

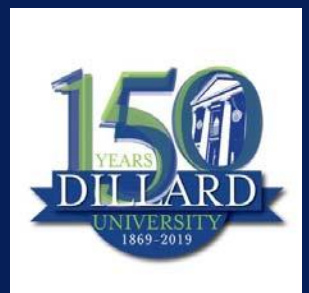
QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN



**#Talking on
the Oaks**

2019

Prepared for the Southern Association of
Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges








OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Yolanda Page
Vice President for Academic Affairs

From: Walter M. Kimbrough 
President

Date: September 9, 2019

Re: QEP Plan: #Talking on the Oaks

It gives me pleasure to acknowledge receipt and acceptance of Dillard University's QEP Plan: *#Talking on the Oaks*, the overarching goal of which is to "foster an institutional environment that prepares students to be effective and competitive oral communicators in a diverse, global, and technologically advanced society."

Kudos to the QEP committee on the successful development of the plan, which meets its goal of demonstrating Dillard's commitment to enhancement of student learning, retention, graduation, and employment skills and reinforces student's belief that their basic abilities and intelligence can be developed with effort, learning, and persistence.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
I Background	4
II Selection and Refinement of the QEP Topic	6
III Documenting the Institution’s Current Activities and Performance	13
IV Intended Student Learning Impact of the QEP Topic	18
V Review of Current Literature	19
VI Implementation of Actions for Improvement of Teaching and Learning	24
VII QEP Organizational Structure	29
VIII QEP Resources	33
IX QEP Marketing and Promotion Plan	35
X QEP Assessment	36
References	40
Appendices	43

Dillard University

Quality Enhancement Plan

“Talking on the Oaks”

Executive Summary

Dillard University's mission is to produce graduates who excel, become world leaders, are broadly educated, culturally aware, and concerned with improving the human condition. Through a highly personalized and learning-centered approach, Dillard's students are able to meet the competitive demands of a diverse, global and technologically advanced society. In 2015, Dillard set out to follow the *BLEUPRINT* for success, the Dillard Strategic Plan. Building on a rich foundation, the proposed QEP is based on Dillard's mission and three of the pillars identified in its strategic plan:

- Pillar 5: The Dillard Student; Objective 2 - Define and implement a unique Dillard undergraduate experience
- Pillar 8: The Successful Student; Objective 1 - Improve career readiness of students
- Pillar 9: 21st Century Teaching & Learning

Institutional planning and assessment information enhanced with information generated through focus groups and surveys were utilized to identify the focus for the 2020 QEP. The focus would align with the institutional mission, would be grounded in preparing students to solve problems as leaders and in service, and be reflective of the domains of communication, personal growth, and career preparation. The process of institutional engagement and extensive discussions across stakeholders identified student learning outcomes integral to quality public speaking in a liberal arts tradition yet responsive to changing professional and social norms.

The QEP Topic: Oral Communication Skills.

Oral communication skills, essential for academic and professional success, are honed during interaction both in and out of class. Students' capacity to communicate with faculty and staff impact both opportunities to engage and learning outcomes. Dillard students often come from backgrounds in which traditional academic skills in English and Language Arts have not been fully cultivated. The cultural norms

for oral communication of our students place them at a disadvantage in both traditional academic and professional settings. Dillard University's QEP Goal is –

To foster an institutional environment that prepares students to be effective and competitive oral communicators in a diverse, global, and technologically advanced society.

Effective and competitive oral communication is clear, tactful and relevant; it is informative and concise; it is used to build relationship and to enhance productivity and innovation

To achieve this overarching goal, Dillard intends to develop students' oral communication skills to be effective and appropriate communicators in all situations. Key student learning outcomes (SLOs) identified for the QEP include:

- 1) Students will demonstrate effective oral communication competency during academic advising by articulating their academic goals and asking appropriate questions to gain understanding of their requirements for academic progress (AY1-AY2 transition).
- 2) Students will demonstrate effective discipline specific oral communication during selected upper-level courses in their major (AY3, AY4).
- 3) Students engaged with co-curricular activities that connect with coursework or enhance skills necessary for successful entry into the workforce (undergraduate research, mock trial, student leadership, athletics, ...) will demonstrate effective oral communication, through the delivery of well-organized, fitting, and meaningful speech appropriate to the setting and audience.

The Oral Communication VALUE rubric as developed by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) as well as assessments associated with professional certification will be utilized to document student learning outcomes. Over the 5-year implementation of the QEP, departments, academic programs, and student support services will be assisted with adapting the QEP SLOs to meet discipline specific goals.

To achieve institutional and discipline specific goals, Dillard University will implement institution-wide interventions to prepare students to be effective oral communicators during their academic career and into their early professional life. The 2020 QEP advocates strategies for use within both academic and student success programs to strengthen students' oral communication skills. The plan will enable the academic and student success programs to rely on in and out of class strategies—oral skill practicum and interpersonal skills development. The QEP was developed through broad-based involvement by Dillard stakeholders including students, faculty, staff, employers and other external constituents.

Key touch points for intervening with students include:

- University College - First Year experience
- Upper level courses within each program
- Co-curricular activities (REU, Mock Trial, Leadership Academy, Debate, ...)

Activities include:

- Student interviews of faculty and staff
- Academic Advising conversations between students and advisors
- Opportunities for students to record audio introductions in courses to post on Canvas LMS
- Enhancing co-curricular engagement of students to provide opportunity to develop and showcase public speaking abilities through opportunities for students:
 - to be speakers during institutional programs;
 - to give oral presentations of academics and research;
 - to participate in competitive debate and competitions requiring public speaking; and
 - to speak in public representing the institution
- Professional development faculty on pedagogical strategies for developing speaking and oral communication skills in students
- Professional development for faculty and staff on assessing and providing feedback to students on their oral speaking skills

Dillard's aspirations are for an achievable and impactful QEP that promotes the development of students' oral communications skills to enhance learning outcomes. The plan will also support and develop the skills of faculty and staff for the betterment of the academic environment and preparation of students for life after Dillard. Improved oral communication abilities will directly impact students' capacity to be engaged members of the institutional community addressing important issues in the changing landscape of higher education.

I Background

The BLEUPRINT: Dillard University Strategic Plan 2015-2020, articulates objectives for the enhancement of undergraduate learning and development of quality graduates prepared for modern professional life. To actualize these goals, Dillard must develop students' oral communications skills to foster quality relationships both during their academic and professional careers.

Effective oral communication is an essential component for student learning and academic life as it allows for students to express their needs, desires, and values to peers, faculty, staff, and the community. Effective oral communication allows for students to communicate their experiences to potential employers and to build relationship with individuals. These skills also allow students and graduates to communicate Dillard core values in the community and to be engaged citizens leading public discourse for social good. The "ability to communicate verbally" ranked as the third most important desired skill according to a National Association of Colleges and Employers survey, (Adams 2014).

Public speaking has historically been rank as a skill university graduates wish they had developed and nurtured while in college (Smith 1997). Dillard students often come from backgrounds in which traditional academic skills in English and Language Arts have not been fully cultivated. The cultural norms for oral communication of our students place them at a disadvantage in both traditional academic and professional settings. Like many Americans, our students have yet to develop the confidence to comfortable speak in the public arena or in professional settings. Students arrive ill prepared to talk with academic professionals about their goals and their academic needs, to communicate to employers their skills and experiences, and to tell the story of the value of the Dillard experience when they venture out into the professional world. Oral communication is an effective pedagogical tool; Gary Smith (1997) documented that "students can learn more by speaking than by listening." With the QEP "Talking On the Oaks", Dillard strives to enhance student learning and become highly effective in preparing our students to be effective communicators of their personal story and the story of Dillard University.

The QEP's overarching goal "To foster an institutional environment that prepares students to be effective and competitive oral communicators in a diverse, global, and technologically advanced society", is aligned with institution-wide academic initiatives adopted by the Dillard faculty to enhance student learning, retention, graduation, and employment skills. In 2016, Dillard faculty embraced incorporating Growth Mindset across the curriculum and the adoption of the Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) which offers a comprehensive process to improve student graduate outcomes through curricular enhancements in writing skills. CPI utilizes Growth Mindset to reinforce student's belief that their basic abilities and intelligence can be developed with effort, learning, and persistence. When a Growth Mindset is adopted, students show greater motivation to learn because they understand that their learning situation as one in which they have the potential to develop their skills and abilities (Dweck, C. 1999; Dweck, C. 2006).

Additionally, Dillard adopted academic counseling and co-curricular initiatives designed to enhance retention rates of students who earn less than a 2.0 grade point average in the first semester of their freshman year. Steps were adopted to enrich academic counseling, strengthen student data collection and use of that data, and to enhance co-curricular opportunities through student engagement in undergraduate research beginning in the second year in order to facilitate early and sustained involvement in the high impact practice of undergraduate research.

The university has seen positive early results from these initiatives. A review of CPI initial reports noted the emergence of several key data sets which helped to guide development of the QEP topic. Most notable was that the initiative was limited to the development of students' writing communications skills only and did not include enhancement or assessment of student oral or speaking skills. As part of the co-curricular Student Success initiative designed to boost persistence rate between the second and third year, the undergraduate research initiative began to encourage and promote an oral component in its second-year student activities.

Encouraged by the information presented in the Institutional Research studies and the newly established programs designed to address some of the retention and efficacy issues raised in them, the Office of Academic Affairs continued to investigate measures that would further prepare students for academic and career success. In 2017, a survey of faculty, staff and students was conducted by the Office of Academic Affairs to determine how the university might further strengthen Dillard students learning skills and success.

II Selection and Refinement of the QEP Topic

The 2020 QEP topic, Oral Communication, was identified through a broad-based collaborative effort that included the involvement and support of Dillard stakeholders (students, faculty, staff and employers). It is widely recognized that learning at Dillard does not happen in a vacuum. Student learning and retention is everyone's responsibility. Hence, it was essential that support for the QEP would require broad-based input in identifying the topic and developing goals. The topic of this QEP evolved through an examination of institutional planning and assessment results since 2015. In identifying possible topics for the QEP, we continued to associate ideas with the university's mission of ensuring students succeed in their chosen academic and career pathways. This has been a key test for any topic or action we considered in developing the QEP. As with all university initiatives, the QEP goal(s) is linked to the strategic plan and budget.

To obtain input on QEP topic ideas that could be synthesized and used in the development of a five-year QEP as a part of the SACSCOC Reaffirmation of Accreditation, the topic selection process considered significant options and impact initiatives; it was inclusive and internal stakeholders had opportunities to provide input and were apprised of progress at regular intervals. The expectation is that all stakeholders will not only understand the QEP, its purpose and expected outcomes, but the process for accomplishing them.

Several initiatives were used to solicit feedback on a QEP topic: Institutional Planning and Assessment reports, focus groups, interviews and surveys, as well as a review of the literature. Data from these sources were triangulated to assure that the most informed and appropriate decisions were being considered in defining student learning outcomes and student success.

II.1 Developing Consensus

II.1.a Initial Survey

In 2017, a survey of faculty, staff and students was conducted to determine how the university might further strengthen Dillard students learning skills and success. The QEP Topic Selection Subcommittee developed the "Strengthening Students at Dillard University" questionnaire to obtain feedback concerning academic and social skills areas that would lead to effective learning and academic success. The objective of the survey was to obtain input from individual faculty, staff and students that could be synthesized and used in the development of the five-year QEP. The first question to be answered was, "What are the main academic and/or social skill areas the university should focus on to strengthen students at Dillard?" Choices included:

- Career Readiness Skills
- Communication Skills (writing, speaking, listening)
- Computational skills
- Critical Thinking Moral and Ethical Development
- Community Involvement and Service

- Global Understanding
- Leadership Skills
- Soft Skills (social graces, personal habits, etc.)
- Undergraduate Research
- Other (please specify)

A 5-point scale was used to rate the focus areas from “most important” to “not very important.” Respondents remained anonymous. Multiple selections were encouraged. 100 respondents participated. Their responses showed career preparation and communication skills most frequently ranked as “most important.” The majority of respondents thought that primary attention to these academic and/or social skill areas should be focused on all students at the university and not aimed at particular classifications such as freshmen students, major, etc. The results of that initial survey indicated that communication skills might be a concern among the university stakeholders that could be addressed by the QEP.

