

Speaking Fellows Program Overview
Providence College Office of Academic Services

Introduction to the Speaking Fellows Concept

The Speaking Fellows Program is designed to support Providence College students in meeting the College's Oral Proficiency requirement. Speaking Fellows are peer tutors who work with students in designated Oral Proficiency courses; their role is to provide feedback on the content, organization, and delivery of oral presentations before these presentations are conducted in the classroom. Speaking Fellows have gone through a rigorous selection process and received extensive training in methods of planning and responding to oral presentations. All training is provided by qualified faculty and academic support personnel.

Important Considerations for Faculty Who Wish to Participate

Faculty members who elect to use the skills and services of Speaking Fellows are expected to build the program into their syllabi and relay the importance of Speaking Fellows to their students. Indeed, participation in the program must be a mandatory component of the course. This cannot be emphasized enough: Students who do not participate in the program should be seen as failing to complete an essential course requirement.

Students must be required to meet with Fellows at least twice before each presentation – once to discuss planning and organization and once to practice their speeches and receive feedback on their delivery. Should students fail to meet with their Fellows by the specified deadlines, it is very unlikely that faculty will see substantive improvement in the quality of their presentations.

Faculty who work with Speaking Fellows should assign a minimum of two major presentations throughout the semester. If students have only one major presentation, they will not have enough contact with Speaking Fellows to reap the benefits of participation in the program.

The achievement of Oral Proficiency must be a collaborative effort among faculty members, Speaking Fellows, and the students themselves. Faculty must meet with Fellows at least twice throughout the semester to evaluate and discuss students' progress. To promote a strong connection between students and Fellows, faculty should also invite the Fellows to one (or more) class meetings so that they may observe presentations and/or participate in plenary sessions.

Finally, students must understand that the job of Speaking Fellows is not to provide research assistance, but to engage them in an active discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of their presentation planning and delivery. Following each practice session, the Fellows will generate a written summary of each student's performance. This summary will indicate the strengths and weaknesses of the speech and serve as a guide for the student in making revisions before delivering the presentation in class. Copies of the summary will be shared with both the student and the professor.

Faculty who are interested in building the Speaking Fellows Program into their courses should contact Meghan Kiley, Assistant Director for Academic Skills/Programs [mkiley@providence.edu, ext. 2679].