

Journal of the Association for Communication Administration
27(1998), 30-43

Administering the Hybrid Department: A National Survey of Combined Communications/Theatre Arts Departments

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FOR several decades there has been discussion in the fields of speech communication and theatre arts about whether these two disciplines are best housed in two separate departments or combined as one. Manning (1982) surveyed 24 liberal arts colleges in the Midwest to determine whether speech communication and theatre were (a) organized as a combined department, (b) comprised of two separate departments, (c) subsumed under a third department, or (d) only speech or theatre existed. Manning observed that in recent years there has been a trend to separate the disciplines of speech communication and theatre into two separate departments. Manning's findings indicated that reasons for departmental splits included conflict between divisions and administrative pressure. Reasons for retaining combined departments included a strong departmental conviction that both speech and theatre are part of communication or a fear that division would weaken one or both parts of the department.

A search of the literature, including administration of hybrid departments in other academic arenas, revealed a 1983 study by Sherohman about combined sociology and social work departments. Sherohman described four obstacles to cooperation between disciplines which overlapped with the discussions found among communications professors. These included perceptions of differences between the two disciplines, competition for students, overlapping interests of the two disciplines which blur disciplinary boundaries, and departmental politics which impede cooperation in combined departments.

A search of the *Association for Communication Administration Bulletin* and the *Journal of the Association for Communication Administration* from 1980-1995 revealed articles pertaining to the administrative organization of hybrid speech departments in October 1984, August 1986, August 1987, and January 1990. In the October 1984 issue, a series of articles discuss the advantages and disadvantages to having a single department for speech communication, mass communication, and theatre. The authors agree that the difficulties of administering a large department included making promotion and tenure decisions for faculty

outside one's academic area, finding a leader or chair sensitive to the needs of all areas, and the burden of having to fight over resources at the department level rather than at the college level. The advantages to having a combined department included the administrative power of a larger department, the ability of a large department to mask low enrollment areas by combining them with high enrollment areas, more efficient use of facilities, equipment and faculty and more opportunities for interdisciplinary work. Pappas (1984), however, argues that the best organizational mode depends mostly on the specific nature of the institution. All agree that the goal was to have less fragmentation and competition between areas and more collaboration (Blanchard, 1984; Pappas, 1984; Tiemens, 1984; Waal, 1984).

Waal (1984), on the other hand, points out that being administratively organized into one department does not guarantee cooperation. She observes that frequently programs are administered within one unit, but students and faculty are specialized and have little interaction. Waal believes that a big factor is whether the theatre department sees itself as pre-professional or academic. Waal concludes that a truly unified department will only work if all members of the faculty are committed to the concept of interdisciplinary courses and to producing graduates who are versed in all areas. If, however, the faculty feel that it is most important to require a heavy course load in each distinct area so that their students are well versed in a specialized discipline, this might best be reflected in administrative separation (Waal, 1984). Tiemens (1984) agrees that there must be a cooperative, collaborative and collegial spirit for a combined department to fulfill its potential.

In the August 1986 issue, four writers discuss the advantages and disadvantages of combining speech communication and mass communication departments. Blanchard (1986) argues that too much emphasis has been placed on preparing students for specific entry-level skills at the cost of providing a broad based, academic communication background, which is far more flexible in response to changes in the workplace. Clark (1986) agrees that there is tension between speech communication, which is an academic preparation, and mass communication, which is more vocationally oriented. Like Blanchard, he believes that a healthy balance between the two provides the best educational preparation.

Jellicorse (1986) includes theatre in the discussion of combined departments. He observes that theatre and communication units are frequently changing their administrative relationships within their institution. Jellicorse explains that as speech and theatre separated from English, these disciplines frequently developed at different rates depending on the specific circumstances at each institution. He explains, "Frequently, a strong unit would split off to become a separate department. Sometimes it was a weaker unit, or units which sought independence, feeling that the favored discipline was monopolizing the resources. After the initial unity was destroyed, further subdivision usually accelerated as each discipline sought equality. In this fashion, in many institutions, the unity of the field was destroyed."