**“Strengthening Students at Dillard University”
Questionnaire Results**

Answer Choices	Responses	
Career Readiness	54.6%	54
Communication Skills (writing, speaking, listening)	74.8%	74
Community Involvement and Service	29.3%	29
Computational Skills	19.2%	19
Critical Thinking	62.6%	62
Global Understanding	29.3%	29
Leadership Skills	39.4%	39
Moral and Ethical Development	43.4%	43
Soft-Skills (social grades, personal habits, etc.)	53.5%	53
Undergraduate Research	34.3%	34
Other (please specify)	9.1%	9
Total Respondents 100		

Source: Academic Affairs, QEP Topic Selection Committee

II.1.b Survey of Institutional Perspective

To ensure broad-based institutional support, the information gleaned from the “Strengthening Students” questionnaire has been augmented with input from multiple internal constituencies, specifically faculty, staff, and students, and from external stakeholders, employers and funders. Through focus groups, surveys, and open-ended discussions with strategic groups the university honed a specific QEP topic. These interactions were initiated to ensure broad-based input and support for the QEP by institutional constituencies by providing members of the Topic Selection Committee with insight into needs, expectation, and capacity for enhancing the student learning environment and improving student learning outcomes.

A series of approaches including focus groups and questionnaires were administered in Spring 2019 to obtain additional feedback from university stakeholders. It was decided that an exploratory process involving the university’s core constituents would provide the most complete understanding of a narrowly focused QEP to improve student learning outcome around communication skills.

Representative List of Broad-based Input	
Input Type	Stakeholder Group
Survey	Students, Faculty, Staff, Administrators
Introduction Meeting	Enrollment Management Direct Reports
Introduction Meeting	Business and Finance Direct Reports
Introduction Meeting	Institutional Advancement
Focus Group	Faculty General Assembly
Focus Group	Institutional Advancement, Communications and Marketing, Community Development, Research & Sponsored Programs
Focus Group	Business and Finance, Records, Registration, Admissions, Recruitment, Bursar
Update and Fact Gathering	Academic Leadership Council
Focus Group	Student Success, Student Leadership, Support Services, Security, Chaplain
Update and Fact Gathering	Academic Leadership Council
Questionnaire	Executive Council
Update and Fact Gathering	Faculty General Assembly
Update and Fact Gathering	Academic Senate
Update and Fact Gathering	English Faculty
Questionnaire	Students, Faculty, Staff, Administrators, Employers
Update and Fact Gathering	Academic Leadership Council
Questionnaire	Students, Faculty, Staff, Administrators, Employers
Questionnaire	Students, Faculty, Staff, Administrators

II.1.c Focus Groups

Focus groups and scripts were developed to satisfy the requirement in SACSCOC Principle 7.2 that the QEP “has broad-based support of institutional constituencies.” It was essential to determine the differences of perceptions and points of views among essential campus constituents. Specifically, focus groups were designed by the Topic Selection Subcommittee to further focus the QEP. Feedback was needed concerning those areas most in need of improvement specifically learning outcomes and/or student success. The focus groups were intended to facilitate an understanding of perceptions, feelings, opinions, and the thoughts of constituents as well as to solicit information regarding what these stakeholders

believed to be important issues impacting student learning and student success relative to the university mission and strategic goals.

Purposeful sampling was utilized to ensure that the unique perspectives individuals and groups who interact with or have contact with students in diverse settings and under distinct circumstances were captured. Participants included the members of the Faculty General Assembly, Enrollment Management, Financial Aid and Services, Records, Advising, Institutional Advancement, Student Success, Community Services, and Career Development. These individuals were able to describe and illustrate the specifics of their experiences and how it may differ from generalized assumptions about our students' experiences.

During the focus groups, participants were asked "Considering Dillard University's mission and goals, please discuss and provide information to address the following:

1. Identify 3 specific and compelling issues or problems relative to student learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning.
2. Why is the issue or topic problematic for student learning/student success at Dillard and the reason(s) the topic is compelling to the University and students?
3. Identify student population(s), if any, that will be the focus of the proposed issues.
4. Identify potential/strategies that would promote student learning/student success.
5. Briefly describe one or more strategies or remedies to access the identified student learning/student success topics you have identified.
6. How do the proposed issues relate to Dillard's mission and goals?

From individual responses, major ideas and reactions that emerged were reduced to concepts that described student learning and student success outcomes.

II.1.d Faculty Focus Group

Faculty and staff expressed positive support for a QEP theme that would enhance both student learning outcomes and student success. They referenced to the Career Pathways Initiative that was currently being administered at Dillard and which focuses on strengthening student writing skills. After a lengthy discussion of strategies already in place to enhance student skills, the faculty heartily endorsed oral communication skills as a beneficial and valuable skill that would help give students a competitive edge whatever their chosen academic or career path after graduation.

Faculty listed oral presentations in the classroom and at conferences, strengthening interviews for internships and external jobs, and discussions with project supervisors during internships as methods to improve students' oral communication abilities. The faculty described an ideal course structure that includes activities to engaged students in problem-solving, discussions of their creative work and research projects outside the classroom, and independently engaging in individual discussions with faculty. To supplement course-based learning, they endorsed initiatives which obligate student engagement in co-curricular experiential initiatives such as community service, internships and creative work and Undergraduate research while enriching the students' spirit.

While faculty responses were numerous and diverse, most of the discussants focused on adopting an expanded and enhanced CPI as the QEP program because it had been in effect for a year, had already required faculty commitment and had start-up funding. A counter argument was that we need to examine other student issues and promoted counseling services and experiential learning.

II.1.e Staff Focus Groups

Intentionally designed focus groups with staff began during the Fall of 2018. Specifically, sessions were held with staff from the divisions of Business and Finance, Enrollment Management, Institutional Advancement (including Community Relations and Communications and Marketing), and Student Success. The purpose of these discussions was to allow individuals in these units to express their points of view in a group setting and provide indicators that would inform selection of the QEP topic. Many of these individuals serve as the first-line of contacts with students and possess different perceptions of student performance, needs, and abilities than do faculty.

Prior to arranging focus groups with staff and administrators, the QEP Director met with each Vice President and their direct reports to explain the QEP's connection to the reaccreditation and importance of a broad-based process of developing the plan. These meetings were also essential to minimizing the possibility and perception of coercion or undue influence in recruiting staff to the focus group who were employed in their divisions.

II.1.f Interview

One interview was held with the Director of Community Relations. This one-person unit is responsible for fostering a relationship between the university and its broader New Orleans community by educating them to the value Dillard brings to the community. The interview questions mimicked the questions asked during the staff focus groups.

II.1.g Surveys

Further information was obtained through surveys of the university's constituents. The surveys helped to examine in further detail the impact of the focus groups results. We were able to hone in on focus group comments by directing specific questions to the university's constituents—students, faculty, staff, administrators and employers responded to the questions. In addition to the initial survey administered in 2017, an additional three surveys were administered.

Focus Survey #2 A second survey was sent to all students, faculty, staff, administrators and employers. The purpose of this questionnaire was to obtain a broad-based approach to identifying specific areas that would enhance and improve the student learning experience at Dillard if selected as the QEP topic. A total of 243 participants responded. The survey was intended to inform selection of the QEP Theme with the Strategic Plan and student assessment outcomes. Participants rank the categories below on importance:

- Career Preparation
- Collaborative Learning, leadership and Teamwork
- Communication Skills
- Diverse Learning Opportunities (Experiential Learning, Internships, etc.)
- Financial Literacy
- Math and Computational Skills
- Personal, Responsibility and Self-Management
- Research Skills
- Technology Skills

The top four most frequent responses to “Most important” were:

- 1 Career Preparation
- 2 Communication Skills
- 3 Personal Responsibility
- 4 Diverse Learning Opportunities (Experiential Learning, Internships, etc.)

Focus Survey #3 The President’s Executive Council was asked to identify the main academic and/or social skills areas the university should focus on to strengthen students. Options were: Communication Skills (writing, speaking, listening), Computational Skills, Soft Skills (social graces, personal habits, etc.), Leadership skills, Global Understanding, Critical Thinking, Moral and Ethical Development, Community Involvement and Service, Career Readiness Skills, Undergraduate Research, Other (Specify). Multiple answers were allowed. Twenty-five participants taking the survey indicated their top three responses were:

- Communication Skills (Writing, Speaking, Listening) - 84%
- Critical Thinking - 72%
- Career Readiness Skills - 40%

Focus Survey #4 Through an examination of previous survey results, the Topic Selection Subcommittee, determined that Communications Skills was too broad a category and the subcommittee members would need more information to determine what communication skills the stakeholders were referencing and how to address them. A final survey of students, faculty and staff was administered asking these stakeholders to identify what the term “communications” means to them. ## responded to the survey.

II.2 Results

The university addressed the question of a ‘significant learning need’ by engaging the full Dillard community of faculty, staff, and administrators, Board of Trustees and employers in broad-based participation to ensure broad representation across the institution’s diverse constituents and stakeholders. Through a combination of qualitative data (gained through focus groups, interviews, informational meetings) and quantitative data (e.g., learning outcome assessment, course success rates, and surveys), a clear preference emerged to address students’ learning needs in communications and

specifically in oral communications. All groups within the Dillard community acknowledged oral communication deficits as a significant barrier to student learning, progression, completion, and to success in their chosen vocation.

All stakeholders, students, faculty, staff, board of trustees and employers were informed of the topic selection process and were able to provide feedback during focus groups, open discussions at meetings and through several questionnaires. Given the evidence that was originated and sustained by Dillard's institutional planning and assessment process and augmented by *ad hoc* information through other sources, the Topic Selection and Assessment Subcommittees identified key issues to improve student learning outcomes and/or student success needs that are in direct alignment with our mission and Strategic Plan. The QEP is being developed to enhance oral communication skills, set priorities and allocate resources to achieve stated learning goals.

III Documenting the Institution’s Current Activities and Performance

III.1 Oral Communication Across the Curriculum

The selection of oral communication as the QEP focus is connected with existing learning expectations across the curriculum. Specific oral communication course work and program requirements are in place but coordination of goals, integration of activities, and assessment of outcomes across academic units does not. Analysis of program requirements and student learning outcomes was conducted to understand current expectations and performance.

III.1.a Expected Student Learning Outcomes and Oral Communication

A review of majors and schools revealed that oral communication skills are an expected learning outcomes in 6 majors and one school.

Majors	Student Learning Outcomes
English	Develop competence in spoken and written English. Demonstrate skills in close reading interpretation, critical thinking analysis, and evaluation of a variety of oral, visual, and written texts. Use a variety of technology and information resources to gather and synthesize information and to produce and communicate knowledge
Mass Communication	Demonstrate competence in written and oral communication.
Biology	Communicate scientific information in a clear and concise manner both orally and in writing.
Criminal Justice	Demonstrate effective communication skills.
Social Work	Demonstrate communicative skills by presenting research to an audience of social sciences faculty members, students, and other disciplinary scholars.
Urban Studies & Public Policy	Communicate complex policy issues in a clear and concise manner both orally and in writing.
Schools	Student Learning Outcomes
School of Nursing	Communicate effectively to foster therapeutic interpersonal and collaborative relationships in a culturally diverse society.

Source: Dillard University 2017-2019 Academic Catalog

III.1.b Course Requirements and Oral Communications

To achieve these learning outcomes, programs have traditionally included required speech-intensive course work. Degree requirements for all majors were reviewed, identifying Public Speaking course (SPT-204) as one of six electives students can select from to meet the core requirement in Humanities. A review of program requirements identified SPT-204 as a major requirement in 8 of 21 majors. The course description for SPT-204 offers “Intensive speech training utilizing key speech purposes. Emphasis on speech preparation and adaptation, effective delivery and rhetorical evaluation”. There was little

consistency in when SPT 204 listed in the academic program plan (e.g. 1st year/1st semester or 4th year/2nd semester).

