INTERCOLLEGE POLICY DEBATE: STAFFING, RESOURCES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND COMPETITIVE SUCCESS

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Abstract: Tournament debating supplanted contract debating and has become the norm over the last fifty years. While contract debating required an inefficient expenditure of resources, the rise of tournament debating has not alleviated the need for both human and financial commitments for successful participation. This paper reports the results from a recent study of intercollegiate policy debate programs on the extent of the resources required by their programs, the responsibilities of debate coaches, and the relationship between resources and competitive success. The data confirm that success, defined narrowly as competitive success at CEDA Nationals and the NDT, requires a significant and increasing commitment of both human and financial resources.

Intercollegiate debating in the United States is more than 100 years old. In the early years, debating involved a single contest between two schools, usually arranged by a contract. A small group of students would travel to another campus to debate the host school in front of a large audience. Debate contracts established the topic, side, number and length of the speeches, and method of judging, among other issues (Cowperthwaite & Baird, 1954, pp. 260-261). Contract debating, however, was an inefficient and expensive means to facilitate intercollegiate competition. Schools would travel great distances, with a limited number of students, to engage in a single debate. Tournament debating, therefore, provided a solution, enabling more students to compete in more debates on a single trip. “Through it, a variety of
near-by schools were able to conduct a goodly number of debate contests in a short time and thereby to enjoy contacts and friendships far beyond those previously experienced” (Parker, 1955, p. 150). As Cowperthwaite and Baird (1954) note, “the most significant of the later developments in intercollegiate debating was the inauguration of the debate tournament” (p. 274).

Today, tournament debating is the unquestioned standard for intercollegiate competition. Yet, the use of tournament debating, while improving on the inefficiencies of contract debating, has not eliminated the pressure of staffing and resources on college debate teams. It is important for college debate programs to understand the financial and human resources that are required to successfully compete in intercollegiate debate. A few studies have attempted to describe the resources devoted to intercollegiate debate. Murphy (1992) surveyed the top 50 debate teams in the Cross Examination Debate Association (CEDA), looking at their staffing, budgeting and participation rates. Bauer and Young (2000) engaged in follow-up study. Using a modified version of Murphy's survey, they targeted the top 50 programs competing in CEDA and the National Debate Tournament (NDT) to profile their staffing, budgeting and participation rates. Rogers (1991) performed the most extensive survey to date, receiving surveys from 278 CEDA programs. He also analyzed data relating to participation rates, budget, and staffing. These surveys provide useful historical information and a reasonable starting point for this project. The goal of this study is to update the prior research and provide contemporary information on the state of staffing, budgeting and participation rates. In addition, this project extends prior research by detailing the responsibilities assigned to various coaches who work with college policy debate teams. Finally, this project
investigates the potential relationships between human and financial resources and competitive success.

An extensive body of research has documented the various benefits of participating in intercollegiate debate. These include, inter alia, critical thinking, leadership, academic achievement, research, oral communication, note taking, self-confidence, ethics, community building, and multiple modes of learning (O’Donnell, 2010). These benefits are a significant justification for participation in the activity. While these are important educational benefits, this report is focused exclusively on competitive success. It should be noted that every debate team is not focused on success at CEDA Nationals or the NDT. But, for those programs that desire this level of competitive success, the survey data reported in this essay clarifies the relationship between competitive success and the staffing, budget and resources of contemporary policy debate programs.

**Literature Review**

**Institutional Arrangement**

All three prior surveys investigated the status of the director of the debate team. Murphy (1992) analyzed data from 33 of the top 50 CEDA programs. Regarding the director, he found that just over half (54%) were in tenure or tenure-track lines. Roughly a quarter of all coaches (27%) were in non-tenure-track lines. A few programs reported the director as a graduate student or in an administrative position. Bauer and Young (2000) reported slightly higher numbers of tenured (or tenure eligible) faculty serving as the director (64.5%). Rogers (1991) found “eighty-eight percent of the Top 20 directors and 81% of the regional directors currently have faculty status. While it is not reported in Table 3, the survey data indicates that 91% are employed in full-time, permanent status” (p. 101). The institutional
arrangement of the director is important for many reasons. Rowland (2010) noted that Directors in tenured lines provide institutional legitimacy to their programs, are more concerned with pedagogical issues, and provide unique contributions to their departments in the areas of argumentation and public policy. No prior study investigated the location of the debate team within the university. With this in mind, this study asks:

**RQ1:** What is the typical institutional arrangement for the director and the team within the structure of the university?