Jellicorse (1986) believes that this separation of disciplines in many cases led to the weakening of all of the communication areas, as well as adding to administrative inefficiency with regard to duplication of programs and facilities. Therefore, the decision to separate may meet the immediate needs of the faculty but will in the end be counter productive and shortsighted. Jellicorse concludes that in order for a "school of communication" to work, the units should be similar in size, each discipline must have an appreciation of the historical relationships and common orientation toward the field, and the units must have faculty and leadership willing to overcome personal ambition to achieve the larger goals of the unit.

Applbaum (1986) agrees with Jellicorse's conclusions. He does not accept the argument that there is little common ground among areas within communication. He argues that competition both across and within departments means that the faculty become incapable of articulating their commonalities. This ensures that administrators will make decisions

about departmental organization based on issues of finances and facilities rather than educational, academic needs. Applbaum predicts that there will be a return to the "basics" of a liberal arts education.

The *Association for Communication Administration Bulletin's* August 1987 issue presents a series of articles about whether there should be a college of communication arts. Ranta (1987) argues that a college of communication is more efficient administratively, more economical and is more likely to encourage collaborative activity. Bettinghouse (1987) argues that the choice should be made on individual, pragmatic administrative grounds only. Wills (1987) agrees, saying that it all depends on issues such as the mission of the institution, the individual academic programs, the size of the institution, the levels of specialization and other similar factors. Ausprich (1987) agrees that the administrative organization of the institution is not the key issue, but rather finding a way for the different areas within the communication discipline to work collaboratively rather than competitively is the main issue. Ausprich argues, "It seems that we have been talking for a long time about what to do with all the units in our own discipline. Do with them what you will. I do not mean to sound flip about this, but what we do, how we do it, how we have done, and how we intend to do it are just not very interesting issues. Rather what is important and what is interesting is the fundamental kind of education in which we want to engage."

Bettinghouse (1987) agrees that simply merging communication units into departments, schools or colleges does not mean that synergistic research, scholarship and teaching will emerge unless constant efforts are made by the dean and chairperson. In reality, Bettinghouse argues most specialists in technical theatre have little to discuss with speech pathologists and interpersonal communications specialists have little to discuss with broadcast journalists. Furthermore, this is becoming more true as younger faculty, who were themselves prepared in discipline-specific programs rather than broad-based communications programs, enter the field.

Ausprich (1987) describes great concern over the trend toward vocationally oriented education, that there has been "a change from educating students to personhood and citizenship to that of training little specialists in the faculty's own image." He looks back fondly on his days at Memphis State University where speech and drama were a combined department. He remembers a place where students and faculty discussed issues about liberal studies, professional education, interculturalism, and values. These discussions, arguments, and debates created a special ambiance where people came to know each other in ways which would not have been possible if they not taken the time to explore these intellectual matters together.

In the January 1990 issue, Ross and Emmert argue strongly for the creation of multi-focused departments rather than single-focused departments. Their arguments for multi-focused departments include administrative efficiency, more possibilities for interdisciplinary research, more comprehensive and less department-centered advising of students, and more flexibility in faculty workloads, financial responsibilities, and service assignments. Instructional quality, research, and service, they argue, will all be enhanced in a combined department. However, at the end of the article, the authors admit that they have never actually experienced a hybrid department because at their own institutions speech communication, English, journalism, speech and hearing sciences, mass communication, and theatre have split into separate units.

Crisp and Seibert (1990) discuss the issue of communication department structure by describing two case studies. At the University of Nevada—Reno, a department of speech and theatre exists peacefully, with mutual respect among the faculty, and plenty of student credit hours to justify its existence. Their co-existence, however, reflects administrative efficiency and expedience rather than a genuine educational merging of the disciplines.

Oregon State University has a combined department that includes broadcast media communication, speech communication, speech pathology and audiology, and theatre. This arrangement, again, has more to do with the history of the development of each area than a cohesive educational philosophy of communication. Crisp and Seibert believe that this arrangement has as many pitfalls as advantages. These include the confusing image the department presents to the academic community and employers, funding battles within the department, the comparability of programs within its scope and the vulnerability of subprograms with fewer student credit hours to budget cuts. Again, being housed in one department does not guarantee collegial cooperation.

