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# SAC

## Speaking Across the Curriculum

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Issue #12, September 1995

Robert O. Weiss, Editor

### Ought to Be Adopted By Every Institution

**Note:** The following exhilarating passages are taken from *The Inarticulate Society*, written by Tom Shlachtmann and published this year by The Free Press.

On the college level, the most promising development has been the Speaking Across the Curriculum (SAC) programs, in which regular academic departments make oral presentation, listening, and structured discussions part of the course requirements. Most of the fifty colleges and universities that have instituted such programs are small or midsize institutions principally devoted to instructing undergraduates and less focused on graduate programs and research grants. Hamline in Minnesota, DePauw in Indiana, Radford in Virginia, and the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs are among the innovators.

The key in SAC programs has been the ability to push faculty from various disciplines to work together with the communications staff to promote articulate behavior. Every institution that has SAC has previously put in place a "writing-across-the-curriculum" (WAC) program and insists that writing is a basic skill that underlies oral competency. From the evidence amassed thus far, it seems clear that WAC and SAC programs ought to be adopted by every institution of higher learning in the United States.

### New IVI Module

From Radford University, Mike Cronin announces the availability of the sixth in a series of interactive video instruction modules: "Effective Introductions and Conclusions in Public Speaking."

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You are invited to send news for the next (May) issue to the editor:

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### Weber State U.

At Weber State University approximately 30 faculty in disciplines from anthropology to zoology attended the Speaking Excellence Across the Curriculum (SPEAC) retreat on August 17 and 18. Mike Cronin and George Grice from Radford University were the presenters for the retreat. Participants learned how to include speaking-to-learn teaching strategies in their classrooms by utilizing the techniques themselves. Four groups each demonstrated one of the following oral communication activities: presentations, group discussion, debate, and listening.

When budgets were drastically reduced and the SPEAC program at WSU was cut from the Arts and Humanities budget, coordination efforts and the budget were happily assumed by the Forum for Teaching and Learning on campus. The Forum provides funding for a fall retreat and coordinates efforts throughout the year to sponsor numerous events involving speaking-to-learn teaching strategies.

Colleen Garside, SPEAC Coordinator, commented that "the change will be advantageous to SPEAC because it emphasizes the interdisciplinary nature of the program, and also provides more co-sponsorships and coordination opportunities with other teaching initiatives on campus."

## Notes

- At East Tennessee State University, Communication Professor William G. Kirkwood has been given responsibility for the administration of the program (described in Issue #11) requiring ETSU students to take two Oral Communication Intensive courses as well as for developing plans for an Oral Communication Center.
- Sherry Morreale, at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, reports: "Our program for the fall is up and running with faculty from across the campus calling in for presentations, workshops, etc. I just did a training for psychology and math TAs on presentation skills."
- At DePauw University, the Speaking and Listening Center, along with the Writing Center and the Quantitative Reasoning Center, has become part of the Learning Resources Center, with new quarters in Harrison Hall. Dr. Pamela Miller continues as Director of the Speaking and Listening Center.

## Wittenberg University

Wittenberg University, according to Corwin Georges, has adopted the following as a "Foundation Goal": "A student should be able to speak effectively within and before groups."

The rationale indicates that "A liberal arts education should prepare students to participate actively in their communities and to engage in public debate and discussion."

"Accomplishment of the goal in full is a responsibility of each major program and as such must be certified by the major department/program for graduation."

"Some departments will have to develop specific strategies for incorporating this goal into their curricula; a faculty member in Speech will be an essential resource."

Wittenberg has reopened its search for "a creative and collaborative person to work with university faculty to integrate the new general education speaking requirement into each major."

## Speech Communication Association

The annual conference of the Speech Communication Association will take place November 18-21 in San Antonio, Texas. A number of programs will be of significance for persons concerned with Speaking Across the Curriculum.

Michael Cronin and George Grice will repeat their popular short course on "Oral Communication Across the Curriculum: Designing, Implementing, and Assessing a University-Wide Program" on Sunday, Nov. 19, from 2:30-5:15 p.m. Note that preregistration by mail must be completed before October 7.

A "poster session" on "General Education Assessment Programs for Institutions: Assessing Speech Communication Competency," arranged by Tony Allison of Cameron University, will take place from 10:00 to 11:15 Sunday, Nov. 19. A dozen presentations will be on display, including this sampling:

Louis J. Rosso, Winthrop University, "A Model for the Assessment of Oral Communication in the University's General Education Program."

Tamara L. Burk, College of William and Mary, "Multi-Level Assessment in a Small Oral Communication Program at the College of William and Mary."

James L. Heflin and Steve M. Adams, Cameron University, "Evaluating the Public Speaking Component in General Education Assessment of Communication at Cameron University."

Closepet M. Ramesh, Northeast Missouri State University, "Northeast Missouri State University: Assessment for Institutional Development."

Robert O. Weiss, DePauw University, "Authentic Communication Assessment Instruments at DePauw University."