**Budget**

All three of the prior surveys investigated the budget of college debate teams. Murphy (1992) found the average budget was more than $24,000. In less than a decade, the average budget increased to more than $41,000 (Bauer and Young, 2000). Success in intercollegiate policy debate, like intercollegiate athletics, might be related the amount of money available to the team. Recent studies have documented a relationship between success in intercollegiate athletics and funding for those teams (Jones, 2012). Similarly, the size of a debate team’s budget has been linked to the success of the team. Rogers (1991) analyzed results from 278 active CEDA programs and found that successful teams were funded above the average for all programs. While he pointed out the limitations of trying to buy success, he noted, “a reasonable resource base is essential for ‘success’” (Rogers, 1991, p. 103).

**RQ2:** What resources are allocated to current intercollegiate policy debate teams?

**RQ3:** Is the size of the budget related to competitive success?
Coaching Staff

Murphy (1992) reported that the size of debate coaching staffs ranged from 1 to 9 with an average of 3.27. Almost half of all programs utilized GTAs as coaches (48.5%). When GTAs were used, the average number assigned to work with the debate team was 2.69. Bauer and Young (2000) noted similar numbers. The number of coaches ranged from 1 to 11 with an average of 3.69. Again, roughly half of all teams used GTAs as coaches. When GTAs served as coaches, an average of 2.27 worked with each team. Rogers (1991) found that for programs in the top 20, “graduate assistants make an important contribution towards a program’s success” (p. 99).

In addition to the number and type of coaches used by a debate team, the teaching load of the coaches affects the amount of time that can be devoted to working on debate. The existence of a teaching obligation could negatively impact coaching efforts. For instance, in Division II athletics, coaches that must engage in activities beyond coaching the team (e.g., teaching, advising, administration) have less time for “developing a competitive program” (Nichols and Bahneman, 2011, p. 10). In the context of intercollegiate academic debate, does the same teaching/coaching trade-off exist?

**RQ4:** What is the size and composition of current debate coaching staffs?

**RQ5:** Is there a relationship between the size and composition of debate coaching staffs and the success of a debate team?

Size of Team

Murphy (1992) reported that teams competed in an average of 15 tournaments per year (with a range of 7 to 25). An average of 10 students per school competed in six or more tournaments per year. Bauer and Young
(2000) found similar results. They reported an average of 10 students per school competed in six or more tournaments per year. With an average team size of 18, roughly eight students per school competed in fewer than six tournaments per year. Rogers (1991) reported slightly different information. He found that successful teams tended to field larger squads. He suggested, “as a rule, larger program, with an average of 19 students... represented a threshold for success (Rogers, 1991, p. 99). With this in mind, this paper investigates:

**RQ6:** What is the size and travel schedule of current policy debate teams?

**RQ7:** Is there a relationship between the size of the team, the travel schedule of debate teams, and their success?

**Coaching Responsibilities**

A limited amount of research on debate coach responsibilities has been reported. Williams and Gantt (2005) surveyed nearly 100 coaches regarding their perception of the most important responsibilities of a director of forensics. Respondents included current and former directors, assistants, and students. A wide variety of forensics programs were represented in the survey, including policy debate, parliamentary debate, and individual events. Williams and Gantt reported 45 different duties for directors that they categorized into four areas: administrative duties, team management duties, coaching and other faculty member responsibilities. While this research provides a useful starting point for understanding the responsibilities of directors of forensics, it is limited in several important ways: (1) it focused on the desired duties, as opposed to the actual duties, (2) it analyzed all directors of forensics, instead of directors of debate, and (3) it did not include duties for other coaches. With this in mind, this study
investigated:

**RQ8**: What are the responsibilities for each type of intercollegiate policy debate coach?

**Method**

**Participants**

Directors from the top 100 programs (based on the final 2010 CEDA rankings) were contacted via email between December 2010 and March 2011. Repeated attempts were made to insure broad participation. Directors were provided with a link to an online survey. 74 surveys were completed. The results were tabulated using SPSS (v. 20.0).

**Measures**

A number of different demographic factors were collected, including information about the director, place of the program within the institution, number of coaches and coaching responsibilities. Respondents were asked to identify their institution. This was necessary so that later information (regarding success) could be linked to each survey. Respondents indicated the approximate number of students who traveled to six or more tournaments as well as the number who traveled to five or fewer. Location of the debate team within the university was recorded as in the communication department, in another academic department, in a university unit (e.g., honors program), or student club. Budget data were collected using six unequal ranges (less than $30,000, $30,000 - $39,999, $40,000 - $59,999, $60,000 – $79,999, $80,000 – $99,999, and $100,000 and over). Respondents were asked to identify the size of the budget devoted operating expenses (i.e., travel) as opposed to scholarships and salaries.

