

“The Peoria Recommendations:  
Suggestions on Promotion, Tenure and Evaluation for Forensics Professionals”

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**Introduction and Background:**

The reality of forensics education in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century is that there are a variety of models in terms of designing programs. A simple list of configurations can include:

- Single tenure-track director of forensics
- Tenure-track director of forensics with one or more tenure-track assistant coaches and/or assistant directors
- Tenure-track director of forensics with one or more part-time assistants coaches and/or assistant directors
- Single continuing-appointment director of forensics
- Single term-appointment director of forensics
- Single staff member director of forensics
- Staff director of forensics with one or more full-time staff assistant coaches and/or assistant directors
- Staff director of forensics with one or more part-time staff assistant coaches and/or assistant directors
- Adjunct director of forensics

All of these configurations occur within the basis of a variety of different types of institutions, including research institutions, regional comprehensive institutions, liberal arts institutions, community colleges, and other types of institutions such as for-profit institutions<sup>1</sup>.

The AFA Policy Debate Caucus gathered in 1993 at the Quail Roost Conference to create draft guidelines that would help forensic educators obtain tenure. While the original committee consisted primarily of debate educators, the goal was to create a document that could be supported by many forensic organizations. Clearly, the Quail Roost committee was correct in calling for a document that served all of these different constituencies. However, Quail Roost (as I'll further refer to the document in this article) was written from a policy debate paradigm.<sup>2</sup> Quail Roost was updated in 2009 by a committee chaired by Robin Rowland from the University of Kansas and R. Jarrod Atchinson of Trinity University (“Status of Standards for Tenure and

Promotion of Debate”), and has been approved by the American Forensic Association. While many forensic educators have borrowed from Quail Roost in the preparation of promotion and tenure documents, this document reconsiders Quail Roost and the Status of Standards for Tenure and Promotion of Debate to account for directors who are part of individual events only or are part of comprehensive programs.

**Executive Summary: Questions to be asked and answered in terms of promotion, tenure, and rehiring**

*1. Questions to be asked of all forensic educators*

- a. What is your coaching philosophy?
- b. What is your judging philosophy?
- c. What is your teaching philosophy? How do you demonstrate effective teaching?
- d. How do you see your program within the context of various forensic organizations? Do you know what the various organizations stand for?
- e. How do you see forensics as an educational opportunity?
- f. How would you define your program? If someone were to ask you what makes your program unique, how would you answer?
- g. How do you know your program is meeting its goals?

*2. How does the professional document teaching?*

*3. How does the professional document service?*

*4. How does the professional document research?*

*5. Questions to be asked by internal and external reviewers*

- a. Does the forensic professional understand the key issues of the field?
- b. Has the forensic professional shown mastery of key competencies?
- c. When appropriate, has the forensic professional established her/himself as an effective teacher in her/his field of study?
- d. Has the program clearly identified its mission, and has the forensics professional successfully operated within its mission?

**Justification for Peoria Recommendations:**

Quail Roost was written before some major reconceptions of theories of scholarship. Boyer's *Scholarship Reconsidered* has had a significant impact on promotion and tenure practices at a variety of institutions. Any guidelines or suggestions for evaluation of forensic professionals must take into account how Boyer's practices have influenced higher education. Additionally, one of the presuppositions of the Quail Roost document is of a "reverse presumption" about service – that in the realm of policy debate, service often happens earlier rather than later in one's professional career (Rogers, 2000, pp. 7-8). That is certainly not always true within the variety of different forensic organizations, although it can be. Instead, a conception of service that is broader-based is necessary to consider the different kinds of service that take place within the forensics community.

This document, therefore, seeks to strike a balance between prescriptive and descriptive. While departments and institutions vary as far as standards of evaluation, tenure, and promotion are concerned, this document seeks to advance the work of former and current forensic educators such as Ann Burnett, MaryAnn Danielson, Tom Workman, David Williams and Joe Gantt to raise the kinds of questions that directors (and assistant directors) should ask of themselves and their programs, and to suggest questions that should be asked of forensics professionals<sup>3</sup> when it comes to their evaluation. In that light, these recommendations serve both to further the professionalism of the activity as well as to align forensics with the growing movement toward assessment (Bartanen, 2006; Kerber and Cronn-Mills, 2005).

While doing so, however, it is important to recognize the caveats noted several years ago by Ed Hinck (2000):

Comparing the work of one director with another is often more difficult than comparing the more traditional work of faculty members who teach and write in their field of expertise. However, just as we recognize the varied contributions of faculty members within the four major categories of teaching, scholarly activity, service, and professional activity, it seems important enough to describe the variations in programs and explain the educational value of those emphases.