Major/Degree Concentration	SPT 204 Required in Year/Semester
Nursing, Generic, Transfer	4th year/2nd semester
Visual Arts	4th year/2nd semester
Film	3rd year/2nd semester
Public Health	3rd year/2nd semester
Social Work	2nd year/2nd semester
Criminal Justice	2nd year/2nd semester
Political Science	2nd year/1st semester
Urban Studies & PP	1st year/1st semester

III.1.c Oral Communication Across the Institutional Experience

To determine where oral communication skills are introduced, reinforced, and assessed during academic programs and in co-curricular activities, the QEP Assessment Subcommittee collected and reviewed course syllabi identifying major assignments aligned with a focus on development and assessment of oral communication skills. 55 courses were identified as including oral or verbal communication in their descriptions.

III.2 Assessment of Oral Communication Skills

Data collected for various components of on-going institutional effectiveness review were compiled to better understand the current capacity of the institution related to the teaching and learning of oral communication skills. The QEP Assessment Subcommittee set out to determine if oral communication skills are evaluated independent of course instructor’s grading schemes or outside of course assessments. These data existed across academic and support units. The review is intended to guide the development of curricula and co-curricular interventions and the assessment of institutional outcomes.

III.2.a DEAL Readiness Self-Assessment

Starting in 2017, the Office of Distance Education and Learning (DEAL) at Dillard began collecting self-assessment information from students enrolled in both hybrid and online learning courses to determine student readiness to participate independently in these courses. Students enrolled in these courses must not only navigate readings and other educational materials independently but feel comfortable asking for help from the instructor and able to communicate with individual students and student groups. The DEAL Readiness Self-Assessment emphasizes the importance of both effective writing and oral communication skills in successfully completing hybrid and online learning courses. It examines students’ perception of their ability to be successful in different types of presentations. Students were asked to mark only one response under each category. Early results from 557 respondents to a sample of questions related to the use of oral skills in online and hybrid courses show:

• **Online Audio/Video:**

#17. I think that I would be able to relate the content of short video clips (1-3 minutes typically) to the information I have read online or in books.

Completely Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure	Strongly Agree	Completely Agree
50%	35%	12%	2%	1%

#19. I think that I would be able to understand course-related information when it's presented in video formats.

• **Internet Discussions**

#20. I think I would be able to carry on a conversation with others using the Internet (e.g., Internet chat, instant messenger).

#21. I think that I would be comfortable having several discussions taking place in the same online chat even though I may not be participating in all of them.

#22. I think that I would be able to follow along with an online conversation (e.g., Internet chat, instant messenger) while typing.

III.2.b Oral Communication Competency

The College of Nursing assesses ten End of Program Student Learning Outcomes (EPSLOs) to measure the students' ability to communicate effectively and interpersonal relationship skills. In the senior year, students are expected to possess the skills necessary to communicate effectively with patients and members of the health care team to improve health outcomes. This Nurse Manager Interview tool is used to measure students' ability to communicate with nurse managers regarding the management of care for diverse patients. Results of this assessment are shown below.

College of Nursing Assessment of EPSLO 1								
Component EPSLO1	Expected Level of Achievement	Frequency of Assessment	Assessment Method(s)*	Baseline Date	Results of Data Collection and Analysis + N (%), X = mean			Actions for Program Development, Maintenance or Revision
				2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	
EPSLO 1. Communicate effectively to foster therapeutic interpersonal and collaborative relationships in a culturally diverse society.	80% of students will earn a grade of 80 or greater	Spring every other year	NUR 452L Nurse Manager Interview	43 -100 X = 95.8	-	11 - 90.90% X = 92	-	ELA achieved. Maintain data collection and trending of data. Review rubric for continued program development.

Source: College of Nursing

III.3 Co-Curricular Oral Communication Opportunities

In addition to course-based opportunities, students have opportunities to practice and reinforce skills through co-curricular pursuits. During these activities, students can demonstrate the ability to communicate orally through:

- Listening attentively to others and responding appropriately
- Adapting individual style to the occasion, task and audience, and
- Articulating ideas in formal and informal setting, through academic, social, or professional context, and within and outside of the institutional community.

Examples of co-curricular activities in which oral communication skills are emphasized include:

III.3a Onboarding Mini Course

New students are asked to complete an onboarding mini course that introduces them to various campus academic technologies and the university's learning management system. One of the activities requires the creation of a short and informal self-introduction video. Nearly 11% of students successfully completed a video self-introduction which offers these students a low stakes opportunity to develop oral communication skills in a technology-rich environment. The university began licensing *VoiceThread* in the Fall of 2018. Thus far 77 students in the onboarding mini course have used *VoiceThread* for a multimedia activity that involves using a microphone and recording a pre-written voice comment and posting it to an online, interactive, password protected space, again, offering those students a low stakes opportunity to use oral communication skills in an evolving technology-rich world. *VoiceThread* is available to all instructors at Dillard University. Five members of the faculty have earned credentials as *VoiceThread* Certified Educators. Unfortunately, student *VoiceThread* participation data is not available at this time.

III.3b Undergraduate Research

The undergraduate research process requires a complementary level of both oral and written communication skills. These skills are honed through the practices of oral justifications, one-on-one meetings with faculty research mentors, summative evaluations with students' peers, and through presentations at campus-wide, regional and national conferences and competitions. Beginning in the second-year, students have an opportunity to participate in university-wide research and off-campus presentations that continue to develop and reinforce self-confidence in their oral communication abilities. Data on students' oral presentations at campus-wide presentations will be collected starting with the end of year Undergraduate Research events in Spring 2019.

III.3c Mock Trials

Students who have identified interest in pursuing careers in law receive training that supports development of their communication skills, and enhancement of speaking, listening, reasoning skills, self-confidence and self-esteem, and knowledge of strategies for conflict resolution as well as writing. Data from this program will be collected beginning Fall 2019.

III.3d Honda Campus All-Star Challenge

Student participants in this national competition are prepared to share ideas and develop networks while mastering factual knowledge, principles and developing confidence acquired through game play. In this competition, Dillard students compete against other regional HBCCUs as part of a year-round program that includes campus engagement, intramural play, and qualifying tournaments that culminates with a National Championship meet.

There has been no systematic assessment of the oral communications skills of students engaged in these initiatives. It is intended that through the QEP, these activities would be incorporated into student learning and assessment of oral communication.

The systematic review undertaken by the Assessment Subcommittee of the university's ongoing student evaluation and institution-wide planning and assessment processes revealed when, where, and how students currently have opportunities to develop and engage in oral communication. Assessment of students' skills is currently limited. The results of annual assessment data from specific NSSE items in particular indicated that many Dillard students were not developing oral communication skills at a level expected of college graduates. This examination of the curriculum and assessment results, in combination with feedback from the initial survey of stakeholders are documentation of the need and existing capacity around oral communication at Dillard University.

IV Intended Student Learning Impact of the QEP Topic

Issues identified in the review of SPT-204 course grades, the DEAL Readiness Self-Assessment, NESSE Results, and program outcomes guide Dillard's desire to address the needs of students and the shortcoming in historical instruction around oral communication. Dillard University intends to impact student learning to:

- Facilitate students' conversation with advisors and faculty promoting greater understanding and ownership of individual learning and their academic career.
- Develop in students the skills and confidence to engage in discussions by articulating questions, expressing opinions, and stating facts across all occasions including academic advising, formal presentations, social interactions, public discourse, and professional interactions.
- Develop students' appreciation for the art of social conversation as a mechanism for developing and maintaining relationships with peers, academics, professionals, and the community.
- Provide students an opportunity to speak in the language of their discipline, effectively communicating mastery of concepts and knowledge required of their chosen vocation.

IV.1 Overarching Goal

The overarching goal of the Dillard University QEP is –

To foster an institutional environment that prepares students to be effective and competitive oral communicators in a diverse, global, and technologically advanced society.

Effective and competitive oral communication is clear, tactful and relevant; it is informative and concise; it is used to build relationship and to enhance productivity and innovation.

IV.2 Student Learning Outcomes

To achieve the overarching goal of the QEP, Dillard intends to develop students' oral communication skills to be effective and appropriate communicators in all situations. The key student learning outcomes (SLOs) identified for the QEP include:

- 1) Students will demonstrate effective oral communication competency during academic advising by articulating their academic goals and asking appropriate questions to gain understanding of their requirements for academic progress (AY1-AY2 transition).
- 2) Students will demonstrate effective discipline specific oral communication during selected upper-level courses in their major (AY3, AY4).
- 3) Students engaged with co-curricular activities that connect with coursework or enhance skills necessary for successful entry into the workforce (undergraduate research, mock trial, student leadership, athletics, ...) will demonstrate effective oral communication, through the delivery of well-organized, fitting, and meaningful speech appropriate to the setting and audience.

V Literature Review

The QEP Literature Review Subcommittee conducted a review of literature to identify current best practices and methodologies for improving students' learning of oral communication skills. The results of the literature review showed that many institutions are migrating, with great success, from traditional teaching methods to those that engage students in active and contextualized learning. Any successful strategy for improving student learning must align teaching methodologies with student learning styles, for which the literature provides several successful approaches.

The ability to communicate is the most important goal of language for an individual to be able to operate effectively (Hedge, 2000). Oral Communication is paramount for the success of college students during and after graduation. Dillard University has selected Oral Communication Skills as the topic for the 2020 Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). This QEP topic will support the university's student learning and student success goals. An increasing body of literature examines the idea that students must develop communication skills to achieve their professional goals in the 21st century. This literature review defines, examines, and considers the importance of oral communication skills to enhance student learning and employability prospects in career choices.

This Literature Review examines:

- Oral Communication Skills
- Current Techniques of Oral Communication Skills in the Classroom
Business, Humanities, Nursing, Social Science, STEM
- High Impact Practices-Presenting Research Orally
- Oral Communication from a Career Perspective

V.1 Oral Communication Skills

Oral Communication has been defined as “the process of expressing ideas through the medium of speech and this plays a crucial role in the life of students” (Lucanus, 2017, p.1). The origin of an individual's communication skills is developed in the home, enhanced through education, and practiced through social and professional interaction. (Lucanus, 2017, p.1). Mastering definitive skills surrounding face-to-face conversations, group and individual speaking, and oral presentations are emphasized as the foundation of Oral Communication Skills (Guffey & Lowey, 2015, p. 501). Others indicate oral communications skills consist of “traits, qualities, and attributes, such as public speaking, leading meetings, or negotiating a contract” (Coffelt, Baker, Corey, 2016, p.4). Similarly, in January of 2019, The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) defines oral communication skills as an individual's ability to express ideas to others (p.1).

V.1.a Communication as an Essential Skill

College students spend over 70% of their day engaged in oral communication, either speaking or listening, and less than 30% of their day engaged in written communication, reading and writing (Buckley, M.H.,

1992). Oral communication is increasing important for personal, professional, and academic success and is a top skill desired by employers (Adams, S., 2014). Effective oral communication fuel self-confidence and facilitate personal control of life. Oral communication skills are associated with the ability to research, conceptualize, organize, and present ideas, facts, and arguments. These are critical for participation as engaged citizens in both democracy and capitalism in contemporary society (Emanuel, R., 2011)

V.2 Current Techniques of Oral Communication Skills in the Classroom

In-depth instruction and practice are essential for the development of strong speaking skills. In 2018, Gewertz indicated that the major components of teaching oral communication skills in the classroom take on a traditional academic form through lecture as the instructor models formal language, PowerPoint presentations, debate coaching, class discussions, and oral presentations by students (p.1). Generally, spoken presentations are considered to follow a format comprised of Introduction, Main Body (methods, results), and Conclusion (discussion, questions from the audience) (Platow, 2002). The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U, 2013) have developed a five-point rubric to evaluate student oral presentations which consist of:

1. Central message - Compelling, easily identifiable, central idea.
2. Delivery Techniques - Posture, projection, eye contact, gestures.
3. Language - Appropriate terminology free from bias.
4. Organization - Grouping, and sequencing of ideas such as chronological pattern, a problem/solution pattern or analysis of parts pattern
5. Supporting Material -Credible, relevant, and appropriate sources.

