**UMW Speaking Center Presents**



Panel Discussions

If you’re invited to speak on a panel before an audience or to moderate a panel, here are some tips to keep in mind:

**FOR PARTICIPANTS**

* Have the ground develop a plan for discussion beforehand.
* Establish a physical space appropriate to the needs of the participants and presentation.
* Develop visual or audio aids.
* Try to stick to pre-determined, discussion outline.
* Contribute frequently.
* Make contributions brief and focused.
* Avoid repetition of or dwelling on points.
* Listen closely and indulge in polite disagreements or responses.
* Appear competent and knowledgeable.
* Manage nonverbal communication such as body language and eye contact.

**FOR MODERATOR**

* Open with an attention getter.
* State and give brief overview of central discussion questions.
* Introduce panelists.
* Initiate beginning of discussion.
* Ask questions to introduce topics or gain clarification and detail.
* Keep group on topic.
* Make summary statements.
* Offer information or statements to spark discussion during lulls.
* Mediate any conflicts that arise.
* Balance communication and number of contributions between panelists.
* Summarize discussion at end.
* Close emphatically and appropriately.