Failing to address those issues leaves directors vulnerable to the misapplication of a very limited set of standards for evaluating their work. (pp. 11-12)

To Hinck's qualifications, this article contends that we as a forensics community must consider research about the activity as well as research about higher education in order to make the recommendations that follow more meaningful.

Thus, the recommendations that will be offered seek to address several questions:

1. How do we define when a director/assistant director is an effective part of the forensics community, which is by definition educational, co-curricular, and also competitive?
2. How do we help to define how forensics uniquely impacts the areas of teaching, scholarship and service?
3. How do we account for the variations in program types when determining what makes an effective ADOF/DOF?

This document draws upon two decades of forensics and higher education research. In some cases, the research and points made will be familiar to long-term members of the forensic

community. In many cases, the arguments presented were prescient long before they were recognized in the larger community. In other cases, good ideas that simply were forgotten are being advanced again because of their intrinsic value.

One other point of qualification must be made about this document. This document does not argue that forensics professionals, unless in a forensics-only position, should not be held to appropriate standards of tenure and/or promotion. The expectation is that a forensics professional should be effective in teaching, research and service. What this document does is to highlight how those areas can function within the forensics community, and offers guidance both to the forensics professional as well as host departments and the college or university as a whole as to how the areas of teaching, research and service may differ for a forensics professional. To utilize an analogy, the Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) has developed guidelines for evaluating the teacher/performer for promotion and tenure. The ATHE suggests that in the application of their guidelines, “All institutions, departments and faculty members are urged to adapt these guidelines to serve their specific missions. Departments are urged to determine and record--before promotion and tenure considerations, preferably at the time of hiring--what shall constitute qualitative and quantitative achievements as a teacher and performer” (Chabora, 1996, p. 1). These recommendations are given in the same spirit.

### **The Professionalism of Forensics Professionals: Bridging the Pedagogical and the Competitive**

One of the unique challenges that a director of forensics faces is that she or he has the ability to offer educational philosophies that guide an entire program. Assistant directors, particularly those who have oversight for a particular portion of a program (for example,

individual events or a particular type of debate) also have this same ability. While this ability to set the educational philosophy is often ground in negotiations with both the host department (as applicable) and/or the larger institution as a whole, it is clear that the director should be able to offer justifications as to the existence and the educational viability of forensics.

As the Status for Standards for Tenure and Promotion in Debate observe, what makes forensics tournaments unique are that they are “best understood as a kind of advanced laboratory for teaching public argument” (2009, p. 4). Indeed, the debate standards suggest that competition and pedagogy are intertwined: “From the perspective of the director/coach, however, the desire of debaters for competitive success is a powerful prod pushing them to fulfill the pedagogical functions of the activity” (2009, p. 4). Accordingly, it is appropriate, then, for forensics professionals to be asked how understand both the competitive and pedagogical nature of what they do, and how they choose to integrate the two.

Along those lines, and of those suggested by Keefe (1989), we should consider the following questions to be essential to ask forensic educators (pp. 49-50).

*1. What is your coaching philosophy?*

While this question sounds fairly straightforward at first, most forensics professionals recognize that this can easily become a fairly complex question. Inherently, by being a part of the forensics community, members of the community have developed a variety of attitudes and perspectives about how forensics should operate, both on a team (micro) and community (macro) level. A successful coaching philosophy should recognize both the micro and macro level.

On the micro level, forensics professionals should be able to answer at least three different questions: how do we expect students to generate speeches<sup>4</sup>, what role should we as

coaches play in the development of our students<sup>5</sup>, and what kind of squad do we want to develop?<sup>6</sup> We should, as forensics educators, be able to clearly delineate and identify the kind of role we want to play in the development of our students as forensics team members, both in micro and macro contexts.

On the macro level, we have a variety of good illustrations from the realm of policy debate. Dr. Ede Warner's Louisville project and Towson State University's 2008 CEDA National Championship team are two examples of programs that have successfully raised questions of how debate should function. Warner has posted extensively on the former EDebate listserv as well as published an article examining the philosophical assumptions under which his program operates.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, the growing research about forensics and service learning<sup>8</sup> suggests ways in which forensics teams can interact within a variety of different communities.

