

THE PODIUM

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Edited by Catherine LeBouton, Danielle DeVille, and Mariah Young

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Consultants to Attend National Conference

By Mariah Young

Every year, there is a conference held by the National Association of Communication Centers (NACC). This year the conference will be held at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and the theme will be "Excellence at the Center: Reflect, Rejoice, & Remix." The conference will be held on April 19-20, 2013.

The conference is a great place for speaking centers and communication centers from all across the country to gather and talk about the issues they face and brainstorm ways to

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The Director's Corner: Springfest is in the Air

By Dr. Esther Yook

With temperatures being in the seventies one week then back down to the thirties with freezing rain the next at the end of January, it makes one wonder what season we are in.

One look at the Speaking Center events calendar reminds us that Spring is surely here! "Springfest" is the Speaking Center's newest event; by planning ahead during the fall, then announcing and presenting 3 workshops early in the semester, we hope that we will bring the focus of attention to the Speaking Center and what we can do for students learning about communication.

Our projects come about as a result of brainstorming sessions during staff meetings, or a staff member who has an epiphany while thinking of ideas for how to reach out to students. After all, research shows that good communication skills are pivotal for academic success, and the Speaking Center exists exactly for that reason.

While visits to the Speaking Center have increased, there are still some students who don't know who we are and

how we can help them.

The center services are part of students' tuition, so it makes sense to use the services.

To overcome this problem, we've been putting together events such as "Octoberfest," "Diversity at the Center," and "Springfest." All of our staff members are on board with these projects, working together in planning and putting up posters to make these events successful. All of our efforts are focused on reaching out to students!

Another bright piece of news heralding the Spring is the announcement that four of our staff members, Danielle DeVille, Tom Pacheco, Russell Michelson, and Mariah Young, will be presenting their papers at the National Association of Communication Centers in April.

They will travel to the University of North Carolina, Greensboro to share their research. Some of them worked during winter break to prepare and also put together an Undergraduate Research Grant. Spring is definitely in the air at the UMW!

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Spring Workshops Help the New Semester Bloom

By Emma Eggers

By now the spring semester is in full swing, and the Speaking Center is flushed with spring fever. Already consultations are pouring in from across the curriculum, keeping our consultants prepped and ready for action. We're also busy with in-class consultations where we visit entire classes to discuss various topics, such as how to present in a foreign language, how to properly incorporate visual aids, and give a general introduction to the Speaking Center. So far, it's business as usual in Combs 101.

But this semester we've implemented a new strategy to better serve the communication needs of UMW. Taking cues from our annual Octoberfest event, the Speaking Center is holding spring workshops to give students an extra hand with their communication skills. This spring we presented on three topics: Communication Apprehension, Using Visual Aids, and Persuasive Speech.

The Communication Apprehension Workshop was held on January 31st, and it was led by consultants Catie, Danielle, and Emma. They opened their workshop by having their participants take the Communication Apprehension Test to get an idea of everyone's personal level of communication anxiety. The consultants then discussed what communication apprehension is, what its symptoms are, and how anxiety generally manifests itself. After establishing what speaking anxiety is, the consultants engaged the group in a discussion of ways to manage both physical and emotional aspects of anxiety. All in all, the workshop was a great success and a lot of fun for everyone involved.

The second workshop on Using Visual Aids was held on February 7th and was led by consultant Mariah. She started with an open discussion, asking the participants what they like and don't like in visual aids. Mariah listed the items the

group had brainstormed, then launched into her presentation on how to effectively use visual aids. She went over why visual aids are important, when to use- and not to use visual aids, as well as how to properly incorporate a visual aid, whether it's a PowerPoint, Prezi, poster, photo, video, or graph. Finally Mariah wrapped up with a brief overview of how to deliver a presentation with a visual aid. She was pleased with the enthusiasm from the students, and she had fun teaching the group some new skills.

Our final workshop on Persuasive Speaking was given on February 13th and was held by consultants Russell, Tom, and Abbie. They discussed the elements of a persuasive speech and how to successfully execute them. Our Spring Workshops were a great success, and we are eager to implement them again in the future.

Important Dates and Reminders

Last date for an appointment:
Saturday, April 27

We will not be open during
Spring Break or Finals Week.