Elimination results from CEDA Nationals and the NDT,
along with the annual list of first-round recipients to the NDT, were examined to determine competitive success. NDT success was characterized as any school that either cleared at the NDT or received a first-round at-large bid to the NDT between 2009-2011 ($n=28$). CEDA success was characterized as any school that cleared at the CEDA National Championship between 2009-2011 ($n=40$). Schools also were divided into four-year institutions ($n=68$) and community colleges ($n=6$). Debaters were identified as competing in an extensive travel schedule if they competed at six or more tournaments per year. Debaters were considered to be on a limited travel schedule if they competed in five or fewer tournaments in a year.

Coaches were divided into seven categories: the director and any additional coaches (full-time with a teaching obligation, full-time without a teaching obligation, part-time with a teaching obligation, part-time without a teaching obligation, GTA and undergraduate). Respondents were asked yes/no questions to determine if they used each type of coach. In addition, they were asked to identify the number of coaches they typically utilize in each category. The total number of coaches was based on the sum of all categories. In addition, for each category of coach with a teaching obligation, respondents indicated the typical number of classes taught per year. Respondents also were asked to evaluate the quantity of coaches on their staff over the last several years as increasing, decreasing, or roughly the same.

The list of coaching responsibilities was adapted from Williams and Gantt (2005). A modified version of their list, reflecting the 15 items most directly related to a policy debate team, was used in this survey. Responsibilities were divided into three types: competitive tasks, programmatic tasks and bureaucratic tasks. Competitive tasks are those that are necessary
for competing at tournaments. These included research and strategy, pre-round coaching, watching practice debates and speeches, judging at tournaments, and driving to tournaments. Programmatic tasks were those related to the functioning of the team. These included administration, making partner decisions, making travel arrangements and recruiting new undergraduates to join the team. Lastly, bureaucratic tasks included activities that went beyond the day-to-day management of the team and involved the team within the larger university and public environment. These included alumni relations, public relations, outreach activities, academic advising, recruiting new coaches, and other coaching tasks. Respondents were provided check boxes to identify all tasks on the list performed by each of their coaches.

Results

Institutional Arrangement

RQ1 addressed the institutional arrangement for the director and the team within the university. The most common type of arrangement still involves a full-time faculty member with a teaching obligation housed within a department of communication. Directors are most likely to be full-time faculty or staff members \((n=58)\) with a teaching obligation. A full-time faculty member without a teaching obligation administers some programs \((n=9)\). A few other programs \((n=7)\) are directed in a different arrangement, mostly using a part-time employee or graduate student. It is no longer likely that a director will be tenured or in a tenure-eligible faculty line \((n=27)\).

Some directors report additional responsibilities outside of debate. The most common is serving on departmental committees \((n=55)\). Less than half of all directors report service in other areas including academic advising \((n=36)\), other service tasks \((n=27)\), performing university-level service \((n=20)\), and serving
on graduate student committees ($n=18$).

Most debate teams are housed in departments of communication ($n=51$). A few are housed in other academic departments ($n=5$) and some within other university units (e.g., honors college) ($n=12$). A handful of programs ($n=6$) are administered as student clubs.

**Budget**

*RQ2* addressed the size of budgets for current policy debate teams. There is a wide discrepancy in terms of the amount of money schools allocate to debate (see Table 1). A significant number of college debate teams operate on modest budgets. Nearly a quarter of all policy debate teams spend less than $30,000 per year on competition. Forty percent of debate teams spend $40,000 or less. The most common budget is between $40,000 - $59,999. More than a quarter of teams have fairly large budgets, devoting more than $60,000 to competition in debate.

Table 1. Budgets for policy debate teams (excluding salaries and scholarships).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget</th>
<th># teams</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $30,000</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30,000 – 39,999</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40,000-59,999</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60,000-79,000</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80,000-100,000</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 100,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a budget disparity between community colleges and four-year schools. Of the 6 community colleges reporting budget information, 5 reported budgets of less than $30,000. The budgets of community college debate teams are smaller than those at four-year schools. The difference is statistically significant, $\chi^2$
RQ3 addressed the relationship between the size of the budget and the likelihood of success in policy debate. The data confirm a relationship exists. The size of a debate budget is highly related to success (receiving a first-round bid or advancing to the elimination rounds) at the NDT. No teams with a budget of less than $30,000 recently have experienced success at the NDT. In fact, thirty teams have a budget of $40,000 or less, and only three experienced some success at the NDT in the three years analyzed in this report. In contrast, 43 teams have a budget greater than $40,000 and 25 of those have experienced some success at the NDT over the same three year period. The relationship between size of budget and success at the NDT is statistically significant, $\chi^2 (5, 73) = 22.104, p=.001, V=.550$. Teams with larger budget are more likely to experience success at the NDT.