## 2. *What is your judging philosophy?*

The question is familiar to those who coach debate, as several organizations such as CEDA (Cross Examination Debate Association), NCCFA (National Christian College Forensics Association), NPDA (National Parliamentary Debate Association), NPTE (National Parliamentary Tournament of Excellence) and the NDT (National Debate Tournament) already explicitly require written philosophies as a part of the tournament entry. The call was made at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Individual Events Developmental Conference for individual events coaches to do the same. As Przybylo (1997) argued, "A judging philosophy is dynamic or ever changing. Our views and criteria should develop as one grows as a judge and educator" (p. 20). Przybylo argues for, at the minimum, the following areas to be covered:

- A General Philosophy Statement (overall view of your positions)
- “Overdone” material/topics
- Different rules (NFA, AFA, Phi Rho Pi, etc.)
- Listening behavior of students in the round
- Language (dirty words, sexist language, etc.)
- Movement and Book-as-Prop
- Use of script
- Current sources
- Types of comments written on the ballot
- Use of speaker points
- Organization of ballot
- Appearance of student
- Time violations
- Statements for each event

Pryzbylo’s series of questions are a good start toward establishing a personal philosophy. One might expect, when it comes to questions of tenure, promotion and retention, that members of the community should be aware of some of the critical issues within various events, and have clearly articulated statements about their own positions relative to those critical issues<sup>9</sup>.

3. *What is your teaching philosophy? How do you demonstrate effective teaching?*

This question is essential to answer no matter whether the forensics professional is striving for full professor or as a staff member up for contract renewal. Even though teaching may be only a part of our responsibilities, given that forensics is at its core an educational activity<sup>10</sup>, we must still be able to articulate two different aspects of teaching: “What is our own pedagogy, and how have we derived it?” and “How do we understand our role as teachers within forensics?”<sup>11</sup>

Both of these are covered later in this essay.

4. *How do you see your program within the context of various forensic organizations? Do you know what the various organizations stand for?*

Although in an ideal world, directors and other professionals should first determine their philosophy and then decide what organizations their teams should be members of, the fact of the matter is that most programs tend to decide what organizations they are part of based on region or the particular events in which they participate. To that end, then, it is appropriate to expect the professional to articulate how and where her or his program fits. For example, in the realm of parliamentary and Lincoln-Douglas debate, programs often confront the question of whether they are traditional or more policy-based<sup>12</sup>. Such considerations are also critical for programs at faith-based institutions: to what extent and how should the forensic team uphold elements of the university's faith tradition?<sup>13</sup>

Additionally, care must be taken to consider whether a program can successfully be part of multiple organizations, and when tournaments conflict, which organizations will a program more closely identify with? In recent years, NPDA has conflicted with CEDA; directors of programs that participate in both organizations have to make decisions as to which organization's tournament to support. Such decisions should be made in the context of the goals and the pedagogy present within each program, but should be clearly articulated by a forensics professional.

5. *How do you see forensics as an educational opportunity?*

The goal behind this particular objective is to have directors and other professionals articulate what kinds of students they draw into the forensics experience. In the realm of policy

debate, for example, some programs (such as Vermont, Louisiana-Lafayette, and others) are known for drawing novices into the activity. In individual events, several colleges and universities, particularly in Minnesota, require some of their students to participate in forensics in order to graduate.<sup>14</sup> Since we clearly do not serve all of our student populations, it is important for us as forensics professionals to more clearly articulate the kinds of students we attract to our teams, as well as how those students fit within the educational mission of our respective colleges and universities.<sup>15</sup>

6. *How would you define your program? If someone were to ask you what makes your program unique, how would you answer?*

This particular is mentioned last because in some ways, it is the summary of the previous five questions. Most of the previous questions are designed to be affirmative answers (i.e., “I seek to engage students in critical thinking”). However, we often answer the last question in the negative (“My program isn’t like program X, Y or Z.”). Forensics professionals should be able to answer this question in the affirmative, grounded not only in terms of their objectives of the program, but also in terms of their program’s contributions to their college or university.

Part of defining the philosophy of the program is to make a decision on whether or not the program should be specialized or broad-based. Rogers (2000) made the case for the broad-based program, contending, “If we give up and compartmentalize our programs doesn’t that make them all the more vulnerable to external critics who argue that we are educating within only a narrow band of experience?” (p. 8). McGee and Simerly (1997) advanced the argument that “In an era of forensics specialization, no program or program director can do all things well”

(p. 282). They also examined issues of resource allocation and the experience of the director to make the case for more focused programs.

Forensic educators should be able to articulate why they have chosen the course they have through *pedagogical* rather than pragmatic lenses. If a program chooses to only offer individual events, then the director should be able to make that case. If the program tends to concentrate on particular areas, such as Lincoln-Douglas debate, limited preparation debate, and so forth, the program should be able to provide a justification. In short, the test of a director should be as Joseph Cardot (1991) once argued: “The director or coach of today must help decision-makers see the educational, social, and personal relevance of forensics” (p. 81).