In summary, the central concern of the writers is creating an atmosphere that would encourage integration between the disciplines of communication. The specific structure of the department, school, or college is often considered less important than the spirit of cooperation and collaborative outlook of the faculty in the communication areas. Furthermore, bridges must be built or maintained between pre-professional areas such as technical theatre or broadcasting and the academic, communication liberal arts core.

Some fourteen years after Manning's 1982 research, the question of whether speech communications and theatre arts are best served as one department or as two separate departments is still with us. However, there is a clear pattern to the chronology of the articles in the Association for Communication Administration publications. There were a large number of articles about this topic during the mid-1980s, but only two articles in the 1990s. It is quite possible that by the 1990s most of the larger departments that had an opportunity to separate had already done so. Therefore, the issues were largely settled. However, there are still plenty of combined departments in existence. For instance, the University of Nebraska, Kearney currently has a speech communication and theatre department, but there has been a movement afoot for several years to separate the two units.

Part of the answer to this question lies in the ability or inability to administer hybrid departments effectively. Do departments that work well together have any similar characteristics? Is there anything department administrators can do to encourage collaboration rather than competition among their faculty?

Based on the opinions in the review of the literature, the initial hypothesis for this study was that department administrators can take steps to encourage collaboration among the units of the communication area. More specifically, it is hypothesized that departments highly integrated between disciplines will enjoy higher degrees of cooperation than those mostly segregated. For example, departments that undertake joint projects, teach interdisciplinary courses, hire professors who have background in more than one area, and meet together on a regular basis have a greater chance of developing a cooperative spirit than departments where the separate units function independently.

The purpose of this study is to discover characteristics of hybrid speech/ theatre departments that describe themselves as highly cooperative and collegial. This paper also presents the perceived advantages and disadvantages of having a combined speech/theatre department, the results of questions pertaining to administrative difficulties in combined departments, and discusses alternative theories about what makes a speech/theatre department work well.

METHODOLOGY

To test the hypothesis that departments that are highly integrated between disciplines enjoy higher degrees of cooperation than departments where the disciplines function independently, a national survey of combined speech/theatre departments was conducted. The first procedure was a mail survey, which was followed by a telephone survey. The subjects of the mail survey were the department chairs of all of the departments that described them-

selves as combined communications/theatre departments in the 1993 Speech Communication Association and the American Theatre in Higher Education directories. One-hundred-fifty-eight surveys were mailed and 90 were returned.

The mail questionnaire began with a question regarding the types of degrees offered by the department. The survey then included a series of yes/no questions pertaining to the degree of integration between the two disciplines in the department, several yes/no questions pertaining to the difficulty of administering a hybrid department, and several open questions asking the respondent to describe the advantages and disadvantages of being a combined department. Question #14 of the survey asked "On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the degree of cooperation between the speech and theatre areas of your department?" A response of "1" meant no cooperation, a "10" meant full cooperation. The research design sought to discover characteristics correlating strongly with departments that evaluated themselves with a high cooperation rating and conversely to find characteristics that correlate with departments reporting a low cooperation rating (see Appendix A).

The second procedure consisted of follow-up telephone interviews. The subjects were 10 of the 90 respondents to the mail survey. Out of the ten departments contacted for follow-up questions, three of the respondents had rated their degree of cooperation at "five or below" and the other seven departments had rated their cooperation a "10." All of the telephone surveys were reported anonymously. Due to their rarity, the "five and below" schools were intentionally sought out for follow-up interviews. Three of these schools were interviewed.

The "10" schools were chosen at random. The departments that gave themselves a cooperation rating of "10" were put in a pile in no particular order. Because this part of the survey was conducted during the summer, the department chairs interviewed were the first to return my phone call. The questions selected for the telephone interviews were based on the data collected from the mail survey and were more informal.