The Public Speaking Project emphasizes eleven speaking competencies that need to be mastered to communicate effectively: 1) Determine a topic that is suitable for the audience and the occasion, 2) Formulate an introduction that positions the audience to the topic and speaker, 3) Construct an effective organization pattern 4) Locate, synthesize, and utilize supporting evidence, 5) Reinforce the thesis and provide psychological closure, 6) Demonstrate a careful word choice in language, 7) Master vocal variation and paralanguage to engage the audience, 8) Demonstrate nonverbal behavior that supports the verbal message, 9) Adapt the presentation to the audience, 10) Employ visual aids, 11) Design an effective message with credible evidence and sound reasoning (Schreiber and Hartranft, 2013, p. 1.8 -1.10). Additionally, oral Communication experiential learning techniques are specific to the discipline.

V.2a Business

Reinsch & Gardner (2014) identify oral communication skills, such as interpersonal, listening, and presenting as the foremost techniques essential for business majors to acquire in oral communication courses. In addition, Coffelt, Baker, & Corey (2016), noted “the five most important communication skills are listening attentiveness, listening responsiveness, conveying professional attitude of respect and interest in clients, asking for clarification or feedback from management, and speaking on the telephone/making conference calls from clients” (p.5). Because of the lack of effective training in oral

communication skills, the authors suggest universities consider adopting a hybrid communications course which includes public speaking and interpersonal communications topics.

V.2b Humanities

Humanities majors are expected to communicate orally and organize their ideas in an articulate manner. Classical rhetoric emphasized logic, human motivation, principles of language, and performance (DeCaro, 2013, p. 1). The ability to persuade in a logical and coherent argument remains at the foundation of oral communication. According to Yarnell (2017) college students need to master oral communication skills in order to effectively speak in front of an audience, communicate with formal and professional language, collaborate on group projects, and strengthen time management skills. “Moreover, high impact pedagogical practices-seminar-style, undergraduate research, community-based learning, internships, etc.” (Decatur, 2016, p. 1) require excellent oral communication skills. A survey of top learning outcomes among intellectual and practical skills ranked oral communication skills at 82% (Humphreys, 2015). Today, oral communications skills need to train students in techniques that will foster “listening, intercultural communication, group communication, interpersonal communication, conflict resolution, gender and communication, and the study of communication in specific contexts” (Emanuel, 2007, p. 3).

V.2c Nursing

Nursing requires not only scientific knowledge but also interpersonal communication essential in all areas of treatment. Nursing students must master aspects of oral communications skills to achieve best practices with their patients. The nursing process moreover as a scientific method of exercise and implementation is achieved through dialogue, interpersonal environment and with specific communication skills. (Raya, 2005). According to Kourkouta and Papathanasiou (2014) “Communication is a vital element in Nursing in all areas of activity and in all its interventions such as prevention, treatment, therapy, rehabilitation, education, and health promotion”. It is essential for the nurse to manifest a sympathetic and relatable manner which can only be achieved through effective communication skills which demonstrate a careful and personal understanding of the patient (Kourkouta and Papathanasiou, 2014).

Essential to this process is communication skills associated with listening. “Effective listening requires concentration and a focused effort that is known as active listening” (Goddu, 2013). According to Papathanasiou (2014) referencing Papadantonaki, the practice of nursing requires listening skills that include “concentration of attention and mobilization of all the senses for the perception of verbal and nonverbal messages emitted by each patient. By listening, nurses assess the situation and the problems of the patient; they enhance his/her self-esteem and integrate both the nursing diagnosis and the process of care at all levels” (pp. 297-298)

V.2d Social Sciences

Ahmadov (2011) stresses the utilization of mock trials as an effective active learning tool in teaching the history of political thought. “Moot courts and mock trials are...techniques (that) have been successfully

used in teaching public law (Cooper, 1979; Deardorff and Aliotta, 2000), international law (Collins and Rogoff, 1991; Ambrosio, 2006; Weiden 2009), world politics (Jefferson, 1999), economics (Carlson and Skaggs, 2000), taxation (Bentley, 1996), and other disciplines (Knerr and Sommerman, 2004). Mock trials have also been used for such practical purposes as predicting jury behavior (Bray and Kerr 1979; Kassin, 1984) and making decisions in difficult clinical cases (Smith, 1992)” (Ahmadov, 2011, p. 625). Simulations and role-plays generate students’ immersion into actively reconstructing and experiencing complex phenomena specific to the discipline leading to enhanced oral communication skills.

V.2e Science, Technology, Engineering, & Mathematics

Studies report that too often STEM students are unable to communicate their understanding of textbook knowledge in a functioning laboratory environment. Oral communication skills are necessary to “design, carry out, analyze, and interpret experiments” (White et al, 2013, p. 298). The hard skills academic curricula in STEM disciplines afford little training or emphasis in soft skills such as oral communication skills which are required for professional employment after graduation. To address the lack of oral communication training, one of the major skills ASBMB recommend for STEM students is “ability to use oral communication to present their work to both a science literate and a science non-literate audience” (White et al, 2013, p. 298). Supporting that claim, InTeGrate recommends service learning and internships to develop oral communication skills. At the 2013 Geoscience in the 21st Century Workforce Workshop, held at Pennsylvania State University, it was recommended that students master geoscience concepts through oral communication mastered in laboratory and field investigations and be able to speak and explain STEM concepts to general audiences (InTeGrate, 2103). The debate, which requires mastering oral rhetoric, from the time of classical education, has been used as a technique to assess oral communication skills while fostering critical thinking to deliver divergent points of view on a topic. Recent studies in Microbiology indicate that debate is a technique that can be utilized to help students integrate everyday problems “using scientific issues to assess societal challenges. Debates provide the scaffolding for evaluating relevant issues” (Shaw, 2012, p. 1).

V.3 High Impact Practices-Presenting Information Research Orally

High Impact Practices are common intellectual experiences outside the classroom that provide co-curricular options for students. These practices may include: 1) Undergraduate Research and Creative Work, 2) Diversity and Global Learning, 3) Service/Community-Based Learning, 4) Internships, 5) Capstone Courses and Projects, 6) First Year Experience. Dillard’s QEP will target Undergraduate Research and Creative Work, Internships, and Capstone Courses as the primary high impact practices that will influence the development of oral communication skills for all students at Dillard University. The effectiveness of these practices across the curriculum will lead to enhancing student success through the development of oral communication. According to NACE, students must acquire public speaking skills in order to express their ideas to others effectively (NACE, 2019).

V.4 Oral Communication Skills from the Career Perspective

Employers consistently rank oral communication skills as a top priority for job seekers in all career categories. “Effective high-quality communication has been linked to increased productivity, decreased absenteeism, job satisfaction, job performance, and organizational commitment” (Lear, Hodge, and Schultz, 2015, p. 66). In 2018, the AAC&U survey of executives and hiring managers identify oral communication as the number one skill desired by employers. In 2019 NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers) lists oral communication skills as one of the eight major competencies for new college graduates’ career readiness.

V.5 Findings

The literature demonstrates that sharing of information between individuals is at the foundation of human interaction. The roots of speech communication lie in the study of rhetoric found in Classical Greek civilization. Today, oral communications can be studied as a major discipline in colleges and universities across the world. Enhanced oral communications skills cultivates the ability to make decisions, simplify judgments, and improve curation of knowledge. The ability to research, synthesize, and effectively deliver ideas in personal and professional settings fosters students’ readiness to contribute to and cultivate a democratic society and to more fully participate in the workforce. Preparing students for mastery of speaking skills ranks as a priority across the curriculum at Dillard University aligned with the university mission and strategic plan.

VI Implementation of Actions for Improvement of Teaching and Learning

VI.1 Academic / Classroom based learning

The central focus of the QEP is to coordinate and enhance 'speaking intensive' coursework across the curriculum. These courses would incorporate evidence-based pedagogy and activities to develop students' skills to perform as oral communicators. Students would demonstrate understanding of course material and content through oral presentations to audiences. Oral Communication is broadly defined for the purposes of this QEP and would include formal academic presentation, paired conversations to reinforce learned concepts, class debates, panel discussions, and professional speaking including networking and advocacy. Oral communication is the sharing and exchange of concepts or opinions through talking to an audience.

The University College touches all students as they enter Dillard and transition for high school to college. This division will facilitate and promote student engagement in core speaking activities during their FYE activities. The University College has identified issues of comfort and confidence as impediments to students asking questions of and engaging in conversations with advisors and professors. To overcome these issues, during FYE courses (FYS101 and FYS102) students will be required to complete an oral interview of a faculty or staff focused on college completion. This activity is designed to provide students with a low-risk opportunity to engage in conversation with institution staff. The University College will solicit volunteers to serve as subjects for these interviews. Volunteers will be provided with strategies to promote students' engagement in a conversational interview.

The second activity University College will use to develop oral communication skills will be during academic advising. Students identified as at-risk during their first semester are required to participate in face-to-face advising. During these sessions, University College advising staff will utilize strategies to promote student engagement in a conversation to identify the reasons for their struggles, discuss their strengths, and to accept a plan to improve their academic performance. This strategy is intended to develop the real world skill of talking through a problem to arrive at a solution. Students often struggle with comfort in discussing problems, this activity is designed to address issues of comfort with difficult conversations of personal challenges.

These two interventions are designed to promote skills required of students to fully engage with the institution for academic success. Students will develop comfort in communicating with faculty and staff to address their needs and to communicate their desires during their academic career. Through improved oral communication, students develop voice and agency to address challenges, to facilitate engagement, and to promote academic progress.

Within the existing curriculum, oral communication skills will be taught and reinforced during QEP designated 'oral intensive' courses. These QEP courses would reside in disciplines across the curriculum and would focus on discipline-specific content. These QEP courses would be enhanced with activities

designed to promote improved public speaking skills through the presentation of relevant topics in oral discussions and presentations. Courses will primarily focus on traditional discipline-based content with a portion of instruction dedicated to development of oral communication skills for both academic and professional success.

These QEP designated ‘oral intensive’ courses will reinforce the skills presented during the University College experience and introduce new skills for discipline based oral communication. Each School within Dillard (School of Accounting and Financial Economics, School of Business Administration, School of Social Sciences, School of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), School of Humanities, and School of Health and Wellness) will identify a set of target courses for development and delivery as an enhanced oral communication course. Over the life of the QEP, Dillard will have developed and implemented at least one enhance oral communication course as a requirement for graduation in each program.

VI.2 Faculty Development

Dillard acknowledge that professionalism requires life-long learning to remain current with discipline specific knowledge and practice as well as to best serve students’ learning needs. Professional Development is effective when it results in improved delivery of professional services (Beer, 2016). Extended research in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning document the connection between regular participation in professional development and improved student success (Condon, W. et al, 2016). The goal of Dillard’s QEP Faculty Professional Development (QFPD) initiative is to facilitate faculty experts continued assimilation of new instructional strategies into the toolbox of existing practice. QFPD is operationalized as both research and practice in the profession of teaching and learning.

To facilitate success, the QFPD will provide faculty with the opportunity to engage with their peers to improve pedagogical practice in teaching and assessing oral communication. QFPD will be delivered during ‘Brown Bag Lunch’ sessions, summer institutes, and asynchronously through the institutional learning management system (Canvas). Faculty teaching ‘oral intensive’ courses will be provided with support for continuous quality improvement of teaching to promote enhanced skills and practice.

QFPD interactive learning groups will utilize both Canvas and face-to-face meetings to share research and best-practice strategies for teaching and assessing oral communication. Faculty will discuss personal experiences and ‘lessons learned’ from implementation within the specifics of their discipline and the learning culture of Dillard University. The QFPD initiative will be organized under the Office of Academic Affairs with the Department of Academic Technology and Distance Education coordinating the development of the LMS-based QFPD modules.

VI.3 Co-curricular based learning

Co-curricular activities also promote student development of oral communication skills required for success beyond the classroom. Activities such as research experiences, participation in debate, academic games, mock-trial, athletics, and student leadership promote the development the skills required to stand

in front of an audience and effectively communicate ideas, facts, and opinions; to both answer questions and ask questions.