7. *How do you know that your program is effectively meeting its goals?*

Bartanen (2006) notes the problem with much current assessment of programs: it tends to be process rather than outcome-based. While studies have been done concerning the role of forensics within the university as a whole<sup>16</sup>, most programs tend not to ask questions about what kind of outcomes the program desires, and whether or not those outcomes have actually been achieved.

One of the means of assessment should be to include students who are part of the program. The Denver conference on individual events recommended that “forensic coaches have the duty to articulate to students their program’s philosophy, goals, rules and expectations” (Karns and Schnoor, 1990, p. 7). Part of an assessment instrument should be to find out how students perceive the goals of the program, and to see whether those goals are actually being achieved.<sup>17</sup> In addition, forensics professionals can profitably include peer evaluations (such as

those already required as external referees/reviewers), reviews from former coaches and DOF's, and so on.

### **Forensics Professionals and Teaching**

Clearly, the expectation is that as instructors in a college classroom, forensics professionals are expected to be effective teachers. The question of whether or not teaching also applies to forensics has been long debated in a variety of tenure and promotion committees. Because of the kind of coaching that forensics professionals often do, which can be one-to-one or one-to-a few, it is often not recognized in the same way as teaching a normal course. However, there are at least two reasons to consider forensics as teaching.

First, to be an effective coach requires the recognition of learning styles. The idea that learners utilize a variety of styles has long been examined within education at all levels; to say that different people prefer styles such as auditory learning, visual learning, and so forth, is neither new nor controversial.<sup>18</sup> In the forensics literature, Thomas Bartl's article which noted that a learning styles approach to coaching can be extremely effective. Since this approach borrows from what has already been established within educational pedagogy, its applicability is readily apparent. Forensics professionals must consider and document their development as teachers.<sup>19</sup>

Second, forensics professionals have the unique ability to see a student's performance multiple times and to give it far more feedback than a typical instructor can do within a course. In our role as judges, we are asked to provide feedback to students from other institutions, and in that sense, confirm whether students have sufficiently mastered the competencies expected

within forensic events, and their effectiveness in a realm of public speaking. As such, we not only teach our students, we teach the students of our colleagues as well. The ballot comments we provide can be a basis for which we can document our teaching.<sup>20</sup>

### **Forensics Professionals and Service**

Different institutions have different levels of expectation as far as service is concerned. This document will consider that service can happen both within the forensics community and externally, such as in service-learning.

Within the forensics community, the common assumption is to think primarily in terms of the national organizations. There are ways in which forensics professionals can engage in service, however. The first is the tournament itself. Not every school is able to host; not every professional is able to direct. Those who do are indeed the lifeblood of the activity. What is needed, however, is more of an assessment tool by which we can establish the effectiveness of the hosting experience. Numbers of schools are a poor indicator; given the nature of the tournament calendar, tournament attendance will vary. However, as a community, we should encourage tournaments that offer variations in different events<sup>21</sup>, as well as to provide standards by which we know that hosts and tournament directors have been successful. This paper will not list such standards, as they are best left to regional and local communities. The two preliminary round and finals Twin Cities Forensics League tournaments on Tuesday afternoons in Minnesota, for example, serve a much different audience than the national draw of the Sunset Cliffs or the HFO Swing.

Service also happens within regional and local associations. Recognition should be given

to those who do such tasks as write topics for tournaments, serve in tabulation rooms, on executive boards and councils of regional forensics organizations, and so on. Each of these different activities is a form of peer-recognized service.

In short, both the forensics professional and those who evaluate the professional should ask the question of how the professional is engaging the larger forensics community, and what role that person has in serving the community. In doing so, it is important to recognize that service happens in a variety of different ways.

### **Forensics Professionals and Scholarship**

This paper will argue, as others, that scholarship should not be confined to traditional views of scholarship as simply conference presentations, refereed journals and/or books. Indeed, many in the academic community have come around to the idea that scholarship should be more broadly grounded along the lines of Ernest Boyer's *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*. The idea of utilizing Boyer's framework is not new; a variety of coaches have successfully used these arguments in promotion and tenure cases<sup>22</sup>. In expanding on Boyer's conceptions of how higher education should function and how it could be helpful for evaluation purposes, one important caveat must be emphasized: Boyer's conceptions do not in any way suggest that such research is easier or less rigorous as compared to traditional research; indeed, in many ways, such research is harder to do and harder to explain. The four elements of research Boyer considers are: the scholarship of discovery, the scholarship of integration, the scholarship of application, and the scholarship of teaching. These four types of scholarship will be explained in terms of the forensics community, as well as how they can be conceived of in various stages of a forensics professional's career.