Hours:
Mon. - Thurs.: 11 am - 6 pm
Friday: 11 am - 6 pm
Saturday: 2 pm - 4 pm

email us at spkc@umw.edu
call us at (540)654-1347
or
use our online scheduler!

Spontaneous Speaking: The Truest Form of Public Speaking



By Russell Michelson

I recently watched the Toastmasters International Public Speaking Competition, where after months of preliminary rounds, 20,000 competitors were whittled down to the top nine speakers in the world. As a public speaking connoisseur, I was as excited for this as football fans are for the Super Bowl - that is, until I realized the greatest public speaking competition in the world is a bunch of bologna.

These nine contestants, and contestants in most public speaking competitions I fear, are allowed to give a speech that has been written down and presented multiple times in the past. It's 100%

memorized and the delivery is planned out to a "T". This means there is nothing extemporaneous about it. In my opinion, that's more of a recitation than a speech.

Spontaneity is what sets public speaking apart from acting. Actors perform for an audience. Public speakers converse with an audience. This is because public speaking is rooted in real life situations where you don't know how people will react to what you're saying. We use public speaking to convince people of something, to inform, and to orally communicate in any situation in the best way possible. The challenge of public

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Customer Service and Communication

By Robert Belcourt

College students often find themselves in an array of part time summer positions that focus specifically on relations with customers, kids, and parents. Strong communication and effective problem solving abilities are vital to any work environment--especially when dealing with other individuals.

Communication in customer service requires a thorough understanding of the needs and perspectives of clients while balancing the role of the company and professional responsibility.

While the customer and employee may desire different outcomes, the ability to minimize conflict and friction becomes important. Many companies conduct surveys to determine what customers or clients expect and how well the group is meeting those standards. While this is generally helpful, the best feedback is usually taken from meaningful interaction.

Thus, communicating effectively in customer service situations can involve a number of challenges. Students should have up to date information about their job or position, and be able to meet customer demands to resolve problems.

One won't always be able to please everyone, but usually an attempt will go a long way. Most people like to feel important.

Giving that experience to a customer will not only make them gain confidence in your abilities, but will make them come back to the company in the future.



Retention, Communication, Empowerment: The Role of the Speaking Center



By Thomas Pacheco

A rising concern among universities in the United States is retention: can schools keep their students from the first year through graduation? This is important for determining the effectiveness of a university. Universities typically look to first-year retention rates as a big indicator. If a university is failing, then students are likely to drop out after their first year.

Research by the University of Mary Washington's own Dr. Esther Yook demonstrates that communication plays

a role in retention rates. Students drop out because they are unhappy. A lack of confidence in communication translates into being unable to receive assistance. It also means that students are not as able to participate in the classroom and feel engaged with their work. In addition, there is also a substantial body of research suggesting that students without communication competency are more likely to have lower grades, which correlates to *Continued on page 5*

Speaking Competition Lacks Spontaneity

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speaking comes from being able to form thoughts in a coherent fashion and deliver them in a way that captivates and convinces your audience.

Since public speaking is a conversation, not a performance, it is only as useful as its practical application. We must keep in mind real life happens in real time. You don't have months to prepare what you want to say.

You don't have drafts to edit, you don't have minutes to sit around and think of the perfect word, and you definitely don't have time to think about what you're going to do with your body while you speak. Public speaking as a skill is useless if you can't do it with little to no preparation.

That's the real challenge of public speaking: doing all of that spontaneously. The challenge is responding to your audience in real time. We should strive to

be better at thinking on the spot. A speech should be more of a reaction than a recitation. That's how we truly communicate. The way the Toastmasters International Public Speaking Competition sees public speaking is an insult to the art of public speaking. What the top nine speakers do does not take an incredible amount of skill.

The only challenge they have is to make their meticulously planned-out delivery seem extemporaneous. While this brand of public speaking belongs somewhere, their participants shouldn't be touted as the best speakers in the world. The real best public speakers are people who can improvise and adjust their speech depending on how the audience is reacting.

In the future when you're giving a speech, speak from your heart and not from your notes because there's no point in trying to fake it.

