National Forensic Journal

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Introduction and Overview

Research and Commentary

Editor's Note

The essays in this issue are bound together by their mutual concern with the issue of "perception." Regardless of what any given thing may or may not "be," there arises the question of how people regard or perceive that entity. The essays in this issue join in exploring particular entities important to the forensics world which are regarded in dissimilar ways by different audiences. Individually and as a group, these essays offer us the opportunity to both better understand our community and more clearly communicate with others about it.

First, we can ask how those of us inside the forensics community perceive our own practices. One particular topic which has drawn a significant amount of attention in recent years concerns the dividing line which separates Prose Interpretation from Dramatic Interpretation. Traditional genre distinctions based on site of publication or performance (i.e., books and short stories vs. stage plays) have become increasingly hard to explain or apply as technology, publication venues, and performance options have advanced. As a result, many feel that it is hard to adequately distinguish between the two forensics performance categories. More than one of our national organizations began to intensively explore this question a few years ago, and in spite of the many discussions and rule changes that have occurred since then, the borderline which separates these events remains fuzzy to many. Rudnick, Peavy, Crosby, Harter, and Dougherty offer an empirical study of our confused perceptions and suggest that more talking and thinking remains to be done by the forensics community in relation to this issue.

The second essay in this issue addresses a challenge that lies at the intersection of self-perception and other-perception. Since a large percentage of forensics coaches hold positions which also require them to demonstrate a regular pattern of continuing professional development (e.g. publication, convention presentation, membership in professional organizations, etc.), it is often important that these coaches be able to explain to their colleagues and administrators how their work constitutes a peer-recognized form of research. Too often, our administrators and/or department members do not see what we do as "real scholarship." In fact, we may not see it as "scholarship" ourselves. White discusses the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) movement and explains how this approach can be used to articulate our work as a well-grounded form of scholarly performance. By taking advantage of this perspective, we can redefine our own self-perceptions and transform how others frame us.

The intersection between self-perception and other-perceptions of us is likewise explored by Stephens. And again, the goal of the essay is to both help us better understand our own work and better explain and justify our work to outside audiences. But instead of defending our personal work, Stephens' focus is on what we can do to better defend our programs against outside forces which threaten their survival. Today, as many colleges and universities are re-thinking their curricular priorities, the topic of HIPs (High Impact Practices) is often raised. Frequently invoked in academic assessment discussions, HIPs programs are widely recognized as valuable contributors to institutional missions. Yet, endangered forensics programs have not widely adopted the concept of HIPs as a protective shield. Stephens provides a detailed analysis of the generic forensics program and systematically explains how and why this activity can and should be perceived as a HIP. Thus, his essay provides programs with useful ideas which can be utilized to defend

forensics programs from those who question their value in the current academic environment.

Taken together, these essays demonstrate the importance of thinking about who we are as forensicators (self-perception) and the crucial need—and wonderful opportunity—we have to shape the views (other-perceptions) others hold of our activity.

Also, in relation specifically to the operation of this journal, we take this opportunity to express our most sincere thanks and great appreciation to Elora ("Ellie") Venchus, formerly a student (and champion debater) at North Central College. For the past two years she has done amazing work as the editorial assistant for this journal, and her carefully researched and fastidiously detailed work has been crucial to the development of this issue.

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Is it Prose or is it Drama?
Distinguishing Events Based on Judging Criteria

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Genre distinctions have been a source of confusion and contention in the collegiate forensics community, particularly in terms of distinguishing between appropriate source material for prose and drama. As the most powerful indicators of current forensic performance evaluations, ballots help illustrate the judging paradigms shaping the community. To that end, we conducted a content analysis of preliminary-round prose and drama ballots from the 2014 NFA championship tournament to determine how judges distinguish between prose and drama. Results illustrate substantial similarities in how each event is evaluated by judges. We discuss implications for this distinction in the conclusion of this essay.

Genre distinctions have been a source of confusion and contention in the collegiate forensics community, particularly in terms of distinguishing between appropriate source material for prose and drama. Differences in literary content and form are best encapsulated in the traditional distinctions in literary genre, which Yordon (1999) describes succinctly: prose "creates an imaginary reality in the form of a story written in sentences and paragraphs"; drama involves plays "written with characters, implied action, and dialogue, usually intended for actors to perform on a stage"; and poetry employs an approach which is "highly imagistic" and "written in condensed, heightened language, stylized syntax, and figures of speech not found in ordinary communication" (pp. 47-48). However, scholars have begun to note the difficulties in maintaining such easy distinctions in the midst of a growing reliance on the Internet to secure literature for performance. White (2010), for

example, argued that "the introduction of the Internet, the spoken word revolution, an increasing interest in alternative literary forms and the growth of unconventional performance pieces all erode our traditional notions of literary genre distinctions" (p. 91). Such arguments, though reflective of current trends in collegiate forensic competition, have reignited debates about the differences in literary genres and their implications for performance.

As literary theories and performance practices evolve, it is increasingly important for co-curricular performance communities—including collegiate forensics—to assess their procedures to ensure they reflect established learning outcomes. In 2010, the National Forensic Association (NFA) released a report on the pedagogical outcomes of forensic participation identifying, among others, the ability for students to discern "literary worth," demonstrate the ability to analyze texts, honor literary voice, and differentiate between point of view as overarching pedagogical outcomes (Kelly, Paine, Richardson, & White, 2014, pp. 51-53). Notably, these learning outcomes are not genre-specific, enabling students who participate in any oral interpretation event to demonstrate proficiency in each of these goals. What differs is the way in which each event enables students to meet these goals through separate, observable performance skills. Since the NFA report on pedagogical outcomes, the NFA community has proposed numerous schemas to clarify the distinctions between prose and drama or re-categorize the oral interpretation events to ensure they accomplish distinct learning outcomes for our students. However, despite attempts to distinguish prose and drama, performances in each event appear to remain strikingly similar, calling our pedagogical goals into question.

In this article, we take a different approach—empirical rather than theoretical—to examine how the differences between prose and drama are conceptualized in current forensic competition. The most powerful indicators of forensic assessment criteria are ballots, which illustrate the judging paradigms influencing forensic performances. Because of the competitive nature of the activity, judges' evaluations ultimately shape the trajectory of performance practices—and analyzing those ballots enables us as forensic scholars to understand how our event conceptualizations are enforced. This article therefore proceeds with a review of relevant literature regarding literary genres and performance and a description of the research methods employed in this study. We then present the findings of our original analysis before concluding with implications for forensic practice.

Literary Genres and Performance

Oral interpretation enjoys a rich intellectual and artistic history with numerous disciplines—including communication, performance studies, and theater—contributing to the many understandings of and approaches to performing literature. Gura and Lee (2010) articulate the practice of oral interpretation as "the art of communicating to an audience a work of literary art in its intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic entirety" (p. 2). This approach to oral interpretation is closely aligned with collegiate forensic practices, which commonly include crafting performances "designed to engage the audience through the development of a story . . . [or] character(s) within a dramatic context" (National Forensic Association, 2016, p. 4). Although different forensic organizations routinely offer different variations of oral interpretation events, most event distinctions (with the notable exception

of duo interpretation or dramatic duo) rely on differences in *source material* to distinguish the events.

Such distinctions between source materials are most frequently articulated in terms of literary genre. A number of scholars readily identify prose, poetry, and drama as three traditional genres of literature (Lewis, 2004; Pelias & Shaffer, 2007; Yordon, 1999). However, contemporary oral interpretation and performance scholars have begun to recognize the many ways in which traditional literary genre distinctions fail to capture or easily categorize all the forms of literature that can convey intellectual, emotional, or artistic meaning. Gura and Lee (2010), for example, note that performers "choose from an almost unlimited range of material … [including] autobiography, letters, diaries, oral history, interviews, personal narrative, ethnographic research, concrete poetry, blogs, and even conversation" (p. 11). In light of the many possibilities for source material in oral interpretation, Pelias and Shaffer (2007) argue that traditional genre distinctions "do not offer performers much help in their efforts to stage texts" (p. 69), effectively rendering traditional literary genres insufficient to distinguish performances of literature.

In response to this challenge, a number of proposed schemas to re-categorize such performances have been developed, both within and outside of the collegiate forensic community. For example, Pelias and Shaffer (2007) argue that classifications based on "the speaker's relationship to the audience" offer a more useful scheme, and propose classifying oral interpretation into three new "modes" (p. 69). The "lyric" mode involves "an expression of an individual speaker's private realization or discovery"; the dramatic mode entails "a shared conversation between two or more speakers" and its primary function is to enable an audience to "listen but not to enter into the conversation"; and the epic mode involves a performance which "unfolds as a story" where "a storyteller speaks directly to an audience … constantly shifting from telling about an event to showing the private interactions between characters" (pp. 69-71). In the context of NFA, White (2010) suggested altering the oral interpretation events to feature the "primary narrative voice" of the text, including first-person interpretation, second/third-person interpretation, and dialogue interpretation (pp. 91-92).

These different categorizations of oral interpretation performances illustrate some of the limitations of traditional genre distinctions and the ongoing conversations between and among performance communities about how to best incorporate the rapid changes in types and access to literature. The diverse perspectives among the NFA community alone suggest the need for closer examination of our own conceptualizations of oral interpretation categories. In the following section, we detail how oral interpretation events have been discussed in our own literature and tournament procedures.

Shifting Genres in Forensic Competition

The distinctions between prose and drama, as they are conceived in the forensic literature and governing documents, are less pronounced than their similarities. Overall, prose is often framed as focusing on the narration of the piece. VerLinden (1987), for example, reported that prose literature is often "chosen because one character is delivering a monologue or two (or more) characters are engaged in dialogue" (p. 62). Similarly, Olson (1989) notes that prose literature "should be a selection or selections from a short story, novel, or other *prose material*" (p. 437, emphasis added). In contrast, forensic scholars

have defined drama as "a selection from a play, screenplay, or radio play" (Olson, 1989, p. 437). VerLinden (1987) notes that dramatic interpretation most typically involves presentations of "dramatic monologue or dialogue" (p. 62). Beyond these dated, surface-level distinctions *grounded in source material,* forensic scholarship has little to offer in terms of conceptual or performative differences between prose and dramatic interpretation.