Boyer suggests that the scholarship of discovery is most similar to traditional research and is based on the notion of a commitment to knowledge for its own sake. This kind of scholarship, in Boyer's view, often includes the creation of original work.

In the forensics community, there have been a variety of calls for additional research into what we do as a community. However, it is also the case that creative activities, such as directing a Readers' Theater, involve the creation of original work as well. To make the case for Readers' Theater, the following is an example of the kind of argumentation Boyer suggests:

Is the scholarship presented publicly or published? Yes.

Is it peer-evaluated? Certainly. We often tend to choose judges in events such as RT that show a significant understanding of the event.

Does it have an impact on the field? Good Readers' Theaters force us to reconsider what the event should be, and indeed, what should be discussed within RT. ARTa is an excellent illustration of this principle. ARTa, and notably forensics professionals such as Leisel Reinhart, Steven Seagle, Todd Lewis and many others, have advanced the scope of what Readers' Theater can be and what it should do.

Boyer's second type of scholarship, the scholarship of integration, refers to where disciplinary boundaries come together. This is often seen in the integration of oral interpretation and performance studies literature. Recent attempts to integrate forensics and organizational culture and forensics and leadership could also be considered within the scholarship of integration.

The third type of scholarship, the scholarship of application, is phrased by Boyer in terms of "How can knowledge be responsibly applied to consequential problems? How can it be

helpful to individuals as well as institutions? And further, can social problems *themselves* define an agenda for scholarly investigation?” (p. 21). Boyer then argues, “New intellectual understandings can arise out of the very act of application” and that in several disciplines, “theory and practice vitally interact, and one renews the other” (p. 23).

Typically, when the forensics community considers the kind of research presented at our national conventions, it often falls into the scholarship of application. We also see it in review pieces at developmental conferences<sup>23</sup>, specialized conferences such as ARTa<sup>24</sup> and PKD, and in forensics journals<sup>25</sup>. This kind of scholarship is common within the realm of interpretation, as forensic educators examine the interaction between oral interpretation, theater, performance studies, narrative theory, and in some cases, musical forms such as hip-hop<sup>26</sup> and so forth.

*Practical Applications for Forensics Professionals About Scholarship: To Publish in Forensics or Not?*

This question is one of great concern to the forensics community, for as Kay pointed out nearly 20 years ago, a bias does exist against forensics research. Kay, a former DOF and then chair of the Department of Speech Communication at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, saw the purpose of his paper “to plead with members of the forensic community to ground their research interests in matters which simultaneously serve the community of forensics and the community of scholars who are dedicated to the understanding of human communication” (p. 61). While this paper doesn’t disagree with Kay’s perspective, it instead argues for a broadening of the perspective, to contend that forensics professionals *do* interact with the communication discipline. In any event, the forensics professional should be ready to demonstrate how her or his research interacts with the larger scholarly community and/or the public.<sup>27</sup>

## **Evaluation of Forensics Professionals: Can One Size Fit All?**

The beginning of this paper argued that there were at least nine different categories of educators. Clearly, the standards for promotion to full professor at Research Extensive universities should look different than the standards at community colleges. In a parallel way, standards for staff members are likely to be (radically) different than for faculty members. This portion of the paper will present several different means by which we can evaluate forensic educators that can function across a variety of different types of institutions and programs.

### *1. Does the forensic professional understand the key issues of the field?*

One aspect of Boyer's work that has been relatively unexplored is his third chapter in *Scholarship Reconsidered* on the faculty. Boyer argues the following:

“...it is unrealistic, we believe, to expect *all* faculty members, regardless of their interests, to engage in research and to publish on a regular timetable. For most scholars, creativity simply doesn't work that way. We propose an alternative approach. Why not assume that staying in touch with one's field means just that – reading the literature and keeping well informed about consequential trends and patterns? Why not ask professors periodically to select the two or three most important new developments or significant new articles in their fields, and then present, in writing, the reasons for their choices? Such a paper, one that could be peer reviewed, surely would help reveal the extent to which a faculty member is conversant with developments in his or her discipline, and is in fact, remaining intellectually alive. (pp. 27-28)

Such an approach could easily be incorporated into a teaching portfolio. This would allow forensic professionals to take a broad approach that considers the entirety of forensics within communication, political science or other disciplines, or focuses more narrowly on particular events.

Diamond's (2002) criteria defining an activity also provides some means by which we can assess whether the reflection we as forensics professionals are doing meets scholarly criteria:

1. The activity of work requires a high level of discipline-related expertise.
2. The activity or work is conducted in a scholarly manner with clear goals, adequate preparation and appropriate methodology.
3. The activity or work and its results are appropriately and effectively documented and disseminated. This reporting should include a reflective critique that addresses the significance of the work, the process that was used, and what was learned.
4. The activity or work has significance beyond the individual context.
5. The activity or work, both process and product or result, is reviewed and judged to be meritorious and significant by a panel of one's peers (p. 78).