RESULTS

The Mail Survey

In response to the question, "On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the degree of cooperation between the speech and theatre areas of your department?" *30 out of 90, or one third of the departments, rated themselves a "10."* Only 5 out of 90 departments rated themselves at "5" or lower. Furthermore, only 9 out of 90 departments answered "yes" to the question, "Does your department have difficulties dividing funds between the speech and theatre areas?"

The first question on the survey asked the respondents to designate the types of degrees offered by the department. Eight colleges offered either an associates degree or no speech or theatre degrees at all. Sixty offered some type of bachelor's degree. Only 12 colleges also offered a B.F.A. degree and only 12 colleges offered a masters program. None of the respondents offered an M.F.A. or Ph.D.

Based on the responses, the departments were divided into four categories: 1) departments that do not offer a degree, offer only a minor in theater, or offer an associates degree; 2) departments whose highest degree offered is a B.S. or B.A.; 3) departments whose highest degree offered is a B.F.A.; and 4) departments whose highest degree offered is a M.A. in speech, a M.A. in theater or M.A. in speech and theater.

Questions 2 through 8 dealt with issues concerning the level of integration between the speech and theatre areas. In order to analyze the data, the respondents were divided into two groups, those whose mean score on the "integration" questions was low, and those whose mean score on the integration questions was high. The number "1" was assigned to "Yes"

answers and the number "2" was assigned to "No" answers. The respondents whose answers to Questions 2-8 totaled 9-13 were designated as highly integrated, and the respondents whose answers to Questions 2-8 totaled 14-18 were designated as having lower levels of integration.

I hypothesized that the type of degree offered and level of integration would affect the perceived amount of cooperation. Specifically, the more advanced the degrees offered and the lower the level of integration, the lower the respondents would perceive the amount of cooperation, as measured in Question 14. This hypothesis was tested using a two-way analysis of variance. In this and the following tests a significance level of .05 was used. "Highest degrees" and "integration" were treated as independent variables. Question 14 (overall degree of cooperation) was the dependent variable. No significance was found for either independent variable ($p > .05$), nor for the interaction (see Table 1).

TABLE 1
Measures of Cooperation in Speech/Theatre Departments

| | <u>SS</u> | <u>df</u> | <u>MS</u> | <u>F</u> | <u>p</u> |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Integration Level | 0.52 | 1 | 0.52 | 0.22 | 0.6387 |
| Highest Degrees | 8.95 | 3 | 2.98 | 1.28 | 0.2875 |
| Interaction Effect | 3.78 | 3 | 1.26 | 0.54 | 0.6560 |
| Error | 193.78 | 83 | 2.33 | | |

In addition to using questions 2-8 as an overall measure of integration, *individual* integration questions were analyzed with the same dependent variable, Question 14 (overall degree of cooperation). The t-test is one of the preferred methods for measuring significance when employing an ANOVA (Hays, 1988, 371). The purpose of these tests was to find out if an individual integration question might be significantly correlated with departmental cooperation, even though the group of integration questions did not show significance. The hypothesis was that departments that answered "yes" to the individual integration questions would have a higher degree of cooperation than those that answered "no." T-tests (two tailed) were conducted using questions 2, 3, 6 and 7c as the independent variables with Question 14 (overall degree of cooperation) as the dependent variable. None of the t-tests was significant (see Table 2).

Questions 4, 5 and 6 in the integration section asked the respondent to elaborate on his/her answer if the response to the question was "yes." Roughly half of the respondents answered "yes" to Question 4: "Are there any courses in your department which include both speech and theatre topics and/or discuss the relationship between these fields." The most common group of responses were oral interpretation and voice and diction courses. The next most common response was some type of "communication studies" class, which either took the form of an introductory course or a "capstone" senior seminar. The third common response was a speech and theatre teaching methods course.

In answer to Question 5 (Does your department offer any courses which are team taught by speech and theater faculty?) 13 out of 90 departments said "yes." Five departments stated that a survey course, either at the introductory or senior seminar level, is team taught. Two departments stated that a forensics or individual events course is team taught. Two respondents listed television courses as team taught by broadcasting and theater faculty and two respondents said that their teaching methods course is team taught. One department stated that a graduate-level rhetorical criticism course is team taught.

