

Revisiting Male/Female Participation and Success in Forensics: Has Time Changed the Playing Field?

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Abstract

Educators have long recognized the value of developing strong oral communication skills; intercollegiate competition in both debate and individual events is a primary vehicle for developing and strengthening these skills. Since data collected and analyzed by Friedley and Manchester (1985) suggested that there is not parity in male/female participation and success in intercollegiate forensics, the authors chose to re-visit the findings of prior research and compare those findings to data gathered from three recent national tournaments in intercollegiate debate and individual events. Data analysis in this study suggests that females have made limited strides in specific individual events; however, simple ratio comparisons, as well as one sample chi-square tests, generally indicate that parity in male/female participation and success in intercollegiate forensics still does not exist.

Educators have long recognized the value of developing strong oral communication skills; intercollegiate competition in both debate and individual events continues to be a primary vehicle for developing and strengthening these skills. As such, almost three decades ago The 1974 National Developmental Conference on Forensics jointly sponsored by the American Forensic Association and the Speech Communication Association called for research to determine specifically why women and minority group members are not proportionately represented in some aspects of these educational activities (McBath, 1975). A decade later at the 1984 Developmental Conference at Northwestern University, participants once again attempted to become more pro-active concerning this issue and endorsed a resolution "to increase and strengthen forensic participation by identifying ethnic, racial, gender, and handicap barriers that may currently inhibit student participation as well as disseminate findings concerning such barriers throughout the forensic community" (Parson, 1985, p. 43). From this directive, forensics scholars have continued to explore the impact of gender on both the participation and success of students in this co-curricular activity.

Review of Gender-Based Forensics Literature

Regardless of the discussion prompted during the 1970s and 1980s in the forensics community, follow-up research to address the issue of male/female participation and success in intercollegiate debate and individual events only served

to confirm that gender parity simply does not exist. For example, a survey conducted within the forensic community sought to explore the perceptions of male/female participation in forensics (Friedley and Nadler, 1983). Results of this study indicate that males are perceived to be more disproportionately represented in debate and that debate is perceived as a "masculine" activity; in individual events, the study reports that male/female participation overall is perceived as more "balanced." However, subsequent analysis of male/female participation and success at three national tournaments in both debate and individual events reflected both participation and success levels that generally favored males (Friedley and Manchester, 1985).

To explain these findings, researchers began to explore why male predominance in the forensic activity persists. For example, in a limited study of why males and females choose to participate in extra-curricular activities, Nadler (1985) noted that males in forensics are more interested in selecting an extra-curricular activity that relates to career choice than females; as such, males may be more driven to participate and succeed in the activity than females. In a follow-up study to explore the nature of male/female judging decisions in ten regional individual events tournaments, Friedley and Manchester (1987) reported that decisions of male judges were more likely to reinforce traditional sex-role expectations for the three event groupings. Specifically, male judges were more likely to rank males slightly higher in the original speaking events, females considerably higher in the interpretive events, and males considerably higher in the limited preparation events.

In an analysis of the persuasive speaking event as it evolved from the 1960s to the 1980s, Sellnow and Ziegelmüller (1988) noted a growing trend that reinforced a clear preference for traditional "masculine" styles of rhetoric - topics with less unique personal involvement, evidence grounded in far more use of logical appeals with far less use of evocative (emotional) appeals, and solutions that were increasingly policy-oriented. As the authors noted, "it would be unfortunate if too much of the emotional quality of 'old fashioned oratory' were lost" (p. 85). As a follow-up to this discussion, Murphy (1989) then explored the issue of "masculine" and "feminine" style differences reflected in the public address events. Given that the standard of success in these events rests primarily with the "masculine" style, Murphy suggested that women often face a double-bind in these events — either conform to a "masculine" style that may be uncomfortable for them or employ a "feminine" style that is devalued in these events. Of these various public address events, however, Murphy noted women had experienced significant success in persuasive speaking where a combination of both the "masculine" and "feminine" styles of speaking might be most appropriate.

With a focus specifically on extemporaneous speaking and persuasive speaking, White (1997) analyzed the participation and success levels of participants entered in these events at two national tournaments — the American Forensic Association's National Individual Events Tournament and the National Forensic Association's Individual Events Nationals. Her findings indicated that

sex is a predictor of competitive success in extemporaneous speaking (i.e., males were significantly more successful in this event than females) while sex is not a predictor of competitive success in persuasive speaking (i.e., while more females participated in the event, the success level between males and females was relatively equal). It seemed that even when more females participated in the event, their success level did not match that level of participation. Finally, Billings (1999) reported that male judges rank male competitors higher than female competitors in both extemporaneous and impromptu speaking; once again, male judges were more likely to reinforce sex-role expectations in the limited preparation events.

