PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT
AY 2008-2009

20 May 2009

College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Communication Studies, Public Speaking Program
Report prepared by Marilyn DeLaure, Director of Public Speaking

1. **Overview Statement**: *Briefly summarize the assessment activities that were undertaken this academic year, indicating:*

    a. *which program learning outcomes were assessed this year.*

    b. *who in your department/program was involved in the assessment of the above learning outcomes*

In the fall 2008 semester, we revised our program learning outcomes, reducing them in number from fifteen to six. (See Appendix A for old and new learning outcomes.) This spring, we assessed learning outcomes C. (structure and argument) and F. (delivery):

> C. Students will ~~analyze and *~~ construct cogent and well-structured arguments, including clear thesis statements, coherent organization, and sound reasoning.
>
> F. Students will perform extemporaneous speaking including effective verbal and nonverbal delivery appropriate to the subject, context and audience.

* Note: We realized that we could not accurately assess students' ability to analyze arguments by reviewing their final speeches. The words "analyze and" were added at the last stage of revisions of the learning outcomes … we see now the difficulty of assessing these two distinct activities (analyzing arguments and constructing them) as one outcome. Therefore, for the purposes of this assessment report, we struck "analyze and" from the outcome, focusing solely on the students' construction of sound, well-structured arguments.

The public speaking faculty worked together to develop a rubric to assess outcomes C and F. The faculty members who viewed and rated the speeches on May 18, 2009, were Marilyn DeLaure (Program Director), Tony Adams, Joanne Babin, and Helen Piserchio.

2. **Please Answers the Following Questions for Each of the Student Outcomes Assessed:**

    a. **<u>What did you do?</u>**

    For each section of public speaking (COMS 103) in the spring semester, two students were randomly selected. We videotaped their final speeches (or, in some cases, their last informative or persuasive speeches, if the final speech of the class was ceremonial), and then four faculty members reviewed all the speeches, evaluating them using the rubric found in Appendix B. There were 18 sections, so there should have been a total of 36 speeches reviewed. Unfortunately, one student speech video was lost in transmission from the classroom to the AV and ITS departments, so we reviewed a total of 35 speeches. This was

the first time the program had gathered this kind of data, and the logistics were somewhat complicated. The majority of the videos are streamed to the Communication Studies Blackboard site, which as restricted access, to protect students' privacy. A few speeches were delivered to the reviewers on DVD.

In evaluating the speeches, the reviewers experienced some challenges in that the quality of the sound and video recordings was varied. In a few cases, there was distracting ambient noise in the recordings (lawnmower in the background, excessive audience coughing) that made it difficult to hear the speaker. There were also some recordings where the videographer failed to pan back and forth to capture the speaker and his or her visual aids.

b. <u>What did the faculty in the department or program learn</u>?

See Appendix C for full data report.

For Learning Outcome C, a total of 34 speeches were evaluated. (One of the speeches, by Student #30, was a ceremonial speech, and was too different in kind to be evaluated for learning outcome C; we only evaluated this student for delivery.) Students did fairly well on structure and argument: 22 students (65%) met or exceeded the benchmark achievement standard. Twelve students (35%) did not meet the benchmark. The average score of all speeches was 2.03 (on a three-point scale, where 2 is the benchmark).

For Learning Outcome F, a total of 35 speeches were evaluated. Only 12 (34 %) met or exceeded the benchmark standard; 23 (66%) did not meet the benchmark. The average score of all speeches was 1.64.

One of the things we made note of during the assessment process was whether or not the student speakers appeared to be non-native speakers of English. There were 8 ESL speakers out of the 35 total speeches; all but one of those students failed to meet the benchmark standard on both learning outcomes. We had discussed as a faculty in advance whether or not we should have a separate rubric or set of standards for ESL students; for this round of assessment, we elected to apply the same standards to all speakers. Given the quality of video recordings and some students' strong accents, some of the speeches were very hard to hear and understand.