In light of the scant theoretical or conceptual distinctions between prose and drama in the forensic literature, perhaps a better way to approach the differences between the two is to compare the event descriptions at the national tournament. Considering that most individual tournaments structure their rules with various national tournaments in mind, the bylaws for the NFA provide a framework for understanding how prose and drama are structured across the country.

As recently as 2002, drama interpretation was not offered at the NFA national tournament. Then, prose interpretation was described as "a selection or selections of prose material of literary merit, which could have been drawn from more than one source. Play cuttings or poetry are prohibited" (National Forensic Association, 2002, p. 1). In 2008, the NFA National Tournament introduced dramatic interpretation as an "experimental event" for a two-year period. Following this two-year trial period, dramatic interpretation was incorporated as a permanent offering at the tournament, and the 2012 NFA bylaws contain event descriptions for both prose and drama. Prose was defined as "a selection or selections of *prose material* of literary merit, which may be drawn from more than one source. Play cuttings and poetry are prohibited" (National Forensic Association, 2012, p. 4, emphasis added). Dramatic interpretation was defined as a performance of "*dramatic literature*, humorous or serious, that represents one or more characters from material of literary merit" (National Forensic Association, 2012, p. 4, emphasis added). These early conceptualizations relied on simple distinctions between *source material,* broadly defined as "prose material" and "dramatic literature."

In 2013, the NFA implemented new language into the bylaws that cemented the "story vs. character" distinction that permeates the activity today. According to the 2013 bylaws, prose was framed as "an interpretive performance designed to engage the audience through the development of a *story*," (National Forensic Association, 2013, p. 3). The 2013 bylaws also stipulated appropriate *source material* for prose, noting "short stories, novels, essays, and story-centered new media" as appropriate for the event (p. 3). In contrast, the 2013 bylaws defined dramatic interpretation as "an interpretive performance designed to engage the audience through the development of *character(s) within a dramatic context*" (National Forensic Association, 2013, p. 4, emphasis added). The bylaws also stipulated appropriate source material for drama, noting that performances must draw from "plays, material written for stage/screen/radio, documentaries, and character(s)-centered new media" (p. 4). Finally, the 2013 bylaws explained that if chosen literature is "non-genre specific," the material should focus on the "development of story" (for prose) or the "development of character(s)" (for drama). This language persists through every iteration of the NFA bylaws through 2016.

Problem Statement

The evolution of prose and drama as evidenced by the NFA bylaws indicates changing perceptions of the events over the years. It also illustrates the uncertainty that

exists in the community's understanding of genre, performance, and the ways in which source material can be distinguished. Today we find ourselves trying to navigate this uncertainty amid discourses that uphold a seemingly simple "story vs. character" distinction—a divide based on elements that, to varying degrees, should be evident in any performance of literature. Our review of existing scholarship and national guidelines demonstrates the tensions still evident in the NFA community over the differences between prose and drama.

The changing nature of competitive oral interpretation illustrates a kind of "identity crisis" in forensic competition. With loose ties to two distinct theoretical and pedagogical approaches—oral interpretation and performance studies—forensic performance seems to be evolving into a distinct approach to the aesthetic representation of literary texts. This evolution warrants closer scrutiny of the ways we distinguish our own events and the justifications for those distinctions. Though debates about the merits of each event in their current conceptualizations have been grounded in sound theoretical perspectives, the forensic community suffers from a dearth of empirical research on how the distinction between prose and drama is conceptualized in competition and how those distinctions are upheld, reinforced, or otherwise perpetuated through judges' feedback and enforcement of those distinctions. To remedy this dilemma, we posed the following research question:

> RQ1:   What criteria do judges use to distinguish between prose and drama in collegiate forensic competition?

This question inquires into how judges distinguish between prose and drama based on the kinds of comments they leave, and the frequency of those comments. Although this method is an imperfect way to uncover current performance paradigms, it remains useful for gauging how judges evaluate performances in both prose and drama. A comparison of those judging criteria should provide an interesting way to understand event distinctions. In the following section, we detail the methods we used to conduct the present study.

Methods

Content Analysis

We relied on traditional methods of content analysis, which attempt to "reduce the total content of a communication . . . to a set of categories that represent some characteristic of research interest" to generate a "systematic description of either verbal or nonverbal materials" (Singleton & Straits, 2010, p. 420). Treadwell (2017) explains that, at its most basic level, content analysis involves "assigning units of content to predetermined categories and then counting the number of units in each category" (p. 218). This approach to content analysis has been widely used in forensic research because of its utility in generating meaning from ballots (Jensen, 1997; Mills, 1991). However, rather than use a pre-existing coding scheme to analyze prose and drama ballots, we engaged in an inductive, iterative, or "grounded" approach to generate codes and categories based on the data (Charmaz, 2006). Such an inductive approach to content analysis was particularly useful to our goals, as it allowed us to "characterize communication and make intriguing comparisons" (Reinard, 2008, p. 169) between meaningful categories of data—in this case, prose and drama ballots.

Data Collection

We collected all data for this study at the 2014 NFA championship tournament held at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, Michigan. This tournament was chosen for a number of reasons. First, a tournament of this magnitude enabled us to collect a large amount of data in a short amount of time. Second, the tournament is somewhat representative of the collegiate forensic community as it draws roughly 80 teams from all over the country.

After securing approval through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the NFA Executive Council, the first author photocopied each preliminary round ballot for prose (n = 1,712) and drama (n = 1,456), resulting in a total sample size of 3,168 ballots. The first author created a transparency sheet to black out all identifying information for competitors and judges to ensure that all ballots were de-identified upon being copied. After the tournament, all ballots were scanned to PDF files, which were used in the analysis procedures later.

Sampling Procedures

To make comparisons between each event, the research team coded prose ballots and drama ballots independently of one another in a series of coding processes. To accomplish this, a subset of ballots for prose (n = 35) and drama (n = 30) were randomly assigned to each of the five researchers to use in initial coding, such that 175 prose ballots and 150 drama ballots were used to generate initial codes. After initial codes and categories were generated, the researchers coded another randomly selected sample of prose ballots (n = 50) and drama ballots (n = 50) together, to ensure we were coding consistently. Finally, each researcher coded a third randomly assigned subset of prose ballots (n = 35) and drama ballots (n = 30). In this final stage of coding, a total of 175 prose ballots and 150 drama ballots were assigned among the research team. This final round of coding resulted in the analysis presented in this article; any coding we conducted for preliminary analysis and coding consistency is not included. After removing ballots from this final subset that were entirely unreadable, the researchers coded a total of 164 prose ballots (9.57% of the total ballots available) containing 931 legible comments and 139 drama ballots (9.55% of the total ballots available) containing 779 legible comments.

Analysis

We began by designating our unit of analysis as a complete sentence or comment. In cases where judges clearly delineated a "comment" with a bullet point, we treated that entire comment as one incident. In cases where ballots were written in long-form paragraphs without clear distinction between ideas, we treated each *sentence* as its own incident.

We then engaged in "initial coding," which Charmaz (2006) describes as "provisional, comparative, and grounded in the data" (p. 48). In this stage, each researcher analyzed a randomly assigned set of ballots to generate as many codes as possible, labeling each unit of analysis with a provisional code that defined the nature of the comment. After this stage of initial coding, the research team came together to discuss the codes we assigned and synthesize those codes into categories. In this "secondary-cycle coding," we worked together to "organize, synthesize, and categorize [codes] into interpretive concepts" (Tracy, 2013, p. 194). Once we sorted our initial codes into categories, all

researchers coded the same set of 50 randomly assigned ballots from each event together to ensure we were consistent in our coding. We discussed differences in codes, resolved disagreements or uncertainties about our coding practices, and finalized our coding schemes for each event. We then engaged in a process of final coding, using our set coding schemes to count the number of recurrences for each comment in new sets of randomly assigned ballots. The findings of this project are based on this final round of coding.

Results

Our research question asked, "What criteria do judges use to distinguish between prose and drama in collegiate forensic competition?" This question is best answered by comparing the coding schemes for prose and drama generated by our analysis. These coding schemes illustrate the overall judging themes for each event, and the specific criteria for each of those themes. Initially, our analysis of prose ballots produced the following themes: commentary, affect, general delivery, characterization, literature, physical/blocking, introductions, and prose vs. drama. (Table 1 provides a list of these themes, their frequencies, and the percentage of total comments comprised by each theme.)

- We defined *commentary* as any comment not directly suggesting, critiquing, or evaluating the performance (e.g., "Love your suit" or "tough round").
- *Affect* referred to the emotional effect produced by the performer. Examples of specific judging criteria for affect in prose included judges commenting on the performer's emotional depth (e.g., "this kid has demons/sadness but I'm not hearing it"), the "build" or climax development of the performance (e.g., "the tone of your piece is all at one level, not much variation in emotion"), and whether the affective characteristics were believable or felt authentic (e.g., "I feel sometimes like the emotion gets forced here").
- *General delivery* was used to categorize any comments pertaining to delivery in a general sense. These criteria, which included such examples as presence, use of pauses, vocal patterns, enunciation, or volume, were delivery comments unrelated to specific characterizations or selection-specific performance choices (e.g., "come forward towards the audience just a tad"; "make sure your quiet parts are able to be heard").
- We defined *characterization* as an expectation for performers to create believable and compelling character portrayals, including keeping multiple characters distinct from one another (e.g., "make sure your narrator & father don't blur together"), committing to the established character portrayal (e.g., "I think you need more embodiment for [character]), and the believability of that character portrayal (e.g., "the father figure is convincing").
- Comments pertaining to *literature* referred to the cutting, flow, selection, or uniqueness of the story (e.g., "abrupt ending"; "parts of the cutting feel like they flow together great").
- *Physical/blocking* referred to comments based on gestures, movements, or the visualization of certain "stage" elements of the performance (e.g., "focal points are really lovely"; "what is her friend doing with her hand?").

- Any comments critiquing the interest level, argumentativeness, or appropriateness of an introduction or teaser were categorized under *introductions* (e.g., "solid teaser"; "I was left wanting more from that intro").
- Finally, *prose vs. drama* was used to capture any comments questioning the "fit" of a performance in the event (e.g., "I think this would be a better DI").

Our analysis of drama ballots produced a remarkably similar set of themes: *commentary, characterization, affect, general delivery, literature, physical/blocking, introductions, environment,* and *prose vs. drama*. (Table 2 provides a list of these themes, their frequencies, and the percentage of total comments comprised by each theme.)