An examination of male/female participation in intercollegiate debate over the past two decades also indicates a lack of parity in both participation and success. In 1986, Logue reported less than 30% participation by females in the Cross Examination Debate Association (CEDA). In the study of a five-year period from 1991 to 1995, Stepp (1997) reported that approximately 55% of the competitors at the CEDA national tournaments were male while approximately 45% of the competitors were female. In a follow-up study of the 2000 CEDA National Tournament, Stepp and Gardner (2001) noted that 64% of the competitors were male and only 36% of the competitors were female compared with the male/female participation ratio of 71% male competitors and 29% female competitors found at the 1990 CEDA National Tournament. While female participation had increased, the authors concluded that "at only 36% participation by females, the debate community is still not representative of the collegiate body in which women comprise 55.8% of students" (p. 74). Furthermore, analysis of male/female participation in elimination rounds did not reflect male/female parity in success. While women comprised approximately 36% of the participants, only 26% of the participants in elimination rounds were women; perhaps even more surprising is the finding that "as the percent of women participating increases, there has not been an increase in the percent of speaker awards given to women" (p. 75).

Finally, while little research has focused specifically on results from the National Debate Tournament, Brusckhe and Johnson (1994) did explore the differences in male/female individual speaker success in several large NDT-style tournaments between 1989 and 1992. Their research reported three interesting findings: 1) overall, female debaters received fewer speaker points than male debaters in these tournaments; 2) the fewest points awarded to female debaters came from female judges when assessing female debaters arguing the negative; and 3) male judges awarded higher speaker points to same-sex teams rather than cross-sex teams. Though these researchers did not explore success in terms of wins and losses, their assessment of individual speaker point differences clearly suggest that males are likely to experience more success in this activity than females.

As the forensics community embarks upon the 21st century, the authors believe that it is appropriate once again to visit the issue of gender equity in this

activity. Since data collected and analyzed by Friedley and Manchester (1985) indicated that there is an imbalance in male/female participation and success in intercollegiate forensics, and no research since that time has indicated a significant shift in these findings, the authors decided it was appropriate to re-visit the findings of prior research and compare those findings to data gathered from recent national tournaments in intercollegiate forensics. Therefore, the purpose of this study is three-fold: 1) to describe the male/female participation and success in both debate and individual events at recent national tournaments; 2) to compare these data to previous data collected at national debate and individual events tournaments; and 3) to identify areas of gender-based inequity that may still exist today.

To accomplish the purpose of this study, the authors generated the following four hypotheses:

H1: There is no difference in the levels of participation or success between male students and female students at a 2001 national tournament in debate.

H2: There is no difference in the levels of participation or success between male students and female students at a 1984 national tournament in debate compared to a 2001 national tournament in debate.

H3: There is no difference in the levels of participation or success between male students and female students at a 2001 national tournament in individual events.

H4: There is no difference in the levels of participation or success between male students and female students at a 1984 national tournament in individual events compared to a 2001 national tournament in individual events.

Method

To provide data for this research, three national forensic tournaments that require a qualifying procedure for participation were selected: (a) the 2001 National Debate Tournament, (b) the 2001 American Forensic Association's National Individual Events Tournament, and (c) the 2001 National Forensic Association's Individual Events Nationals. As with the 1984 study, national tournaments with a qualifying procedure were selected to assure participants who had already been judged to represent a level of "success" that warranted participation at a national tournament. For the National Debate Tournament, tournament results were taken from the *2001 National Debate Tournament Results Book* that provided complete names of all tournament participants. For both the 2001 American Forensic Association's National Individual Events Tournament and the 2001 National Forensic Association's Individual Events Tournament, tabulation sheets that included the participant's complete name were consulted.

Using this data, the participant's sex was determined by noting obviously sex-typed first names. When a participant's first name was not gender-specific, identification was determined through consultation with various directors of forensics. Participant names from these three national tournaments were then analyzed to determine male/female distribution ratios for both preliminary rounds and elimination rounds of competition. Using these ratios, male/female participant and team comparisons were made in debate while male/female participant comparisons by event and event groupings were made in individual events. In addition, one-sample chi-square tests were performed to determine whether differences in levels of participation and success between male and female students were statistically significant. The research findings are reported individually by national tournament.

Research Findings

National Debate Tournament

H1: There is no difference in the levels of participation or success between male and female students at a 2001 national tournament in debate.

