

**RESOLUTIONS FROM THE
THIRD NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTAL CONFERENCE
ON INDIVIDUAL EVENTS**

(addressing Individual Events, NFA-LD, & NPDA Parliamentary Debate)

August 13-16, 1997, Rice University, Houston, TX

EDITOR'S NOTES: Each new resolution is indicated with a ●. Titles of panels or sessions that developed resolutions are indicated. Most resolutions were developed in panels and were brought to the legislative session for approval or rejection by the entire group. Resolutions that were developed by the entire group in the Keynote and Legislative Sessions are grouped together. All resolutions appearing in this document were endorsed by a vote of those attending the conference. Resolutions from the Keynote and Legislative Sessions are listed first. Other resolutions are listed in the order in which the corresponding panels appeared in the conference schedule. These resolutions were sent to officers of the various national organizations and the Council of Forensics Organizations in September 1997 so the organizations could include them in discussion at the various fall meetings held during the annual National Communication Association convention.

**RESOLUTIONS FROM
THE KEYNOTE and LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS**

● The conference participants formally thank M'Liss Hindman (Tyler Junior College), Dan West (Rice University), members of the Rice University Forensics Squad (Lauren McGarity, Amir Brown, and Jason Welch), and the Rice University staff for their work in organizing and hosting the *Third National Developmental Conference on Individual Events*. The participants also thank Shawnalee Whitney (University of Alaska Anchorage) for her work in editing the conference proceedings. Their efforts have provided a forum for forensic educators to explore and develop research and resources to promote professionalism in our discipline.

● While competition and education are compatible, we believe that competitive ends that are exclusive of pedagogical ends are not conducive to forensics professionalism.

● We believe that judges should refrain from paradigms that incorporate sexist, biased, or prejudicial attitudes and should exercise tact in comments related to apparel, appearance, and so on.

● We encourage forensics organizations to consider the adoption of a new event called Oral Performance of Original Literature and suggest that all other interpretation events employ published material only.

● We support the development of a Steering Committee for the purpose of developing a 1998 National Developmental Conference on Individual Events, NFA-LD, and Parliamentary Debate. That conference would offer training for coaches/judges similar to the short courses at the 1997 conference. The following individuals have been elected to serve on the committee: M'Liss Hindman (Tyler Junior College, Tyler, TX), Scott Jensen (Webster University, St. Louis, MO), Vicki Karns (Suffolk University, Boston, MA), Jeff Przybylo (William Rainey Harper College, Palatine, IL), Dan West (Rice University, Houston, TX), Tom Workman (University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE), and Shawnalee Whitney (University of Alaska Anchorage, Anchorage, AK).

**RESOLUTIONS FROM THE PANEL ENTITLED
"STANDARDS FOR EVALUATION AND JUDGING"**

● We encourage the Council of Forensic Organizations to develop and distribute a one-page statement concerning the judging of student competitors who are physically challenged. This statement would include:

1) recommendations on judging students with temporary or permanent sensory, physical, or speech impairments (i.e. reconceiving judging paradigms based on use of manuscript, gestures or transitional movements).

2) provisions regarding the use of conventions, time limits, visual materials and/or human/animal assistance.

3) instructions for the use of this statement for all tournaments.

This statement should be distributed to all directors of forensics and those listed as tournament directors in the national calendars of all Council of Forensic Organizations affiliates, and could be invoked by a tournament director when physically challenged competitors have been entered into the tournament. A cover letter accompanying the statement would give a background of the need for judge education and the issues surrounding competition for the physically challenged student.

Justification: There is sufficient evidence that judges inappropriately compensate judging criteria or judge unfairly those students with physical challenges. Lack of education produces judges who are uncomfortable or ineffective with the physically challenged student. As a result, poor judging remains a significant reason why retention rates of physically challenged competitors are low. Such a statement from a national organization would provide a value for physically challenged competitors that currently does not exist. It removes the burden of judge education being placed solely on the coach of a physically challenged student or the student him or herself.

- We believe it is the responsibility of every Director of Forensics with graduate student staff or volunteer judges to establish a process of developing individual judge philosophies as part of judge preparation. We further believe it is the responsibility of every tournament director to provide some form of judge training at all tournaments.

- We call upon the Council of Forensic Organizations to endorse and develop a commission to determine national standards for the evaluation and training of Directors of Forensics. Once determined, national standards should be implemented through national conferences and convention short courses under existing or new certification procedures. Further, we call for the forensics community to adopt an oath or "statement of moral duty" for forensics educators reading: *"I pledge to make as my mission the education of the student through speech competition, and I commit to making choices that place the academic*

development of the student as my primary concern. I pledge to strive toward excellence in the knowledge and practice of my field and will work toward the betterment of my field artistically, pedagogically, ethically, and practically."

- This body encourages forensics and communication research in the following areas:

- 1) Forensics education pedagogy
- 2) Empirical support for the method of forensics as communication and/or citizenship pedagogy
- 3) Empirical support for competency standards of forensics coaching and administration
- 4) Public speaking event issues and concerns

**RESOLUTIONS FROM THE PANEL ENTITLED
"NEW DIRECTIONS FOR ORAL INTERPRETATION"**

- We encourage the national organizations to consider the following descriptions as guidelines for their interpretation event rules to emphasize the importance of understanding of text. (Additions to current guidelines are in CAPITAL letters.) These rule changes place the emphasis on the text by offering a purpose for engaging in interpretation of each of the genres. In addition, these proposals offer a means to achieving the understanding of the literature and finally, the proposed rule changes make theme subsidiary to understanding of the text.

