



Student Presenters Excel at Acquiring Knowledge (S.P.E.A.K.)
Quality Enhancement Plan Executive Summary

Allen University
Kevin Trumpeter, Ph.D., QEP Committee Chair
ktrumpeter@allenuniversity.edu

Allen University's quality enhancement plan (QEP) is titled S.P.E.A.K. (Student Presenters Excel at Acquiring Knowledge) and centers on enhancing students' oral communication skills. The plan focuses on students improving these skills by regularly participating in graded presentation assignments in a variety of classes across the curriculum. Students in these courses are provided with constructive feedback from faculty trained in best instructional practices for teaching oral communication. In addition, these students are provided with resources (textbooks, tutors, video capture and viewing equipment, discipline-specific assignments, standardized rubrics) to assist their understanding and practice of concepts relevant to oral communication skills. The QEP's focus on oral communication is ultimately intended to enhance students' opportunities for success and advancement in their academic, professional, and civic lives.

Allen University's QEP entails the addition of required oral presentation assignments to various classes across the curriculum as well as a series of professional development workshops that ensure the institution's faculty are equipped with the knowledge and resources required to teach oral communication effectively. Students and faculty are provided with both a standard textbook and pedagogical resources developed by support staff in the newly expanded Writing and Oral Communication Center (WOCC) on campus. The WOCC is staffed by tutors with rhetorical training who can help students develop and refine oral presentation assignments for their classes, and it also provides private space for students to digitally record and view their presentations. The success of the QEP will be assessed using a standard analytic rubric for oral presentation assignments in classes across the disciplines.

Allen University supports this initiative by allocating funds for 1.) the purchase of needed equipment and software to record and archive student presentations and 2.) stipends for faculty who participate in the professional development opportunities and assessment duties necessary for implementing and monitoring the success of the plan. The university will also demonstrate support by allocating additional space to house the WOCC.

The plan is scheduled for implementation in the spring of 2018 by piloting select QEP classes from the general education curriculum. These initial efforts will allow the QEP committee to review and make any necessary adjustments to the QEP's assessment tools and protocols before the plan is implemented more broadly across the curriculum. Through ongoing faculty training and coordinated assessment efforts that will closely monitor student progress toward acquiring a proficiency with the plan's learning objectives, instruction in oral communication will be well integrated into the majority of the university's courses by the fall of 2021. By making instruction in oral communication a priority on our campus, Allen University is ensuring that it will equip its students and graduates with the skill they need to succeed in their academic, professional, and civic careers.