Of the 154 participants who competed at the National Debate Tournament in 2001, 75% were male while 25% were female. A male/female distribution of the seventy-seven teams competing included the following: 56% male/male debate teams, 38% male / female debate teams, and only 6% were female/female debate teams ($X^2 = 29.08, p < .01$). Of the twenty-seven teams advancing to double octa-final rounds of competition at this tournament, participants included 78% males / 22% females. A male/female distribution of the teams advancing to the first level of elimination rounds included the following: 63% male/male debate teams, 30% male/female debate teams, and 7% (only 2) female/female debate teams. The 16 teams advancing to octa-final rounds of competition at this tournament included 84% males / 16% females. A male/female distribution of the teams advancing to this second level of elimination rounds included the following: 69% male/male debate teams, 31% male/female debate teams, and no female/female debate teams advanced to octa-final rounds of competition ($X^2 = 6.65, p < .05$). Of the 8 teams advancing to quarter-final rounds of competition, participants included 87% males / 13% females; 67% were male/male debate teams and 33% were male/female debate teams. Semi-final and final rounds of competition at the National Debate Tournament included only males; again, no female/female debate teams advanced beyond double octa-final rounds of competition and no females advanced beyond the quarter-final rounds of competition (see Appendix A).

Based on these findings, H1 is rejected for both level of participation and level of success at the 2001 National Debate Tournament.

H2: There is no difference in the levels of participation or success between male students and female students at a 1984 national tournament in debate when compared to a 2001 national tournament in debate.

Compared to data gathered seventeen years ago at the 1984 National Debate Tournament, the male/female participation ratios reflect a slight increase in female participation (Friedley & Manchester, 1985). Of the 124 participants that year, 85% were male while only 15% were female; by 2001, female participation at this national tournament increased by 10%. A male/female distribution of the sixty-two teams competing included the following: 73% male/male debate teams, 24% male/female debate teams, and only 3% female/female debate teams ($X^2= 47.55$, $p<.01$). In comparing the "success ratio" of female debaters in 2001 to those in 1984, the ratio decreased. In 1984, one female/female debate team advanced to octa-finals; in 2001, no female/female teams advanced to octa-finals. In 1984, the final round of competition at the National Debate Tournament included three males (75%) and one female (25%); however, the male/male team won the 1984 National Debate Tournament. Because no female debaters even advanced beyond the quarter-final rounds of competition in 2001, a male/female team also won the 2001 National Debate Tournament.

Based on these findings, H2 is rejected. There is no discernable difference between the 1984 and 2001 National Debate Tournament results in both levels of participation or success for female debaters.

American Forensic Association's National Individual Events Tournament

H3: There is no difference in the levels of participation or success between male students and female students at a 2001 national individual events tournament.

Of the 1441 participants at the 2001 American Forensic Association's National Individual Events Tournament, 52% were male and 48% were female. Combining all eleven events in the competition, participants advancing to quarter-final rounds were 58% male and 42% female, while participants advancing to the semi-final rounds were 65% male / 35% female ($X^2=10.15$, $p<.01$). Participants advancing to the final rounds of competition in the combined eleven events were 65% male / 35% female; thus, the gender gap widened as the tournament progressed with female participation dropping from 48% in preliminary rounds to 42% in quarter-final rounds, 35% in semi-final rounds, and holding to 35% in final rounds of competition ($X^2 = 5.12$, $p>.05$; see Appendix B).

Of the 471 participants in the original speaking events including persuasive speaking, informative speaking, after dinner speaking, and communication analysis, 47% were male and 53% were female. That relative gender balance in participation was preserved for these four events in quarter-final rounds (48% male, 52% female). The greatest gender differences in ratios of participation appeared in the semi-final rounds of competition (56% male, 44% female). Advancing to the final rounds of competition in these events, however, females leveled the playing field by maintaining a 50% level of participation across the four events.

When the original speaking events were analyzed individually, females held a slight dominance in three of the four events: persuasive speaking (43%

male, 56% female), informative speaking (44% male, 56% female), and communication analysis (44% male, 56% female). The greatest disparity between male/female participation in preliminary rounds occurred in after dinner speaking (58% male, 42% female). Perhaps most interesting is the fact that there were an equal number of male and female participants in the final rounds of both informative speaking and after dinner speaking; the highest ratio of female participation was in the final round of persuasive speaking (17% male, 83% female) and the lowest ratio of female participation was in communication analysis (83% male, 17% female).