- Similar to the themes for prose, *commentary* referred to any comment lacking substantive suggestions or references to the performance itself (e.g., "you've got such a great smile"; "what a fab voice you have!").
- We categorized comments as *characterization* if they related to establishing or maintaining clear, consistent, believable, and compelling characters (e.g., "I think you gotta push the diff. characterizations"; "character transformation is excellent").
- *Affect* again referred to the performer's production of an emotional effect, including "authentic" displays of emotion, emotional depth, climax development, or emotional flow (e.g., "feels almost melodramatic"; "thank you for the emotional development").
- *General delivery* also emerged as an important theme, again referring to comments about delivery in a more general (not event-specific) sense (e.g., "you tend to upspeak, it's awkward"; "watch rushing over your sentences").
- *Literature* emerged as a category for comments pertaining to the effectiveness of a selection, cutting, or teaser, or the choice of interesting or "fresh" texts (e.g., "this cutting is a bit choppy"; "interesting lit choice").
- *Physical/blocking* again referred to comments about gestures, movements, and other small physical performance choices specific to a particular selection (e.g., "that doorknob is set awfully high off the ground"; "some of the movement isn't needed").
- *Introductions* emerged as a category for comments regarding the interest level of an introduction or a performer's illustration of their "own" speaking style in contrast to the character(s) (e.g., "your argument is too straight-forward"; "need to see stronger links to the intro argument").
- Unique to drama was the theme *environment,* which involved comments about the performer's ability to create a sense of unique "staging" or "setting" for the performance, helping the audience visualize that setting through the performer's interaction with the space, and defining "who" the audience is (e.g., "really created the world"; "the placement of the tree keeps changing").
- Finally, *prose vs. drama* again referred to comments about the appropriateness of that selection for the event (e.g., "I need more of this in DI"; "DI is a very different animal than prose, and this needs more rawness").

Our analysis suggests that prose and drama are judged in remarkably similar ways. After removing those themes that were not event-specific (i.e., *commentary* and *general delivery,* which do not speak to substantive differences in performing prose or drama), the

two coding schemes shared the same two most frequent set of judging comments. *Affect* and *characterization* accounted for 33.84% of the comments we observed in prose ballots and 35.21% of the comments we observed in drama ballots. These similarities seem to undermine a commonly held belief in the forensic community that prose and drama are sufficiently distinct performance categories. To the extent that we accept the role judges play in enforcing performance expectations and shaping the performance categories, the absence of substantial differences in judges' comments suggests that prose and drama are similar enough to question why they remain distinct events.

Discussion

Despite subtle differences in judging criteria and frequencies of those criteria, our findings suggest that prose and drama performances are being judged in remarkably similar ways. These similarities suggest several implications for the conceptualization and evaluation of prose and dramatic interpretation in collegiate speech competition.

First, the forensic community might benefit from more deliberate efforts to ensure that judges evaluate events based on established event descriptions. Our earlier review of literature traced the development of prose and drama through the NFA bylaws, ending with our current distinction based on the "development of story" (for prose) or the "development of character(s)" (for drama). Although this distinction is easily embraced and articulated by coaches and judges in conversation, the judging criteria that emerged from our analysis illustrate some inconsistency with this conceptual distinction. Comments present in both events stray away from the standards illustrated by the NFA bylaws: for example, codes synthesized from prose ballots do not directly refer to audience engagement through story development whatsoever. From our analysis, the closest approximation to "story" codes were categorized under the *literature* theme, including literature cutting or flow, literature selection, and literature uniqueness—none of which fully convey the overarching purpose of the event as it is conceptualized in the bylaws. Additionally, comments pertaining to this *literature* theme appeared in relatively equal proportions in both prose and drama ballots, further blurring the "story vs. character" distinction we might have expected to see. Similarly, both prose and drama appear to rely heavily on "characterization" as a judging criterion, a characteristic emphasized only in the description for dramatic interpretation. The issue, then, is that even with this supposedly clear "story vs. character" distinction, both events appear to *not* be judged based on that distinction. The event conceptualizations are plainly presented in the bylaws, and judges presumably understand what each event should encompass—but this distinction is not articulated on their ballots. By judging the two events so similarly, the justification and relevance for each event becomes less transparent.

A related concern is whether the comments left on ballots—particularly those comments that help distinguish events like prose and drama—actually correlate with the ranks assigned in the round. Because ranks, speaker points, and other identifying markers on the ballots collected for our study were removed to ensure anonymity, we were unable to assess this connection in the present study. However, considering our activity is rooted in competition, it is important to question whether judges are rewarding performances that adhere to event descriptions through their assigned ranks in addition to specific judging comments. Such considerations could help us determine whether we reinforce event

distinctions in conversation, but award higher ranks for individual performances irrespective of the frameworks provided for each event by our national organizations.

Arguably, if our conceptualizations of each event are sufficiently distinct, then perhaps the "solution" to the prose and drama identity crisis is to think of methods to help our judges evaluate the events more closely based on the rule distinctions from the bylaws. Such a solution is, of course, somewhat contingent upon providing sufficient training or orientation to judges, including judges without forensic background and former forensic competitors who continue their forensic participation as new coaches or judges. Additionally, we encourage current coaches and judges to question their own understandings of prose and dramatic interpretation, to ensure we are all "judging on good communication practice and with a pedagogical emphasis" (Outzen, Youngvorst, & Cronn-Mills, 2013, p. 42). To the extent that our national organizations set event descriptions to achieve strategic competitive and pedagogical outcomes, it is increasingly imperative that our coaches and judges align their own evaluative paradigms to uphold those outcomes through the ballot.

Second, we would be remiss to not question the similarities in prose and drama evident in our findings and consider whether the two events do serve distinct pedagogical goals. Our findings suggest that prose and dramatic interpretation are both overwhelmingly judged based on how performers create a compelling character presence, and how they establish some kind of emotional effect—both in terms of creating an affective environment for the audience, and in conveying proper emotional depth for the character(s) represented in the performance. In both prose and drama, *affect* and *characterization* were the two most common criteria with which judges were concerned. On the surface, this emphasis on embodying emotion seems incredibly relevant to both events. Bodkin and Gaddis (2016) argue, "Speech teaches us empathy for fellow humans of the world: fathers of dead children, alcoholic mothers, teenagers on the brink of coming out, and so on" (p. 43). As Bodkin and Gaddis suggest, creating and portraying empathy is a significant pedagogical skill competitors gain from oral interpretation events, and is directly related to emotion and characterization. The problem with relying so heavily on the performance of empathy or emotion as a judging criterion stems from the fact that empathy is not genre-specific and is a goal of oral interpretation *as a whole.* If judging criteria for prose and drama both emphasize the evocation of emotion to the detriment of more clearly distinguished, event-specific criteria, it becomes difficult to assess how prose and drama teach students sufficiently distinct skills. This issue ultimately warrants a reconsideration of the judging criteria being utilized in forensics to evaluate the effectiveness of prose interpretation and dramatic interpretation.

These considerations lead to our final conclusion: our findings create an opportunity to (re)open conversations about re-categorizing the interpretation events. With the current conceptualizations of prose and drama being evaluated so similarly, it is worthwhile to (re)consider the elimination of prose and drama based on genre or "story vs. character" distinctions. An alternative approach might involve collapsing the existing prose and drama events into a single interpretation category, which is favored by coaches and competitors already disgruntled by the disproportionate number of interpretation events compared to public address events.

Another approach might instead pursue a reclassification of interpretation events based on some other, more clearly delineated set of criteria. White (2010) first proposed

re-categorizing the interpretation events based on "the primary narrative voice (point of view) used in the text, rather than the text's assumed genre" (p. 91). The proposal involved distinguishing events into first-person interpretation, second and/or third-person interpretation, and dialogue interpretation in addition to the existing poetry, duo, and POI events. In 2013, the NFA Executive Committee proposed a different reclassification of the oral interpretation events based on the number of "voices" in the selection, doing away with the traditional genre distinction and instead emphasizing "how the performer interacted with their texts in preparation to performance" (unpublished proposal, p. 2). Focusing on voice characterization allows for the performance of multiple literature selections with consistent voice, while eliminating the confusion surrounding the distinction between prosaic and dramatic literature. Ultimately, neither of these proposals were accepted, and the current "story vs. character" trope was embraced and codified by the NFA membership instead. Our findings, however, illustrate the limitations of that distinction in that prose and drama are not being judged based on those qualities.

The significance of this problem depends on the community's approach to forensic competition. If we wish to solidify our position as a purely competitive activity, then the problem of having two remarkably similar events might not be a problem at all—just another opportunity for students to compete and put their skills to practice. If, however, we wish to maintain our standing as a co-curricular activity and continue aligning our competitive practices with our self-reported pedagogical goals, the best course of action is for us to more seriously consider reclassifying the oral interpretation events based on clearer, more concrete performative accomplishments. The argument for reclassification is not an attempt to completely erase the traditional constructs of prose and drama, but to continue refining what we do to best realize our activity's potential as a co-curricular activity. By establishing (more) distinct events grounded in sound(er) theoretical and pedagogical choices, we can ensure that our students take as much as possible from their participation in forensics, both competitively and educationally.

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Tables

Table 1

Themes, Frequencies, and Proportions for Prose Ballots

Theme	Frequency	% of Total Comments
Commentary	225	24.17
Affect	195	20.95
General delivery	168	18.05
Characterization	120	12.89
Literature	85	9.13
Physical/blocking	69	7.41
Introductions	60	6.44
Prose vs. drama	9	.97
Total comments	**931**	**100%**

Table 2

Themes, Frequencies, and Proportions for Drama Ballots

Theme	Frequency	% of Total Comments
Commentary	177	24.93
Characterization	140	19.72
Affect	110	15.49
General Delivery	99	13.94
Literature	77	10.85
Physical/blocking	40	5.63
Introductions	36	5.07
Environment	26	3.66
Prose vs. drama	5	.70
Total comments	**710**	**100%**

How Can SoTL Help Forensic Educators Assess Their Performance?

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Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) is a movement among educators which seeks to acknowledge the work we do teaching as its own form of unique scholarship. SoTL argues the work we do as teachers can be peer-reviewed, critiqued and shared with others in our academic communities. The goal of this paper is to outline how forensic educators can use SoTL approaches to help build an argument about their scholarly activity as illustrated in coaching practice. SoTL provides a framework through which we can articulate the significance of this aspect of our scholarly performance.