VI.4 Staff Development

Staff assigned to moderate and facilitate co-curricular activities will be provided opportunity to develop knowledge and skills to promote the development of oral communication skills in real world situations. Staff development will focus on the skills required to assess students' oral communication and to provide critical feedback that informs students of issues of clarity, delivery, and appropriateness for the audience and environment. These staff development activities will be delivered in large group format, providing general strategies and knowledge, and in individual sessions focused on specific activities and strategies based on each staff's intersections and engagement with students.

VI.5 Evidence Based Strategies

There exist a variety of evidence based strategies to improve oral communication in college students and to develop competencies that can be assessed with performance-based evaluation rubrics. Such rubrics include The Competent Speaker (Morreale, S.P. et al, 1998) and the AAC&U Oral Communication VALUE Rubric (2009). Other assessment rubrics have been developed by institutions to assess more specific learning goals of programs and courses.

VI.5A Class Discussion

The most common learning activities to promote oral communication development and mastery is Class Discussions (Walls, JK, 2018; Yannuzzi, TJ, 2014; Flosason, T 2015; Dallimore, EJ 2008). It has been noted that the 'exceptional teacher did not just want to get students speaking; they wanted them to think and learn how to engage in the exchange of ideas" (Bain, 2004 p126). Bain found discussions worked when they began with exploratory questions to confront students with problems of understanding and application; these were followed by prompts to provoke imagination requiring students to articulate solutions and possibilities. Dallimore documented evidence that active preparation and participation in class discussion is linked to students' reports of improved oral and written communication skills and he suggest that discussion can be a useful addition to cross-curricular programs as well as in standalone courses. Learner-led discussions format in particular, with its emphasis on a "learner-centered" approach, allowed learners to take charge of their own intellectual growth and enhanced their appreciation for the scientific method and analysis (Mathias, C 2015). Class discussions can be used in combination with other strategies to improve learning outcomes and develop oral communication skills. Allowing students to remain silent during discussion weakens the vitality of the class discussion and does not develop important skills required for success in professional careers – the ability to express ideas and views in group settings (Foster, L et al 2009). To develop more "democratic" classroom in which genuine discussion among equal peers is possible requires teaching the skills underlying discussion. (Flynn, 2009). Scaffolding the teaching of discussion skills throughout a course allows students to become more active and engaged in good discussion.

VI.5b Student-led Instruction

Encouraging students to teach one another during courses develops their skills in oral communication and provides the experience of learning how to explain concepts to peers (Davis, 2009). These experiences with oral presentation to their peers can be used to develop oral communication skills for different purposes. Gordon (2007) used a phenomenographic study to discern three contrasting concepts for oral presentations: as transmission of ideas and information; as a test of understanding; and as arguing a position. Each requires students to be aware of the audience and their interaction with that audience.

VI.5c In-Class Debate

In-class debate can take many formats, meeting-house, four-corner, fishbowl, think-pair-share, and role-play debates (Kennedy, R, 2007). Kennedy concluded that the various forms of in-class debates provide an opportunity for students to be actively engaged in learning and particularly in the areas of mastering the content as well as developing critical thinking skills, oral communication skills, and empathy. Effective post-debate discussion can be important to reaching and satisfying students' learning needs (Oros, A, 2007). This allows students to actively engage in the process of criticizing a text, and synthesizing information, rather than simply writing down key points about a text from an instructor's lecture.

VI.5d Self-Reflection as Feed-back

Using reflection activities appears to accelerate students' oral presentation skill development and improve their implicit confidence/comfort with presenting, as well as reinforce faculty feedback/suggestions (Mineart, K & Cooper, M 2016). Students using reflection methods improved their presentation grades twice as quickly as cohort students who did not. These activities require access to recording equipment for students to be able to watch their performance and the performance of other students to provide constructive criticism and identify areas for improvement.

VI.5e Oral Exams

While oral exams are rarely used during students' undergraduate education, they can be effective tools to assess knowledge and deep understanding of concepts and content. Oral exams may be too time consuming for large sections but are a valuable tool for advanced courses with fewer students. Methods include providing students with a set of questions in advance and then engage in a conversation with the professor around these questions. Grades are based not on the number of correct answers but on the extent and level of understanding articulated by the student. This reinforces skills required for effective oral communication, explaining ideas and concepts. It is recommended that instructors take time to put students at ease by using informal seating arrangements, tactfully responding and prompting students and allowing students to lead the conversation (Davis, 2009).

QEP Implementation Timeline						
QEP Activities	YR 0	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5
• Draft QEP Student Learning Outcomes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
• Develop Discipline Specific SLOs for Oral Communication		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
• Develop standards of 'good' oral communication in discipline specific courses	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Identify and adapt appropriate Rubrics to assess QEP SLOs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
• Modify QEP assessment rubrics to satisfy departmental needs for assessing discipline specific SLOs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Identify Courses with oral communication components and provide assistance and support to faculty for best pedagogical practices and strategies.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
• Support faculty with enhancements to oral communication courses		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Develop and deploy LMS based QEP Professional Development Modules on Oral Communication		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
• Identify and Engage Student Organizations and Student Leaders in development of the QEP topic and activities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
• Engage Students in the development of co-curricular programming to promote oral communication		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Enhance co-curricular activities to encourage oral communication skills development		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Organize Campus Oral Communication events to demonstrate good skills		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Design QEP communication plan and media materials	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
• Execute communication plan and produce marketing materials	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Develop and maintain links and resource for faculty to use to develop and enhance skills for teaching and assessing oral communication		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Develop and maintain links and resource for students to use to learn, reinforce, and practice oral communication skills		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Develop Awards to acknowledge excellence in oral communications in academic and co-curricular		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
• Monitor Progress of QEP Activities and Initiatives	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Assess QEP SLOs		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Assess Discipline based SLOs			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Evaluate the Impact of the QEP on Institutional Improvement					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

VII QEP Organizational Structure

Dillard's QEP is organized under the leadership of the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) is responsible for providing and sustaining an intellectually rigorous community of scholars and learners. Dr. Yolanda Page assumed this position in 2013 and is the Institution's Chief Academic Officer charged with offering competitive academic programs, taught by excellent faculty, and administered by dedicated professional staff in an environment that offers opportunities for discipline related research, service-learning/civic engagement, and self-exploration. The Deans of the three degree granting Colleges (College of Business, College of Arts & Sciences, and College of Nursing), the Dean of the University College, and the Dean of Faculty and Student Academic Success report directly to the VPAA. The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, the Library, and three academic Centers are also coordinated through the Office of the VPAA.

The VPAA has ultimate authority over the QEP and has designated the Director of Assessment and Analysis to serve as the QEP Director and facilitator of the Institution's QEP Committee.

VII.1 QEP Leadership Team

The Vice President of Academic Affairs utilizes the Academic Deans as a key advisory group for guidance and advise related to academic improvement efforts. The VPAA convenes the Academic Deans for weekly meetings to discuss issues of scholarship, teaching, and learning. This body, serves as a key advisory group for QEP development, implementation, and assessment. The VPAA has identified three staff as the responsible leadership for successful implementation of the QEP.

VII.1a The QEP Director

The Director of Assessment and Analysis has been task by the Vice President of Academic Affairs to serve as the QEP Director. This is a newly created position with Mr. Jacques J Detiege having been hired to fill it in August of 2019. Mr. Detiege has an earned M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction and has completed course work towards a Doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction. Since 2010, Mr. Detiege has served on the QEP development and implementation committees at two of Dillard's peer institutions. As QEP Director, Mr. Detiege is responsible for the overall implementation and success of the QEP as the mechanism for data-driven quality improvement of the Institution's learning environment and for improvement of student outcomes aligned with the Institution's Mission.

VII.1b The Dean of Faculty Support and Student Academic Services

Dr. Eartha Lee Johnson serves as Dean of Faculty Support and Student Services and reports to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. She has formerly served as Assistant Dean, for the College of Arts and Sciences, Director of University Counseling, Coordinator of Academic Testing, and as Director of the Freshman Program and Coordinator of Student Retention. As Dean of Faculty Support and Student Academic Services, Dr. Johnson is responsible for the coordination of Faculty Development activities to ensure faculty professionalism and best-practice pedagogical strategies to serve students' learning needs.

The goal of Dillard's QEP Faculty Professional Development (QFPD) initiative is to facilitate faculty experts continued assimilation of new instructional strategies into the toolbox of existing practice. QFPD is operationalized as both research and practice in the profession of teaching and learning.

VII.1c The Dean of University College

Dr. Nia Woods Haydel serves as Dean of University College and Director of the Thompson/Cook Honors Program. Dr. Haydel has been a higher education professional for over 20 years working in Student Affairs, Enrollment Management, Academic Affairs, and Intercultural Relations. In her current role, she oversees the University's retention initiatives with focus on academic advising and academic enrichment initiatives for first-year students.

The University College at Dillard University is responsible for General Education and the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE). The goal of ACE is to create a national model for providing holistic academic and social care to students from our particular demographic. Within ACE, the programs and staff work collaboratively to improve the retention efforts and academic success of all students as they matriculate through the first two years of their collegiate experience at Dillard University. ACE programs and departments include: the First-Year Experience Programs, Academic Advising (for first-year and transfer students), Service Learning, the Writing Center, Supplemental Instruction, and the Thompson/Cook Honors Program. These units are charged with coordinating service delivery to students to promote the overall success of lower division students. Embedded within these programs are administrative, curricular and programmatic initiatives that assist students in developing the requisite competencies to successfully navigate the processes and culture of higher education. Combining these programs allows for students to work collaboratively to support the needs of their peers. These collaborations will further contribute to the sense of purpose and belonging for all students. The overall goal is to create an environment that allows for both natural and intentional collaborations to occur.

VII.2 The QEP Committee

The QEP Development Team, comprised of faculty, staff, and students from a variety of different disciplines and areas of expertise, was formed beginning the Fall 2016 to oversee the process for development. Specifically, the team is charged with the following responsibilities:

- Concept identification and development;
- Literature review and best practices;
- Capability including budget;
- Communications and outreach;
- Assessment;
- Writing; and
- Integrity

The members facilitated the development through solicitation of input from other constituents. Student input was ensured through a four-member student subcommittee.

QEP Implementation Responsibilities		
QEP Activities	Responsible Staff	Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft QEP Student Learning Outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · QEP Committee 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Discipline Specific SLOs for Oral Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · QEP Committee · Academic Deans · Departmental Faculty 	Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop standards of 'good' oral communication in discipline specific courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Departmental Faculty 	On-going
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and adapt appropriate Rubrics to assess QEP SLOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · QEP Committee 	On-going
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modify QEP assessment rubrics to satisfy departmental needs for assessing discipline specific SLOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Departmental Faculty · QEP Assessment Team 	On-going
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify Courses with oral communication components and provide assistance and support to faculty for best pedagogical practices and strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · QEP Committee · Academic Deans · Faculty Support and Student Services 	On-going
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support faculty with enhancements to oral communication courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · QEP Committee · Faculty Support and Student Services 	Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and deploy LMS based QEP Professional Development Modules on Oral Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · QEP Committee · Academic Technology and Distance Education 	Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and Engage Student Organizations and Student Leaders in development of the QEP topic and activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · QEP Committee 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage Students in the development of co-curricular programming to promote oral communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · QEP Committee 	On-going
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance co-curricular activities to encourage oral communication skills development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · QEP Committee 	Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize Campus Oral Communication events to demonstrate good skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · QEP Committee 	Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design QEP communication plan and media materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · QEP Committee · Marketing and Promotion 	Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and maintain links and resource for faculty to use to develop and enhance skills for teaching and assessing oral communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · QEP Committee · Academic Technology and Distance Education 	Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and maintain links and resource for students to use to learn, reinforce, and practice oral communication skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · QEP Committee · Academic Technology and Distance Education 	Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Awards to acknowledge excellence in oral communications in academic and co-curricular 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · QEP Committee 	Development

The QEP Committee is in the process of transitioning from development to implementation. During this period, some members will rotate off and new members will be identified based on responsibilities and areas of specialization. The QEP Committee will evolve as the QEP moves through phases from conceptualization, to development, to implementation, to assessment.