Of the 735 participants in the interpretive events of program oral interpretation, prose, poetry, drama, and dramatic duo, 52% were male and 48% were female. While there was a relative balance between males and females during preliminary rounds of competition, the male/female ratio began to change significantly at the outset of the elimination rounds. As a result, only 40% of those participants advancing to the quarter-final rounds of competition were female while 60% were male ($X^2=3.95$, $p<.05$). The gap widened considerably in semi-final rounds (71% male, 29% female; $X^2 = 10.30$, $p<.01$) and continued to widen even more in final rounds of competition (75% male, 25% female; $\chi^2 = 7.66$, $p<.01$). During preliminary rounds of competition in these events, drama reflected the greatest male/female ratio imbalance (58% male, 42% female); however, that male/female ratio was stable until the final round of competition where there were an equal number of male and female participants.

While preliminary rounds of program oral interpretation and poetry each reflect a slight female dominance (47% male, 53% female), those ratios shifted considerably during elimination rounds. The male/female ratio in program oral interpretation shifted in quarter-final rounds (67% male, 33% female); that ratio continued to hold for both semi-final and final rounds of competition in this event. The male/female ratio in poetry also shifted in quarter-final rounds (62% male, 38% female); however, that ratio shifted significantly in semi-final rounds of competition (83% male, 17% female) and in the final round of competition where no females advanced. While prose interpretation reflected relative balance in female/male participation during preliminary rounds of competition (53% male, 47% female), the male/female ratio also widened significantly during elimination rounds of competition: 54% males / 46% females advanced to quarter-final rounds, 83% males / only 17% females advanced to semi-final rounds, and once again no females advanced to the final round of competition in this event.

Finally, the male/female ratio of participation in dramatic duo during preliminary rounds reflected 54% males / 46% females. During the elimination rounds in this event, the ratios varied as follows: 60% male / 40% female participants advanced to quarter-final rounds, 62% male / 38% female participants advanced to semi-final rounds, and 58% male / 42% female participants advanced to the final round of competition in this event. While female participation in the interpretive events was almost equal to male participation (52% male, 48% female), the gap widened considerably by the final rounds of competition

in these events where females represented only 25% of the participants and were not represented at all in the final rounds of two events - prose and poetry.

Of the 235 participants in the limited preparation events of extemporaneous speaking and impromptu speaking, 63% of the participants were male while only 37% of the participants were female ($X^2=15.84$, $p<.01$). As the participants advanced to the elimination rounds, the male/female ratio of participation remained relatively stable: 69% male / 31% female participants advanced to quarter-final rounds, 67% male / 33% female participants advanced to semi-final rounds, and 67% male / 33% female participants advanced to the final rounds of competition in the limited preparation events.

In extemporaneous speaking, 63% of the participants were male while 37% of the participants were female. Through elimination rounds of competition, the ratios varied as follows: 71% male / 29% female participants advanced to quarter-final rounds, 63% male / 37% female participants advanced to semi-final rounds, and the final round of extemporaneous speaking consisted of three male and three female participants. Though female participants comprised slightly more than one-third of the initial participants, women comprised half of the finalists in this event. In impromptu speaking, 64% of the participants were male while 36% of the participants were female. Though male/female ratios held somewhat constant with preliminary round ratios through quarter-final rounds of competition (67% male, 33% female) and semi-final rounds of competition (67% male, 33% female), only 1 female (83% male, 17% female) advanced to the final round of competition in this event.

Finally, out of the twelve national champions (including duo) named in the eleven events at the 2001 American Forensic Association's National Individual Events Tournament, only three of those national champions were females. Females were national champions in informative speaking and program oral interpretation; in addition, a third female was a national champion with her male partner in dramatic duo. The "success ratio" for national champions this tournament was 75% males and 25% females.

Based on these findings, H3 is confirmed for overall level of participation and rejected for overall success in semi-final and final rounds of competition at the 2001 American Forensic Association's National Individual Events Tournament.

H4: There is no difference in the levels of participation or success between male students and female students at a 1984 national individual events tournament compared to a 2001 national individual events tournament.

