive setting would increase our knowledge of one another and our identity as a group. This year, the team room is always full of competitors, doing homework and working on speeches, and as a result, team solidarity is flourishing. After the two meetings and the work weekend, one team member summed up our new relationship goals perfectly: "I love you all and am really glad that I got to know you guys even better over the weekend. As we said…we need to be a better team during the weekdays in order to come close to reaching our potential" (email correspondence, 25 January 2010). This entire situation really helped us to form a team culture, a culture which might not have otherwise existed. Being a part of this culture helped motivate us to change.

Team Cohesion

The first meeting, the student-only meeting, in addition to fostering team culture, increased the cohesiveness of what was previously a loosely connected group of individuals. At least one person agreed with this impression, saying "I felt afterwards that we had all grown closer and in addition I truly feel it became the moment when we actually became a team" (email correspondence, 12 November 2010). To become a team is to overcome personal differences and desires and function as part of a collectivistic unit. When our team president called for a meeting, he used highly collectivistic rhetoric to get us thinking about ourselves as a cohesive team, and not as a collection of individuals:

> We as a team must fix the status quo…We includes everyone who wants to work to fix this. We includes people who will… show up with some ideas or observations about the team. We includes, most importantly, people who will attend, take the ideas set when we meet, and actually work towards them. (email correspondence, 19 January 2010).

Our team president used the rhetoric of "we" to change the team perspective. This email was meant to galvanize the team, to motivate the members to not only attend the student-led meeting, but to work for real change in place of apathy and negativity.

Most students who attended the first meeting indicated that they did so because they were interested in changing the way the team operated, in one way or another, which is exactly the response our president was seeking. When people attended the second meeting, many did so to demonstrate solidarity, to demonstrate the cohesive unit that our team had suddenly become. Different members indicated that they attended "to show support for the team's objectives"

or because "we all had to be [o]n the same page." One member explained, "I felt that we all needed to be there for one another and with one another to support one another, or else...our message... wouldn't have been heard" (email correspondence, 12 November 2010). Thanks to shared goals and a shared perspective, we were now a unified team.

One instance of tangible team cohesion was the way we all started supporting one another after the first meeting. Before the meeting, most of us had paid little attention to our teammates' competitive events. After the meeting, we attempted to increase the amount of varsity-novice peer coaching and we developed an item called the "Whatcha Workin' On Sheet," which we used to keep tabs on each others' speeches. This sheet was displayed prominently in the team room, and it included our names, the events we were working on, our topics for those events, and how far along we were. This gave everyone a better sense of how well we were doing with our team goals, as well as identifying who needed what kind of help with which events. Many different team members felt a shift in team interaction following the meeting:

> Team members did not motivate me much before the meetings, but did afterwards (Email correspondence (12 November 2010).

> I did not get to see the others too much before the meeting. After the meeting we definitely pushed each other (Email correspondence, 12 November 2010).

> Before, the team didn't motivate me – I didn't really know anyone and didn't feel like I needed to. After, I wanted to work because I knew that they were working just as hard or harder... and I had my teammates pushing me to be better than them (email correspondence, 12 November 2010).

This dramatic shift in team cohesion came about because we took the first step, and identified common goals. Then we took those goals and moved forward. After the meeting, I hunted down novices and encouraged them to peer coach with me, and I also sought feedback on my speeches from my fellow varsity members. Before the meetings, no one really *dis*liked one another, but at the same time, the cohesive interpersonal bonds needed to have a truly successful team were just not there. On that night that we "became a team," we were able to increase team cohesion and, thus, our motivation to succeed. One team member attributes his motivation almost entirely to team cohesion—"What was and is motivating for me is the chance to be part of a group of people that are trying to accomplish something great" (Email correspondence, 12 November 2010). Before the first meeting, we had no way of knowing what our teammates hoped to accomplish.

Team Goals

One problem we had was poorly constructed team goals. One

student said of the coaches, "They motivated us by setting lofty goals" (email correspondence, 12 November 2010). Although we had taken the time to collectively set goals for our team at the beginning of the year, many team members felt that these "lofty goals" were not a true representation of their own objectives. Immediately before the two meetings, our director of forensics informed us, "The team has abandoned its goals" (email correspondence, 18 January 2010); however, realistically, we could not abandon what many of us had not internalized in the first place. Forensic competitors are not solely interested in winning, and the our speech team was no exception. The official team goals failed to take into account alternate, less ambitions, viewpoints. Some team members felt that the atmosphere at the initial goal-setting session had been too controlled by the coaches. The feeling was that even had we voiced our opinions, they would have been overruled or drowned out by the overwhelming influence of those in power. As one student put it, "We wanted to be coached and led instead of forced into doing things" (email correspondence, 12 November 2010). At the first meeting, we tried to correct this mistake, and "talked about the coaches being overbearing, the real goals that we wanted and what they meant for us" (email correspondence, 12 November 2010). One student summed up the feelings of the group by explaining the delicate nature of team motivation and goals:

> If the team is going to be at all motivated it needs to come from within the team. Someone from within the team (or someones) need to motivate and lead the team to accomplish the goals that we set as a team, realistically, with the whole mindset of achieving those goals. The coaches are good inspiration and wonderful critical evaluators, but the motivation has to come from within the group or else (as history has shown) the group may not really embrace the goals set forth (email correspondence, 12 November 2010).

This student-led goal setting session, free from the influence of the coaches, helped us to define what we truly wanted to get out of this activity as a team. We expressed our desire to "try a different team dynamic...where people are not asked to have only school and speech in their lives" (email correspondence, 21 January 2010). We wanted to take command of our team aspirations.

One reason the competitors took issue with the team goals was the disparity between the rhetoric of coach-student interactions, and the reality of the actual speech team. Whereas the coaches presented lofty rhetoric about education and personal growth, several of the competitors felt that all the coaches cared about was winning trophies. One competitor was especially concerned at the incongruity of this situation:

> I was concerned that their plaque said something about "Forensics is always about winning; but not necessarily about winning trophies," yet I didn't feel that, given the work I was

putting in, that the plaque was being followed... It felt as though their only concern was trophies and physical victories, not improvements in an individual overall (Email correspondence, 12 November 2010).

It is not easy to mean every single thing you say, but when communicating the core values and goals of a team, consistency is absolutely necessary. The coaches undermined their own position by espousing one set of values, but in practice, lived by another.

Another reason that the team's goals and the coaches' goals were so mismatched was the dearth of productive dialogue between the two groups—dialogue being "a two way exchange of ideas that leads to everyone understanding the position of everyone else," according to one competitor (email correspondence, 12 November 2010). Our team president indicated that before the meetings, the main concern was a "lack of dialogue," that the coaches and students were just not communicating in a optimal manner, and another said that they attended the meeting because "we needed to have an actual dialogue and insist upon the coaches that we wanted them to understand our position" (email correspondence, 12 November 2010). Unfortunately, the lack of dialog continued throughout the coach-student follow-up meeting, where many students felt that they were not being heard by the coaches when they tried to voice their opinions on the direction of the team. One teammate commented that the coaches should have been "more understanding and open to ideas differing from their own" (email correspondence, 12 November 2010). Other team members were also concerned at the lack of dialogic communication that occurred during the coach-led meeting: "I feel that he cut off the kind of dialogue we needed to have...[T]he coaches didn't fully understand our position and shot down the chance for an actual dialogue" (Email correspondence, 12 November 2010). Another team member said: "Most of this issues that were brought up were countered or shut down ... [The coaches] didn't create an atmosphere that was receptive to questions" (Email correspondence, 12 November 2010).

Whereas the first meeting was about sharing ideas, and had a serious yet positive atmosphere, the atmosphere of the second meeting was overwhelmingly described as "hostile," "tense," and "combative" by my teammates. Several of them suggested that the entire second meeting simply became a game of students vs. coaches. Everyone just blamed one another for the team's failures, instead of collaborating to rectify these failures. One team member wished that it had been "more of an open discussion, and less of a debate," and another explained the dynamics of the situation: " When the meeting clearly became students in chairs and coaches up front it because students vs coaches" (email correspondence, 12 November 2010). Many of my teammates suggested that had there been a smaller student-to-coach ratio at that meeting, it would have seemed less like we were attacking them, and more like we wanted to collaborate for true change.

Conclusion

The speech team at this mid-sized Midwestern university solved its problems by holding a meeting and hammering out exactly what we wanted from forensics and what we were willing to do to achieve our goals. Both the student-led meeting and the coach-led meeting were important to make sure we were all understanding one another, but ultimately, the change had to come from within the ranks of the students in order for it to truly work: "Nothing else was going to work unless it came from the students. The things we decided would not have been well received had they been advanced by coaches or anyone else" (Email correspondence, 12 November 2010). Through the first meeting, the team culture, team cohesion, and team goals were positively affected, which culminated in a higher degree of motivation for the entire team. The second meeting, while necessary, did not have the impact assigned to it by the coaches. In forensics, motivation must come from within the team, or else it will not become a lasting part of team dynamics.

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