Key members will include the QEP Director, the Dean of Faculty and Student Academic Services, and the Dean of University College. The Faculty Senate will be charged with identifying members who will represent faculty interest during implementation. The Office of Student Affairs will identify staff to represent the interest of co-curricular and student services during QEP implementation and assessment. Ex-officio members will include the Vice President for Academic Affairs, The Assistant Vice President for Institutional Research and Effectiveness and the Director of Academic Technology and Distance Education.

VII.3 QEP Assessment Team

Responsibility for assessment activities, analysis, and reporting related to the QEP are assigned to the Assistant Vice President of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (AVPIRE). The AVPIRE supervises the Director of Assessment and Analysis and the Director of Academic Technology and Distance Education. This team will develop and implement the QEP assessment plan and ensure appropriate collection, analysis, and reporting of data to for process evaluation (implementation fidelity and activity monitoring) and outcome assessment (student learning, process improvement, and capacity building). The QEP Assessment Team will be advised by a sub-committee of the QEP Committee focused on data-driven quality assurance and monitoring for continued improvement.

VIII QEP Resources

Dillard University maintains the institutional capacity to successfully implement and complete the QEP as planned over the five-year project life and beyond. The human capital and capacity has been described in the previous section. The Institution has committed physical, financial, and organizational resources in support of successful initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP.

VIII.1 Financial Resource

Dillard University proposes to allocate a total sum of \$353,500 towards the development, implementation and assessment of the QEP. Dillard allocated over \$23,500 towards activities that directly supported development of the QEP prior to review and approval by SACSCOC.

VIII.1a Project Implementation Funding

Dillard has committed \$330,000 towards the successful implementation and assessment of the QEP during the 5-year project life. Annually, \$32,000 of funds support the salaries of the QEP Director and the salaries of administrative support staff assigned to units with direct responsibilities for QEP implementation activities. The remaining funds are allocated to support the enhancement of academic and co-curricular activities to develop oral communication skills of our students and to administer and evaluate the project. The proposed yearly QEP budget by category is detailed in the Table below:

QEP Budget Category	YR 0	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5
Total Allocation	\$23,500	\$66,000	\$66,000	\$66,000	\$66,000	\$66,000
Director	\$10,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Administrative Office Support	\$10,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000
Implementation Committee	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
Assessment		\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$7,000
Technology		\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$1,000
Professional Development		\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000
Academic / Instructional Support		\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$5,000
Support 1 st -year Seminars		\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500
Co-curricular Support		\$3,500	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$3,500
Supplies / Consumables / Recognition / Incentives	\$2,500	\$3,000	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$6,000
Marketing and Promotion		\$4,000	\$3,000	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$1,000

VIII.2 Existing Institutional Resources Supporting QEP Implementation

Across the institution, a number of existing units will support the QEP through their existing activities and responsibilities. Faculty, staff, and students have access to the services provided by each of these units in support of an environment that promotes the efficacy of teaching and learning aligned with the institution's mission.

VIII.2a The Will W. Alexander Library

The University Library is the Creative Commons of Dillard University supporting all scholarship and curricula activities. The Library is the University's information center for knowledge collection, connection, creation, and curation. The Library maintain both digital and physical collections and possesses a knowledgeable and competent professional staff able to support students' learning needs and faculty's pedagogical and research requirements.

VIII.2b The Department of Academic Technology and Distance Education and Authentic Learning (DEAL)

This Unit is responsible for support of the institution's learning management system, Canvas. Regular professional development sessions are provided to faculty on best-practices for course design, course delivery, and assessment using Canvas. Dillard is a proud partner of the California State University System's Multimedia Education Resource for Learning and Online Teaching (MERLOT) and participates in the Online Learning Consortium; HBCU Summit for Affordable Learning Solutions.

VIII.2c Student Support Services

Student Support Services (SSS) is a federally funded program and has received continuous funding through the Department of Education since 1976. The overall goal of the program is to instill confidence in our students by providing academic support, counseling, and various workshops to promote student success and to increase retention and graduation. SSS maintains Academic Support Labs providing tutoring and development in General Academic Skills, Math, Science, Foreign Language, Writing, and Computer/Technology.

VIII.2d Counseling

Dillard's Counseling Center goes far beyond academic guidance and offers support students require for success including career guidance, social service referrals, and confidential counseling services to meet the learning and emotional needs of students.

VIII.2e Center for Student Engagement and Leadership

This Center creates a vibrant co-curricular experience through the coordination of educational, social, and cultural programs to foster student experiences which develop individuals to be agents of change in a global society.

IX QEP Marketing and Promotion Plan

The QEP Marketing Subcommittee was comprised of students under the guidance of the Director of Communications and Marketing and with support from the Office of Student Leadership developed plans to promote the University QEP. These students proposed a QEP title, “Talking on the Oaks”. This connects the QEP with the long institutional tradition of describing the open tree-lined green space at the center of campus as ‘The Oaks’.

After development of the title and with assistance from the Office of Communications and Marketing, students began work on a design for a QEP logo. The design was chosen and executed; it appears to the right. This logo will appear on the University web page beginning in Fall 2019. Faculty, staff and students will be encouraged to use the QEP logo in the signature of institutional emails. Additionally, the logo will be used in the production of items to promote the QEP; these will include tech tattoos (laptop stickers), t-shirts as well as QEP ‘swag’ distributed at student events.

The QEP logo and messaging are being placed in the *Courtbouillon*, the student newspaper. The *Courtbouillon* has requested the opportunity to interview the QEP Director and key staff to inform students of the program goals, activities, and expected impact. As both a QEP activity and as promotion of the QEP, student leaders will be encouraged to prepare short ‘elevator speeches’ to inform members of their organizations of the QEP theme and goals. Students will aid in the development of social media awareness campaign to reach students. The social media campaign will include a series of short original videos for released on all University digital platforms. QEP promotion will be a focal point in all campus activities. \$4,000 are dedicated for the execution of the marketing strategy during the first year.



X QEP Assessment

The purposes of program assessment is to inform stakeholders of program successes, shortcomings, and impacts. The goal of program assessment is to inform continuous improvement to maximize impact. Assessment is critically important for quality informed decisions when there are competing priorities, limited resources, and during times of systemic and environmental change as is being experienced in the higher education landscape.

Dillard's QEP assessment will include both process and summative components. Process evaluation will provide continuous assessment and feedback for monitoring of quality and improvement during implementation and administration activities. Summative evaluation will document the impact of activities on student learning, faculty performance, and on the academic culture and environment of the institution.

X.1 Process evaluation

For the continuous monitoring of QEP activities to support implementation success, data are to be collected on the inputs, resources, activities and outputs related to QEP implementation. By documenting not only what was done, but also what resources were expended and the levels of output achieved, QEP management can better understand which initiatives and activities yield 'bang for the buck'. QEP leadership will receive regular feedback on the levels of engagement in the different components of the QEP. This supports both QEP implementation and provides a framework for understanding outcomes and for predicting the extent to which activities achieve desired impacts.

X.2 Summative evaluation

To document the impact QEP activities have had on enhancing the quality of teaching and learning at Dillard, QEP assessment will measure learning outcomes and student performance during their summative academic assessments in their chosen majors. A criterion-based analytic model is employed to measure student performance against a predetermined standard. Desired performance criteria will be predetermined for each level of assessment, for 1st year performance and for end of program - 'capstone' performance. Issues of both time-frame and student attrition impact the appropriateness of analytic models utilizing either individual or group change scores.

X.3 Assessment Tools

X.3a Outcome Assessment Tools

Two primary tool will be employed to measure QEP outcomes, defined as students' oral communication performance. These instruments are, the Oral Communication VALUE rubric as developed by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and a 17-item rubric developed for use at St. Lawrence University by Dr. Kirk W. Fuoss, Director of Rhetoric & Communication (Fuoss, 2017).

The AAC&U Oral Communication VALUE Rubric is well documented in literature and widely used as an assessment tool. As noted by AAC&U:

This rubric is specifically designed to evaluate oral presentations of a single speaker at a time and is best applied to live or video-recorded presentations. For panel presentations or group presentations, it is recommended that each speaker be evaluated separately. This rubric best applies to presentations of sufficient length such that a central message is conveyed, supported by one or more forms of supporting materials and includes a purposeful organization. (AACU.org, 2010)

As with other initiatives to assess undergraduate learning using the AAC&U VALUE rubric, the Oral Communication rubric will be adapted to document student learning from 0 (no display of competency) to 4 (capstone-level of competency) (Sorey & DeMarte, 2013).

The rubric developed at St. Lawrence University assesses student performance in three broad domains: (I) Organization, (II) Thesis, Evidence, & Citation, and (III) Language, Style, & Delivery. The instrument is comprised of 17 four-point rating items producing scale scores for each of the three domains. To provide context for each item on the scale, the underlying rationale is provided for students and faculty to promote understanding of what is being measured and why it is important for quality oral presentations. St. Lawrence University has utilized this rubric for a number of assessment projects similar to the activities in Dillard's QEP and aligned with two of the three defined SLOs in Dillard's QEP. The rubric has been used at St. Lawrence University to assess: (1) student presentation skills at the end of their first-year (QEP SLO 1); (2) student presentation skills in upper-level courses in their majors (QEP SLO 2); & (3) student presentation skills near the end of the basic public speaking course.

X.3b Administrative / Process Assessment Tools

Documentation of QEP activities and outputs will focus on accomplishing QEP defined activities and the level of participation in activities. Data collection will focus on activities and outputs, if and when activities occurred and the number of participants in activities. Data collection will utilize checklist and rosters. Administrative areas to be assessed include, faculty and staff development activities, course enhancement activities, student oral communication opportunities in academic and co-curricular settings, QEP marketing and promotion activities, and assessment activities. The Institution's annual effectiveness review will include items to assess student, staff, and faculty perceptions of the effectiveness and quality of QEP implementation.

X.4 QEP Assessment Responsibility

Assessment responsibilities fall on the Office of the Assistance Vice President for Institutional Research and Effectiveness. The Office will coordinate data collection by academic and co-curricular units; provide training and professional development to ensure data quality and integrity; and regularly provide feedback to ensure optimal engagement with and enthusiasm for assessment activities. The Office will regularly conduct analysis consistent with the level and scale of data collected and produce reports to

both inform QEP management and to document outcomes and impact of QEP activities. QEP assessment and reporting will be integrated into the institutional assessment calendar and annual assessment cycle. The assessment activities are included in the QEP Implementation Timeline.