Compared to data collected in 1984, the ratios indicate some interesting findings (Friedley & Manchester, 1985). Of the 861 participants at the 1984 American Forensic Association's National Individual Events Tournament, 58% were male and 42% were female ($X^2= 21.80$, $p<.01$); female participation rose by 6% in 2001. The "success ratio" for the combined ten events at the 1984 tourna-

ment compared to the combined eleven events at the 2001 tournament indicated that females had made some strides in the elimination rounds. In 1984, the male/female ratio in quarter-final rounds was 65% male and 35% female ($X^2 = 5.82$, $p < .05$); in 2001, the ratio in quarter-final rounds was 58% male and 42% female - the female ratio rose 7%. In 1984, the male/female ratio in semi-finals was 71% male and 29% female ($X^2 = 9.41$, $p < .01$); in 2001, the ratio in semi-finals was 65% male and 35% female - the female ratio rose 6%. In 1984, the male/female ratio in final rounds of competition was 80% male and 20% female ($X^2 = 13.44$, $p < .01$); in 2001, the ratio in final rounds of competition was 65% male and 35% female - the female ratio rose 15%. While parity with the participation rate still has not occurred for females, the success ratio has risen slightly overall.

In examining data from both national tournaments by the three event groupings, the male/female participation ratio compared to the male/female "success ratio" indicates female strides that range from slight to significant (Friedley & Manchester, 1985). For the original speaking events, the 1984 participation ratio reflected 57% male / 43% female ($X^2 = 4.76$, $p < .05$); in 2001, the participation ratio reflected 47% male / 53% female. While the 1984 final rounds in this event grouping reflected a 71% male / 29% female ratio, the 2001 final rounds in this event grouping reflected a 50% male / 50% female ratio - the "success ratio" for females rose 21%. For the interpretive events, the 1984 participation ratio reflected 54% male / 46% female; in 2001, the participation ratio reflected 52% male / 48% female. While the 1984 final rounds in this event grouping reflected an 83% male / 17% female ratio ($X^2 = 10.39$, $p < .01$), the 2001 final rounds in this event grouping reflected a 75% male / 25% female ratio - the "success ratio" for females rose only 8% and is still not consistent with the participation level for this grouping of events. For the limited preparation events, the 1984 participation ratio reflected 69% male / 31% female ($X^2 = 23.76$, $p < .01$); in 2001, the participation ratio was similar - 63% male / 37% female. While 1984 final rounds in this event grouping reflected a 92% male and 8% female ratio, the 2001 final rounds in this event grouping reflected a 67% male / 33% female ratio; the "success ratio" for females in this event grouping rose 25%, but has not reached a level of parity.

Based on these findings, H4 is confirmed for level of participation; unlike 1984, female students were close to parity with male students in 2001 in terms of overall participation. However, H4 is rejected for overall levels of success for females in 2001 versus 1984 at the quarter-final, semi-final, and final rounds of competition at the American Forensic Association's National Individual Events Tournament (note that the 2001 results still do not reflect parity between male and female students).

National Forensic Association's Individual Events Nationals

H3: There is no difference in the levels of participation or success between male students and female students at a 2001 national individual events tournament.

Of the 1587 participants at the 2001 National Forensic Association's Individual competition, 47% were male and 53% were female ($X^2 = 5.68$, $p < .05$). Combining all nine events in the competition, participants advancing to quarter-final rounds were 57% male and 43% ($X^2 = 4.90$, $p < .05$) female while participants advancing to semi-final rounds were 58% male and 42% female ($X^2 = 6.19$, $p < .05$). Participants advancing to the final rounds of competition in the combined nine events were 62% male and 38% female ($X^2 = 5.19$, $p < .05$); thus, females constituted 53% of the entries in preliminary rounds yet their "success ratio" dropped to only 38% in the final rounds of competition (see Appendix C).

Of the 532 participants in the original speaking events including informative speaking, persuasive speaking, after dinner speaking, and rhetorical criticism, 47% were male and 53% were female. While female participation was strongest in informative speaking (41% male, 59% female), that ratio increased in quarter-final rounds of competition (33% male, 67% female) and semi-final rounds of competition (33% male, 67% female); however, the final round of competition in this event reflected 50% male / 50% female participation. Participation in preliminary rounds of persuasive speaking competition reflected a 47% male / 53% female ratio. Quarter-final rounds of competition reflected a 32% male / 68% female ratio and semi-final rounds of competition reflected a 42% male / 58% female ratio; however, the final round of competition in persuasive speaking reflect a 50% male / 50% female ratio.

While female participation was weakest in after dinner speaking (55% male, 45% female), the ratios vary as follows throughout the elimination rounds: a 62% male / 38% female ratio in quarter-final rounds, a 50% male / 50% female ratio in semi-final rounds, and a 50% male / 50% female ratio in the final round of competition. The final event in this grouping, rhetorical criticism, reflected the greatest decline in the female "success ratio." While 57% of the participants in this event were female and only 43% of the participants in this event were male, the participant levels across elimination rounds were as follows: quarter-final rounds reflected a 54% male / 46% female ratio; semi-final rounds reflected a 50% male and 50% female ratio; the final round of rhetorical criticism reflected a 67% male / 33% female ratio.