*2. Does the forensic professional show mastery of key competencies?*

Previous research by Workman, Williams and Gantt, and Danielson and Hollwitz have tried to focus on key competencies of the director of forensics. Workman suggests that there are six critical competencies: instructional, financial management, leadership and responsibility, administrative, interpersonal, and professional (pp. 84-85). Williams and Gantt's survey identified the administrative as being the most frequently mentioned cluster of DOF duties, followed by team management and coaching.

Danielson and Hollwitz's survey of DOF's identified four essential components and four relevant components of the DOF's position. In their study, the essential components included: arranging students' participation in off-campus tournaments, administering the speech and debate program, coaching speech and debate participants, and accounting and bookkeeping. The four relevant components of the DOF position were: recruiting students for speech and debate programs, teaching speech and debate classes, directing on-campus tournaments, and counseling and advising speech and debate students. They then went on to suggest that two other components may possibly be included: college and community service involvement, and moderating speech and debate student groups.

Clearly, previous studies have suggested that there are a variety of competencies that surround the forensics professional. As was noted earlier, the forensics professional, in conjunction with her or his supervisor (dean, department chair, etc.), should mutually agree on the important competencies and then demonstrate how those competencies are to be measured.

*3. When appropriate, has the forensic professional established her/himself as an effective teacher in her/his field of study?*

Because of the nature of some forensic positions being primarily staff positions and/or adjunct positions, those professionals may not necessarily be teaching traditional undergraduate or graduate courses. However, in the sense that forensics coaching can be considered a form of teaching, all who coach are teachers, as this essay argued earlier.<sup>28</sup> When we evaluate teaching, there are at least three different contexts to consider in evaluating the forensics professional: teaching within one's discipline, coaching and teaching students, and teaching future forensics professionals.

Teaching in one's discipline has certainly gained a great deal of importance over the past several decades, and it is not the primary focus of this particular paper. I would suggest, clearly, that those who are effective teachers in their courses should be rewarded and recognized. As we evaluate colleagues from other institutions, those who are called to be reviewers should not be afraid to ask about their teaching in other courses.

This paper has already discussed the notion of coaching and teaching students, so this essay will then turn to the final element: teaching future forensics professionals. Many in the forensics community have lamented the decrease in terms of doctoral-level programs that educate forensics professionals; at the same time, MSU-Mankato has developed an MFA

program for forensics professionals. But the impact of the trend is that much of what passes as teaching today takes place informally.<sup>29</sup> Documenting mentoring or other kinds of relationships is an important part of this process. For forensics professionals who work with graduate students or assistant coaches, documenting the kinds of things that are taught both formally (through classes, workshops or retreats) or informally can serve to show how younger professionals are being asked to model the behaviors and raise the questions that are central to any kind of disciplinary study. Evaluations by the assistants and/or graduate students can become part of the teaching evaluation process. In much the same way that department chairs are assessed, so too can forensics professionals be assessed.

4. *Has the program clearly identified its mission, and has the forensics professional successfully operated within its mission?*

Mission statements, for example, can help to both shape the professional's thinking as well as to serve as a reminder of the focus of the program. As Bolton, Brunnermeier & Veldkamp (2008) observe, "A good leader is able to coordinate his followers around a credible mission statement, which communicates the future course of action of the organization" (p. 1). This provides a basis by which the literature of leadership and the literature of assessment come together. If we consider the mission statement of the professional's program, then there are a variety of assessment tools, from surveys, interviews, and focus groups, to external reviewers, that can help to assess the effectiveness of the mission statement and the extent to which the forensics team fulfills the mission statement. As a side effect of that strategy, it is likely that more forensics professionals will be grounded in pedagogical reasons for their teams' existence.\

The Status of Standards for Tenure and Promotion in Debate (2009) argue for two different models: a professional performance model, and as research in traditional research-based models. Given the vast differences in comprehensive programs, individual events programs, or even alternative debate format programs (parliamentary debate, LD, IPDA Debate, etc.), it is beyond the scope of these recommendations to suggest that these two models are the only models for forensic professionals. However, these recommendations agree with the Standards for Tenure and Promotion in Debate document, which argue that there must be a path for forensics professionals to reach both associate and full professor, should the professional be in a tenure-track position.

