Effective Presentations

From time to time, members of clubs and organizations will be asked to make a presentation of one kind or another. This may mean:

- Giving a presentation at a conference.
- Presenting a proposal to the Associated Students, Inc.
- Representing your group to the University administration.
- Convincing another campus group to join with you in a project.

The thought of making a presentation can provoke a lot of anxiety. This handout is designed to assist you in planning and delivering a presentation with less anxiety.

**Preparedness**

There is nothing worse than a presentation that sounds like it was put together at the last minute.

- Know your audience. Find out what group of people will be in attendance. What are the demographics? What would they most like to know?
- Be clear on the amount of time you will have for the presentation. Find out the type, size and layout of the room. Visit the room if possible.
- Be aware of the time of day the presentation will take place. If you are presenting after a meal you may want to make your presentation interactive or have a dynamic icebreaker.
- Be familiar with your presentation. Use index cards to remind yourself of the main points. Rehearse in front of friends.
- If your presentation is long, decide how you will break it up. A question and answer period, visual aids or a short break are all ways to prevent your audience from becoming bored.

**At the Presentation**

- Speak clearly and loudly for everyone to hear you. Make eye contact with members of the audience. Pay attention; is your audience bored or confused?
- Use examples that the audience can understand which are relevant to their experience. Use the names of participants.
- Be brief. Be brief. Be brief. Stick to the point!
- Give an organized presentation. At the beginning let the audience know that you will cover and your goals. Alert them to important points by use of voice inflection or repetition. Summarize at the end.
- Be able to show how the audience can use the information you are giving them.
- Be upbeat and enthusiastic.
- Provide time for the audience to ask questions either at key points during the presentation or at the end. Be honest if you don’t know the answer to a question and offer to help find the answer.
- Forget about being perfect; be yourself and use your own style. Use humor if appropriate.
Effective Presentations (cont'd)

Visual Aids
People have various learning styles. Some prefer hearing the presentation while others need visual aids. You will cover the bases if you use posters, charts or PowerPoint to supplement your presentation. These should focus attention on the important parts of your presentation and should be simple.

Other Ideas

- Analyze speakers you believe are effective and notice the things they do that you might try.
- Have your presentations videotaped and look for ways to improve.
- Solicit feedback from people in some form of evaluation.

Making effective presentations is a skill that you can learn. The more presentations you give, the better you'll become. This handout can act as a guide as you sharpen your skills.