Table 2
Relationship of Faculty and Student Activities to
Cooperation in Speech/Theatre Departments

| | Faculty teach both speech and theatre | | Faculty do NOT teach both speech and theatre |
|-------------|---|---------|---|
| <i>N</i> | 68 | | 20 |
| <i>M</i> | 8.69 | | 8.40 |
| <i>S.D.</i> | 1.37 | | 2.01 |
| <i>t</i> | | -0.7445 | |
| <i>p</i> | | 0.46 | |
| | Students regularly take courses in both speech and theatre | | Students regularly do NOT take courses in both speech and theatre |
| <i>N</i> | 56 | | 32 |
| <i>M</i> | 8.64 | | 8.66 |
| <i>S.D.</i> | 1.61 | | 1.43 |
| <i>t</i> | | 0.0390 | |
| <i>p</i> | | 0.97 | |
| | Students regularly take part in both speech and theatre projects | | Students regularly do NOT take part in both speech and theatre projects |
| <i>N</i> | 38 | | 28 |
| <i>M</i> | 8.81 | | 8.39 |
| <i>S.D.</i> | 1.52 | | 1.47 |
| <i>t</i> | | -1.1306 | |
| <i>p</i> | | 0.26 | |
| | Speech and theatre faculty undertake joint creative projects | | Speech and theatre faculty do NOT undertake joint creative projects |
| <i>N</i> | 27 | | 61 |
| <i>M</i> | 8.26 | | 8.82 |
| <i>S.D.</i> | 2.01 | | 1.26 |
| <i>t</i> | | 1.5890 | |
| <i>p</i> | | 0.11 | |

In answer to Question 6: (Are there any creative projects which are jointly undertaken by the speech faculty?), 27 out of 90 departments said "yes." Forensics and theatrical productions were listed most frequently, followed by video/film projects and community service projects.

Administrative Issues

This section of the survey collected information to test two hypotheses. One was that departments answering "yes" to the question "Does your department have difficulties dividing funds" would have less overall cooperation than those answering "no." A second hypothesis was that departments that have chairs who have training and/or experience in

both speech and theater would enjoy higher degrees of cooperation than departments whose chair only has training and/or experience in one of the two disciplines. In order to obtain data indicating support or lack of support of these two hypotheses, a two-way analysis of variance was conducted. The dichotomous independent variables were Question 9 (does your department have difficulties dividing funds between areas?) and Question 10 (does the chair of your department having either experience or training in both areas?). The score for Question 14 (overall degree of cooperation) was the dependent variable. There was no significant effect of Question 10. However, there was a significant effect of Question 9. The departments who had difficulties dividing funds had lower ratings of cooperation ($M=6.89$) than those who had no difficulties dividing funds ($M=8.81$). There was no significant interaction (see Table 3).

TABLE 3
Relationship of Dividing Funds and Chair's Training to Cooperation in Speech/Theatre Departments

| | <u>SS</u> | <u>df</u> | <u>MS</u> | <u>F</u> | <u>p</u> |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Dividing funds | 29.82 | 1 | 29.82 | 14.38 | 0.0003 |
| Chair's training/ experience | 0.27 | 1 | 0.27 | 0.13 | 0.7207 |
| Interaction Effect | 2.56 | 1 | 2.56 | 1.23 | 0.2701 |
| Error | 174.22 | 84 | 2.07 | | |

Fewer than one-third of the chairs said they did not have training or experience in both fields. Of that group, only five said that this situation creates difficulties. The problems they cited included difficulties in doing faculty evaluations outside their area of expertise, difficulty in setting goals and understanding the needs of the unfamiliar discipline, and even knowing the terminology of the unfamiliar discipline.

Finally, in order to obtain data relating to the hypothesis that departments that want to separate into two distinct departments are likely to have a lower degree of cooperation than those that want to remain one department, a t-test (two tailed) was conducted using Question 11, "Does your department want to separate into two autonomous departments?" as the independent variable and Question 14 (degree of cooperation) as the dependent variable. There was a significant effect of separation (see Table 4). Those who want to separate had lower means ($M=7.37$) than those who did not want to separate ($M=8.97$).