Of the 682 participants in the interpretive events of prose, poetry, and dramatic duo, 42% were male and 58% were female ($X^2 = 17.74$, $p < .01$). While there was a slight to moderate dominance of female participation compared to male participation in the preliminary rounds of competition in these events, there were significant ratio shifts across elimination rounds in the various events. For example, preliminary round participation in prose reflected a ratio of 38% male / 62% female. During the quarter-final and semi-final rounds in this event, the ratio held stable at 50% male / 50% female; however, the final round of competition in prose reflect a female ratio even stronger than the original level of participation (33% male, 67% female). Participation in the preliminary rounds of poetry reflected a 36% male / 64% female ratio; however, the ratios varied as follows across elimination rounds: a 54% male / 46% female participation ratio in quarter-final rounds, a 67% male / 33% female participation ratio in semi-finals, and

a 67% male / 33% female participation ratio in the final round of competition. Participation in preliminary rounds of dramatic duo reflected a ratio of 42% male / 58% female. During elimination rounds in this event, the most significant change in the male/female ratio occurred at the quarter-final rounds of competition (62% male, 38% female); the semi-final rounds of competition reflected a 71% male / 29% female participation ratio while the final round of competition in dramatic duo reflected a 67% male / 33% female ratio of participation.

Of the 333 participants in the limited preparation events of extemporaneous speaking and impromptu speaking, 61% were male and 39% were female ($X^2 = 16.00$, $p < .01$) during preliminary rounds of competition. The ratio of female participants compared to male participants decreased significantly during the elimination rounds, and the ratios were identical for both events across all elimination rounds. For both extemporaneous speaking and impromptu speaking, the ratios across elimination rounds were as follows: for quarter-final rounds, the ratio was 79% male / 21% female ($X^2 = 6.63$, $p < .05$); for semi-final rounds, the ratio was 75% male / 25% female; for the final round of competition in both events, the ratio was 83% male / 17% female. Of all the events at the National Forensic Association's Individual Events Nationals, the limited preparation events reflected the lowest "success ratio" for females compared to males.

Finally, out of ten national champions (including duo) named in the nine events at the 2001 National Forensic Association's Individual Events Nationals, only one was female. The only female national champion at this tournament was in after dinner speaking; therefore, the "success ratio" for national champions at this tournament was 90% males and 10% females.

Based on these findings, H3 is confirmed for overall level of participation and is rejected for overall success in quarter-final, semi-final, and final rounds of competition at the 2001 National Forensic Association's Individual Events Nationals.

H4: There is no difference in the levels of participation or success between male students and female students at a 1984 national individual events tournament compared to a 2001 national individual events tournament.

Compared to data collected in 1984, the ratios once again provide some interesting findings (Friedley & Manchester, 1985). Of the 1096 participants at the 1984 National Forensic Association's Individual Events Nationals, 52% were male and 48% were female; female participation rose by 5% in 2001. The "success ratio" for the combined nine events at the 1984 tournament compared to the combined nine events at the 2001 tournament indicated that females had made minimal strides in the elimination rounds. In 1984, the male/female ratio in quarter-finals was 59% male / 41% female ($X^2 = 4.64$, $p < .05$); in 2001, the ratio in quarter-finals was 57% male / 43% female - the female ratio rose only 2%. In 1984, the male/female ratio in semi-finals was 57% male / 43% female; in 2001, the ratio in semi-final rounds was 58% male / 42% female - the female ratio, declined by 1%. In 1984, the male/female ratio in final rounds of competition

was 58% male / 42% female; in 2001, the ratio in final rounds of competition was 62% male / 38% female - the female ratio declined 4%. While parity with the participation rate has not yet occurred, the success ratio has also declined in the last seventeen years.

In examining data from both national tournaments by the three event groupings, the male/female participation ratio when compared to the male/female "success ratio" indicates an overall decline in the level of success for females. For the original speaking events, the 1984 participation ratio reflected 51% male / 49% female; in 2001, the participation ratio reflected 47% male / 53% female. While the 1984 final rounds of competition in this event grouping reflected a 46% male / 54% female ratio, the 2001 final rounds of competition in this event grouping reflected a 54% male / 46% female ratio - the "success ratio" for females had dropped 8%. For the interpretive events, the 1984 participation ratio reflected 49% male and 51% female; in 2001, the participation ratio reflected 58% male / 42% female. While the 1984 final rounds of competition in this event grouping reflected a 62% male / 38% female ratio, the 2001 final rounds of competition in this event grouping reflected a 58% male / 42% female ratio - the "success ratio" for females rose 4%. For the limited preparation events, the 1984 participation ratio reflected 62% male and 38% female ($X^2 = 22.34, p < .01$); in 2001, the participation ratio was similar - 61% male and 39% female. While the 1984 final rounds in this event grouping reflected a 75% male and 25% female ratio, the 2001 final rounds in this event grouping reflected a significant decline in the "success ratio" for females in this event. The event grouping ratio was 83% male and only 17% female - a decline of 8% for females.