QEP Assessment Timeline					
	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5
University College					
• Identify evaluation cohort - Interviews	FA	FA	FA	FA	FA
• Identify evaluation cohort – Advising Conversations	FA	FA	FA	FA	FA
• Prepare and distribute Assessment Rubric – Interviews		FA	FA	FA	FA
• Prepare and distribute Assessment Rubric – Advising Conversations	FA	FA	FA	FA	FA
• Collect University College SLO and assessment measures	FA/SP/SU	FA/SP/SU	FA/SP/SU	FA/SP/SU	FA/SP/SU
Co-curricular					
• Identify focus activities for the semester	FA/SP	FA/SP	FA/SP	FA/SP	FA/SP
• Prepare and distribute assessment rubrics	FA/SP	FA/SP	FA/SP	FA/SP	FA/SP
• Collect Co-curricular assessment measures	FA/SP	FA/SP	FA/SP	FA/SP	FA/SP
Faculty Development					
• Develop assessment and feedback forms for faculty engaged in QFPD	FA/SP/SU	FA/SP/SU			
• Collect QFPD assessment measures	FA/SP/SU	FA/SP/SU	FA/SP/SU	FA/SP/SU	FA/SP/SU
• Finalize Discipline specific ‘revised’ rubrics and assessment instruments for SLOs	FA/SP/SU	FA/SP/SU	FA/SP/SU		
• Collect measures of discipline specific SLOs	FA/SP/SU	FA/SP/SU	FA/SP/SU	FA/SP/SU	FA/SP/SU
Institutional Effectiveness and Outcomes					
• Develop QEP Focused institutional Effectiveness measures	FA/SP/SU	FA/SP/SU			
• Collect QEP IE data	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP
• Monitor Progress of QEP Activities and Initiatives	FA/SP/SU	FA/SP/SU	FA/SP/SU	FA/SP/SU	FA/SP/SU
• Assess QEP SLOs	FA/SP/SU	FA/SP/SU	FA/SP/SU	FA/SP/SU	FA/SP/SU
• Assess Discipline based SLOs	FA/SP/SU	FA/SP/SU	FA/SP/SU	FA/SP/SU	FA/SP/SU
• Evaluate the Impact of the QEP on Institutional Improvement				FA/SP/SU	FA/SP/SU

References

- Adams, S. (2014). The 10 Skills Employers Most Want in 2015 Graduates. Accessed on Sept. 30, 2015 from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/susanadams/2014/11/12/the-10-skillsemployers-most-want-in-2015-graduates/>.
- Ahmadov, Anar. (2011). When Great Minds Don't Think Alike: Using Mock Trials in Teaching Political Thought. *The Teacher*. doi:10.1017/S10490966511000722
- Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). (2009). *Inquiry and analysis VALUE rubric*. Retrieved from <https://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/inquiry-analysis>
- Bain, K. (2004). What the best college teachers do. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Beer, M., Finnstrom, M., & Schrader, D. (2016). The great training robbery. Harvard Business School Research Paper Series, 16–121
- Buckley, M. H. (1992). "Focus on Research: we listen a book a day; speak a book a week" *Language Arts*, 69:622–626.
- Coffelt, T. A., Baker, M.J., & Corey, R. C. (2016). Business communication practices from employers' perspectives. *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, 79, 300-316. doi:10.1177/2329490616644014.
- Condon, W. et al (2016). *Faculty Development and Student Learning: Assessing the Connection* Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN.
- Dallimore, E. J., Hertenstein, J. H., & Platt, M. B. (2008). Using Discussion Pedagogy to Enhance Oral and Written Communication Skills. *College Teaching*, 56(3), 163–172. <https://doi.org/10.3200/CTCH.56.3.163-172>
- Davis, B. G. (2009). *Tools for teaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Decatur, S. (2016). Oral Communication is Central to the Goals and Outcomes of Liberal Studies. <http://www.aspenideas.org/blog/myths-and-realities-liberal-arts-education>
- Dillard University, (2018). *The BLEUPRINT: Dillard University Strategic Plan, 2015-2020*. http://www.dillard.edu/_office-of-the-president/dillard-booklet-bleuprintstrategicplan-v01.pdf
- Dweck, C. (1999). *Self-theories: Their role in motivation, personality, and development*. Philadelphia, PA: Psychology Press.
- Dweck, C. (2006). *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Emanuel, R. (2011) "Critical Concerns for Oral Communication Education in Alabama and Beyond" *Education Research International*, Article ID 948138. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2011/948138>.
- Emanuel, R. (2007). *Communication: Humanities' Core Discipline*. *American Communication Journal*, Vol 9, 2, Summer 2007.
- Equality and Employability in Higher Education. <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2018/09/26/speaking-skills-top-employer-wish-lists-but.html>
- Fakhr-Movahedi, A., Salsali, M., Negarandeh, R., Rahnavard, Z. (2011). Exploring Contextual Factors of the Nurse-Patient Relationship: A Qualitative Study. *Koomesh*; 13(1):23–34.
- Flosason, T., McGee, H., & Diener-Ludwig, L. (2015). Evaluating Impact of Small-Group Discussion on Learning Utilizing a Classroom Response System. *Journal of Behavioral Education*, 24(3), 317–337. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10864-015-9225-0>

- Flynn, N. K. (2009). Toward Democratic Discourse: Scaffolding Student-Led Discussions in the Social Studies. *Teachers College Record*, 111(8), 2021–2053. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=44030097&site=ehost-live>
- Foster, L. N., Krohn, K. R., McCleary, D. F., Aspiranti, K. B., Nalls, M. L., Quillivan, C. C., Taylor, C. M., & Williams, R. L. (2009). Increasing Low-Responding Students' Participation in Class Discussion. *Journal of Behavioral Education*, 18, 73-188
- Fuoss, K. W. (2017). Resources & Suggestions for Teaching Oral Presentation Skills. <https://www.stlawu.edu/sites/default/files/resource/Oral%20Communication%20Resource%20Guide.pdf>
- Gewertz, C. (2018). Speaking Skills Top Employer Wish Lists. But Schools Don't Teach Them. *Education Week*. <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2018/09/26/speaking-skills-top-employer-wish-lists-but.html>
- Goddu, M. (2013). Listening Effectively. Chapter 4. *Public Speaking: The Virtual Text*. Creative Commons Attribution, Creative Commons, San Francisco.
- Hedge, T. (2000). *Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom*. Oxford: OUP.
- Humphreys, D. (2016). Progress and Prospects for the Reform of Undergraduate Education: Results from the Latest Survey of AAC&U Members, Liberal education Summer. http://www.aacu.org/liberaleducation/2016/summer/humphreys?utm_medium=email&utm_source=lesu16&utm_campaign=lesu16
- InTeGrate [Interdisciplinary Teaching about Earth for a Sustainable Future]. <https://serc.carleton.edu/integrate/workshops/workforce2013/index.html>
- Joughin, G. (2007). Student conceptions of oral presentations. *Studies in Higher Education*, 32(3), 323–336. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070701346873>
- Kennedy, R. (2007). In-Class Debates: Fertile Ground for Active Learning and the Cultivation of Critical Thinking and Oral Communication Skills. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 19(2). <http://www.isetl.org/ijtlhe/>
- Kosko, K. W. (2012). Student enrollment in classes with frequent mathematical discussion and its longitudinal effect on mathematics achievement. *The Mathematics Enthusiast*, 9(1&2), 111-148.
- Kourkouta, L., & Papathanasiou, I. V. (2014). Communication in Nursing Practice. *Materia Socio-Medica*, 26(1), 65-7.
- Lear, J., Hodge, K., Schultz, S. (2015). Talk to Me! Effective, Efficient, Communication. *The Journal of Research in Business Education*, 57, No. 1, Spring/Summer.
- Lucanus, A. (2017). Oral Communication Skills Are Important for Students. Stanford University. <https://collegepuzzle.stanford.edu/oral-communication-skills-are-important-for-students>
- Mathias, C. (2015) A Learner-led, Discussion-based Elective on Emerging Infectious Disease. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 79(6).
- Mineart, K. P. & Cooper, M. (2016). Evaluation of Student Reflection as a Route to Improved Oral Communication. *Chemical Education* 50(3)
- Morley, L. (2006). Producing New Workers: Quality in Higher Education, pp. 131-138. <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2018/09/26/speaking-skills-top-employer-wish-lists-but.html>;
- Morreale, S. P., Rubin, R. B., & Jones, E. A. (1998). Competencies for college students: Basic skills for persuading, informing, and relating. Retrieved August 18, 2003, from <http://www.natcom.org/instruction.3>

- NACE, (2019). Career Readiness for the New College Graduate.
- Noblitt, L., Vance, D. E., Smith, M. L. D. (2010). A comparison of case study and traditional teaching methods for improvement of oral communication and critical-thinking skills. *Journal of College Science Teaching*, 39(5), 26-32.
- Papadantonaki, A. (2006). *Communication and Nursing*. Nosileftiki. 45(3):297–298.
- Raya A. (2005). Ed.6th. Athens: 2005. *Basic Nursing*.
- Schreiber, L., & Hartranft, M. (2013). *Introduction to Public Speaking*, Chapter 1. *Public Speaking: The Virtual Text*. Creative Commons Attribution, Creative Commons, San Francisco.
- Sewanee: The University of the South. <http://www.sewanee.edu/qep/faq/>
- Shaw, J. (2012). Using Small Group Debates to Actively Engage Students in an Introductory Microbiology Course. *Journal of Biology and Microbiology Education*.
- Smith, G. (1997). Learning to Speak and Speaking to Learn. *College Teaching*. 45 (2):49-51. Texas State University
- University of West Florida <https://uwf.edu/academic-engagement/departments/quality-enhancement-plan/about/overview/>
- Virginia Highlands Community College (2017). LearningPLUS+ Communication. Professionalism. Problem Solving. Teamwork. Quality Enhancement Plan On-Site Review. <http://www.vhcc.edu/home/showdocument?id=7583>
- Walls, J. K., & Hall, S. S. (2018). A focus group study of African American students' experiences with classroom discussions about race at a predominantly White university. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 23(1), 47–62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2017.1359158>
- White, H., Benore, M., Sumter, T., Caldwell, B., Bell, E. (2013). What skills should students of undergraduate biochemistry and molecular biology programs have upon graduation? *Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Education*. <https://iubmb.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/bmb.20729>
- Yannuzzi, T. J., & Martin, D. (2014). Voice, identity, and the organizing of student experience: managing pedagogical dilemmas in critical classroom discussions. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 19(6), 709–720. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2014.901963>
- Yarnell, J. (2017). Why Everyone Should Take a Public Speaking Course. Geneva College, Beaver Falls, PA. [site://geneva.edu/blog/humanities-liberal-arts/take-public-speaking-course](http://geneva.edu/blog/humanities-liberal-arts/take-public-speaking-course)

Appendices

APPENDIX A

ORAL COMMUNICATION VALUE RUBRIC

for more information, please contact value@aacu.org



The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The core expectations articulated in all 15 of the VALUE rubrics can and should be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can be shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success.

The type of oral communication most likely to be included in a collection of student work is an oral presentation and therefore is the focus for the application of this rubric.

Definition

Oral communication is a prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.

Framing Language

Oral communication takes many forms. This rubric is specifically designed to evaluate oral presentations of a single speaker at a time and is best applied to live or video-recorded presentations. For panel presentations or group presentations, it is recommended that each speaker be evaluated separately. This rubric best applies to presentations of sufficient length such that a central message is conveyed, supported by one or more forms of supporting materials and includes a purposeful organization. An oral answer to a single question not designed to be structured into a presentation does not readily apply to this rubric.

Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

- **Central message:** The main point/thesis/"bottom line"/"take-away" of a presentation. A clear central message is easy to identify; a compelling central message is also vivid and memorable.
- **Delivery techniques:** Posture, gestures, eye contact, and use of the voice. Delivery techniques enhance the effectiveness of the presentation when the speaker stands and moves with authority, looks more often at the audience than at his/her speaking materials/notes, uses the voice expressively, and uses few vocal fillers ("um," "uh," "like," "you know," etc.).
- **Language:** Vocabulary, terminology, and sentence structure. Language that supports the effectiveness of a presentation is appropriate to the topic and audience, grammatical, clear, and free from bias. Language that enhances the effectiveness of a presentation is also vivid, imaginative, and expressive.
- **Organization:** The grouping and sequencing of ideas and supporting material in a presentation. An organizational pattern that supports the effectiveness of a presentation typically includes an introduction, one or more identifiable sections in the body of the speech, and a conclusion. An organizational pattern that enhances the effectiveness of the presentation reflects a purposeful choice among possible alternatives, such as a chronological pattern, a problem-solution pattern, an analysis-of-parts pattern, etc., that makes the content of the presentation easier to follow and more likely to accomplish its purpose.
- **Supporting material:** Explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities, and other kinds of information or analysis that supports the principal ideas of the presentation. Supporting material is generally credible when it is relevant and derived from reliable and appropriate sources. Supporting material is highly credible when it is also vivid and varied across the types listed above (e.g., a mix of examples, statistics, and references to authorities). Supporting material may also serve the purpose of establishing the speaker's credibility. For example, in presenting a creative work such as a dramatic reading of Shakespeare, supporting evidence may not advance the ideas of Shakespeare, but rather serve to establish the speaker as a credible Shakespearean actor.