TABLE 4
Relationship of Department Members' Desire to Separate to Cooperation Across Programs

| | Departments do NOT want to separate | Departments DO want to separate |
|-------------|--|------------------------------------|
| <i>N</i> | 70 | 19 |
| <i>M</i> | 8.97 | 7.37 |
| <i>S.D.</i> | 1.08 | 2.24 |
| <i>t</i> | | -4.4283 |
| <i>p</i> | | 0.0001 |

The most common responses to Question 12 (What are the greatest advantages to being a combined department?) were:

a. One larger department has more political clout within the university/college arena than two smaller departments.

b. It is easier to make students aware of the cross-fertilization between the two disciplines in a combined department. Furthermore, exposure to both disciplines forms a better basis for a liberal arts education. These two answers accounted for over two-thirds of the responses to this question.

The most common response to Question 13 (What is the greatest disadvantage of having a combined speech/theatre department?) was "none!" The second most common response was that speech and theatre are becoming increasingly separate as speech moves toward a social science orientation with new emphasis on organizational communication, interpersonal communication, nonverbal communication, intercultural communication, etc.

The third most common group of responses had to do with difficulties in administering combined departments. For example, five responses were about funding problems, four responses were about difficulties for the chair in administering and two responses were about use of space.

The Telephone Survey

The interviewees were asked about the size of the faculty. The "low cooperation" schools ranged in size from 8 to 22 faculty, whereas the "high cooperation" schools tended to be somewhat smaller departments, ranging in size from 3 to 14.

Five out of seven of the "full cooperation" schools said that being in a small school/department was an advantage because in a small school people must cooperate, and/or that in a small department it is easier for everyone to get along, again because they have to.

No patterns were found in response to a question regarding the number of faculty in speech versus theatre. However, the high cooperation schools were more likely to include mass communication within the department than the low cooperation schools.

All ten interviewees described their departments as having a liberal arts focus rather than a pre-professional focus, although roughly half qualified their answer by saying that some part of the program, either theatre or broadcasting, was career oriented.

When asked to what they attributed the degree of cooperation among the faculty, six out of seven of the "full cooperation" schools discussed the integration of their departments. Responses included:

a. A commitment to liberal arts, broad based education which is interested in finding relationships between the disciplines.

b. Their faculty are generalists, rather than specialists. A few mentioned that their faculty have background in both disciplines and/or have to teach in both disciplines. For example, the theatre faculty also teach the basic communications course, or their speech faculty have undergraduate theatre degrees.

c. Their speech area has remained performance oriented. Sometimes the broadcasting area is also performance-oriented, or there is an interest in readers theatre.

One respondent stated the opposite of my hypothesis. He felt that the key to his department's success was the autonomy each discipline has. He said that the department is successful in completing joint tasks such as recruiting, community service, and policy decisions, but that each division within the department has complete control over its area which creates a sense of ownership, even entrepreneurship, for that area.

Five out of seven of the "full cooperation schools" said they genuinely liked each other as individuals and that this made everything easier.

All three of the chairs who had given their department a low cooperation rating discussed the separation of the academic disciplines within the department as the main obstacle. All three pointed out that personal animosity was not the problem; the issue was lack of knowledge, or even interest, by faculty in the other disciplines. There was no unified vision for the department. One department was so isolated that, until recently, the two disciplines were housed in different buildings. All three interviewees mentioned at some point in the conversation that the specialization of the faculty had contributed to this difficulty. One respondent said the specialization developed as the department got larger.

Nine out of ten respondents agreed that the increasing separation of the speech and theatre fields, as speech moves toward a social science orientation, is a growing problem. (The one who didn't see this as a problem was the same person who thought that separation/autonomy between disciplines was a strength.) A few said that it is increasingly difficult to find generalists who appreciate the nexus between the disciplines.

Nine out of ten department chairs also agreed that departments with frequent interaction among the faculty and students have an easier time getting along. One person said that a one-credit, cross-over course had been introduced specifically to foster interaction among the faculty. Two out of three chairs from "low cooperation" department said that specialization had made faculty interaction more difficult. A few people reiterated that it is easier to foster interaction in a small department.