Based on these findings, H4 is confirmed for the National Forensic Association's Individual Events Nationals. Unlike 1984, the level of participation for female students exceeded that of male students in 2001; however, H4 is confirmed for overall levels of success for females in 2001 versus 1984 at the quarter-final, semi-final, and final rounds of competition.

Discussion

Though the research findings presented provide interesting insight into male /female participation and success in intercollegiate forensics, the authors would be remiss if they did not acknowledge some limitations to the study. First, the data analyzed and compared in this study reflects participation and success levels at only three national tournaments in only two years of competition - 1984 and 2001. While the authors assume these tournaments are representative of the activity over time, these tournaments may reflect only a "snapshot" of the activity that is an anomaly rather than a representative sample. An analysis of data from additional national tournaments in the activity over a span of several consecutive years may provide a more representative sample from which to draw conclusions about male/female participation and success in intercollegiate forensics.

Second, the authors note that there are several other variables, besides sex, that may account for participation and success in intercollegiate forensics. For

example, the prior forensics training a student brings to intercollegiate forensics, the length of time a student participates in the activity, and the amount of time a student dedicates to the activity may be powerful predictors of participation and success in intercollegiate forensics. If patterns of participation and success are well established in high school forensics, then these patterns may simply lay the groundwork for a repeated pattern in intercollegiate forensics. If males, more than females, are drawn to extra-curricular activities most closely related to career goals (Nadler, 1983), then males may be more driven to participate and succeed in an activity that develops strong oral communication skills related to career goals. These variables, as well as many others, may never foster parity for males and females engaged in this activity.

Finally, the authors cannot underestimate the influence of forensics coaches as teachers, mentors, and judges in the activity; all of these roles directly influence student participation and success in the activity. Coaches as teachers and mentors select the students they will nurture and challenge; they set the standards for participation and success in their own individual programs. As coaches then judge participants in the activity each week, their evaluations and assessments define various aspects of the activity and reinforce the standards for success. The sex of forensic coaches, as well as their perceptions of how sex and gender relate to participation and success in various aspects of intercollegiate forensics, will likely shape the activity (its participants and their success) over time.

As discussed in the review of literature, early gender research in forensics suggested that debate is perceived to be a male-dominated activity (Friedley & Nadler, 1983); in fact, actual examination of the male/female participation level at the 1984 and 2001 National Debate Tournament continues to support that perception. Males continue to outnumber females in intercollegiate debate at a ratio of roughly three to one; perhaps even more disconcerting is the fact that female success in this activity has declined when compared to earlier data. While one female/female debate team advanced to octa-finals in 1984, no female/female debate teams advanced to octa-finals in 2001. While a female debater advanced to the final round of competition in 1984, no female debater even advanced beyond quarter-finals in 2001.

While these findings may not be representative of all intercollegiate debate (i.e., cross examination debate or Lincoln-Douglas debate), these findings do provide powerful commentary on male/female parity within the primary outlet for policy debate - it simply does not exist. Perhaps leaders in this activity might examine some of the same factors the U.S. Department of Labor noted in 1991 as reasons for the "glass ceiling" women and minorities face in the workplace: "unfair recruitment practices, limited opportunities for advancement to decision-making positions, gender-based stereotyping and harassment, and a general lack of management commitment to established systems, policies, and practices for achieving workplace diversity and upward mobility" (Stewart, Cooper, Stewart, & Friedley, 2003, p. 181). If the National Debate Tournament believes that women ought to have parity with men in the activity, then their efforts must begin with recruiting and retaining women in the activity so that they can succeed.

Early gender research in forensics also suggested that the individual events activity is perceived to be a more gender-balanced forensic activity (Friedley & Nadler, 1983). While descriptive data from the preliminary rounds of competition at both the 1984 and 2001 American Forensic Association's National Individual Events Tournament and National Forensic Association's Individual Events Nationals suggest a general balance in male/female participation ratios, analysis of the elimination rounds at both tournaments reflect a male/female imbalance that emerges - an imbalance that generally continues to favor male participants in this activity. Perhaps most interesting is data generated by the three event groupings.