ORAL COMMUNICATION VALUE RUBRIC

for more information, please contact value@aacu.org



Definition

Oral communication is a prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

	Capstone 4	Milestones		Benchmark 1
		3	2	
Organization	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable and is skillful and makes the content of the presentation cohesive.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable within the presentation.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is intermittently observable within the presentation.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is not observable within the presentation.
Language	Language choices are imaginative, memorable, and compelling, and enhance the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are thoughtful and generally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are mundane and commonplace and partially support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are unclear and minimally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is not appropriate to audience.
Delivery	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation compelling, and speaker appears polished and confident.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation interesting, and speaker appears comfortable.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation understandable, and speaker appears tentative.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) detract from the understandability of the presentation, and speaker appears uncomfortable.
Supporting Material	A variety of types of supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that significantly supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that generally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that partially supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Insufficient supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make reference to information or analysis that minimally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.
Central Message	Central message is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported.)	Central message is clear and consistent with the supporting material.	Central message is basically understandable but is not often repeated and is not memorable.	Central message can be deduced, but is not explicitly stated in the presentation.

APPENDIX B

St. Lawrence University – Rubric for Formal Oral Presentations

Speaker _____ Course _____ Term _____

I. Organization & Structure					
A. Introduction	4	3	2	1	Score
1. The opening moments entice the audience to continue listening	very effectively	in a generally effective manner	in a somewhat effective manner	not effectively	
2. Introduces presenter's topic & purpose	very clearly	in a generally effective manner	in a somewhat effective manner	not effectively	
3. Relates the topic to the presenter	in a clear & compelling manner	in a manner that is generally successful	with limited success	with no success or no attempt to do so	
4. Relates topic to the audience	clearly & convincingly	generally successful	with limited success	no success or no attempt	
5. Previews what is to follow	very clearly	pretty clearly	provides some sense of what is to come	provides little to no sense of what is to come.	
B. Body	4	3	2	1	Score
6. The organizational pattern adopted by the speaker (e.g. chronological, spatial, topical, problems-solution, cause effect)...	clearly & consistently advances the rhetorical aims	generally advances the rhetorical aims	serves the rhetorical aims at times	does not serve the rhetorical aims or no choice of organizational pattern	
7. Speaker uses transitional/signposting to mark the breaks between main points...	clearly & consistently	usually	sometimes	seldom or not at all	
C. Conclusions	4	3	2	1	Score
8. Review of main points	clearly & fully (yet concisely) reviews the main points developed in the body of the speech	review is generally effective but suffers a bit in clarity, fullness, &/or concision	includes something of a summary but its effectiveness is limited	the speaker fails to include any sort of review	
9. Closure	final moments provide clear & effective closure for the speech	final moments are generally effective at providing closure for the speech	while the final moments are not effective, the speaker doesn't just trail off or resort to verbally signaling that the speech is done.	speaker just trails off or resorts to verbally signaling that the speech is done.	

II. Thesis/Evidence/Citation	4	3	2	1	Score
10. The speaker's thesis/central idea is ____	sufficiently focused, adequately supported, & appropriate consideration is afforded to alternative points of view	sufficiently focused & adequately supported	either insufficiently focused or inadequately supported	both insufficiently focused & inadequately supported	
11. The speaker's choices re: types of supporting material (e.g., examples, statistics, quotes) on which to draw...	clearly & consistently services the rhetorical aims	usually serve the rhetorical aims	sometimes serve the rhetorical aims	seldom or never serve the rhetorical aims	
12. The speaker ____ draws on a variety of appropriate sources to support the claims he/she/they advance.	consistently	generally	sometimes	seldom or never	
13. The speaker ____ cites the sources such that audience members are clear re: what information came from which source(s)	clearly & consistently	generally	sometimes	seldom or never	
III. Language/Style/Delivery	4	3	2	1	Score
14. The speaker's language and stylistic choices result in a presentation that ____	is consistently clear & imaginative, memorable, & /or compelling	is consistently clear & occasionally imaginative, memorable, &/or compelling	is usually clear but seldom (if ever) imaginative, memorable, &/or compelling	suffers from a frequent lack of clarity & is generally unimaginative, not memorable, & not compelling	
15. The speaker's execution of the chosen/assigned delivery style (e.g., impromptu, extemporaneous, manuscript, memorized) is ____	clearly & consistently excellent	generally strong	variable	consistently weak to the point of distraction	
16. The vocal aspects of delivery (e.g., pacing, articulation, vocal variation and vocal energy) are ____	clearly & consistently excellent	generally strong	variable	consistently weak to the point of distraction	
17. The physical aspects of the delivery (e.g., eye contact, stance, gesture and movement) are ____	clearly & consistently	generally strong	variable	consistently weak to the point of distraction	

Fuoss, K. W. (2017). Resources & Suggestions for Teaching Oral Presentation Skills.

<https://www.stlawu.edu/sites/default/files/resource/Oral%20Communication%20Resource%20Guide.pdf>

APPENDIX C

**Rationale Underlying Each Measure in
the Rubric for Assessing Formal Oral Presentations****Kirk W. Fuoss**

I. Skills Students Should Be Working On in their Formal Oral Communication Assignments in the FYP

A. Organizational Skills

Introduction (1-5)

(1) Speakers should open their presentation with a "hook" that captures the audience's attention, simultaneously introducing them to the topic and enticing them to continue listening.

While doing so is no guarantee that audience members will remain attentive, it is difficult for speakers to command an audience's attention in the latter sections of their presentations if they have not done so from the start. Moreover, even if they are successful in doing so, audience members have likely already missed some crucial content.

(2) Speakers should reveal what they hope to accomplish in their presentation.

Just as the literature on assessment strongly urges educators to be transparent with their students about their learning goals, so, too, do public speaking texts strongly urge presenters to let their audiences in on both their general purpose (i.e., to inform, to persuade, to inspire, to entertain) and their specific purpose (e.g., "to inspire audience members to commit to community service projects that enrich the lives of the elderly").

(3) Speakers should relate their topic to the particular audience they are addressing.

Because audience members who perceive a topic as relevant to their lives are much more likely to continue listening than audience members who do not, speakers are well advised to relate their topic to the specific audience they are addressing early on in their presentations, letting them know why the topic is significant and why they ought to care enough to continue listening.

(4) Speakers should relate their topic to themselves.

Just as audience members are more likely to attend to a presentation when the speaker explicitly links the topic to them, so, too, they are more likely to "invest" in a speech when they understand why the speaker is "invested" in it. While accomplishing this task is typically easier when an assignment grants students substantial latitude in selecting their topics, few assignments are so prescriptive as to render accomplishing this task impossible.

(5) Speakers should conclude their introduction by previewing the main points they will pursue in the body of their presentations.

Listening to a presentation in which the speaker does not preview what is to follow is akin to being taken on a trip in which you do not know your destination or how or when you will get there. While some individuals occasionally enjoy the pleasant surprises that sometimes accompany a trip of this sort, most prefer journeys less shrouded in the fog of uncertainty.

Body

(6) The main points that comprise the body of a presentation should address the challenges of the particular rhetorical situation confronting the speaker.

Speakers necessarily decide what to include and exclude, as well as how to structure that which they include. These decisions should be based not on personal whims but on the confluence of the speaker's purpose and the audience being addressed. Consider two speeches advocating expanded background checks on firearm purchases: one for an audience of avid hunters who fear that expanded background checks will encroach on their second amendment rights, the other for a more heterogeneous audience, most of whom already favor what the speaker is proposing. Adopting a structure in which each main point refutes a specific counter-argument that speaker believes audience members are likely to hold makes considerable sense for the first of these rhetorical situations but little sense for the second. Conversely, adopting a structure in which each main point focuses on a specific step audience members can take to increase the likelihood that stricter background checks will, in fact, be adopted makes considerable sense for the second rhetorical situation but little sense for the first one.

(7) Speakers should deploy clear transitions to explicitly mark the divisions between main points.

While transitions are important in both oral and written communication, because the former lacks the visual organizational cues of writing (e.g., indentation for new paragraphs, inclusion of blank spaces between sections and/or section headers), it is especially vital that presenters provide clear transitions as they shift from one main point to the next. "Signposting" is a simple, efficient, and explicit transitioning method in which presenters numerically mark their main points (e.g., "In addition to_ , a second reason for supporting mandatory term limits for senators & representatives is_____").

Conclusion

(8) Speakers should clearly yet concisely review the main points they covered in the body of their presentation.

While providing reminders and reinforcement might be unnecessary in an ideal world where everybody "gets" and retains content the very first time they encounter it, the proliferation of "post-it" notes and "to-do" lists in our everyday lives is powerful proof that the world we actually inhabit, unlike the one just described, is fraught with lapses of memory that we need to guard against. Accordingly, speakers are well advised to clearly yet concisely review for their audiences the main points they covered in the body of their presentations. In fact, at a very basic level, public speaking can be reduced to the following formula: tell the audience what you're going to tell them; tell it to them; tell them what you told them.

(9) The final moments of an oral presentation should provide psychological closure.

While all speeches end, not all provide their audiences adequate psychological closure. One way to comprehend the difference between a speech that "just ends" and one that provides adequate closure is to consider the very different states invoked in viewers by the conclusion of an episode of an afternoon soap opera and the conclusion of an episode of a situation comedy or dramatic series. Speakers should craft the closing moments of their presentation such that the speech doesn't just trail off or end abruptly but instead feels whole, done, complete without the speaker having to resort to verbally or nonverbally signaling to the audience that the presentation has ended (e.g., "That's it," "Thank you," projecting a "Works Cited" PowerPoint slide).

B. Skills Related to Thesis Development & the Use of Evidence

(10) Presenters should advance a thesis/central idea that is sufficiently focused and capable of being supported via evidence and reasoning, and, when warranted by the rhetorical situation, they should also afford appropriate consideration to alternative points of view.

Given the relatively short time frame of most presentations, speakers are unable to adequately develop and support a thesis/central idea unless it has been sufficiently focused. Moreover, if this overarching claim is not capable of being supported by an appropriate combination of evidence and reasoning, then presenters stand little or no chance of realizing their rhetorical goals. Additionally, when a substantial portion of the audience is likely to

dispute the speaker's overarching argument, as well as when audience members are likely to encounter and perhaps be persuaded by counter-arguments after listening to the speech, presenters are well advised to afford adequate consideration to competing points of view.

(11 & 12) Speaker should substantiate their overarching claim with an appropriate mix of types of supporting material drawn from an appropriate variety of types of sources.

Like writers, the three major types of supporting material speakers use to substantiate claims are examples, statistics, and testimony (including both paraphrases & direct quotations). While each type of supporting material has the potential to fulfill a range of rhetorical functions, each also carries out rhetorical functions the others are incapable of fulfilling. The amount of each type of supporting material presenters should draw on varies widely depending on the confluence of topic, purpose, and audience. In addition to drawing on an appropriate variety of types of supporting material, presenters should also draw on material from an appropriate variety of types of sources (e.g., popular, scholarly, alternative, personal interviews). Depending on the assignments, drawing on no outside sources may also be appropriate.

(13) Speakers should orally cite their sources such that audience members are able to clearly ascertain which information came from which sources.

Citing sources fulfills the same sorts of functions in an oral communication context as it does in writing. Among other possible functions, when speakers orally cite their sources in an appropriate manner they maintain basic principles of academic integrity, bolster their credibility, and enable their audience to assess the sources of the evidence upon which they are drawing. Because a knowing which information came from which source is a fundamental aspect of appropriate oral citation of sources, it is imperative that speakers cite their sources at the moment in their presentation when they are actually integrating information from that source rather than merely providing an oral works cited list at the end of their speech or momentarily flashing a "Works Cited" slide.

C. Skills Related to Language & Style

(14) The speaker's language should result in a presentation that is consistently clear, and the speaker's stylistic choices should result in a presentation that is imaginative, memorable, & compelling.

Because the fundamental purpose of all oral presentations is the communication of ideas, speakers should strive, first & foremost, for a level of clarity that will facilitate the audience's understanding. However, because audiences often encounter clear presentations whose content is quickly forgotten, once this first threshold has been achieved, speakers should also strive to help their audiences to retain the information they communicate by crafting a presentation that is imaginative, memorable, and compelling.

D. Delivery

(15, 16, & 17) The vocal & physical aspects of delivery should advance the presenter's rhetorical aims.

The cardinal rule for style is "clarity above all else," the cardinal rule for delivery is "avoid distracting vocal and physical mannerisms." As was the case with style, however, once this fundamental benchmark has been achieved, speakers should strive to deliver their presentations in a manner that cultivates audience engagement with and understanding of the ideas they are expressing.