DISCUSSION

The questionnaire responses indicated that the vast majority of speech/theatre departments get along well. The initial hypothesis that departments that were highly integrated would enjoy higher degrees of cooperation was not confirmed by the mail surveys, since there was no statistical significance to the questions pertaining to the degree of departmental speech/theatre integration. However, to the contrary, the telephone interviews strongly affirmed my hypothesis.

Similarly, the statistical analysis of the question regarding the difficulty of having one chair for two disciplines showed no significance. However, a statistical significance ($p < .0003$) was found for the question, "Does your department have difficulties dividing funds between the speech and theatre areas?" It is probably not surprising that there was significance ($p < .0001$) for the question concerning whether the departments want to separate. However, it is interesting that only five colleges rated their overall degree of cooperation below the level of "5" on a ten point scale, yet 19 departments stated that they want to separate. Why would departments who claim to work well together still want to separate? These two issues require further investigation.

Why was there such a contradiction between the mail survey and the telephone survey? The fact that 60 of the mail-survey respondents offered a Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Arts degree, another 8 respondents offered either an associates degree or no theatre degree at all, and only 24 respondents offered either a graduate degree or a B.F.A. degree led to a new hypothesis. Perhaps one reason so many departments described themselves as highly cooperative was that these were primarily small departments with fewer specialized programs than larger departments. To some degree, the telephone interviews confirmed the notion that smaller departments with less specialization have an easier time than larger, more specialized departments. The review of the literature also confirms this hypothesis.

Sherohman (1983) described the dynamics between sociology and social work departments in ways that sound strikingly familiar to the issues surrounding the professionalization of speech communications and theatre. Sherohman listed the "professionalization" of undergraduate social work education as the principal factor in the breakdown of the traditional "alliance" between sociology and social work in undergraduate education. He explained

that as social work expanded relative to sociology, sociology faculty were reluctant to give social work the autonomy it needed to develop. Another contributing factor was the different logic of professional (specialized) and liberal arts (generalist) education. For example, the M.S.W. degree was not always recognized as a terminal degree by sociology professors making hiring, promotion and tenure decisions. In addition, Sherohman suggested that sociologists may have little understanding of the importance of agency contacts, field coordination, field instruction, and the justification for credit hours and release time provided for these activities.

These sociology/social work issues seem similar to arguments about the validity of M.F.A. degrees in theatre departments, the importance of spending time with theatre students while working on productions and the release time and credit hour production that directors, designers, and technical directors need for this aspect of their work. Furthermore, the perception that the speech department is not allowing the theatre department the autonomy it needs to grow into a professional program (or visa-versa depending on which discipline was initially stronger in the institution), is similar to the struggles between sociology and social work departments.

The open-ended questions in the mail survey were in agreement with Manning's (1982) research: The advantages of being a combined department seemed to be the strength in numbers of a larger department and the opportunities for cross-fertilization between the fields. At the same time, a frequently cited problem is that the fields of speech and theatre are becoming more separate as speech moves toward less performance-based, more specialized fields such as organizational communication and intercultural communication. This problem deserves attention from those who are interested in preserving the interdisciplinary orientation of the hybrid department.

This study also confirms the results of the review of the literature found in the Association for Communication Administration publications. The fact that there are no articles on this subject since 1990 indicates that most of the larger departments that had an opportunity to separate had already done so. Therefore, there was nothing to discuss. Several writers suggest that the specific structure of the department, school or college is often less important than the spirit of cooperation and collaborative outlook of the faculty in the communication areas. Furthermore, issues such as the mission and history of the institution, the size of the programs, and the attitude of the faculty are the strongest considerations in deciding how to organize communications and theatre programs.

