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**Mary A Nelson\*** (mnelso15@gmu.edu), 4400 University Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030, and **Maddie Trieber**. *Oral Reviews: Leveling the Playing Field*.

Failure rates in introductory mathematics courses often result in students becoming discouraged and even the dropping their STEM major. The gatekeeper of most STEM majors is Calculus I, where the national failure rates have been about 40%. More troubling is the fact that many rural and inner city high schools are unable to provide high level mathematics courses, typically available to students in the suburbs. Hence some students begin STEM majors at a distinct disadvantage. Our study showed strong correlations between the use of orals and a leveling of the playing field for mathematically under-prepared students. Orals are voluntary, ungraded discussion-based review sessions that take place before written exams. A group of 5-6 students discuss important concepts with each other and a knowledgeable facilitator. They discuss concepts to be covered on upcoming written exams, and draw graphs and diagrams to clarify important ideas. Students gain a more conceptual understanding of course materials through the interactive feedback. The use of orals has been shown to be highly correlated to improved exam scores and to a decrease in DFW rates. At one university, for example, a ten year average failure rate for Calculus I of 31% was dropped to a five year average of 22%. (Received September 26, 2017)