Although discussions of formal assessment practices in forensics have been increasing in the past several years, the focus of these have been primarily around how we, as educators, can assess student learning as a way to justify the activity as a whole (Kelly & Richardson, 2010; Kelly, Paine, Richardson & White, 2014). Certainly, our performance as forensic educators can and should be evaluated based on student-learning outcomes. However, the assessment of our own scholarship as academic professionals is often ignored. While publication and presentation obligations vary across institutions, most academic appointments come with the expectation faculty engage in regular scholarly activities. Given research expectations are frequently cited as a contributing factor to coach burnout (Leland, 2004; Preston, 1995; Richardson, 2005), exploring ways forensic educators can balance coaching responsibilities and research expectations is vital.

Traditional approaches to assessment, such as publication and conference presentation quotas, do not account for a forensic educator's most common scholarly activity. Effective coaches are constantly working collaboratively with students on research projects in the form of speeches presented at tournaments. Like traditional research, these speeches are presented publicly and peer-reviewed. However, current faculty assessment measures do not take into account this significant scholarly activity. Forensic educators need to articulate better the active scholarship in which they regularly engage. The goal of this brief essay is to explore the origins of the SoTL (Scholarship of Teaching and Learning) movement as a resource for forensic educators to use when documenting their scholarly activity for their own professional-review process. This paper will provide a brief overview of the SoTL movement, explain how the movement is easily applied to forensic practice and finally provide suggestions for how forensic educators can use this approach to assess their own scholarly contributions.

Overview of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Kern, Mettetal, Dixson, and Morgan (2015) argue SoTL "lies at the intersection of teaching and research" (p. 4) and although there is some disagreement about what sort of activities fall under the classification of SoTL, for an activity to be considered part of a SoTL framework it must require "conscientious consideration, planning, and follow through" (p. 4). Traditional published or presented data-driven studies of teaching effectiveness, case studies, and essays concerning effective teaching practice are the

activities most universally "counted" as SoTL projects. However, the origins of the movement did not define scholarship this narrowly. The SoTL movement grew out of ideas presented by Boyer (1990) in his text *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*. Boyer was reacting to a shift in academic culture that valued research productivity over teaching effectiveness. Boyer writes, "the faculty reward system does not match the full range of academic functions" and as a result "professors are often caught between competing obligations" (p. 1). Boyer sought to expand the definition of scholarship to include a more comprehensive understanding of the various intellectual activities performed by professors. Boyer argued, "What we urgently need today is a more inclusive view of what it means to be a scholar—a recognition that knowledge is acquired through research, through synthesis, through practice, and through teaching" (p. 24). Acknowledging and valuing the variety of work done by professors allows academic professionals to nurture their own professional growth in a way that strengthens self, students, and institution.

Boyer's (1990) approach to scholarship involves viewing scholarship as having four different, yet related, functions: the scholarship of discovery, the scholarship of integration, the scholarship of application, and the scholarship of teaching. Initially, the *scholarship of discovery* is what we consider traditional research. The contribution to a wide base of knowledge is a worthy goal of academic professionals. Many thrive in an environment focused on scientific breakthroughs and intellectual discoveries.

However, according to Boyer, influential scholarship moves beyond discovery. Therefore, the *scholarship of integration* is also a valuable function. Boyer defines this function of scholarship as giving "meaning to isolated facts, putting them in perspective. … making connections across the disciplines" (p. 18). Essentially the scholarship of integration moves beyond discovering what can be known and shifts to an understanding of what findings mean in a larger context. Boyer suggests an increase in interdisciplinary programs of study is a sign that the scholarship of integration is gaining appreciation.

Next, Boyer describes the *scholarship of application*. This function of scholarship seeks to explore how knowledge can be used to solve problems. Traditionally this function of scholarship has been relegated to the underappreciated professional expectation of service. Boyer, however, argues that service can be considered scholarship if the activities are "tied directly to one's special field of knowledge" and "is serious, demanding work, requiring the rigor—and accountability—traditionally associated with research activities" (p. 22).

Finally, Boyer proposes an appreciation for the *scholarship of teaching*. He cites Aristotle's claim, "Teaching is the highest form of understanding," to support the rigor involved in effective teaching. To teach well requires a deep grasp of one's subject area as well as the ability to explain broader connections between bodies of knowledge. Boyer maintains, "inspired teaching keeps the flame of scholarship alive" (p. 24). Therefore, without professors committed to effective teaching, the distribution of knowledge would falter.

Boyer (1990) was clear in his stance that all four functions of scholarship need to be recognized and rewarded within the academy. Each function of scholarship contributes to the vitality of a college or university. Boyer's work is especially useful for forensic educators seeking to articulate their own scholarly contributions to their institution.

Application of Boyer's Functions of Scholarship to Forensic Educators

Although many forensic educators engage in the *scholarship of discovery*, and the community supports several academic journals dedicated to publishing this work, the traditional approach to scholarship is not the type of scholarship in which many forensic educators excel. This may be due to time constraints linked to coaching and travel, but perhaps the reason is less defeatist. Boyer's reconsideration of scholarship grants permission for forensic educators to unapologetically admit their scholarly passions and skills manifest in other areas such as integration, application, and teaching.

The interdisciplinary nature of competitive forensics lends itself to a commitment to the *scholarship of integration*. Currently forensic competitors are coached to interrogate the implications of the topics and literature they explore. Coaches encourage their students to synthesize research, question widely accepted interpretations, and build connections between once disparate ideas. The performances delivered in competition are innovative and exciting in the ways they provide a broader understanding of the world. Boyer (1990) explains, "The scholarship of integration also means interpretation, fitting one's own research—or the research of others—into larger intellectual patterns" (p. 19). Forensic educators promote this form of scholarship on a near-daily basis as they work with students to develop their events.

Another current value supported by many forensic educators is the commitment to integrate themselves and their students into civic-service and social-justice work. This focus on the *scholarship of application* is an additional way forensic educators contribute to less-traditional forms of scholarship. Many of those involved in the forensic community recognize the advantage their refined communication skills offer them, and as a result seek ways to use these skills in a service capacity. Forensic educators work to create opportunities for their students to use their advocacy skills to improve local communities. Boyer (1990) clarifies that the scholarship of application is not just "doing good," but rather applying the knowledge and skills gained through professional inquiry toward solving key social problems (p. 22). Therefore, a team's commitment to make blankets to be given to a local shelter is an example of "doing good" but a commitment to planning, sponsoring, and presenting a public debate on the issue of local poverty could be considered scholarship of application. Forensic educators can turn to Boyer's framework as a way to justify service commitments as a form of scholarship.

Finally, Boyer's (1990) *scholarship of teaching* is especially relevant to the work done by forensic educators. Boyer argues great teachers "stimulate active, not passive, learning and encourage students to be critical, creative thinkers, with the capacity to go on learning after their college days are over" (p. 24). The most effective forensic educators are great teachers. Certainly, competitive success for students is a goal, but those coaches with longevity in the activity understand and appreciate the importance of nurturing students who will be life-long learners. Boyer strongly defends the vital importance of the scholarship of teaching writing, "Without the teaching function, the continuity of knowledge will be broken and the store of human knowledge dangerously diminished" (p. 24). The commitment to teaching is what simultaneously fuels and exhausts the effective forensic educator. The excellent scholarship done in this area needs to be respected and rewarded.

Documenting the Scholarly Contributions of a Forensic Educator

Boyer's (1990) project intended to recognize "the great diversity of talent within the professoriate" and to help faculty "reflect on the meaning and direction of their professional lives" (p. 25). Such guided reflection can be especially useful to forensic educators seeking to build an argument regarding the importance of their work in the area of scholarship. The final section of this paper provides practical advice for how forensic educators can document the unique nature of scholarship related to their professional activity.

In *Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the Professoriate*, Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff (1997) extend Boyer's (1990) work by offering guidelines for how academics can assess activity that falls within the four functions of scholarship as outlined by Boyer. The authors understand that for Boyer's approach to have institutional legitimacy, there must be some process for measuring quality. Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff explain that all quality scholarship, regardless under which of Boyer's functions it falls, is guided by six standards of quality: first, the project must have clear goals; second, be supported by adequate preparation; third, use appropriate methods; fourth, generate significant results; fifth, be effectively presented; and finally, include reflective critique. If forensic educators wish to use Boyer's approach as a basis for self-assessment, they must be able to articulate how their work adheres to this process.

Initially, scholarship must have clear goals. Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff (1997) argue all scholarship projects must have objectives that are clearly defined and achievable. In other words, when arguing coaching activity is scholarship, forensic educators need to approach coaching in a way guided by articulated objectives. Best practices to meet this step include developing a formal strategic plan for the forensic program. The strategic plan should include expected participation numbers, travel commitments, competitive goals, and social growth goals for students. These should be formally linked to the institution's strategic plan. Second, coaches need to clearly state student learning outcomes for participation. Coaches should know what skills they intend to teach and be able to articulate the co-curricular nature of the activity.

Next, coaching as scholarly activity must be grounded in adequate preparation. Forensic educators need to stay knowledgeable regarding disciplinary developments in communication studies, but also have a solid understanding of effective coaching practices and administrative functions of their home campus. When coaching, becoming isolated in one's own world of appointments and travel is difficult to avoid. However, forensic educators must engage in their own professional growth to ensure they are prepared to meet the expectations they have outlined when setting goals. Adequate preparation can be demonstrated by keeping a log of materials one reads. This log can include research relevant to a student's topic, potential literature for student performance, monographs about effective teaching and coaching, as well as listserv discussions about current topics within the forensic community. Coaches also need to set aside time to discuss the art of coaching with peers and mentors. Even something as simple as grabbing coffee with a peer during an off round can provide significant gains for personal growth. Finally, forensic professionals need to stay aware of the administrative workings of one's campus. Coaches should attend relevant trainings and meetings designed to assist them with the logistical aspects of coaching.

