

***“Talking on the Oaks”:***  
**Effective and competitive oral communicators**  
**for a diverse, global, and technologically advanced society.**

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. The 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.

To achieve this overarching goal, Dillard intends to develop students’ oral communication skills to be effective and appropriate communicators in all situations. Key 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.

Developed through broad-based involvement by stakeholders including students, faculty, staff, employers, and other external constituents, Dillard’s aspirations are for an achievable and impactful QEP promoting the development of students’ oral communication skills to enhance learning outcomes. *Talking on the Oaks* advocates strategies for use within both academic and student success programs to strengthen students’ oral communication skills and prepare them to be effective oral communicators in their academic career and early professional life.

The QEP assessment is criterion-based, focusing on student competency at specific points during academic progression. In addition to assessing student competencies, student reported self-efficacy is monitored for change over time at the institution level.

The QEP supports and develops professional skills of faculty and staff for the betterment of the academic environment and prepares students for life after Dillard. Improved oral communication skills directly impact students’ capacity to be engaged citizens addressing important issues in the changing landscape of higher education and in a diverse, global, and technologically advanced society.

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