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Assessment in Forensics: It's a Dirty Job but We Need to Do It!

Kittie Grace
Hastings College

Cognitive, affective, and behavioral assessment are all necessary measures to understanding the effectiveness of any collegiate major or forensics team. As the Director of Forensics at Hastings College, I use all three measures to assess the strength of the current program and to track trends regarding the team. This discussion focuses on presenting different ways to assess your programs to increase departmental and institutional support for your forensics programs.

Purpose:

Accredited by North Central
Help Administration
Help Provide Your Own Records for PR purposes
Help See Team Needs

The Measurements Needed:

Keep sight of the mission=Need the goal or mission of the team in every assessment document
Affective (example: How much do you like being a part of the speech team?)
Behavioral (example: Video of persuasion speech from start of the season and end of the season)
Cognitive (example: Testing how well students understand the event rules vs. norms)
Be specific, administration likes numbers and clear examples

Example: We will qualify a majority of the team for the AFA-NIET=50% of the first year class, 90% of second and third year class, 100% senior class

Collaboration:

Ask other coaches to help with the document
Ask colleagues to look at it so it is readable beyond a forensics audience

PR

Workshops-students and coaches
Summer Camps
Factoids to admissions
Alumni Gatherings

Example Assessment Document

Achievement of Last Year's Goals:

Short Term

- *Strong/Clear Tournament Ready Standards that are upheld*—Work with students so events are very strong and ready for competition for their first tournament out. Help students use the coaching staff available to them. To achieve this we will...
 - Encourage students to use coaching hours

- Conduct an event night every Tues. evening
- Have all events work with two different coaches before the event travels
- Check-off is due Monday night by midnight

- Goal was partially achieved
- We held to these standards and for most tournaments events were ready to travel.
- We need to re-assess this "Tournament Ready" schedule and assess what is feasible with the coaching staff schedules
- We decided that short in-meeting lessons will be most beneficial for the 2009-2010 team

- *Qualify everyone to the AFA-NIET that travels and coaches consistently*—This is a lofty goal but to have a *competitive* team this year, we need everyone to fully participate. We will work to *achieve* this goal by...

- Having students coach at least two hours a week
- Use team meetings for coaching time
- Encourage students to travel earlier in the season
- Students must make the necessary changes to events to continue traveling

- Goal was partially achieved
- Everyone who coaches at least two hours a week and traveled to six tournaments each semester did qualify for nationals
- A majority of students did not travel beyond scholarship requirements this year. The average number of students travel was approx. 8 students which is frustrating with a team of 21
- Coaches need to encourage travel and explain the importance of travel as an educational activity
- Students need to present a welcoming atmosphere, respect differences and diversity to help encourage travel for underclassmen

Long Term

- *Increase campus & community involvement*—For students to become strong liberal arts candidates, activity variety is needed. *On-campus* activities will be encouraged by the staff. Additionally, students will be asked to participate in at least **one community service activity** each semester to increase community involvement. The students will also be asked to participate in non-competitive speaking performances such as performing for Homecoming, State Fair, Rotary Club, etc.

- We will continue to encourage campus involvement by looking to other events where student can use their forensics talents.

- *Improve recruiting procedures*—The ADOF will work with admissions to help improve our *connection* with the high schools. We will provide workshops, high school tournament, summer camp, night of forensics, etc. to help increase campus enrollment.
- This goal is in process. We will have a student recruiting committee this year as well and we will host a fall showcase to help with recruiting.