The Director’s Podium

By Kim Cuny

NOT NEW

* We continue to offer public speaking, group, and interpersonal communication consultations.

* We provide a safe place for non-native English speakers to practice conversation with native speakers of English.

* We offer extended support via online chat! Send us your quick questions during our regular hours of operation. GoogleTalk/ AIM: UNCGSpeaking

Or visit our Web page.

* Speakers who need to be recorded when they come to practice can be recorded to their own electronic device or we can use our devices. If we record to one of our devices we’ll share by Google Drive before the consultation ends.

* Due to the process nature of our work & space limitations, we require appointments. It is never too early to call for an appointment. It can, however, be too late. Appointments need to take place two or more days before the final presentation date.

* We are taking requests for our interactive oral communication workshops.

* During a consultation, speakers work one-on-one with a communication consultant trained to offer guidance & feedback. Each individual session lasts 30 minutes while a group session lasts 60. We can assist you at any stage of your presentation, from discovery to organization to delivery.

* Our services are open and available to the entire campus community and, through our community outreach, to not-for-profit off-campus communities as well.

NEW

* Due to budget constraints, we are no longer planning a move to the Jackson Library.

* We are supporting group assignment online via Google Hangout.

* We produce a magazine called UNCG Speaking Center at https://flipboard.com/section/ uncg-speaking-center-bbTYha

* We will attend the spring Speaking Center conference.

Workshops that work for you: By Erin Ellis

Course specific instructional workshops have been a staple for the Speaking Center since 2002. Over the years, our workshop requests have increased and this increase has been over diverse courses and campus affiliated organizations. This semester was no exception.

Our workshops focus on public speaking, interpersonal and group communication and were presented to students in nearly 15 different disciplines.

We were able to work closely with workshop requestors, which are often faculty members, to create and develop workshops that provides communication instructional material while engaging audience members through active training and experiential learning activities.

Oh, you say, my class is not speaking intensive and I wouldn’t need a workshop. But wait! Do your students have to facilitate a class discussion, present their capstone, or have any type of presentation to give?

Would students benefit from learning the latest researched-based information about oral communication and effective public speaking competencies?

Effective communication competencies are consistently rated as a top skill desired in college graduates.

If you are interested in requesting a workshop for the upcoming semester, please check out our website at speakingcenter.uncg.edu/services/workshops in order to request yours today!

We bring all materials to your classroom so all you have to do is find time in your course calendar to have us. It is never too early to request a workshop!

Retention the focus of Top Panel

Our SC directors Kim Cuny and Erin Ellis received the Top Panel Award for their contributions to a panel titled “Communication Center Connections with the Basic Course.” The award was presented by the National Communication Association’s Communication Centers Section in Washington, DC. The panel focused on how speaking centers across the country can better connect to basic communication studies courses like UNCG’s CST 105. In this time of retention-driven funding, audience members were particularly interested to learn that freshmen who visited the speaking center one time returned to UNCG for sophomore year at a 5% higher rate than freshmen who did not use our services. Those who utilized our services more than once returned at 7% higher.

The Multiliteracy Centers @ UNCG

Our directors have been saying for years that “as the ways we communicate evolve, the need to communicate effectively remains the same.” Now this year, our Speaking Center, Writing Center, and Digital Studio have a new organizational identity known as The Multiliteracy Centers. Visit the MLC Web page for more information: multiliteracycenters.uncg.edu
Fall has been a season of firsts: first semester in graduate school, first time living in my own house, first time in Greensboro, and first semester working at the Speaking Center. Amidst these changes, the Speaking Center has been a grounding point. I have enjoyed Friday afternoon tea with fellow graduate student Quiana, cupcakes on Mondays with the consultants-in-training, and discussions in the Speaking Center with consultants. However, the Speaking Center has offered welcomed challenges too. The workshops have allowed me to hone my public speaking skills while engaging directly with students about topics such as effective delivery, managing public speaking anxiety, and organizing a speech. Also, the center has helped me grow as I incorporate giving feedback without value statements into my consulting style. I have shifted from saying, “This thesis is good because it uses strong verbs” to “This thesis uses strong verbs.” The change was subtle, but in the end it was an effort to foster discussion and an environment free from judgment. Most of all, I am honored to work with consultants and desk managers whose goal is to support the growth of speakers.

Katie is one of our graduate assistants and she is pursuing an MA in Poetry. The workshops have already driven you to the edge and you feel you can’t handle any more responsibility—then you walk into the center. However, whenever you walk in, it is not another unbearable duty. You are joining an atmosphere of support from undergraduate and graduate students who share your same stressors. The conversation created among the consultants is one of optimism and hope because from our experiences we are able to share constructive pieces of advice. After your conversation with your constituents, you walk into the lobby to greet a speaker eager to gain feedback for their assignments and you are able to use your experience and knowledge to share helpful tips [and tip sheets] that give them the same sense of relief and confidence. I am a small part of an important cycle.

~Hannah~

My experience at the Speaking Center has been a roller coaster. Roller coasters are exciting, daunting, and filled with loops and whorls, but I took comfort in the fact that my Speaking Center peers were always by my side. There have been a lot of changes once I returned from studying abroad this past spring. There have been a lot of great aspects to the Speaking Center that have remained the same. I am privileged to work with amazing and dedicated consultants, cupcake Mondays have become an exciting tradition, and a faculty recommendation letter which speaks to your interpersonal communication skills and desire to help others, and a letter of personal interest that indicates (after you complete CST 190) a minimum of a one-year commitment to a paid position or a one-semester, 90-hour internship (CST 412). Learn more at: http://speakingcenter.uncg.edu/staff/index.php

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Many past Allan Fellows have presented their research at national and regional academic conferences. One even had her Allan-funded undergraduate research published in an academic journal.

~Mariah~

Working in the Speaking Center is not easy. There are days when consultations are in high demand, there are days when your classes and your personal assignments have already driven you to the edge and you feel you can’t handle any more responsibility—then you walk into the center. However, whenever you walk in, it is not another unbearable duty. You are joining an atmosphere of support from undergraduate and graduate students who share your same stressors. The conversation created among the consultants is one of optimism and hope because from our experiences we are able to share constructive pieces of advice. After your conversation with your constituents, you walk into the lobby to greet a speaker eager to gain feedback for their assignments and you are able to use your experience and knowledge to share helpful tips [and tip sheets] that give them the same sense of relief and confidence. I am a small part of an important cycle.

~Anastasia~

Although I have learned a lot while training to work in the Speaking Center, the one concept that stands out the most is collaborative learning. In CST 390, we learned that communication consultants are not experts nor should they give advice or provide answers. Rather, an effective consultant should use interpersonal communication to build a relationship with the speaker. Using the relationship as a foundation, both the consultant and the speaker can then collaborate to achieve their goals. As a result of learning about interpersonal communication, I plan to employ it in my future consultations. Just as I learned how to be an effective peer educator, CST 390 also taught me the importance of remaining open to learning from every consultation and experience in the Speaking Center.

Here we feature the voices of students who have completed the consultant training course as well as students who are currently enrolled in the 300-level speaking center theory and practice course.

Fall 2014 Allan Fellow

Rolando: Managing Consultant
Major: Sociology / Pre-Med

Louisa: Managing Consultant
Major: Elementary Education

Rebekah: Managing Consultant
Major: IGS/Psychology

Hannah: Senior Consultant
Major: IGS/Psychology

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