

From Public Speaking to Power Points & Everything in Between

One of the leadership skills you will exercise often as a student leader is public speaking. Between the questions, meetings, and public presentations, you are sure to gain and enhance your speaking skills. Don't panic, you just have to remind yourself that you have been speaking in front of others all your life – answering questions, telling stories, and relaying information. You just may find your speaking invitations to be a bit more formal when wearing your student leadership hat.

Speaking Out: Getting Past the Butterflies

- **Make the most of your first few minutes.** Connect with the audience with a question, a significant story, or humor.
- **Watch nonverbals—yours and theirs!** Have a smile on, make eye contact with audience members, and stand tall with your arms and hands loose—no crossed arms allowed!
- **Have notes you can turn to in a pinch.** It's your safety net, and people will know you have made every attempt to have a breadth of information prepared for them, so they won't mind you looking at your notes if you can give them an answer to their question.
- **Know your space.** Visit the space you will be presenting in prior to the actual presentation. Check out the room, adjust furniture, and test the audio visual equipment at least two hours before your presentation.
- **In a more formal small or large group setting, move around.** Don't simply stand at the front of the room and speak to the group. Consider asking smaller groups to get in a circle to create a more inclusive setting.
- **Be aware of your language.** Avoid obscene language and watch for campus slang.
- **Recap your highlights.** Prior to speaking, select the top three to five things you want your audience to leave with. Then use the final minutes of your presentation to recap those things.

Spice Up Your Speech

Make your words stand out with some of these tips:

- ▲ **Use language to express, not impress**—using jargon, acronyms or big, impressive words that may be unknown to others will lose them.
- ▲ **Paint pictures with your words**—use images that will burn into their brains.
- ▲ **Be aware of your tendency to use “Ummm” or “Like”**—these terms take away from the crispness of your words and may make you seem uncertain about the information you are sharing.

Scoring POWER Points

In today's age of technology, using a PowerPoint is a fairly common method of presenting information. Consider these “points” when preparing and presenting with a PowerPoint:

- Outline your presentation and create main points and sub-points.
- Create a title slide.
- Create one slide for each main point and add sub-points appropriately.
- Use an easy to read font and 28 point size or larger.
- Consider including artwork or graphics to add life to your PowerPoint.
- Put your slides in sequential order.
- Proofread and edit.
- Save the PowerPoint on your hard drive and USB thumb drive.
- Print a copy of the presentation for yourself just in case technology goes awry.
- The day of or before, practice using the equipment you will use for the actual presentation.

Adapted from “How to Use PowerPoint Effectively in a College Class” at www.ehow.com