Prose Interpretation: A selection or selections of prose material of literary merit DESIGNED TO ILLUMINATE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE TEXT THROUGH THE USE OF VOCAL AND PHYSICAL DELIVERY. MULTIPLE SELECTIONS MAY BE USED WHEN THE ILLUMINATED TEXTS SHARE A COMMON THEME. Play cuttings and poetry are prohibited. Use of manuscript is required. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes including introduction.

Dramatic Duo: A cutting from a play, humorous or serious, involving the portrayal of two or more characters presented by two individuals FOR THE PURPOSE OF ILLUMINATING AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE TEXT THROUGH THE USE OF VOCAL AND PHYSICAL DELIVERY. This material may be drawn from stage, screen, or radio. This is not an acting event; thus, no costumes, props, lighting, etc., are to be used. Presentation is from the manuscript and the focus should be off-stage and not to each other. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes including introduction.

Program Oral Interpretation: A PROGRAM OF LITERATURE FROM TWO OR THREE RECOGNIZED GENRES OF COMPETITIVE INTERPRETATION (PROSE/POETRY/DRAMA) FOR THE PURPOSE OF ILLUMINATING AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE TEXT THROUGH THE USE OF VOCAL AND PHYSICAL DELIVERY. LITERATURE SHOULD BE CHOSEN BECAUSE THE ILLUMINATED TEXTS SHARE A COMMON THEME. A substantial portion of the total time must be devoted to each of the genres used in the program. Different genre means the material must appear in separate pieces of literature (e.g. a poem included in a short story that appears only in that short story does not constitute a poetry genre). Use of manuscript is required. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes including original introduction and/or transitions.

Dramatic Interpretation: A cutting which represents one or more characters from a play or plays of literary merit DESIGNED TO ILLUMINATE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE TEXT THROUGH THE USE OF VOCAL AND PHYSICAL DELIVERY. MULTIPLE SELECTIONS MAY BE USED WHEN THE ILLUMINATED TEXTS SHARE A COMMON THEME. This material may be drawn from stage, screen or radio. Use of manuscript is required. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes including original introduction.

Poetry Interpretation: A selection or selections of poetry of literary merit DESIGNED TO ILLUMINATE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE TEXT THROUGH THE USE OF VOCAL AND PHYSICAL

DELIVERY. MULTIPLE SELECTIONS MAY BE USED WHEN THE ILLUMINATED TEXTS SHARE A COMMON THEME. Play cuttings and prose works are prohibited. Use of manuscript is required. Maximum time limit is 10 minutes including introductions.

- We recommend that judges recognize the value of “recycled” material for the individual performer at the time, and should communicate issues of newness and rank decisions being mindful of the student’s individual expression of the material.
- We encourage coaches to guide students who desire to interpret older, “recycled” literature, to avoid copying or mimicking performance ideas and to seek out “fresh” or “novel” approaches.

RESOLUTIONS FROM THE PANEL ENTITLED “NEW DIRECTIONS FOR PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE AND NFA-LD”

- We encourage debate programs and organizations to develop opportunities to provide students venues in which to develop public argument skills.
- We encourage forensic programs to utilize non-forensic faculty from various disciplines as resources for all forensic events.
- We discourage an unexamined adoption of rules, previous theoretical constructs, or previous practical conventions in debate.
- We encourage forensic organizations to develop, implement, and enforce policies to reduce sexual harassment of students, coaches, and judges and that ongoing education about sexual harassment be a priority.
- We encourage debate organizations to experiment with alternate formats including but not limited to various international formats.
- We suggest that for parliamentary debate, regardless of an adjudicator’s ruling on an issue of debate procedure voiced in a Point of Order, the debate should continue in its entirety.

- We recognize debate as a unique, worthwhile activity, worthy of a student's dedication and effort.

**RESOLUTIONS FROM THE PANEL ENTITLED
"TOURNAMENT MANAGEMENT"**

- We encourage the forensics community to adopt the philosophy that competition during the course of the year should not be dictated by an emphasis on qualification procedures for national tournaments. In other words, we discourage the creation of a culture in which students and/or coaches are encouraged, explicitly or implicitly, to pull qualified slots, determining the number of students to be included in a final round based on a perception of the need for and/or lack thereof of places in those events, and the hosting of so-called "last chance" qualifying tournaments.
- We believe that experimentation in extemporaneous and impromptu speaking is worthwhile, and believe that innovations should be communicated in the tournament invitation.
- We call for tournament directors in all regions to cooperate to ensure that a variety of comprehensive and specialized tournaments are available.

**RESOLUTIONS FROM THE PANEL
"NEW DIRECTIONS FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING"**

- We encourage forensics educators to take a professional, proactive stance when responding to comments on ballots which are contradictory or condescending. Additionally, we encourage judges to make themselves available to competitors and/or coaches who seek clarification on ballot comments.
- We believe the forensics community should encourage diversity in organizational patterns, modes of persuasion, topic selection, and so on.

- We encourage tournament directors to consider the use of experimental or alternative formats to ensure the public accessibility of various events.
- We believe that tournament directors and national organizations should (re)consider the use of a brief single question (not to exceed one minute) in the final round of individual events.
- We call for a "reason for decision" section on ballots as a means of encouraging judges to more clearly justify and explain ranks and speaker points. In cases where such a section is not included on ballots, judges should be encouraged to provide clear justification or their own "reason for decision" section.
- We encourage national organizations and tournament directors to provide advisory point guidelines similar to those used by the National Parliamentary Debate Association to delineate the differences between speaker points (e.g. what does a 15 mean, a 16, a 17, and so on).