**DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.   
“WORD FROM THE MOUNTAIN TOP” ORATORY CONTEST**

Campus and Community Engagement, a unit of the Office of the Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, is proud to announce our inaugural Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. *Word from the Mountain Top* oratory contest. The purpose of the contestis to recognize and give students the opportunity to reflect on the words of Dr. King while connecting his message to issues facing our nation in the 21st century. In addition, participants are provided an opportunity to display and enhance their own writing and communication skills through oration.

**ELIGIBILITY:** To be eligible all participants must be a high school (public, parochial, military, private or state accredited home school), community college, or college student currently enrolled in a school located in the Birmingham City, Shelby County, or Jefferson County area.

**HOW TO ENTER:** Students must submit one copy of the completed typed- written speech (title included). This information should be delivered no later than January 4, 2019, by 5:00 p.m. Speeches can also be submitted electronically to [inclusion@uab.edu](mailto:inclusion@uab.edu) with the subject line: **2019 MLK Speech**.

**CONTEST REGULATIONS:** All speech content must comply with the following contest rules before submission:

* Each speech must reflect the contestant’s own ideas, research, writing, and original thinking.
* Only one (1) speech may be submitted by each contestant.
* Speeches must be typed double space, 500 words minimum to 1,000 words max.
* The delivered response to the assigned speech topic should last for a minimum of five minutes, but no longer than ten minutes. (1)
* Each speech must include a title page with the following information:
* Speech
* Author’s name
* Physical Address
* Email Address
* Telephone number
* School name
* Total number of pages

The title of the speech, NOT the author’s name, MUST appear on the top of the first page. References should be included and clearly identified. Speeches will not be returned to the author; they become the property of the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at UAB. If selected, we reserve the right to reprint the speeches in educational publications, future promotional material, and use them at community education workshops. Appropriate citations will be given to the authors.

**THEME & GUIDELINES**

“A genuine revolution of values means in the final analysis that our loyalties must become ecumenical rather than sectional. Every nation must now develop an overriding loyalty to mankind as a whole in order to preserve the best in their individual societies. This call for a worldwide fellowship that lifts neighborly concern beyond one's tribe, race, class, and nation is in reality a call for an all-embracing -- embracing and unconditional love for all mankind. This oft misunderstood, this oft misinterpreted concept, so readily dismissed by the Nietzsches of the world as a weak and cowardly force, has now become an absolute necessity for the survival of man. When I speak of love I am not speaking of some sentimental and weak response. I am not speaking of that force which is just emotional bosh. I am speaking of that force which all of the great religions have seen as the supreme unifying principle of life. Love is somehow the key that unlocks the door which leads to ultimate reality.” –Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.  
  
Exactly one year before his assassination on April 4, 1967, Dr. King delivered what has been characterized as one of his most powerful, radical, and often forgotten speeches. No longer willing to remain quiet about the perceived immorality of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War, and having knowledge of the criticism he would receive for speaking out, King still felt compelled to break his silence. In his speech, “Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence”, King offered up a critique of war and its crippling effects on our nation’s public policies. Specifically, he argued that a foreign policy based on violence and domination abroad is a symptom of a deeper social illness being faced at home. King goes on to challenge the nation to rapidly shift its values from a “thing-oriented” society to a “person-oriented” society. He warns, ”When machines and computers, profit motives, and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered.” Through such a cultural shift, King felt we could avoid future mistakes and save the soul of America. In keeping with the realization of King’s words and this year’s theme, “A Call to Conscience: Time to Break Silence”, participants are encouraged to use the selected quote as inspiration to prepare a speech addressing the following question:  
  
**Using the assigned quote from Dr. King’s “Beyond Vietnam” speech, what would you say to encourage listeners to act to preserve the best in our U.S. democratic society?**

**ASSIGNED TOPIC:** The purpose of the assigned topic is to test the speaker’s knowledge of the subject, the extent of his/her research, and the ability to respond to the question as related to the basic principles of Dr. Martin Luther King’s message.  
  
