

QEP: Oral Communication Across the Curriculum

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Based on a two-year topic selection process, College of the Mainland chose as its QEP topic, ***“Find Your Voice at COM: Oral Communication across the Curriculum.”*** This topic was chosen based not only on data indicating that employers cite the ability to speak articulately as one of the top skills they seek from graduates, but also because this skill was being addressed at COM in only a very limited fashion. Input from multiple constituent groups revealed that there was a discrepancy between the perceived importance of this skill set and the degree to which it was being effectively addressed by the College. Thus, based on this data-driven process with broad input from multiple groups, oral communication was identified as the QEP topic.

The College of the Mainland will begin implementing the QEP in 2013 by incorporating oral communication in high enrollment courses across the curriculum, expanding the QEP to a total of 24 different courses by the end of the 2014/2015 academic year. Professional development for faculty will be an important element of this QEP, as faculty will need to be educated not only about how to evaluate different kinds of oral communication but also about how they might themselves improve their skills so that they may model effective speech in the classroom.

Aside from the incorporation of oral communication in a more broad-based fashion into courses across the curriculum, students will experience enhanced instruction and academic support focused on speaking skills. An electronic student instructional module will be developed by speech faculty and made available to students in QEP-enhanced courses so that direct instruction from speech experts will be accessible. In addition, a Speaking, Reading, and Writing Center has been constructed to include soundproof booths in which students can practice and record oral communication assignments and receive tutoring in all aspects of speech. Aside from the emphasis on the development of effective oral communication, speech anxiety will also be addressed by appropriate personnel (speech faculty, tutors, or counselors). Thus, not only will students experience significantly expanded opportunities to practice their speaking skills, but they will also receive augmented instruction and support in this area.

It is also the goal of this QEP to impact the culture on COM's campus by raising awareness of the importance of integrating this skill into the curriculum. Events showcasing students who have demonstrated exceptional speaking skills will be held twice a year, and the QEP will become a regular agenda item for key administrative and instructional bodies.

Student learner outcomes for this QEP target key elements of effective oral communication and will be evaluated via a rubric on which faculty will be trained. Communication apprehension (speech anxiety) will also be evaluated and tracked. Impact on the culture of the College will also be evaluated on a number of indices.

COM is prepared to commit its resources to this QEP as demonstrated by the allocation of necessary space, the purchase of software, expansion of tutoring, and the appointment of a QEP Director. The budget designated for the QEP takes into consideration the current financial constraints facing institutions of higher education while still placing priority on this initiative.

Thus, by 2018, oral communication will have become an integral part of COM's educational experience. As a result of the QEP's implementation, not only will our students gain confidence in their ability to communicate their ideas in a clear, effective manner, but they will be equipped to compete successfully in the workplace and beyond.