Budget also is related to success at CEDA Nationals. Of the 39 teams reporting budget information who were successful at CEDA, only four had budgets below $30,000. An additional five programs had budgets between $30,000 and $40,000. More than three-fourths of all teams who were successful at CEDA Nationals had budgets greater than $40,000. The relationship between size of the budget and success at CEDA Nationals is statistically significant, $\chi^2 (5, 73) = 16.789, p=.005, V = .480$. Teams with larger budgets are more likely to experience success at CEDA Nationals.

Even though the relationship is statistically significant, some might argue that a larger budget does not guarantee success at CEDA Nationals since many programs with large budgets were not successful. In fact, thirteen programs reported budgets over $40,000 and have not been successful at CEDA Nationals. However,
this point is misleading. First, a cursory look at the list
reveals that most of those schools either (a) do not attend
the tournament or (b) do not send their best teams.
Second, by contrast, of the 21 programs that reported
budgets of less than $40,000 and who are not successful
at CEDA Nationals, many have attended the tournament.
In other words, for those who attend the tournament,
the link between budget and success at CEDA Nationals
appears to be quite strong.

Coaching Staff

RQ4 addressed the size and composition of debate
coaching staffs. The number of coaches that work with
a team varies dramatically, with a range of 1 to 13.
The average number of coaches is almost 4 ($M=3.91$,
$SD=2.20$). Teams employ a wide variety of types of
coaches. In addition to the director, schools were asked
to identify all coaches that work with their teams. An
additional distinction was made for coaches who have a
teaching obligation beyond debate and those who do not.
Table 2 reports the type of coach, the number of teams
that have that type of coach, the percentage of all teams
that use that type of coach, and the number of coaches
most likely employed by a school (mode).

Teaching Load

Teaching obligations for most directors ($n=60$)
working with debate teams are modest. Forty-eight
directors with a teaching obligation are responsible for
four classes per year or less. An additional nine directors
are responsible for five or six classes per year. At the high
end, only three directors teach seven or more classes per
year.

Full-time coaches with a teaching obligation ($n=22$)
are responsible for a similar load. Sixteen are responsible
for four classes or less per year. An additional five are
responsible for five or six classes per year. Only one has a
teaching load of seven classes or more each year.

Table 2: Types of coaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of coaches</th>
<th>Number of Teams Using Type</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
<th>Likely Number of This Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergrad</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GTA</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT w/o teach</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT w/ teach</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FT w/o teach</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FT w/ teach</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GTAs (n=31) also have modest teaching expectations. Twenty-six debate GTAs have a teaching obligation of no more than two classes per year (including those GTAs with no teaching obligation). An additional four are expected to teach three or four classes per year. Only one program reports their GTAs are expected to teach five or more classes per year.

Part-time coaches with a teaching obligation (n=4) appear more likely to teach more classes than their counterparts. Two are responsible for four classes or less per year. Two are responsible for five or six classes per year.

Quantity of Coaches

The most likely kind of coach, in addition to the director, is a full-time coach (n=42). Some teams employ part-time coaches (n=36), GTAs (n=31) and undergraduates (n=21). Just over half of the full-time coaches have an obligation to teach (n=22). Very few of the part-time coaches have an obligation to teach (n=6).
Directors were asked to compare the amount of coaching today with the amount of coaching they had several years ago. The vast majority of teams either have the same amount of coaching \((n=30)\) or an increased amount of coaching \((n=31)\) over the last several years. Some programs have less coaching \((n=10)\) over the last several years.

