

THE GOALS OF THE  
TENNESSEE SPEECH COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION

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Nothing imparts health, growth, and vigor to human enterprises as does the formulating and appropriating of authentic goals. Our interests and efforts become dynamic processes when we relentlessly pursue prized, but unattained goals. This principle applies both to individuals, such as teachers of communication skills, and to groups, such as the Tennessee Speech Communication Association. A consideration of goals for TSCA, therefore, should interest the readers of this journal. As TSCA president-elect, I suggest that all of us work to formulate and to realize goals that will continuously revitalize our teaching and profession.

The TSCA officers are currently planning our annual conference. When finalized, we want a program that will help us serve one another as we serve our students and our communities. We have adopted as planning guidelines some goals that many of you expressed during our 1979 conference. Let me share with you those goals, as TSCA president elect, I affirm, and that many of you hold to be authentic goals for ourselves.

First, we want to achieve an increase of members in TSCA. The greater our numbers within Tennessee and the wider the representation from all levels of teaching, from all types of schools, and from the diverse communication vocations, the

of schools, and from the diverse communication vocations, the greater will be the benefits we will receive from TSCA. We want TSCA to respond to the interests and to provide for the needs of people engaged in teaching and/or practicing the communication arts. The teacher needing help with the noncommunicative, withdrawn first grader, the political campaigner struggling with ethical decisions concerning persuasive methods and messages, the department head fighting for diminishing appropriations, the teacher assigned the impossible teaching load must find support and answers within TSCA. But, this supportive role can only exist as TSCA continues to increase in number and breadth of membership.

As a step toward achieving this goal, we urge all TSCA members to ask your city and county school administrators to approve attendance at our fall conference for continuing education units. We ask that you also urge teachers to seek CEU credit for attending the TSCA conference. Many school districts require that their faculty members continually earn CEU credits. If our conference serves as a recognized inservice educational program, and if it speaks to our professional needs and interests, then we believe TSCA will increase in membership and participation.

Second we want to increase the quality of professionalism among all teachers and practitioners of the communication arts. We see a need to raise our consciousness

as an association of professional people, bound together by common purposes, problems, and expertise. As professionals, the practices of self-direction, self-evaluation, and self-discipline must characterize us. We cannot provide professional leadership, influence public decision-making, or receive the respect and admiration of other professions if we exist as the hand maiden or step-child of other professional groups or of the state board of education.

We have selected, therefore, as the theme for our coming annual conference, "The Professional Future of Speech Communication Education in Tennessee--Its Minimum Objectives and Their Measurement." The program will include a resource person who has expertise in establishing measurable objectives. Members of our diverse interest groups will have opportunity to discuss and to begin work toward an improved professionalism in relation to our theme. While we recognize that one conference cannot resolve all the problems we face, even on this one theme, we also recognize that our conference experience can be one giant step toward a strengthened and an improved professionalism for TSCA.

Third, we want to reaffirm, and perhaps in some instances to revitalize those educational goals that have made our discipline and profession historically significant. In those "golden eras" of intellectual ferment and cultural

progress that occurred in western civilization, the "rhetors" have exerted an important, if not a dominant influence. Classical Greece and Rome and the European Renaissance illustrate the place of rhetoric within intellectual movements. At the risk of oversimplification, I argue that the value of the rhetorical arts, past and present, lies in the educational goals of rhetoric. Stated in the simplest terms, those goals are to produce citizens who have wise things to speak, who have eloquence for speaking, and who have an ethic to enlighten their choices of the means and ends of speaking.

The crises and challenges of the present decade rudely intrude into our lives, and from them we have no escape. The quality of our living, the value of our money, the fuel to travel and to heat our homes is no longer a matter of our choice alone. Our world is frighteningly hostile, increasingly crowded, and dangerously irrational. Given this world, the educational goals of TSCA must create prepared world citizens. By prepared, I mean citizens in whose person rhetoric fulfills its historical function. Prepared citizens speak wisdom in the midst of foolishness, banality, and irrationality. Prepared citizens speak eloquently in contrast to popular mediocrity, insipidity, and insanity. Prepared citizens inform their own choices by humanly beneficial ethics in a time of political opportunism, public

gullibility, and pervasive permissiveness. Toward the realization of these goals TSCA must address itself in its annual conference and in its daily contributions to the teachers and practitioners of speech communication.

As I count the objectives that TSCA should establish for the immediate year as well as this decade, they are at least three. TSCA must increase its membership in number and breadth of representation. TSCA must raise the professional consciousness and status of its members. TSCA must prepare citizens to function in a crisis world by speaking wisely, eloquently, and humanely. I urge all TSCA members to commit themselves to these goals.