

TITLE: Communicate Through Debate

INSTITUTION: Wiley College

CONTACT: Mr. Christopher Medina – Director, Forensics and QEP – cmedina@wileyc.edu

Wiley College has chosen the quality enhancement initiative *Communicate through Debate* to focus on enhancing students' communication and critical thinking skills through the medium of debate: an instructional strategy that will heighten student engagement in learning. A number of studies report that students who learn the principles of argumentation, and prepare appropriately by researching and practicing in anticipation of debating, can improve their cognitive performance, as well as, oral delivery. As they progress, students sharpen their information literacy skills and develop self-confidence. The debate experience prepares graduates to become productive team members and professionals, thoughtful leaders and well-informed citizens.

Wiley College will implement its QEP by means of a Debate Across the Curriculum (DAC) model to meet four student learning outcomes: (1) Students will be able to compile and analyze empirical and expert evidence from diverse media to support a logical claim; (2) students will be able to draw conclusions by evaluating an argument to determine the veracity of the evidence and the logic of the idea; (3) students will be able to demonstrate knowledge and application of a well-formulated argument that uses evidence to support their position; and (4) students will be able to recognize opposing viewpoints and utilize research evidence to champion their position through the exchange of verbal questions and answers. The Debate Across the Curriculum model will ensure that students at every level receive the training and mentoring needed to achieve the intended student learning outcomes.

Communicate through Debate will be introduced into the College's curriculum beginning with entering freshmen, including those in developmental courses, who will be taught the basics of argumentation. During this initial phase and onward, forensics specialists will sustain the faculty through mentoring and modeling approaches that engage students as they participate in class debating activities. Students will also be mentored by their peers, who are members of the Wiley College debate team. Additionally, students, representing their majors, clubs, and classes, will participate in an annual intramural debate tournament where they will attend debate clinics to learn how to refine and utilize their skills in practical settings.