There are two major things we've learned from this assessment. First, it is clear that our ESL students as a group are not performing as well as we'd hoped on both outcomes. However, we may need to develop a different rubric or set of evaluation standards for this particular population. Since we only examined final speeches, we were unable to tell how far these students had progressed as speakers throughout the class; it could be the case that many or all of them made great improvements over the course of the semester. Regardless, we will be taking action to try to address the needs of this group of students (see below).

Second, we found that student performance on Learning Outcome F, delivery, was weaker across the board than expected. One explanation for this is that there were a variety of factors that led to low scores. Some students, including many of the ESL students, had weak vocal delivery (poor enunciation, low volume, halting rate); other students spoke very clearly, but were reading from manuscripts, and the learning outcome specifies the goal of speaking

extemporaneously. The faculty raters also agreed that our expectations for an outstanding score (3) were quite high, requiring extemporaneous speaking, clear vocal delivery, and comfortable physical delivery. We hope to focus our attention next year on improving instruction in speech delivery.

c. <u>What will be done differently as a result of what was learned</u>?

Discuss how courses and/or curricula will be changed to improve student learning as a result of the assessment. Include a discussion of how the faculty will help students overcome their weaknesses and improve their strengths.

The first action we've already taken is to designate a special section of public speaking (in both Summer 09 and Fall 09 terms) for multi-lingual/ESL students. We anticipate that this will allow for a more focused approach to addressing the learning needs specific to non-native English speakers.

Second, we as a faculty will work next fall on developing improved pedagogical strategies for teaching delivery. We will draw upon the experience of existing faculty, as well as on the expertise of Kate Al-Shamma, a PHP instructor with a Ph.D. in Theatre, who will be returning to our program after several years away.

Third, we are planning to expand the current Writing Center into a Writing and Speaking Center. We had hoped to open the Speaking Center in fall 2009, but the project is on indefinite hold given the current university budget crisis. We believe that a Speaking Center staffed by faculty, offering individual instruction and rehearsal-performance opportunities, will benefit both ESL speakers and the general student population, particularly on delivery. Correcting delivery mistakes and improving performance of speech delivery is something that requires practice (the student rehearsing and delivering speeches) as well as individual coaching. The Speaking Center can provide space for both of these.

Finally, we will be working to further refine our learning outcomes, and also to develop assessment methods for the other learning outcomes.

3. **Attach a copy of the components of the department/program assessment plan that have been modified since its initial submission:**
    a. Program Mission
    b. Program Learning Goals
    c. Program Learning Outcomes
    d. Program Learning Rubrics aligned with outcomes
    e. Curriculum map that shows the courses that pertain to the outcome

Please return to: Provost Office by June 1, 2009

You can send your replies as either a Word attachment (to: marin@usfca.edu) or as a hard copy to: Provost Office, Lone Mountain Rossi Wing 4th floor.

If you have any questions, please contact: William Murry, Director of Institutional Assessment (wmurry@usfca.edu or x5486).

APPENDIX 1: Learning Outcomes

OLD LEARNING OUTCOMES (prior to 2009)

1. Understand the importance of oral argument in citizenship and public decision-making.
2. Understand key concepts from the tradition of rhetoric and use these concepts to assess both their own speaking and that of others.
3. Identify and evaluate ethical issues in public address, including plagiarism and gender and cultural stereotyping.
4. Fashion a clear and concise thesis statement.
5. Identify and use compelling, credible evidence and anticipate audience support of, or opposition to, evidentiary claims.
6. Identify and evaluate lines of reasoning (both logical and fallacious), and types of proofs and appeals.
7. Adapt arguments to various audiences and occasions.
8. Demonstrate facility in multiple genres/modes of public discourse, organizing material in a manner appropriate to the speech genre/mode.
9. Create a speech outline that categorizes and subordinates ideas to produce a clear, appropriate organizational pattern.
10. Properly cite a variety of sources.
11. Adjust voice appropriately to audience, room and material.
12. Demonstrate appropriate vocal variety (e.g., pitch, rate, volume) while controlling speech anxiety.
13. Demonstrate fluency when delivering speech from notes or outline.
14. Use nonverbal cues to enhance the speech rather than detract from it.
15. Use visual aids (e.g., multimedia) effectively.