The University of Nebraska, Kearney, is a good example of a speech communication/theatre department that has difficulties working together and that fits the profile presented in this study of a department one might expect to have difficulties. The department is relatively large, having 13 full-time faculty, and offers both a B.F.A. degree and a Masters in Speech and Theatre. Most faculty would describe the department as pre-professional and the theatre area, in particular, as highly specialized. Only the forensics coaches focus on public address. The rest of the speech faculty are either social science oriented or theoreticians. Therefore, the faculty have little common ground and share no common vision. The department is currently trying to create a common ground by starting an "Institute for Narrative Study." This will include storytelling as performance, as a basis for rhetorical analysis and even for intercultural communication studies. A recent study from a National Association of Schools of Theatre consultant, however, has recommended that theatre split from speech in this department. Some faculty believe this is the best solution.

Finally, more research on this topic is needed. It is possible that the survey was skewed because only the department chair was contacted. The department chair might be predisposed to describe the department as cooperative and effective because this provides a positive reflection of the chair's leadership. A larger follow-up study would include other members of the department for each college and perhaps even someone outside the speech/

theatre department. Furthermore, in order to confirm the findings of this study, a new survey should include questions about the size and level of specialization of the departments.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

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The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Dr. Maurine Eckloff and Dr. Akbar Javidi in preparing this manuscript for publication and Dr. Joseph Benz and Dr. John Anderson for reviewing the statistical analysis of the data.

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APPENDIX A

1. Please circle the degrees offered by your department.

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|----|----|-----|----|----|-----|-------|
| theatre | BS | BA | BFA | MS | MA | MFA | Ph.D. |
| speech | BS | BA | | MS | MA | | Ph.D. |
| speech and theatre | BS | BA | | MS | MA | | Ph.D. |

2. Does your department include faculty who teach **both** speech and theatre courses? Yes No

3. Do most of your students regularly take courses in **both** speech and theatre? (As opposed to speech majors taking only speech courses and theatre majors taking only theatre courses.) Yes No

4. Are there any courses in your department which include both speech and theatre topics and/or discuss the relationship between these fields? Yes No
 If so, please list the course title and briefly describe the course content.

5. Does your department offer any courses which are team taught by speech and theatre faculty? Yes No
 If so, please list the course title and briefly describe the course content.

6. Are there any creative projects which are jointly undertaken by the speech and theatre faculty? Yes No
 If so, please describe them briefly.

- 7a. Does your department compete in collegiate forensics? Yes No
- 7b. If so, does the forensic team coach(es) have background in both speech and theatre? Yes No
- 7c. Is it common for students to participate in projects in both areas? For example, is a student likely to work on a production and also compete in forensics? Yes No

8. Do speech and theatre faculty meet together for department meetings? (As opposed to each area meeting separately) Yes No
 If yes, how frequently do these meetings occur?
 (circle one)
 weekly biweekly monthly each semester annually

9. Does your department have difficulties dividing funds between the theatre and speech areas? Yes No

- 10a. Do you, as chair of the department, have training in both speech and theatre? Yes No
- 10b. Do you have experience in both speech and theatre? Yes No
- 10c. If the answer to 10a or 10b is no, does this lack of background make it difficult to make administrative decisions for that area? Yes No

If yes, please describe an example of a difficult administrative decision.

11. Does your department want to separate into two autonomous departments? Yes No
 If yes, has a goal been set to do this? Yes No
12. What do you consider to be the greatest advantage of having a combined speech/theatre department?
13. What do you consider to be the greatest disadvantage of having a combined speech/theatre department?
14. On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the degree of cooperation between the speech and theatre areas of your department?
 (circle one)
 No cooperation Full cooperation
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
15. Are you willing to discuss these issues in a follow-up telephone interview? Yes No

Name _____ Telephone Number _____

College or University _____

Address _____

APPENDIX B THE TELEPHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions for telephone interviews:

1. How many faculty are in the department?
 How many in speech?
 How many in theatre?
2. Does your department include mass communications?
3. Would you describe your department as having a liberal arts focus or a pre-professional focus?
4. To what do you attribute the degree of cooperation which your department enjoys between the speech and theatre area?
5. Do you feel that having increased interaction between students and faculty from speech and theatre in terms of curriculum or creative projects helps foster good relations and cooperation?
6. Do you feel that the speech and theatre disciplines are becoming increasingly separate as speech moves more towards a social science orientation with interpersonal and organizational communication?