Early Bird Gets the Worm:

First Year Students at the Speaking Center

By Abbie Boaduwa Yifrah

While every new semester is one that the Speaking Center looks forward to as a chance to reach out to students, we always happen to be particularly excited to assist freshmen. At the Speaking Center, we recognize that public speaking in high school is very different from college. The expectations are higher, the audience is completely different, and the topics are more controversial. With this in mind, we take it upon ourselves to reach out to as many first-year students as possible.

We've observed that if a student visits the Speaking Center during their first year, they are more likely to keep visiting. Our plan, therefore, is to instill the habit of frequenting the Speaking Center in freshmen so that by the time they are upper classmen, it will become second nature.

I can say for myself and for the other consultants that when working with first year students we are very empathetic and encouraging. We recognize that their first experience at the Speaking Center can determine whether or not there will be any future visits. I have enjoyed seeing the improvements in students who come in as freshmen and return later as sophomores and juniors. Their improvements do not go unnoticed.

We are committed to making the art of public speaking one that everyone here at UMW enjoys, whether in the classroom or outside the UMW community and in the eyes of the public.

What exactly do we do to meet this goal? Before the start of the semester

when professors are putting their syllabi together, Dr. Yook, the Director of the Speaking Center, makes it a point to send out emails asking that professors mention our services and encourage visits, as well as give incentives in the form of extra-credit.

Some professors have even taken it a step further by making it a requirement for students to visit the center. We do not stop there. Our in-class training sessions have played a vital role in our outreach to first year students. During these sessions, we give a brief tour of our center, our technology, how to make appointments, and generally what we do at the Speaking Center. As a consultant, I have found that the students are more relaxed when they come into the center, familiarize themselves with the place and also meet the consultants. Once they find out that we are all students with diverse majors, and most importantly, have all been first year students just like them, they become more at ease.

Our semester workshops have also been an effective way for us to reach out to first year students. In choosing topics, we try to choose ones that they are more likely to be interested in, such as Dealing with Speech Anxiety and using PowerPoint. In the past, there has been a huge turnout of first year students at our workshops.

It is our hope that you make it a point to visit us—we will make your experience a memorable one!

Points on Poise

By Danielle DeVille

When it comes to your presentation, an excellent delivery will not compensate for poor research and ineffective writing. No matter how well constructed your speech is, if you cannot deliver it effectively, your points will often be overlooked. The number one thing that hinders a confident delivery is nervousness. How can you look calm while experiencing anxiety? Consider these tips from our speaking center staff:

- Project your voice. Don't whisper. Sound as though you believe what you're saying.
- Pace yourself and remember to breathe. Writing breaths in on your outline is always a good idea.
- Do not read to your audience.
- If you tend to sway back and forth, try standing with your feet hips distance apart and one foot forward. This will give you a more solid stance.
- Use eye contact.
- If you find your hands fidgeting, make a note to rest them gently on the podium and express that nervous energy through enthusiastic (but appropriate) hand gestures.
- Dress appropriately. You will look and feel more competent, which will be reflected in your delivery and how your audience perceives you.
- Practice.

NACC Conference

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Not only will the University of Mary Washington Speaking Center be attending the conference to represent our program, but some of our consultants were selected to present research papers for competition. The papers went through a proposal and approval process, in which they were ultimately accepted.

The planning for the conference began at the end of last semester, and has continued into this semester.

The papers cover a variety of issues facing our Speaking Center at UMW. They include empowerment of students and consultants within the Speaking Center, the effectiveness of a Speaking Center without a communication department, and different approaches to having a consultation with students who visit the Speaking Center.

We wish the best of luck to our consultants attending the conference!



Speaking Anxiety? Yeah, Us Too

By Catie LeBouton

Let's face it: we all face speaking anxiety in some form or another. Whether you have butterflies during an interview or you can't seem to calm down when you're presenting in class, it's something we've all dealt with. So why are we so terrified? Speaking anxiety doesn't have to ruin your day, or your self-confidence. In fact, you can use it to your advantage. Your worst fear can become your greatest ally.