Further, forensic educators must document the methods they use to meet the objectives they have outlined for their programs. Few individuals outside the forensic community have an understanding of the countless hours forensic professionals log each semester. Coaches must do more to document the scholarly work they accomplish. One simple step is to log coaching hours. Although this can be tedious, tracking the number of hours set aside for coaching appointments is a concrete way to measure the teaching aspect of coaching. Coaches can also log the time spent editing drafts. Keeping track of speech draft revisions is an additional way coaches can document their coaching methods. The ability to track the history of a document's revision process through programs such as Google Docs makes this type of documentation relatively easy. Documenting the revision process undertaken between coach and student is an excellent way to illustrate how a coach engages in the scholarship of teaching. Similarly, each season a coach can select one or two events and keep a "coaching log" that outlines the process one goes through when assisting a student to develop a strong performance. Finally, forensic participants should complete bi-annual evaluations of the coaching staff. These student evaluations can serve as documentation of coaching effectiveness.

Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff (1997) add that to be assessed as effective, the results of scholarly activity should achieve stated goals and "add consequentially to the field" (p. 36). If coaches have strategic plans and systems in place to measure student learning outcomes, they should be able to document how their programs are achieving stated goals. However, demonstrating how one's coaching impacts the broader forensic community is more difficult. One way forensic educators can measure the impact of their coaching is to collect ballot comments that indicate when a student's performance has positively impacted a judge. Often judges will comment when a student performance leads them to see the world in a new way or challenges their understanding of a topic. These "epiphany moments" are evidence that the scholarship of teaching through coaching is leading to significant results. Additionally, forensic educators can request colleagues write letters of impact that describe the ways their coaching efforts are benefiting the larger forensic community. Students from other teams are constantly learning from the performances of their peers and the ballots coaches write. The scholarship of teaching happening in the forensic community is a unique form of co-teaching. As colleagues, we can help each other document the impact we are making outside the boundaries of our own teams.

Effective presentation as a standard of quality is perhaps the easiest of the six measures for forensic educators to document. A typical forensic student will give at least four to six speeches at each tournament. These speeches are the most obvious evidence of the scholarship being accomplished in the forensic community. Although those outside of the forensic community may struggle to grasp many of the rules and norms of tournament practice, they can recognize the exceptional ability of students involved in the activity to effectively communicate messages. Campus showcase performances are an excellent way to document the public presentation of scholarship occurring within a forensic program.

Finally, perhaps the most important stage of the evaluation process is reflective critique. Forensic educators need to take time to critically evaluate themselves. Often coaches are so busy they don't take the time to reflect on how they approach coaching. The sheer number of hours dedicated to working with students leads to a dependence on intuition and habit. However, careful reflection regarding "why" one approaches coaching in a specific way leads to self-awareness that will improve one's craft. Most coaches expect

their students to conduct a ballot analysis of judge feedback. Coaches should engage in a similar task. Conducting exit interviews with students at the conclusion of each academic year is an excellent way to engage in the reflective critique process. Coaches can ask students what went well during the past season and what might be done more effectively in the future. Synthesizing student feedback allows the coach to adjust goals and methods for future academic years. As Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff (1997) explain, "reflective critique both promises and promotes intellectual engagement. It leads to better scholarship" (p. 35).

Documenting coaching efforts may seem a daunting task to add to an already overwhelming list of responsibilities. However, the effort will help forensic educators build strong arguments regarding the significance of their scholarship. "Documentation that addresses these standards familiarizes campus colleagues with the contexts surrounding the scholarly projects they are asked to review" (Glassick, Huber & Maeroff, 1997, p. 49). A formal assessment of scholarship helps ensure those outside of forensics understand the value of the work forensic educators do. As Hutchings, Huber, and Ciccone (2011) write:

> The scholarship of teaching and learning is not so much a function of what particular pedagogies faculty use. Rather, it concerns the thoughtfulness with which they construct the learning environments they offer students, the attention they pay to students and their learning, and the engagement they seek with colleagues on all things pertaining to education in their disciplines, programs, and institutions. (p. 10-11)

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Impact by Intention:
An Argument for Forensics as a High-Impact Practice

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This essay locates forensics within national discourse about high-impact practices (HIPs) in higher education, as outlined by scholar George D. Kuh. Forensics shares all the characteristics associated with the ten promising practices Kuh (2008) outlined initially. Though Kuh's original overview and expanded list of practices (Kuh, 2016) serve as reference points for addressing HIPs, forensics has not been recognized as a HIP. The essay argues that framing forensics as a HIP could enrich advocacy efforts to start and/or sustain current forensics programs. The article connects the fiscal climate with the assessment paradigm, examines the ways forensics adheres to Kuh's definition, and identifies three ways reframing forensics could enrich advocacy efforts and the visibility of forensics.

If I describe intercollegiate forensics as an enriching educational experience that changes the lives of students, most directors, coaches, and students who constitute the forensics community, including alumni, would probably agree. Further, if I outline the time and effort it requires from students; describe the ways it facilitates learning beyond the classroom; note the range of meaningful interactions it fosters among coaches, students, and teammates; articulate how it encourages collaborations with diverse people; and observe that it offers a forum for students to receive frequent and substantive feedback, this would probably generate minimal controversy.

As obvious as the impact of forensics might seem to members of the forensics community, recognition of its role as a substantive co-curricular endeavor is noticeably absent from the scholarship regarding High-Impact Educational Practices or, more commonly, High-Impact Practices (HIPs), that has circulated in higher education discourse since around 2008. To return to my opening proposition, the National Survey of Student Engagement's (NSSE) "Engagement Indicators & High Impact Practices" (2015) summary describes HIPs in terms familiar to forensics affiliates. It characterizes them as practices that:

> . . . represent enriching educational practices that can be life-changing. They typically demand considerable time and effort, facilitate learning outside of the classroom, require meaningful interactions with faculty and other students, encourage collaboration with diverse others, and provide frequent and substantive feedback. (NSSE, 2015)

The ten practices most commonly identified as HIPs that "educational research suggests increase rates of student retention and student engagement" (Kuh, 2008, p. 9) include first-year seminars and experiences, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignments and projects, undergraduate research, diversity/global learning, service learning/community-based learning, internships, and capstone courses and projects (Kuh, 2008). In 2016, Kuh expanded the list to also include electronic or e-portfolios where students document their cumulative co-curricular experiences.

The educative core of forensics does not appear in literature on HIPs. McBath (1975) argues that forensics is "an educational activity primarily concerned with using an argumentative perspective in examining problems and communicating with people," and asserts that "forensics activities, including debate and individual events, are laboratories for helping students to understand and communicate various forms of argument more effectively in a variety of contexts with a variety of audiences" (p. 11). However, despite the literature forensics educators, alumni, and current students have shared about the educational impact of forensics on the enrichment of knowledge and skills, it is missing from the conversation.

This essay aspires to correct this omission for multiple reasons. Exploring the ways forensics can be understood within the HIP framework is an important way for the forensics community to speak a type of language many administrators and scholars are speaking in higher education. The pressure for co-curricular programs to demonstrate their value and impact on students is inseparable from contemporary discourse about competing demands for institutional funding and support. As Cunningham (2005) notes, "[s]adly, our community has seen many programs eliminated when a new dean or department chair-person with a lack of knowledge about forensics wants to cut budgets" (p. 15). The survival of forensics may eventually depend on clear and effective articulations regarding its impact and efficacy. Placing it in the HIP context could aid efforts to converse with institutional, divisional, and/or departmental goals.

Understanding forensics as a HIP is also a potential tool for enriching the forensics community's self-awareness and enhancing its own administrative practices. Deeper reflexivity could provide a means for translating the learning outcomes of forensics to faculty, staff, and administrators. As several authors have noted previously, the forensics community must continually challenge perceptions that it is "extracurricular" rather than co-curricular, a club rather than an enduring educational activity, or just a "competition" focused on winning rather than student development (Burnett, Brand, & Meister, 2003, p. 12).

The most pointed articulation so far of forensics as competition comes from Burnett, Brand and Meister (2003), who argue:

> Current practices in forensics focus on competition and not on an often-referenced education model. The problem is that when the competition model of forensics attempts to justify the activity by advocating a 'balance' of education through the realities of competition, it masks the competition model under an educational guise. (p. 12)

Their argument prompted Hinck (2003) to challenge their overall perspective and articulate the educative value of forensics' competitive structure. Hinck notes:

> In a well-founded forensics program, students learn how to communicate complex ideas to many different types of audiences from peers, to coaches, to teachers, to judges, to teammates, to members of other departmental classes, to community members, and possibly even administrators. Through forensics competition students begin to understand how competing ideas shape political and organizational outcomes. (p. 64)

The process of preparing oneself to engage with audiences is part of a larger process warranting further inquiry. Hinck (2003) cites discipline, the ability to prioritize, and goal-setting as skills students experience through competition that enrich their lives beyond college. Hinck offers an important critical opportunity to challenge perceptions, and more importantly, to expand our lens to view competition as a vehicle for transformative educational and personal development well beyond tournaments themselves.

I begin my argument for framing forensics as a HIP by first addressing the relationship between the funding anxieties in higher education and the emergence of the HIPs paradigm as a language for measuring learning in a curricular, co-curricular, and pedagogical context. Next, I discuss the specific correlations between forensics and the HIPs framework based on the six criteria Kuh (2008) outlines. Finally, I explore the utility of this approach and potential advocacy strategies for program directors and coaches.

I ground this discussion in the robust literature on forensics' educational impact written by scholars who have expanded the discourse regarding forensics' educational scope. Because the relationship between coaches and students is a central engine of the educational orientation of forensics, coaches as teachers, mentors, and advisers have an especially prominent role in this process. Communicating about the ways forensics exemplifies the HIP definition is a potential strategy for aligning forensics practitioners with their campus colleagues and placing their work more strategically in the national discourse about the role of co-curricular learning in a liberal education.

Placing HIPs in Context

Communication studies scholars routinely allude to concerns regarding resource allocations as a looming anxiety affecting forensics programs. For example, Schnoor (2015) begins an essay on forensics program budgeting by noting:

> We only have to look at how the events of the past few years have provided us with the evidence that our administrators are under the gun to tighten financial expenditures and in doing so, have begun to look closely at departments and programs they may feel are of less value or have failed to defend their existence for whatever reasons. (p. 76)

Copeland and James (2016) note similar concerns by recognizing that "[f]orensics educators find themselves continuously justifying the activity to administrators, colleagues, and other stakeholders," a concern that should compel forensics educators to "champion the applied educational benefits of the activity" (p. 20). Billings' (2011) study regarding the learning experiences of former forensics competitors beyond their undergraduate education is also situated in the concern that a lack of scholarly information may impact struggles to "maintain forensics programs at a time of declining financial support for higher education" (p. 111).