**Coaching Staffs and Success: NDT**

*RQ5* addressed the relationship between the size and composition of debate coaching staffs and competitive success. Several factors relating to coaching are associated with success at the NDT. First, there is some relationship between the perceived quantity of coaching and recent success: perceived changes in coaching (adding, losing or stayed the same) is related to success at the NDT, \(\chi^2 (3,72)=6.322, p=.097, V=.296\). Ten teams reported fewer coaches today compared to the recent past, and nine of those did not experience success at the NDT. Second, there is a relationship between the quantity of coaches and success at the NDT. A one-way ANOVA confirms that schools that are successful at the NDT have more coaches \((M=4.83, SD=1.87)\) than schools that are not successful at the NDT \((M=3.31, SD=2.21)\). The difference in the size of the coaching staffs is statistically significant, \(F (1,72)=9.306, p=.003, \eta^2_p=.114\). In addition, a binary logistic regression confirms that increasing total number of coaches predicts success at the NDT, \(\chi^2=8.89, df=1, N=74, p=.003\).

Third, beyond the quantity of coaches, there is a relationship between the kinds of coaches and success at the NDT. The presence of coaches without a teaching obligation is associated with success at the NDT. The presence of at least one full-time coach without a teaching obligation is significantly related to success at the NDT, \(\chi^2 (1,74)=19.155, p<.000, V=.509\). Twenty
teams report having at least one full-time coach without a teaching obligation. Sixteen of those teams experienced some success over the last three years. Full-time coaches are associated with success at the NDT independent of other coaches. For instance, there is a strong relationship between full-time coaches and success at the NDT when GTAs are not available, $\chi^2(1,43)=16.404$, $p<.000$, $V=.618$, and even when they are available, $\chi^2(1,31)=3.160$, $p=.098$, $V=.319$.

The presence of at least one part-time coach without a teaching obligation also is associated with success at the NDT, $\chi^2(1,74)=6.467$, $p=.011$, $V=.296$. Thirty teams report having at least one part-time coach without a teaching obligation. Seventeen of those teams experienced success over the past three years. Part-time coaches appear to be valuable when GTAs are not available. There is a strong relationship between part-time coaches who do not teach and success at the NDT when there are not GTAs available, $\chi^2(1,43)=8.777$, $p=.004$, $V=.452$. The relationship to success disappears when GTAs are present, $\chi^2(1,31)=.019$, $p=.606$.

The presence of undergraduate coaches, $\chi^2(1,74)=.015$, $p=.560$, GTAs, $\chi^2(1,74)=.307$, $p=.378$, part-time coaches who have an obligation to teach, $\chi^2(1,74)=1.390$, $p=.235$, and full-time coaches with an obligation to teach, $\chi^2(1,74)=1.535$, $p=.164$, are not statistically associated with success at the NDT.

Coaching Staffs and Success: CEDA

Unlike the NDT, the perceived amount of coaching does not appear to be related to success at CEDA, $\chi^2(3,74)=2.924$, $p=.408$. It is possible for teams to experience success at CEDA Nationals even if they believe they do not have enough coaching. Of the 48 programs that reported not having enough coaching, 24 went on to experience some level of success.
Second, while the perception of the amount of coaching is not related to success at CEDA, the actual level of coaching is related to success at CEDA Nationals. A one-way ANOVA confirms that schools that are successful at CEDA have more coaches ($M=4.6$, $SD=1.69$) than schools that are not successful at CEDA Nationals ($M=3.09$, $SD=2.47$). The difference in the size of the coaching staffs is statistically significant, $F(1,72)=9.682$, $p=.003$, $\eta^2=.119$. In addition, a binary logistic regression confirms that increasing total number of coaches predicts success at CEDA Nationals, $\chi^2=9.923$, $df=1$, $N=74$, $p=.002$.

The kind of coaching also plays a role in success at CEDA Nationals. The strongest relationship exists between the presence of at least one full-time coach who does not teach and success at CEDA Nationals, $\chi^2(1,74)=7.429$, $p=.006$, $V=.317$. The relationship is strengthened in the absence of a GTA, $\chi^2(1,43)=8.576$, $p=.004$, $V=.447$. Twenty teams reported having at least one full-time coach without a teaching obligation. Sixteen of those teams had success at CEDA Nationals. The significance of the relationship is eliminated if at least one GTA works with the team, $\chi^2(1,31)=1.151$, $p=.284$.

There is a weaker relationship between several types of coaching and success at CEDA Nationals. The presence of undergraduate coaches is related to success at CEDA Nationals, $\chi^2(1,74)=3.564$, $p=.05$, $V=.219$. That relationship is strengthened in the absence of GTAs, $\chi^2(1,43)=4.083$, $p=.047$, $V=.308$. But, the relationship is eliminated when GTAs are present, $\chi^2(1,31)=.194$, $p=.490$. The presence of part-time coach is not related to success at CEDA Nationals in general, $\chi^2(1,74)=.718$, $p=.271$. But, when no GTA is present, the relationship improves dramatically, $\chi^2(1,43)=2.865$, $p=.082$, $V=.258$.