## **Conclusion**

The Peoria Recommendations are meant to be a starting point for both further discussion within the forensics community as well as for individual forensics professionals to consider the key questions of how professionals function within the community, and how professionals should be evaluated within the community. Without clearer standards, the role of the forensics professional will continue to be marginalized as committees who do not understand forensics are asked to evaluate forensics professionals.

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## Notes:

<sup>1</sup>Earlier in the decade DeVry had several students competing in parliamentary debate.

<sup>2</sup>The Third Developmental Conference on Debate met in June, 2009, to discuss a followup to Quail Roost. From the posting by Robert Rowland of the University of Kansas to EDebate, the revision was to be focused on debate. The goals were outlined in "Professional Status Information," <http://www.ndtceda.com/pipermail/edebate/2009-February/077602.html>, accessed 4 February 2009. The actual paper was approved by the American Forensic Association during its Fall 2009 business meeting.

<sup>3</sup>The term "forensics professional" shall be used throughout this paper to indicate someone who fits within any of the conceptions mentioned at the very beginning of the recommendations.

<sup>4</sup>Among other places, the issue is raised in O'Rourke, D. J. (1985). Criticizing the critic: The value of questions in rhetorical criticism. *National Forensic Journal*, 3(2), 163-166. Most recently, it was raised in Swift, C. L. & Rybold, G. (2007). Finding an acceptable definition of 'original' work in platform speeches: A study of community college coaches. *Speaker and Gavel* 44 (2007), 27-44.

<sup>5</sup>White, S. L. (2005). The coach as mentor. *National Forensic Journal*, 23(1), 89-94.

<sup>6</sup>Keefe, C. (1991). Developing and managing a peer forensics program. *National Forensic Journal*, 9(1), 65-75; Friedley, S. A. and Manchester, B. B. (2005). Building team cohesion: Becoming 'we' instead of 'me.'" *National Forensic Journal*, 23(1), 95-100.

<sup>7</sup>Warner, E. & Brusckhe, J. (2001). 'Gone on debating:' Competitive academic debate as a tool of empowerment. *Contemporary Argumentation and Debate*, 22, 1-21.

<sup>8</sup>Much of the 1998 issue of the *National Forensic Journal* is devoted to service learning. See Hinck, E. A. and Hinck, S. S. (1998). Service learning and forensics. *National Forensic Journal*, 16, 1-26; Warriner, A. A. (1998). Forensics in a correctional facility. *National Forensic Journal*, 16, 27-41; Hatfield, K. L. (1998). Service learning in forensics: An undergraduate's perspective. *National Forensic Journal*, 16, 43-52.

<sup>9</sup>This has long been a strand of forensic research. See Ott, B. (1998). Bridging theory and practice: Toward a more pedagogical model of rhetorical criticism. *National Forensic Journal*, 16, 53-74; Croucher, S. M. (2004). Like, you know, what I'm saying: A study of discourse marker frequency in extemporaneous and impromptu speaking. *National Forensic Journal*, 22(2), 38-47; White, L. and Messmer, L. (2003). An analysis of interstate speeches: Are they structurally different? *National Forensic Journal*, 21(2), 2-19, among others.

<sup>10</sup>See Church, R. (1975). The educational value of oral communication courses and intercollegiate forensics: An opinion survey of college prelegal advisors and law school deans. *Argumentation and Advocacy*, 12(1), 49-50; Bartanen, K.M. (1998). The place of the forensics program in the liberal arts college of the twenty-first century: An essay in honor of Larry E. Norton. *The Forensic*, 84(1), 1-16; Stenger, K. (1999). Forensics as preparation for participation in the academic world. *The Forensic*, 84(4), 13-23; Millsap, S. (1998). The benefits of forensics across the curriculum: An opportunity to expand the visibility of college forensics. *The Forensic* 84(1), 17-26.

<sup>11</sup>White, L. (2005). The coach as mentor. *National Forensic Journal*, 23(1), 89-94.

<sup>12</sup>I recognize this is a simplification; however, it illustrates the general principle of identifying one's own program in the light of other peers. This is more a function of the "Here's what my program is like" approach.

<sup>13</sup>For example, many evangelical schools do attend the National Christian College Forensics Invitational, but not all do. Questions of whether or not a program should separate itself from others are perfectly fair and appropriate questions to raise. Forensics professionals at faith-based institutions are typically required to write a faith-integration essay as part of promotion and tenure portfolios. A typical expectation is that the forensics professional would incorporate her or his forensics experience and pedagogy into the faith-integration paper.

<sup>14</sup>This is covered more fully in Dreher, M. (1997). Component-based forensic participation: Using components to build a traditional team. *Southern Journal of Forensics*, 2(3), 236-243.