These financial concerns reflect a broader conversation in higher education that partially informs the drive toward assessment. Pike, Smart, Kuh and Hayek (2006) discuss various factors informing expenditures on multiple types of college campuses. They frame their analysis as a necessary intervention responding to a "paucity of research on expenditures and outcomes," especially "given the declining state of funding for higher

education and growing demands that colleges and universities be more transparent and accountable for student learning outcomes" (pp. 847-848). One of Pike's co-authors, George D. Kuh, is a leading voice in the translation of engagement data from the NSSE, which "collects information at hundreds of four-year colleges and universities about first-year and senior students' participation in programs and activities that institutions provide for their learning and personal development" ("NSSE," 2015), into a framework for organizing select student practices that has become known as HIPs. Published in 2008, *High-Impact Educational Practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter* (Kuh, 2008) is a publication based on a collaboration between the Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) Initiative and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC & U). In the publication, LEAP's then-President Carol Geary Schneider links the ability of students "to both thrive and contribute in a fast-changing economy and in turbulent, highly demanding global, societal, and often personal contexts" to the "emerging discussion about 'student learning outcomes'" (Kuh, 2008, p. 2). Questions regarding the ways students use their time, their engagement with different types of educational practices, and the ways these practices help them learn are central to the discourse regarding outcomes, as are concerns from employers about students' preparedness in key skill areas (Kuh, 2008).

From this largely socioeconomic context, Kuh outlines six primary characteristics that define the 10 categories of HIPs. Kuh does not frame HIPs as infallible solutions. He recognizes certain limitations and frames them carefully as "promising practices" (Kuh, 2008, p. 17). A critical concern about this admirably nuanced approach is that, by emphasizing the 10 categories, the HIPs approach codifies them to the exclusion of other impactful practices. This is a key area where forensics educators have an opportunity to examine and articulate the impact of their practices on student learning and development.

Defining Forensics Practices as HIPs

I examine the six characteristics Kuh (2008) uses to define HIPs and consider them in relation to practices within the forensics community. Affirming the ways forensics exemplifies HIPs criteria does not exempt either forensics or the HIPs framework from further critique or scrutiny. My focus, however, operates from the critical perspective that both have demonstrated their validity in numerous ways and thus placing them in conversation could benefit both mutually.

Student Time and Effort

First, Kuh (2008) notes that "these [HIPs] practices typically demand that students devote considerable time and effort to purposeful tasks; most require daily decisions that deepen students' investment in the activity as well as their commitment to their academic program and the college" (p. 14). Students who compete within the guidelines of two of the most prominent individual events forensics organizations, the American Forensics Association (AFA) and the National Forensics Association (NFA), typically compete in multiple individual events including limited prep, oral interpretation, and public address (American Forensics Association, 2018; National Forensics Association, 2018). The "pentathlon" and "individual sweepstakes" awards categories, often featured at local, state, regional, and national tournaments, reflect the common practice of students choosing to

compete in multiple events annually. In public address events, for example, time—to select topics, research and craft speeches, collaborate with staff coaches and peer coaches, memorize speeches, practice delivery, travel to tournaments, compete in rounds, review ballots, and revise—is central to the art of forensics. The first two elements of topic selection and speech writing are approached differently in working on interpretive events, but selecting texts, cutting them, and blocking the pieces are parallel time-consuming activities, as are more general practices such as working with coach(es) and traveling to tournaments.

The abilities of students to work with multiple coaches and for teams to travel widely vary by the size and funding of teams, among other factors. As such, one cannot sufficiently quantify the "average" time competitors spend preparing for individual events. However, a core structure of forensics that reflects Kuh's (2008) definition is the demand for coaching and practice time. Moore's (2005) essay on coaching addresses the varieties of coaching structures prevalent in forensics. These include *standardized individual coaching* sessions, which are typically half-hour or hour-long weekly meetings, and *variable weekly coaching*, the "most common coaching approach," where "you allow students to sign-up for individual coaching sessions weekly. The availability and quantity of the coaching slots varies week-to-week. In general, students schedule these appointments at the teams' weekly meetings" (pp. 66-67). Coaching times also include *standardized team practice*, which could occur multiple days per week at the same time, *come when you want* sessions where students work with coaches during their extended office times, and *peer coaching*, which often comes in the form of varsity students serving as "event captains" and supplementing feedback from professional coaching staff members (p. 68).

However scheduled coaching and practice sessions represent only one aspect of the time required to compete in forensics. This is a substantial activity that requires hours of performing, active listening, reflection, and post-coaching revision from students. This correlates to the purposeful task, student investment, and academic elements Kuh (2008) notes as a defining aspect of HIPs (p. 14). Further, the NFA's Academic Learning Compact (ALC) learning outcomes (Kelly, Paine, Richardson, & White, 2014) outline specific learning outcomes representing "the best practices in forensics pedagogy" that students experience in working with coaches (p. 39). For example, for Public Address events they outline nine areas of development, including audience analysis, analysis of the occasion, topic selection, research, organization, language (style), vocal delivery, physical delivery, and memorization. Each section includes a rationale and at least one student learning outcome. They codify similar elements for oral interpretation and limited preparation events. Kelly and Richardson (2010) framed these outcomes as the Pedagogical Prerogative Perspective, "a theory-based set of learning expectations and outcomes" (p. 80).

Critical awareness of the need to articulate the educational aspirations and achievements of forensics participants has inspired multiple studies relevant to our understanding of how students use their time in forensics and what they learn. A qualitative study Copeland and James (2016) conducted with then-current competitors identifies "improving skills in public speaking, listening, organization and structure, networking, time management, group work, and increasing knowledge and broadening worldview" as major benefits of competing in forensics (p. 20). Billings's (2011) qualitative study of

forensics competitors at least 10 years past their competitive careers identified six areas where the alums felt the activity was most beneficial, including argument formulation, confidence, friendships, research skills, world/cultural literacy, and time management/organization. Clearly, the desired outcomes of forensics, the ways competitors experience forensics historically and in the present, and the time and investment required to reap these benefits relate strongly. While more research on students' self-perceptions on the benefits of forensics is needed, as well as more discussion about the ways students structure their time, these examples epitomize Kuh's (2008) time and effort criteria for HIPs.

Meaningful Interaction with Faculty and Peers

The second criterion Kuh (2008) identifies as a characteristic of HIPs is the way such an activity "puts students in circumstances that essentially demand they interact with faculty and peers about substantive matters, typically over extended periods of time" (p. 14). Critical discussions about the role of coaches as mentors (White, 2005) and advisors (Tyma, 2008) for students in forensics reflect the high potential for intense collaborative relationships between coaches and students which Moore (2005) identifies. In 1990's National Developmental Conference on Individual Events (NDC-IE) proceedings, Carver and Ialson-Casselton's (1990) discussion of mentoring for coaches notes, "most of the experienced coaches definitely felt they fulfilled the mentor role for their students." The nature of the mentoring interaction is commonly understood within the forensics community as intrinsic to the coach-student relationship but may be less evident externally. White (2005) notes, "[m]entoring is an important aspect of a forensic coach's job. Although it is not what we are 'officially' hired to do, it is fundamental to the success of our programs" (pp. 92-93). Drawing on a range of mentoring literature, White identifies the nurturing, friendship, and apprenticeship models of mentoring as valuable models for coaches at different points in their careers.

Understanding the nature of different types of mentoring relationships in the context of forensics deepens my argument that forensics fosters meaningful interactions between faculty and students. *Nurturing mentoring* is rooted in "empathetic guidance," whereby "[t]he mentor shows a genuine concern for the mentee, but still maintains a stance as the more knowledgeable in the partnership. The mentor's role is not to control the mentee, but rather to guide the mentee toward making wise life choices" (White, 2005, p. 90). *Friendship mentoring* is "a complementary and reciprocal relationship," given that "mentoring views mentor and mentee as peers who are equals. There is no hierarchical distance between the involved parties" (p. 91). *Apprenticeship mentoring* is "characterized by a short-term relationship where the mentor assists in the mentee's learning process" and social and personal aspects are minimal (p. 91). White thoroughly addresses the benefits and limits of these models in the context of forensics. For example, she recognizes the potential for a "friendship" mentoring relationship to undermine the professional role of coaches if students perceive all decision-making as open for "mutual negotiation" (p. 91). Nonetheless, each type of mentoring embodies a high level of intentionality rooted in communication, listening, support, and feedback in various forms.

The coach-as-advisor perspective Tyma (2008) describes has parallels to the mentoring approach but incorporates a more overt developmental piece. Notably, "[t]he coach knows various ways of achieving a winning performance, but the competitor must

find his or her own path." Such an approach "affords the competitor an opportunity to learn, make decisions, make mistakes, continue to learn, and become finally successful by her or his own measure" (p. 105).

The correlation between effective mentoring and the development of skills extends beyond tournaments to broader areas of a student's development. Hinck (2003) captures the unique potential outcome of this relational intensity by noting:

> Competitive forensics can provide opportunities for mentoring students who might otherwise have chosen to forego further coursework, might be going through difficult personal circumstances, or simply trying to stay interested in school. The close interaction between teacher and student in the course of preparing for tournament competition can often create the relationship that makes mentoring and its positive outcomes possible. (p. 65)

I explore the way competitors articulate classroom impacts of forensics later in this essay, but Hinck offers an important link, noting how positive coaching-mentoring relationships enrich students' enthusiasm for their academic work and even inform retention and persistence toward graduation.

Peer coaching is a significant element in forensics that Moore (2005) has addressed previously. This practice also mirrors Kuh's (2008) discussion of substantive peer-to-peer interactions. Tyma (2008) recognizes peer coaching as a longstanding tradition in forensics and discusses the ways it "allows for all members of the team to have *voice* and *agency*" through structured opportunities for teammates working with multiple events to perform for each other, listen, and share questions and constructive feedback (p. 106). The greatest potential benefit of students learning from each other is the opportunity to "uncover new options or directions, and assist in developing a course of action to follow for the competitor[s]" (p. 107). Additionally, the connections students make with competitors from other teams, especially competitors who compete over multiple years, can be understood as a substantive form of peer engagement. While this is challenging to document, Billings (2011) discusses the relationships and friendships forensics alumni report they developed as a result of their experiences, and Copeland and James (2016) discuss the networking opportunities current competitors report. This speaks to a rich social dimension of peer connections happening within the forensics student community.