Finally, the presence of GTAs contributes to success at CEDA Nationals, $\chi^2(1,74)=2.351$, $p=.097$, $V=.178$. Given
the prior results, it appears that the presence of some kind of a coach, beyond the director, is related to success at CEDA Nationals. That coach can be an undergraduate, a GTA, or a full- or part-time coach, so long as they do not have a teaching obligation.

**Size of the Team and Travel Schedule**

*RQ6* addressed the number of debaters on each team and the numbers of tournaments they attend each year. Schools were asked to identify the number of students engaged in an extensive travel schedule (defined as 6 or more tournaments per year) and those with a limited travel schedule (defined as 5 or fewer tournaments per year). On average, 9 students per team compete on a limited travel schedule (*M*=9.19, *SD*=10.134). Similarly, 9 students per team compete on an extensive travel schedule (*M*=9.27, *SD*=5.775).

Not surprisingly, the size of a team’s budget is related to the number of debaters that travel an extensive schedule. A one-way ANOVA reveals the relationship is significant, *F*(5,73) = 7.061, *p*<.001, \(\eta^2_p=.345\). In other words, teams with larger budgets are likely to travel a greater number of debaters to 6 or more tournaments per year (see Table 3). The size of a team’s budget is not related to the number of students that travel a limited schedule, *F*(5.73) = 1.536, *p*=.190. In other words, budget constraints are not related to the number of debaters who opt for a limited travel schedule.

**Size of Team, Travel Schedule and Success**

*RQ7* addressed the relationship between the size of the team, travel schedule, and competitive success. There is a difference in the travel patterns of students who compete on teams that are successful at the NDT. Successful teams at the NDT travel fewer debaters on a limited travel schedule. It appears that teams that make
Table 3. Mean of number of students who attend 6 or more tournaments per year based on budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less than $30,000</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000 - $39,999</td>
<td>7.08</td>
<td>4.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000 - $59,999</td>
<td>9.57</td>
<td>3.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000 - $79,999</td>
<td>11.50</td>
<td>4.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80,000 - $99,999</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td>5.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 and above</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>9.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

room for casual debaters (those who attend 5 or fewer tournaments in a season) are less likely to have success at the NDT. Of the teams who have experienced success at the NDT, the squad had an average of 10 debaters who traveled to six or more tournaments per year, but only 5 debaters who traveled to five or fewer tournaments per year. The schools that have not experienced success at the NDT had an average of 9 students who compete on extensive travel schedules, but also have 12 students who competed on a limited schedule. The key factor is not the number of teams that travel a heavy schedule, but whether or not a team facilitates participation by marginal competitors. The relationship between number of debaters travelling a limited schedule and success at the NDT is statistically significant, $t(72)=-2.842$, $p=.006$, $d=.72$. It appears that the time and energy it takes to support marginal competitors likely trades-off with the resources needed to succeed at the highest level.

Success at CEDA Nationals, in contrast, is not associated with the number of debaters on a limited travel schedule. Instead, program that travel a larger number of students on an extensive travel (an average of 11 per school) were statistically more likely to have
success at CEDA Nationals than teams that traveled fewer debaters to six or more tournaments (an average of 6), $t(72) = 3.786, p < .001, d = .895$. The number of debaters that traveled a limited schedule is not related to success at CEDA Nationals, $t(72) = -.150, p = .881$. Successful debaters at CEDA Nationals came from teams with a larger number of debaters travelling an extensive travel schedule. Programs with a smaller cohort of debaters travelling to six or more tournaments were less likely to experience success at CEDA Nationals.

The results are not encouraging for community colleges. No community colleges (who participated in the study) cleared at CEDA or the NDT in the three years covered in the study. The relationship between the type of institution (two-year and four-year) and recent success at both CEDA, $\chi^2(1,74) = 7.682, p = .007, V = .322$, and the NDT, $\chi^2(1,74) = 4.208, p = .044, V = .238$, is statistically significant.

