Presentation Tips
from the Business Communication Center

Eye Contact
- Look at the audience as you talk, not the computer nor the projection screen.
- Avoid note cards. They indicate a lack of preparation.
- Make eye contact with all parts of the room.

Hands
- Use your hands descriptively, not just generically.
- When not using your hands, rest them loosely in front of you or lightly on the lectern. Don’t let them fidget.
- Keep hands out of pockets.
- Gesture to the screen when you say “As you can see…”
- Let PowerPoint highlight or point to details for you.

Voice
- Replace “uh” and “um” with silence.
- Keep good inflection to avoid speaking in a monotone.
- Speak loudly enough to easily be heard in the back.
- Stay conversational. Explain things simply and clearly.
- Be concise when discussing each point.
- Keep a good pace, but don’t rush.
- Keep your presentation fact-based. Avoid saying “I feel” or “I hope” or “I believe” or “I think.”

Stance
- Keep your weight evenly on both feet to avoid weaving and shuffling.
- Don’t cross your legs.
- Don’t block the screen.

Miscellaneous
- Know what you’re talking about.
- Prepare well in advance. Don’t wait until the last minute.
- Practice several times individually and as a group.
- Dress appropriately.
- Prepare for glitches (bring backups, handouts, etc.)
- Smile at your audience.
- Turn off your cell phone!

Slide Design
- Display a photo or chart on all (or most) of your slides to make PowerPoint show what you are talking about.
- Show numerical data visually via graphs & charts.
- Keep good contrast between text and background.
- Display bulleted text as keywords, not full sentences.
- Use title case for titles, sentence case for keywords.
- Design your Summary slide first, then work backwards. Make sure it briefly and succinctly reminds your audience of your presentation’s main takeaway points.

Introduction
- Greet your audience, then establish their buy-in. (What’s in it for them?)
- Introduce yourself, your teammates, and your topic.
- Establish your credibility. (Why should they listen to you?)
- Specify the Q&A ground rules.

Transitions
- Thank the previous speaker.
- When you change to a new slide, state your point, then prove it with that slide’s bulleted text or charts.
- When you change to a new slide, avoid saying Next is [slide title] and Now I’m going to talk about [slide title].
- Stay in sync with your slides and bullets.
- Ask rhetorical questions.
- At the end of your section of a team presentation, briefly recap the key takeaway points of your section, but don’t repeat a lot of details.
- Introduce the next speaker.

Summary & Conclusion
- The closing speaker should briefly summarize the major takeaway points, but not the small details.
- Stop on a Summary slide, not on a Questions slide.
- End on time.
- Be prepared for Q&A.