The original speaking events reflect most male/female parity in both participation and success. The male/female ratio in the final rounds of competition in this event grouping reflects these significant female strides: a 50% female/50% male ratio in 2001 compared to a 29% female/71% male ratio in 1984 (AFA-NIET) and a 46% female/54% male ratio in 2001 compared to a 54% female/46% male ratio in 1984 (NFA-IE Nationals). While Sellnow and Ziegelmüller (1988) noted a growing trend that reinforced the traditionally "masculine" style of rhetoric in this event grouping during the 1980s, male/female parity that has been attained in this event grouping suggests that a new paradigm for success in this event grouping has emerged. Perhaps the original speaking events have come to reflect a "blend" of the logical appeals grounded in argument and critical thinking (often labeled as "masculine") as well as the use of emotional appeals (often labeled as "feminine"). This blend of "masculine" and "feminine" styles in the original speaking events may minimize sex-role stereotyping and, as such, explain the male/female parity attained in both participation and success at the national tournaments.

The interpretive events also reflect relative parity in male/female participation with a higher ratio of female participation (58% female, 42% male) at the 2001 National Forensic Association's Individual Events Nationals than at the 2001 American Forensic Association's National Individual Events Tournament (48% female, 52% male). Females at the NFA-IE Nationals were able to maintain a higher "success ratio" in final rounds of competition in this event grouping (42% female, 58% male) than females at the AFA-NIET (25% female, 75% male). With this group of events historically perceived as "feminine," grounded in emotional expression, the forensic community must continue to explore reasons for inequity in male/female levels of success. At both national tournaments, males experienced more success in this event grouping than females; in fact, no females even advanced to the final rounds of competition in either poetry or prose at the 2001 American Forensic Association's National Individual Events Tournament.

Perhaps it is most interesting to note that males who cross sex-role typing into the perceived "feminine" activity of interpretive events are rewarded more than females who cross sex-role typing into the perceived "masculine" activities of debate and limited preparation events. While this phenomenon is a positive commentary on an activity that has created a rewarding environment for males

to explore the emotional aspects of excellent literature, it is also a criticism of an activity that has not created a rewarding environment for females to explore critical thinking and direct clash in developing strong argument. The ability to explore the "masculine" and "feminine" in each of us should be an equal opportunity afforded both males and females in intercollegiate forensics.

Finally, the limited preparation events continue to reflect the greatest inequity in both male/female participation and success at both national tournaments in 1984 and again in 2001. These events, most closely linked to argument, critical thinking, and the "masculine" activity of debate, continue to attract the fewest number of female participants compared to male participants. While data does indicate female parity in the final round of extemporaneous speaking at the American Forensic Association's National Individual Events Tournament (50% male, 50% female), only one female (17%) advanced to the remaining extemporaneous speaking final round and the impromptu speaking final rounds at both national tournaments. Once again, those coaches and judges who work with students in this event grouping may benefit from suggestions made earlier to the debate community. With the lack of male/female parity found in these events, concerted efforts to attract and retain females in these events must be made if parity is to be attained.

Conclusion

As the forensics community addresses relevant issues concerning their activities in the 21st century, research indicates that the issue of gender equity is still one worthy of discussion. While data analysis in this study suggests that some limited strides have been made by females in specific individual events, a summary of the data overall when compared to previous research indicates that male/female parity in this activity still does not exist. As educators who are preparing men and women to make the transition to the workplace, we have the opportunity to facilitate parity in that environment through the training we provide in this intercollegiate activity.

For example, women have made strides among the managerial ranks in organizations. The percentage of women in managerial and executive positions has steadily increased from 18 percent in 1970, to 40 percent in 1990, and to 48 percent in 1997 (Stewart, et al., 2003, p. 180). Only if both men and women are given the opportunity to develop strong communication skills, develop self-confidence and self-esteem as they succeed, and break the boundaries of sex-role stereotyping will these strides toward parity continue. The intercollegiate forensic activity can provide an excellent training ground in public presentation skills, critical thinking skills, leadership skills, mentoring ability, and group dynamics. Intercollegiate forensics provides some of the most powerful lessons in time management as well as self-discovery and self-development; as Charles Dickens might write, intercollegiate forensics tests the human spirit "in the best of times and in the worst of times." For those of us who believe this educational training ground made a profound difference in our personal and professional lives, we

hope this educational experience is one that provides equal opportunity for both men and women to reap its many benefits.

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