<sup>15</sup>An often cited justification is that forensics students tend to be brighter than the typical college student, thus, raising the academic profile of the institution. Additionally, this is the justification offered by Urban Debate Leagues (UDL) for their existence. The Rogers *Contemporary Argumentation and Debate* article cited in the bibliography provides a research-based substantiation for this argument.

<sup>16</sup>Allen, M., Berkowitz, S., Hunt, S., and Loudon, A. (1999). A meta-analysis of the impact of forensics and communication education on critical thinking. *Communication Education* 48, 18-30; Bellon, J. (2000). A research-

based justification for debate across the curriculum. *Argumentation and Advocacy*, 36(3), 161-175.

<sup>17</sup>Such an approach can be found in McMillian, J. K., and Todd-Mancillas, W. R. (1991). An assessment of the value of individual events in forensics competition from students' perspectives. *National Forensic Journal*, 9(1), 1-17.

<sup>18</sup>See Evans, C. and Waring, M. (2006). Towards inclusive teacher education: Sensitising individuals to how they learn. *Educational Psychology*, 26(4), 499-518.

<sup>19</sup>See Kugel, P. (1993). How professors develop as teachers. *Studies in Higher Education*, 18(3), 315-328.

<sup>20</sup>See Elmer, D. and Borke VanHorn, S. (2003). You have great gestures: An analysis of ballot commentary to pedagogical outcomes. *Argumentation and Advocacy*, 40(2), 105-117.

<sup>21</sup>See Williams, D. E., Carver, C. T., and Hart, R. D. (1993). Is it time for a change in impromptu speaking? *National Forensic Journal*, 11(1), 29-40; Jensen, S. (1997). Equal opportunity?: The impact of specialized tournaments on forensics pedagogy, forensics professionals, and the forensic laboratory. In S. Whitney (Ed.), *Proceedings of the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Developmental Conference on Individual Events* (pp.66-72). Houston: Rice University.

<sup>22</sup>The author has utilized this framework for promotion to full professor in 2004; he is indebted to Bob Groven of Augsburg College, who also used the idea. This idea is also discussed in Holm, T. and Miller, J. (2004). Working in forensics systems. *National Forensic Journal*, 22(2), 23-37.

<sup>23</sup>See Knapp, T. (1997). Returning to our roots: A new direction for oral interpretation. In S. Whitney (Ed.), *Proceedings of the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Developmental Conference on Individual Events* (pp.29-34). Houston: Rice University.

<sup>24</sup>For example, one panel at the 2008 ARTa conference by Amy Andrews and Crystal Lane Swift concerned "Argumentation/Interpretation: Do Performances Have to Argue?" Swift (2009) then expanded and published her paper: Rejecting the square peg in a round hole: Expanding arguments in oral interpretation introductions. *Speaker and Gavel*, 46, 25-37.

<sup>25</sup>Among many different possibilities, see Lewis, T. V., Williams, D. A., Keaveney, M. M., Leigh, M. G. (1984). Evaluating oral interpretation events: A contest and festival perspectives symposium. *National Forensic Journal* 2(1), 19-32.

<sup>26</sup>See Sotto, T., "The Poetics of Hip Hop," ArtsEdge/Kennedy Center series, <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/content/3656/>

<sup>27</sup>While it is this author's contention that public scholarship is a legitimate form of scholarship, a word of caution should be given. Many institutions do not recognize public scholarship in the same kind of way as traditional scholarship, and some institutions do not recognize public scholarship at all in the realm of promotion and tenure. Advice should be sought from the chair and relevant university committees before engaging in a public-based research agenda.

<sup>28</sup>Clearly, the forensics literature has suggested that ballots, and indeed events, perform an educational function. Additionally, the Spring 2005 (volume 23, no. 1) focus issue of the *National Forensic Journal* included a variety of articles based on the educational focus of various genres and events. As just one example, see LaMaster, G. (2005). Understanding public address events. *National Forensic Journal*, 23(1), 32-36; also in that issue were Kelly, B. (2005). Basic training: An assertion of principles for coaching oral interpretation for intercollegiate forensics competition. *National Forensic Journal*, 23(1), 25-31; Turnipseed, I. (2005). Understanding limited preparation events. *National Forensic Journal*, 23(1), 37-44; and Diers, A. (2005). Understanding Lincoln-Douglas debate. *National Forensic Journal*, 23(1), 45-54.

<sup>29</sup>See Workman, T. (1997). Solving for a healthy future: Creating national standards for training future directors of forensics. In S. Whitney (Ed.), *Proceedings of the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Developmental Conference on Individual Events* (pp. 83-86). Houston: Rice University.