**Coaching Responsibilities**

*RQ8* addressed the scope of responsibilities performed by the various types of debate coaches. Each program identified which types of coaching they used and which responsibilities each type of coach performed. Within each category of coaching, tasks were put in rank order based on the number of programs who assign that type of coach to perform that type of task. For instance, all twenty-two full-time coaches with a teaching obligation were responsible for “research and strategy.” Hence, with the most number of coaches in the category performing the task, it was assigned the top rank. But, only five full-time coaches with a teaching obligation were assigned an “other task.” Hence, with the fewest number of coaches in the category performing the task, it was assigned the last rank. Ranks were averaged in the case of ties. This procedure was completed for all seven
types of coaches. Spearman’s rho ($r_s$) was used to test the relationship between the rank-order for coaching assignments between each coaching category. Coaching categories with statistically significant relationships engage in the same type (and frequency) of coaching task. Coaching categories without statistically significant relations engage in coaching tasks less frequently.

Table 4 reports the percentage of coaches, in each category, who perform the various tasks. The descriptions below suggest some types of coaches are “more likely” or “less likely” to perform specific tasks. In each case, if fewer than half of the coaches perform a given task, they were deemed “less likely” to engage in the activity. If more than half of the coaches perform a given task, they were classified as “more likely” to engage in the activity.

Table 5 displays the rank-order correlations between the director and every other type of coach. None of the correlations were significant (at the .05 level). In other words, the tasks performed most frequently by directors are different than the tasks performed most frequently by coaches in every other category. For instance, directors engage in research and strategy. In fact, more than 87% report they participate in this coaching activity. But, because they also perform many other tasks, it is just the 11th most common task. Over 98% of directors report they determine the travel schedule. Because more directors report engaging in this task more than any other task, it is ranked first. By contrast, research and strategy is ranked first (or tied for first) for four other types of coaches (full-time with teaching, full-time without teaching, GTA and undergrad). Public relations represents the opposite end of the spectrum. Over 94% of directors report engaging in this task, placing it as the third (tied) most common task. But, public relations is not a common task for any other type of coach, with
Table 4. Percentage of coaches who perform each task.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th>FT w/ teaching</th>
<th>FT w/o teaching</th>
<th>PT w/ teaching</th>
<th>PT w/o teaching</th>
<th>GTA</th>
<th>Undergrad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research/strategy</td>
<td>87.84</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>90.00</td>
<td>66.67</td>
<td>90.00</td>
<td>96.77</td>
<td>95.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-round coaching</td>
<td>91.89</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>90.00</td>
<td>83.33</td>
<td>93.33</td>
<td>93.55</td>
<td>93.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching practice</td>
<td>94.59</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>90.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>83.33</td>
<td>96.77</td>
<td>85.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judging</td>
<td>90.54</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>90.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>93.55</td>
<td>90.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner decisions</td>
<td>93.24</td>
<td>90.91</td>
<td>80.00</td>
<td>83.33</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>41.94</td>
<td>33.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine travel</td>
<td>98.65</td>
<td>77.27</td>
<td>60.00</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>29.03</td>
<td>19.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>95.95</td>
<td>63.64</td>
<td>45.00</td>
<td>66.67</td>
<td>23.33</td>
<td>35.48</td>
<td>14.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driving</td>
<td>93.24</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>85.00</td>
<td>66.67</td>
<td>76.67</td>
<td>90.32</td>
<td>52.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiting undergrads</td>
<td>94.59</td>
<td>86.36</td>
<td>75.00</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>36.67</td>
<td>38.71</td>
<td>56.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiting coaches</td>
<td>85.14</td>
<td>59.09</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>29.03</td>
<td>19.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alum relations</td>
<td>89.19</td>
<td>31.82</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>6.45</td>
<td>14.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations</td>
<td>94.59</td>
<td>31.82</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>13.33</td>
<td>9.68</td>
<td>14.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDL / outreach</td>
<td>66.22</td>
<td>36.36</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>29.03</td>
<td>38.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic advising</td>
<td>66.22</td>
<td>45.45</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>4.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>40.54</td>
<td>22.73</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>12.90</td>
<td>19.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
a small percentage of coaches in every other category performing this task.

It is not the case that directors do not engage in the same tasks as other coaches. In fact, given the number of coaches who report engaging in research and watching practice rounds, it appears that directors serve the same role as other coaches, but with additional responsibilities, such as administration and determining the travel schedule.

Interestingly, the rank-order correlations were statistically significant between every other coaching category. That is, all other coaches, from full-time staff members, to GTAs, to undergraduates, perform all of the other tasks at a similar frequency. Debate programs appear to ask the same of all of its non-director coaches. Directors, however, engage in some tasks with a different frequency than all other coaches.