Though White (2005) and Tyma (2008) focus on describing types of coach-student relationships, there is a strong praxis element. For example, White elaborates on her mentoring experiences by noting interactions beyond the more apprentice-oriented model focused on skill-building:

> I usually try to hold goal-setting appointments at the start of each semester. If I am most comfortable taking the apprenticeship approach toward mentoring a student, I keep these meetings focused on competitive goals and skill improvement. If I am drawn toward the nurturing style of mentoring with a particular student, I use these special meetings to ask the student more specific questions about his/her academics, family and future plans. (p. 92)

A variety of structures and practices exist within forensics that entail strong faculty-student and student-student interactions.

Experiences with Diverse Cultures

The third criterion Kuh (2008) identifies notes how "participating in one or more of these activities increases the likelihood that students will experience diversity through contact with people who are different from themselves" (p. 15). Because students from community colleges, public universities, private universities, and private liberal arts colleges participate in the forensics community, no central metric could quantify the cultural diversity of the community sufficiently. This lack of quantitative data has neither prevented attention to issues of inclusion and diversity nor impeded qualitative analyses of diversity, which is the topic I now turn my attention to.

Though one could intuit that competing at local, regional, national, and international tournaments offers students multiple opportunities to experience cultural differences, both Billings (2011) study of forensics alumni and Copeland and James (2016) qualitative study of current competitors provide firsthand evidence of forensics students' perceptions of diversity. Among the core benefits Billings isolates in his survey of 107 respondents, diversity emerges as one of the six key themes he identifies. Billings notes that the range of comments provided by respondents:

> . . . made a joint argument for forensics being a facilitator of a global citizenship that includes not only learning about different social, cultural, economic, and political ideas through the construction of speeches but also the exposure to people who were of different demographic and cultural origins than their own. (p. 117)

Some of the comments refer to the benefits of leaving one's own home state, travelling outside of the United States, and meeting an open member of the LGBTQ community.

Related to this finding is Copeland and James's (2016) note that 14 of the 19 then-current competitors they interviewed "described the forensics experience as increasing their knowledge, and therefore broadening one's worldview" (p. 28). The way students think about the world, the openness to different perspectives, the development of empathy, the use of forensics as a form of social advocacy, and the personal expression of underrepresented identities are some of the thematic elements the authors quote from respondents. Clearly, the process of crafting content within individual events, the opportunity to engage with other competitors' arguments and interpretations, and opportunities to interact with different kinds of people affect the ability of forensics students to develop inclusive attitudes and broaden their social perspectives. While there are many opportunities for scholars to explore this area further, the existing evidence indicates a positive correlation between participating in forensics and experiencing diversity.

Ongoing Feedback

Kuh's (2008) fourth criterion for HIPs is that "students typically get frequent feedback about their performance" (p. 17). Some of the examples he cites include

collaborating with faculty on research, working with a peer-writing tutor, and receiving feedback from an internship supervisor. All of these are "opportunities for immediate formal and informal feedback" (p. 17). Coaching relationships and the ways students respond to ballots from judges are the obvious examples of feedback received by forensics students. As Moore (2005) outlines, coaching relationships and feedback are a constant in the life of forensics competitors. Moore also references overt academic overlaps, noting that "[s]ome schools allow students to receive practicum hours for their participation on a team and some even require communication majors to compete at least one semester during their collegiate experience" (p. 67).

Alongside the feedback professional coaches and peer coaches can offer students is the important educational role of judges. One of the four domains of the National Forensics Association's Academic Learning Compact is communication, which includes four sub-goals: a clear and memorable style, the ability to "[d]eliver effective presentations," the ability to "[e]stablish credibility with [the] audience," and the ability to "use information technology effectively to conduct research" (Kelly, Paine, Richardson, & White, 2014, pp. 39-40). Judges, many of whom are coaches, previous competitors, and lay judges, constitute the audience for most competitors. Critical evaluations of performances, as recorded on ballots which also include comments, rankings, and speaker points, are largely rooted in competitors establishing credibility with their audiences. Considering that most individual events competitors compete in multiple events, forensics students receive a substantial amount of criticism at a typical tournament. Of course, the amount does not ensure the criticism is insightful or that it leads competitors to alter their approaches. But the same could also be true of a student intern with multiple supervisors. The likelihood of students competing in multiple events means students are receiving multiple ballots, which ensures the opportunity to consider multiple voices and responses to their performances.

Qualifying to compete at the AFA-NIET and/or the NFA National Championship Tournament is a common goal for forensics students. The process of preparing to compete at nationals means competing at multiple local, state, and/or regional tournaments (depending on a team's resources). Students' opportunities to employ ballots as educational tools, and to then refine and revise their performances, guarantee that forensics students experience a steady stream of feedback regarding their performances. By the time they compete at national tournaments (for those who qualify), students have read and potentially responded to a substantial number of ballots from different types of judges, as well as benefited from coaching feedback. National tournaments are the ultimate space for feedback. Great humility and openness are required for students to listen, trust, and think beyond their own perspective on their performances.

For example, at NFA's national tournament students compete in three preliminary rounds and are scored by two judges in each, thus they receive a minimum of six ballots. Students who advance to elimination rounds (octofinals, quarterfinals, semifinals, and/or finals) receive an additional five ballots from each round. Thus, a finalist in a limited prep, public address, or interpretive individual event would receive 26 ballots from 26 separate voices. Though most students do not necessarily emerge as finalists at national tournaments, the culmination of each person's experience is not just recognition but feedback for improvement.

Observing Impact

The fifth HIPs criterion Kuh (2008) identifies is that "participation in these activities provides opportunities for students to see how what they are learning works in different settings, on and off campus" (p. 17). The relationship between the craft involved in preparing for forensics tournaments, the experience of competing, and the way these experiences impact students' undergraduate education and broader sense of self has inspired multiple studies involving competitors in both debate and individual events. Rogers (2002), whose work assesses behavioral differences between debate and non-debate students, speaks to the layered nature of forensics in a way that resonates for both debate and individual events. Notably, there are "contextual skills" such as critical thinking, research skills, and evidence evaluation that forensics community members presume are benefits. Alongside these skills is a perception of "an impressive array of non-linear benefits" (p. 1). These findings were later expanded on by Rogers and his additional associates (Rogers, Freeman, & Rennels, 2017). Exploring the ways obvious and less apparent "skills" surface in the lives of forensics students also informs my argument that forensics fulfills Kuh's criteria. Based on the existing research, forensics provides students a panoply of opportunities that empower them to excel in the classroom, pursue their educational and professional aspirations vigorously, and develop a robust set of personal competencies. Copeland and James (2016) frame this apparent richness as "an experiential-learning environment where students find personal and academic growth" (p. 33).

In 1991, McMillian and Todd-Mancillas identified self-esteem, education, and skills as three main areas where competitors perceived specific advantages from competing in individual events based on the responses of 164 forensics participants. These categories provide specific frameworks for understanding the different kinds of learning derived from the forensics experience. In terms of self-esteem, students strongly agreed or agreed (93% and 95% respectively) that "personal accomplishment and enhanced self-confidence" (p. 6) were advantages gained from forensics competition. Copeland and James (2016) found that eight of the 19 actively-competing participants in their study noted "that the speaking experience in forensics fostered confidence, or building the belief in the reliability of speaking well in front of others" (p. 26). While this may not be surprising, multiple students discussed developing confidence "outside of forensics" in a personal sense, as well as gaining an applied sense of managing anxiety in stressful situations and feeling better equipped to improvise in challenging situations. Confidence is also identified as a positive benefit by the past competitors Billings (2011) surveyed, with those respondents holding that "the immersive nature of forensics provided enough overall experience to give them the confidence they needed in their jobs" (p. 116). In terms of esteem, competitors' perceptions of the enhanced confidence forensics provided for them has personal and practical resonance in multiple contexts, a result which reflects Kuh's (2008) mandate.

McMillian and Todd-Mancillas (1991) also cite education as another area where students identified themselves as feeling advantaged. Specific impacts garnering the strongest responses include "gaining knowledge and skills which can be implemented in the 'real world,' receiving individual instruction, learning about people and subjects, learning to think quickly, and developing ethics" (p. 8). In the context of Kuh's criteria, focusing on the notion that forensics can translate into the "real world" beyond forensics itself is particularly germane. The current competitors and alumni competitors who participated in studies by Copeland and James (2016) and Billings (2011) both cite

enhanced research skills, including knowing proper research methods and learning how to identify credible sources, as forensics-related skills that improved their ability to execute coursework (Copeland & James, 2016; Billings, 2011). Both studies' respondents also identify time management, including the ability to balance competing demands (Copeland & James, 2016) and the ability to meet deadlines and prioritize (Billings, 2011), as real-world educational impacts of participating in forensics.

The skills the participants in McMillian and Todd-Mancillas's (1991) study identify as areas where they improved through forensics include "oral communication, critical thinking, organization, research, and writing skills" (p. 8). Several previously cited examples illustrate these elements, but the Copeland and James (2016) study features more explicit applications of these advantages and benefits in terms of "educational courses, the workforce and professional etiquette" (p. 30). They note that 10 of their 19 participants cited forensics as enriching their coursework through advancing skills related to argumentation, reasoning, and improvisation. Fourteen participants noted direct correlations between their skills in argumentation and communication and the achievement of their professional goals. Finally, 11 participants connected forensics to enriching their sense of professionalism, including their choice of attire, professional communication expectations, and social skills. Beyond teaching skills needed to compete successfully, forensics consistently promotes skills related to self-esteem, confidence, and various other competencies competitors can employ quite broadly in their lives.

Beyond the Classroom

The sixth and final criterion Kuh (2008, p. 17) associates with HIPs concerns the ways "it can be life changing to study abroad, participate in service learning, conduct research with a faculty member, or complete an internship." Having this type of "undergraduate experience deepens learning and brings one's values and beliefs into awareness; it helps students develop the ability to take the measure of events and actions and put them in perspective."

