

Diversity in Forensics

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Competitive speaking has been revered as an excellent way to gain public speaking skills, and critical thinking skills that are not always as accessible through the classroom. Researchers have found that there is a significant improvement in critical thinking skills in students who participate in forensics (Allen 173). This experience has been found to be more substantial than the skills derived from the classroom that is meant to teach these same skills. There is substantial evidence that forensics provides many educational opportunities. This is one reason why this activity must continue. The challenge to forensic organizations is to expand their memberships to include an adequate number of individuals from underrepresented groups in our society. Not only would wider participation extend the organization, it would extend the educational experiences and advantages to each individual. To ensure forensics organizations remain successful, their memberships must reflect the dynamic society in which its members live and it is a part off (Allen 173).

Researchers have considered issues of diversity in forensics. In the beginning forensic organizations' participants were all male, and the numbers have not strayed much from that orientation (Greenstreet 1). Researchers have provided many suggestions and improvements. These would help to mirror these organizations' memberships to society to include groups that are often underrepresented in such organizations. The determinant to whether these suggestions will help is if the coaches and administrators feel that this is a problem that must be dealt with. If they do not feel this way, then more probably the suggestions will not be taken into consideration (Allen 174). That is why anywhere that there is a problem understanding the significance of diversity, fellow coaches and students need to step up and voice how important diversity is to the organization, and how important diversity is to themselves.

There are many places that can be looked upon as a starting place for change. An important place is the motivation given to new participants. Participants from a whole new generation need to be motivated to participate and feel like they too have a place in forensics. Some people feel that changing the formation in which forensics is evaluated would help to motivate more participants (Allen 174). The current types of evaluation may place unnecessary stress on the part of a participant who is not part of the dominant group. This need to develop new types of motivation as forensic organizations develop needs to remain an ongoing consideration. Women appear to be unequal to men in debate, some researchers feel that this is because debate activities are considered "masculine" (Manchester 20).

One of the problems affecting participation is whether success in forensics reflects biases that some may have toward certain groups that participate. If people feel certain groups are favored over others could cause a major barrier in participation. Because events are judged, rather than evaluated objectively could cause a perception of bias. Also, coaches and judges should be looked at for their gender and ethnicity. Motivation should be given for more from the minority of these categories to become

coaches or judges. Also, the demands of these positions should carefully be taken into consideration. If coaches cannot meet these demands they should be evaluated to see if they limit the diversity margin of the organization. People in this position should be concerned with the fact that the activity produces a perception that the activity is selective, and does not exactly welcome diverse participants. Coaches and judges should work to find a way to access this problem and deal with it efficiently. Any perceptions of forensic organizations not being open and diverse should be addressed (Allen 175).

The environment of the activity can also present a problem that can limit diversity. Since most programs usually participate in competitive tournaments that does not promote diversity. The use of alternative formats may be a way to open programs up for better diversify is to make sure the program is recognized as a university program, rather than a departmental program. This opens more opportunities for diverse participants because it does not limit the people who can join to a certain major. Also, this would help to open the communication lines, because people would hear of it because it is something that may not be native to their type of program.

The obstacle is for the community in which the organization is a part of to adapt to the changing population. Despite where the program is located, or what type of program it is, there should always be motivation to better and to grow in a positive reinforcing way. The motivation in place for this adaptation should be critically examined so that more diverse participants will be encouraged (Allen 175). Forensic organizations should include people from groups in our society that are not necessarily dominant. Forensics needs to be measuring where and how much diversity is valued. If it is not encouraged, rewarded, or expected it is less likely to happen. Diversity is essential for these organizations to continue growing positively.

Works Cited

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