**SELECTION:** Three finalists from each category (high school and college/graduate) will be contacted and invited to perform their written speeches on January 26, 2019.

**ENTRIES ARE TO BE DELIVERED TO:**

Dr. Brandon Wolfe  
401 Campbell   
1300 University Boulevard  
Birmingham, AL 35233

*In the prepared oration, quotations must be indicated as such. Where quotations are more than words in length, the author’s name must be given in the manuscript and cited orally.*

**ORATORY RUBRIC[[1]](#footnote-1)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **5- Distinguished** | **3- Proficient** | 1. **Novice** |
| **Delivery** | * Relaxed, positive; appears confident and calm * Maintain eye contact with audience * Gestures enhance speech | * Some nervousness apparent; sporadic eye contact or only to one person * Some nervous gestures, stiff, tense, or too relaxed | * Delivery distracting; eye contact lacking * Gestures lacking or inappropriate for speech |
| **Vocal delivery** | * Enunciates clearly with effective volume * Infection conveys emotion and enhances meaning * Meaningful pauses build suspense or enhance interest | * Generally uses appropriate enunciation and volume * Ordinary inflection * Random pauses with gap fillers (“um”, “er”, etc.) | * Enunciation or volume a problem; difficult to hear or understand * Monotone * Frequent pauses and distracting fillers |
| **Pacing** | * Delivery is engaging for audience, moving along at an interesting pace | * Delivery is somewhat uneven | * Delivery is rather too quick or slow, decreasing interest for audience |
| **Introduction and Closing** | * Introduction captures audience attention and sets the mood * Closing is strong, leaving the audience with a clear message | * Introduction is evident but not outstanding * Closing is evident, but average | * Introduction is weak or lacking * Closing is weak or lacking |
| **Presentation Style** | * Information presented in an engaging, compelling style * Presenter’s personality is effectively integrated into the presentation | * Presentation style effective, but not especially strong * Presenter’s personality is somewhat in evidence | * Presentation style does not inspire interest * No evidence of the presenter’s personality |
| **Point Total** |  |  |  |

**WRITTEN SPEECH RUBRIC[[2]](#footnote-2)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **5-Distinguished** | **3-Proficient** | **1-Novice** |
| **Content is relevant to topic and personal life** | * Clear purpose and subject; reference is made to the yearly theme * Pertinent examples, facts, and/or statistics | * Has some success defining purpose and subject; only limited reference to the yearly theme * Some examples, fact, and/or statistics, support the subject | * Attempts to define the purpose and subject; no mention of the yearly theme * Weak examples, facts, and/or statistics, which do not adequately * Support the subject |
| **The speech adds value to the experience of those who hear it** | * Message is original; speaker has mad real contribution to the thinking of the audience * Message is meaningful and convincing | * Message is well- presented with new ideas evident; audience benefits from having heard the speech * Message has a clear point of view, but not presented in an especially convincing manner | * Message is run-of-the mill; little originality evident of minimal value to the audience * Speech values to effectively convince the audience |
| **The speech has a good flow** | * There is a clear beginning, a middle, and end * Smooth and effective transitions are made between thoughts or sections * Ideas are conveyed in an original, insightful manner that holds the attention of the audience | * Average beginning, middle and end to speech * Adequate transitions * Audience is attentive | * Unclear or confusing flow to speech * Transitions are few or lacking * Audience does not remain engaged |
| **It is presented with attention to vocabulary and grammar convention** | * Accurate, interesting vocabulary * No grammatical errors * Interesting and varied sentence structure | * Adequate but ordinary vocabulary * Some grammatical * Sentence structure is repetitive | * Poor vocabulary with little originality * Significant grammatical errors * Little or no attention to sentence structure |
| **Point Total** |  |  |  |

1. Speeches that the do not adhere to the time allotment will be deducted 5 points. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. If the content of the speech does not, in a judge’s estimation, meet the criteria for the contest, a score of 0 should be awarded for content. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)