Framing forensics as a HIP with a wide range of positive outcomes related to education, skill development, and self-esteem does not rob it of its complexities and challenges. For example, McMillian and Todd-Mancillas (1991) incorporate students' critiques of the activity, including being expected to learn overly programmed delivery styles, feeling the time commitment can sometimes interfere with coursework, and noting areas where competitions could improve (including the quality of judging and "tournament structure alterations" [p. 12]). Billings's respondents also address the heavy time demands, the high levels of stress, poor personal choices (e.g. smoking, physical impacts), myopia, costs of competing, and internal politics as negative aspects of their experience. Arguably, *any* high impact practice will offer students a range of challenges and benefits, as well as offer different levels of engagement. Kuh (2008) recognizes, for example, that among the 10 most prominent (initially) promising practices, "some groups of historically underserved students are less likely to participate in high impact activities—those first in their family to attend college and African American students in particular" (p. 17).

Despite the existence of documented challenges, the forensics community has a strong record of reflexivity, indicated by the movement toward greater educational accountability, and the overall benefits seem to outweigh the challenges. Multiple students in Copeland and James (2016) study cite forensics as a key to accessing a "[w]ell-rounded

education" (p. 30), with comments such as, "[m]y college education has come from my participation in the forensic team. I've learned more in forensics than I did in my philosophy class," and "[t]o be quite frank, I feel like I have learned more in my speech and debate career than I have learned in any classroom" (pp. 30-31). Billings (2011) finds similar results, citing such open-ended responses as, "I think that competing in college forensics was the single most valuable aspect of my college education," and "[i]t was a life-changing experience and I cherish every memory" (p. 120). Members of the forensics community continually articulate the impact of the practice on their lives beyond the context of tournaments themselves, and sometimes view it as more educational than formal classroom instruction. For example, the forensics journal *Speaker & Gavel* inaugurated the "Alumni Corner: What Forensics Did for Me" feature in their June 2016 issue (Jablonski, 2016; Keatley, 2016). It provides an opportunity for forensics alumni to write about the impact of forensics on their lives in multiple contexts. The viability of this reflective opportunity speaks to the enduring impact of forensics for many of its competitors.

Next Steps: Translating Knowledge into Advocacy

The concept of High-Impact Educational Practices has circulated in higher education discourse since around 2008 and has persisted as a powerful way for institutions of higher education to frame the educational impact of their curriculum and co-curriculum. Institutions mobilize HIPs by sharing examples of how their students participate in HIPs with NSSE. NSSE shares these via "NSSE Data Use Stories." In a 2017 brief, for example, NSSE highlights successful HIPs at the University of Georgia, University of Texas at Tyler, Ramapo College of New Jersey, and Tulane University ("Increasing opportunities to engage"). Bucknell University's Office of Institutional Research and Planning includes data related to NSSE-derived data on HIPs on their website under the heading "Student Outcomes." In both examples, HIPs function as a kind of currency exemplifying a promising practice for peer institutions and as a potential asset for consumers seeking to connect the undergraduate education an institution offers with its practical value. Employing the language of HIPs to articulate the impact of forensics on undergraduate students is a promising strategy for directors to advocate when seeking ongoing, or even increased, institutional support for existing forensics programs, or when asserting a rationale for institutions to initiate programs. The vast scope of advantages, benefits, and impacts associated with forensics, as documented by various qualitative and quantitative studies, align forensics with the promising practices more commonly associated with HIPs.

I recommend three potential ways to mobilize the critical alignment of forensics with the HIPs framework I have outlined above. They include general administrative advocacy, data-informed campus partnerships, and forensics and HIP fusions. It is not an exhaustive list. Many programs may already engage in some of these practices. Future research might encourage programs already engaging in such advocacy practices to share the outcomes of their existing efforts. Programs could also implement some of the newer ideas and share them with other forensics community members. As such, a "best practices" list of advocacy strategies could emerge as a resource for other forensics programs.

General Administrative Advocacy
- Collaborating with campus offices of institutional research (if such resources are available on a respective campus) to design and administer annual learning assessments for forensics competitors, and developing effective ways to release the results publicly.
- Creating faculty and staff reading groups/colloquia for faculty and student life professionals to discuss key studies related to forensics impacts. This would exemplify what Manning, Kinzie, and Schuh (2006) title the academic-student affairs collaboration model, which features "significant interactions between student and academic affairs staff around the common purpose of enhanced student learning" (p. 124). One area of interest could include emergent literature on contemporary topics such as overlaps between forensics and civic education.
- Developing opportunities for faculty to experience forensics directly. Just as athletics programs have "faculty coaches" who attend practices and games, programs could invite faculty to attend a select number of practices and coaching sessions and serve as judges at competitions.
- Hosting annual showcases that include performances and opportunities for students to reflect on the educational impact of their competitive experiences.
- Collaborating with faculty in fields that address student development, including psychology and education, to develop assessments.

Data-informed Campus Partnerships

A data-informed approach to translating some of the high impact educational outcomes forensics achieves involves the study of building relationships with campus offices and services, as well as with faculty. Developing a rapport with campus resources is a visible way for diverse colleagues to experience the range of skills students obtain in forensics. Alongside sharing data, establishing and sustaining these kinds of meaningful relationships could aid with securing institutional buy-in for the viability and impact of forensics programs. A few examples of this "forensics ambassador" role include the following:

- Since forensics students cite the ability to do research as a key area of competency and skill, those who actively employ campus libraries for their research could share this ability with library personnel to create research guides. This outreach could also generate publicity for campus libraries as a student resource for classroom *and* out-of-classroom endeavors. Similar outreach to offices of undergraduate research could also achieve these results.
- Because many students consider forensics a key source of professionalization, ranging from attire choices to communication styles, forensics students could volunteer to lead workshops for campus career centers. A sampling of potential topics could include workshops on delivering presentations effectively in relation to such issues as addressing the needs of different kinds of audiences, organizing content succinctly, and incorporating improvisation and humor.
- An improved capacity for interacting with people from a broad range of cultural backgrounds and perspectives is another consistent outcome of forensics. This fact could motivate forensics programs to collaborate with campus cultural centers (e.g. ones focused on race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, ability, and faith traditions) as

allies for diversity, equity, and inclusion work happening on their respective campuses.

Forensics and HIP Fusions

Though Kuh's (2008) research and NSSE surveys tend to emphasize ten types of promising practices, as well as e-portfolios, they are often presented as discrete entities. Notably, the ways a first-year seminar and a service-learning project overlap are rarely discussed. Comparatively, since I argue that forensic practices are HIPs, there are opportunities to reimagine forensics in these contexts. I preface these recommendations by acknowledging the wide variance in how different institutions define and coordinate HIPs—perhaps or perhaps not including such programs as study abroad and internships. Some examples that might "double" the impact associated with these activities could include the following:

- A forensics-themed learning community, a promising practice in which "[s]tudents take two or more linked courses as a group and work closely with one another and with their professors" (Kuh, 2008, p. 11). A thematic community co-sponsored by communication studies faculty that incorporated varsity forensics students as peer leaders would connect forensics to the academic core, showcase the leadership skills of forensics students, and recruit new students to experience the educational potential of forensics. Many colleges have residential learning communities or living learning programs "where students often live together for several years, take numerous classes together, and have structured activities in their living space that focus on academics" (Jessup-Anger, Warwrzynski, & Yao, 2011, p. 58). Student affairs literature often cites these programs as "exemplary initiatives in academic-student affairs collaboration" (p. 58).

- Creating opportunities to connect forensics with service learning, defined as "field based 'experiential learning' with community partners" (Kuh, 2008, 11). Related to service learning is the opportunity to mobilize forensics to contribute to students' engagement with civic education and experience "the acquisition of knowledge and skills to enable understanding of and participation in public life" (Hogan, Kurr, Bermaier, & Johnson, 2017, p. xi-xii). Service learning and civic education are great sources of educational fusion among HIPs. As Hinck (2003) notes:

> Service-learning activities, debate watches during major campaigns, civic engagement projects, speaker bureaus, exhibition speeches and debates, communication workshops for high schools and community citizen groups, public forums on major social issues, and integrating interpretive performances and debates during campus conferences" are opportunities that connect forensics to public life. (p. 74)

Some useful resources for exploring programmatic possibilities include reviewing Volume 16 of the *National Forensics Journal*, which features essays by Hatfield (1998), Warriner (1998), and Hinck and Hinck (1998), that focus on forensics and service-learning opportunities. The edited collection *Speech and Debate as Civic Education* (Hogan, et al, 2017) offers a historical perspective on the relationships

between debate, argumentation, and civic life, as well as contemporary examples of how forensics can connect students with public engagement opportunities.

There is a longstanding conversation in the forensics community about the urgent need to articulate its educational outcomes given its status as a co-curricular experience that requires dedicated staffing, considerable investments of time from students, and ongoing institutional resources. McMillian and Todd-Mancillas's (1991) observation that "knowledge of the perceived benefits (or disadvantages) of individual events could be used in making programmatic improvements and gaining additional financial and institutional support for individual events programs" (p. 1) remains a relevant insight. In a related vein, though Rogers (2002) focuses on competitive debate, his argument that studies have the potential to offer "empirical data to persuade administrators, colleagues and parents" that forensics benefits the "socio-psychological and academic success arenas" (p. 23) also relates to individual events. The emergence of academic studies on the experiences of current and past competitors, and the development and usage of assessment tools such as the NFA's Academic Learning Compact (Kelly, Paine, Richardson, & White, 2014), are conscious efforts to demonstrate the impact of forensics in terms of not only programmatic survival but overall educational enrichment.

The HIP framework has great potential to synthesize these efforts in a fashion that resonates with faculty, staff, and administrators. Optimally, employing the tools of persuasion, argumentation, and communication that are the cornerstones of forensics could clarify the ways the community theorizes its impacts and identifies specific benefits that have made forensics competitors successful students, professionals, and citizens. The thinly veiled HIP definition I began with should feel familiar to most forensics alumni and competitors because its criteria have been deeply embedded in the community's practices for years. This richness is not a coincidence or a recent development. Rather, it is the outcome of decades of sustained attention to forensics as an educational practice. The language of HIPs has persisted for over a decade as a fresh educational paradigm. The concept's maturation and institutionalization make this an opportune time for coaches and program directors to translate what many of "us" (I competed in forensics in high school and college) know into a larger framework accessible to the broader academic and administrative community.

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