Directors tend to complete all three kinds of tasks: competitive, programmatic and bureaucratic. An overwhelming majority of directors engage in competitive and programmatic tasks. Most directors also engage in all bureaucratic tasks. The two tasks least frequently required of directors are outreach activities and academic advising. Even still, nearly two-thirds of all directors report engaging in these activities.

Similarly, full-time coaches, both with and without teaching obligations, perform competitive and programmatic tasks. They are least likely to perform bureaucratic tasks. The one exception: full-time coaches without teaching obligations do not always perform administrative tasks.

Part-time coaches, regardless of teaching obligation, are most likely to perform competitive tasks. They are occasionally called upon to perform programmatic
functions. For instance, part-time coaches with a teaching obligation occasionally assist with administrative tasks. Part-time coaches tend not to perform bureaucratic functions.

GTAs exclusively assist with competitive tasks. Almost all GTAs are asked to research, watch practice rounds, engage in pre-round coaching, judge and drive to tournaments. In general, they are not performing either programmatic tasks or bureaucratic tasks. Fewer than half of the teams report that GTAs are performing any other tasks.

Undergraduate coaches almost exclusively perform competitive tasks. They almost never perform programmatic or bureaucratic tasks. The one exception: some undergraduates help with programmatic tasks by recruiting new undergraduate debaters to the team. Given the proximity in age and experience, and given the role of current debaters in recruiting, this exception is not surprising.

**Conclusion**

This paper continues the process of regularly collecting data on collegiate policy debate programs in order to better ascertain the budget and resources devoted to debate. This study reports the current level of resources provided to intercollegiate policy debate teams and identifies where those resources are associated with success at CEDA Nationals and the NDT. The results make clear that policy debate is a resource-intensive activity, requiring increasing human and financial resources compared to a decade ago. In particular, the size of budgets and staffs has increased over the last decade.

While the main purpose of the study was to provide a description of the current resources devoted to intercollegiate policy debate, several normative
judgments about the data are possible. First, policy debate is increasingly more professionalized than it was just a decade ago. The number of tenured (or tenure-eligible) directors has declined. Most directors are still full-time employees, but they are less likely to be in tenure-eligible lines. This has important ramifications for the long-term stability of the activity. A tenured faculty member provides more protection for the program within the university. As Rowland (2010) noted, the lack of a tenured debate coach means, “in a difficult economic or ideological climate, it may be much easier to get rid of a debate director/coach than other faculty members” (p. 68). The decline in tenured and tenure-eligible directors does not suggest that debate programs are in jeopardy. But, it does suggest that directors need to remain vigilant in identifying sources of institutional support for themselves and the program.

Second, debate coaches still struggle with the organizational requirements of the activity. The growth of coaching staffs should provide a better balance, enabling different coaches the ability to work on different tasks. As Hingstman (2010) pointed out, “division of labor and specialization of functions are the hallmarks of modern organizations, and academic cocurricular programs need to follow the model” (p. 132). Additional coaches should facilitate the division of labor. Unfortunately, the results of this study suggest more can be done. While the results do not clarify the amount of time devoted to each activity (which clearly limits strongly worded judgments), it is apparent that directors continue to be engaged in the widest variety of responsibilities and that increasing the number of coaches does not appear to have lessened the scope of their obligations. Additional coaches primarily augment the ranks of those performing competitive tasks. But, that does not appear to have lessened the burden of competitive tasks for the director.
A few words of caution also are required. First, the results presented here should not be interpreted as a guarantee that increasing funding for a debate program will translate into competitive success. Competitive success is driven by a number of factors including tradition, geography, quality of coaching, style of argument, quality of debaters, and quality of the academic institution. Simply adding money to a budget will not immediately turn a losing team into a national champion. Similarly, simply adding a coach or reducing the teaching load will not immediately transform the competitive fortunes of a team. That said, the strength of the associations reported here do suggest that sufficient (and likely increasing) human and financial resources are an important part of the ingredients required for competitive success at the highest levels of intercollegiate policy debate.

Second, the results of this study are focused on one narrow outcome: success at the highest levels. There are many other reasons why students compete in debate and why institutions provide support for the activity. Most debaters will not advance to the elimination rounds at CEDA Nationals or the NDT. Failing to meet that highest bar is not a sign of failure. The results reported here should be interpreted narrowly: they provide a snapshot of the human and financial resources devoted to intercollegiate policy debate measured against but one single outcome, competitive success at the national championship tournaments. Many other possible outcomes can and should be used by those who advocate for debate within their universities, including increased critical thinking, academic achievement, and public speaking. Future research should investigate those connections.
References


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