

1. Our concern with the role and professionalism of GAs stems from a broader concern, i.e., that directing forensics is not considered to be a professional goal by many departments of speech communication.
2. Some departments of speech communication do not support forensics with a full-time regular faculty position and assign the direction of the program to a GA.
3. Many departments regard the use of GAs as "cheap Labor."
4. Many departments make inadequate efforts to train their forensic GAs to do the job they are expected to do as a forensic coach.
5. First year forensic GAs are often tempted to spend too much time with the position and all forensic GAs have to learn to manage time effectively. They must learn to set realistic expectations.
6. First year forensic GAs face a difficult transition in role from competitor to coach and need the counsel and advice of faculty in making the role change.

SUGGESTIONS TO DEPARTMENTS

1. We strongly encourage that all forensic programs be directed by a full-time faculty member.
2. An overarching faculty group in the department should be responsible for guiding the professional development of the GA.
3. Make the GA clearly aware of the expectations of the position as a forensic GA and adequately warn the GA of the pitfalls of being in that position.
4. Offer a course in directing forensics for graduate students. If that is not feasible develop a careful mentoring/instructional program for the forensic GAs.
5. Be understanding of the GA's unique position as a forensic assistant in terms of the time spent away from campus, etc.

SUGGESTIONS TO DIRECTORS WHO HAVE GAs

1. Never ask a forensic GA to do something that conflicts with their graduate studies.
2. Try to develop joint research/professional development activities with GAs. Work to guide the professional development of the GA.
3. Promote a flexible and varied experience for the GA by assigning a variety of program and teaching responsibilities during the years spent as a forensic GA. Involve the GA in the administration of the forensic program.
4. Train GAs to be effective judges.
5. Recognize GAs importance and validate, in all ways possible, them as members of the intercollegiate forensic community.

SUGGESTIONS TO FORENSIC ASSOCIATIONS

1. Consider carefully whether first-year GAs should be used as judges at national tournaments.
2. Collect data and publish a unified list of the forensic assistantships offered at U.S. Universities and colleges.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM ROLE OF GRADUATE ASSISTANTS IN INDIVIDUAL EVENTS PROGRAMS

The presentors and participants in this session dealt with issues that have been neglected by the previous National Development Conferences and by the conferences of our professional associations. Although graduate assistants play a vital and essential role on the forensic community, we only rarely discuss their role. The group felt that in many important ways the future of forensic activity rests with GAs. From the discussion observations emerged.

OBSERVATIONS

3. Encourage research in forensics by GAs.
4. Get GAs more involved in the professional activities of the associations.

- Submitted by Don Swanson
