

CARS Talk

Powerful Data Presentations with (PD)²

Jennifer H. Van Mullekom, PhD

September 21, 2018

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Lakeview 1165 (Telepresence Room)

The amount of available data has exploded in the past ten years. Those holding quantitative roles in businesses and universities have been called upon to analyze it and interpret it. We must turn data into information for decision makers to act. This is true whether you are assessing the performance of a new therapy, immigration policy, product launch, or academic program. The point of presenting data is for you to synthesize the facts in a meaningful, digestible way for your audience. Yet, many data-based presentations serve to create confusion and delay in the decision-making process because they lack clarity. Even worse, the lack of clarity leads to making a decision based on an erroneous interpretation.

Developing good communication skills around data-based presentations is essential for those in quantitative fields. This talk will discuss a four phased process for excelling at a data-based presentation. The four phases are Prepare, Design, Practice and Deliver or (PD)² for short. In the context of the process, emphasis will be placed on explaining complex concepts, formatting your results for clarity, designing your slides to facilitate interpretation, and engaging a non-quantitative audience. You will leave the talk with an overall framework for tackling your next data-based presentation as well as tips and tricks you can immediately use in informal team interactions.



Jennifer H. Van Mullekom joined Virginia Tech in Fall 2016 as the Director of the Statistical Applications and Innovations Group (SAIG) and an Associate Professor of Statistical Practice. She teaches a collaboration skills course to graduate students and mentors them as they practice statistics as SAIG collaborators.

Formerly, she was a Senior Consulting Statistician and Certified Six Sigma Master Black Belt in DuPont's Applied Statistics Group, supporting the DuPont Protection Technologies business. At DuPont, she provided statistical leadership to the Tyvek® Medical Packaging Transition Project in the areas of product development, commercialization, and regulatory. Her contributions to the development portion of that project earned her a DuPont Engineering Excellence Award in 2014, one of the company's highest honors.

Jen is active in professional societies. She has been involved in the ASA's Section on Physical and Engineering Sciences since 1998 and has held various positions including Section Chair. Currently she is chair of the American Society for Quality's Chemical and Processes Division. She has co-developed the ASA's course on "Effective Presentations for Statisticians" as a member of past ASA President Bob Rodriguez's Career Success Factors Task Group as well as served on multiple conference committees for ASA.

She holds three US Patents and has also worked at Lubrizol and Capital One. Her statistical areas of interest include equivalence testing, regression modeling, response surface designs, and mixed models. Jennifer received her PhD and MS from Virginia Tech in 1998 and 1995 respectively. She holds undergraduate degrees from Concord University in Mathematics (1993) and Mathematics Education (1994).