To explain, it's important to first understand what factors can cause speaking apprehension. It can be from a lack of preparedness, an unexpected or unique situation, the overwhelming idea that people are judging you, or simply from too much negative thinking. No matter what the cause, remember that the adrenaline rush you feel will only last for a short

period of time—if you let it. One problem with public speaking is that the fear often perpetuates itself as you recognize your anxiety. If you panic, your brain is going

to release more adrenaline, and you won't be able to easily calm yourself down. By acknowledging "Yes, I have some anxiety, but it's normal, it's supposed to be there," you can limit the amount of time you're on high alert. You can settle into your presentation, or interview, and carry on sharing your brilliant insight with the world.

You see, a little bit of anxiety is



necessary to doing well. Studies have repeatedly shown that as anxiety increases, so does performance. Unfortunately, this is only true up to a certain point.

That's where your fear turns from being facilitative, helping you to do better, to debilitating, where it can really start to hinder your communication. Anxiety can be expressed in your delivery as enthusiasm and excitement. You've got a lot of energy coursing through your veins, so make it come out in your words, and share it with your audience! No one can hear your heart pounding in your chest;

no one really minds that you stuttered or jumbled that one phrase. You are your worst judge, and typically no one, not even the consultants here at the Speaking Center, can even tell that you're nervous.

Public speaking is a bit on the intimidating side. At number one in national fears, you're not alone if you struggle with it. And lucky for you, there are people who can help you overcome your anxiety. Just make an appointment to meet one-on-one with a Speaking Center consultant, and we can help

you figure out how you can get past the butterflies, the shaking, or the shortness of breath and get you putting your best foot forward!

Empowering Students within the Speaking Center

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an increased risk of dropping out.

The Speaking Center offers a wide range of services to all students, but it is a particularly good tool for first-year students to use. College emphasizes the importance of discussion in the classroom, particularly at a liberal arts university like Mary Washington.

The Speaking Center offers knowledgeable peers for student-student interaction that can enhance public speaking skills. They can help with any sort of presentation, interview, or even early stages of speech writing. The Speaking Center also has a vast collection of handouts on speaking tips, and several shelves of

books and videos. All of this is for the students.

The Speaking Center provides a unique educational experience. It is not a classroom where there is a teacher and a student. There are no grades. Students coming to the center have an opportunity to engage in a dialogue on whatever they feel can benefit them.

Students come with questions or ideas, and find someone to talk to about their communication concerns. They have the ability to receive instantaneous feedback in a friendly, noncompetitive environment. We even have mints for students as they leave so that they can be as confident

in their breath as they are in their speech!

There are fees or minimum number of communication courses required for entry. Even if a student feels confident in their public speaking, the Speaking Center can still offer feedback on delivery, speech structure, and visual aids.

We exist to help foster communication skills in the students of Mary Washington that benefit not only their college experience, but also skills that will assist them later in life in future careers. Take hold of your education – make an appointment at the Speaking Center.

Speaking Center Word Search Challenge

S M T M B Q N M C P A E H C G G Y N
O W M O X G T O R O T R O L N D P O
H O V V W L R I I H M N A I O O N I
T L Z E G R A K O S T B K B W O X T
A F W M I I N S O E U A S E I F F A
P N O E L V S C N O E L R T A D S T
E A I N Y J I T R P Y P C I W Q R L
C J U T E P T F S E O U A N P B K U
N X Q D U X I P G I D E B C O X N S
E D Z U I Y O P N O M I N S E C G N
D Z V O A E N T R T N V B I O J G O
I P R E S E N T A T I O N I L D N C
F S E T O N N C P O D I U M L T C I
N H Z C H I Q R E K A E P S L I U O
O Y P M U B T N A T L U S N O C T O
C D E L I V E R Y W Y W B V G H S Y
D B J I X C L O A T T B J D O L S R
A W R G E H O O K A I B L G S A G K

AUDIENCE
BODY
COMBS
CONCLUSION
CONFIDENCE
CONSULTANT
CONSULTATION
CONTENT
CREDIBILITY

DELIVERY
ETHOS
FLOW
HOOK
INTRODUCTION
LOGOS
MOVEMENT
NOTES
OUTLINE

PACE
PATHOS
PODIUM
POWERPOINT
PRESENTATION
SPEAKER
SPEAKING
TRANSITION