NEW/REVISED LEARNING OUTCOMES (starting 2009)

A. Students will practice speaking as a public art of citizenship, using key concepts from the rhetorical tradition to guide the creation and assessment of speeches and to inform civic judgment.

B. Students will identify and evaluate ethical issues in public address, including plagiarism and gender and cultural stereotyping, and exhibit good ethos as speakers and listeners.

C. Students will analyze and construct cogent and well-structured arguments, including clear thesis statements, coherent organization, and sound reasoning.

D. Students will identify, use, and properly cite credible evidence.

E. Students will demonstrate facility in multiple genres of public discourse and in the adaptation of argument to their audiences.

F. Students will perform extemporaneous speaking including effective verbal and nonverbal delivery appropriate to the subject, context and audience.

Appendix 2: Assessment Rubric

Outcome	1: Very Poor Achievement of Outcome	2: Average Achievement of Outcome [Benchmark Standard]	3: Very Good Achievement Of Outcome
C. Students will ~~analyze and~~ construct cogent and well-structured arguments, including clear thesis statements, coherent organization, and sound reasoning.	No identifiable thesis Little to no organizational pattern Poor reasoning (unsupported claims, logical fallacies)	Clear thesis Identifiable organizational structure Solid reasoning: claims supported, no gross errors of reasoning	Clear and compelling thesis Clear organizational structure appropriate to content Cogent argument: claims well supported by strong evidence, sound reasoning
F. Students will perform extemporaneous speaking including effective verbal and nonverbal delivery appropriate to the subject, context and audience	Failure to speak extemporaneously (reading from MS, or memorized) Voice too soft or loud, rate too fast or slow, excessive and distracting filler words, poor enunciation Distracting nonverbal delivery (posture, gesture, eye contact, movement)	Speaks extemporaneously from notes Can easily understand: appropriate volume and rate, clear enunciation, minimal filler words No distracting mannerisms, decent posture and eye contact	Excellent extemporaneous delivery: conversational and engaging Strong vocal delivery: modulates voice, varies rate and pitch, projects confidence and enthusiasm Engaging nonverbal delivery: excellent use of movement, gesture, and eye contact

Appendix 3: Speech Scoring Data
Learning Outcome C: Structure & Argument

Student #	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3	Rater 4	Average Score	
1	2	2	2	1	1.75	
2	1	2	1	1	1.25	ESL
3	2	2	2	2	2	ESL
4					0	(video lost)
5	3	2	2	2	2.25	
6	2	1	2	1	1.5	
7	2	1	3	2	2	
8	3	2	3	3	2.75	
9	2	3	2	2	2.25	
10	3	1	2	2	2	
11	3	2	2	2	2.25	
12	2	2	2	2	2	
13	3	2	3	3	2.75	
14	3	2	3	3	2.75	
15	1	1	1	2	1.25	ESL
16	2	1	1	1	1.25	ESL
17	2	2	3	3	2.5	
18	3	2	3	3	2.75	
19	2	2	3	3	2.5	
20	3	2	3	2	2.5	
21	3	2	2	2	2.25	
22	1	1	1	1	1	
23	1	2	1	1	1.25	ESL
24	2	3	2	3	2.5	
25	2	2	2	2	2	
26	2	2	2	1	1.75	
27	2	2	2	2	2	
28	3	2	3	3	2.75	
29	1	1	1	1	1	ESL
30	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a		
31	2	2	2	3	2.25	
32	2	1	1	2	1.5	ESL
33	1	1	2	2	1.5	
34	3	2	3	3	2.75	
35	3	2	3	2	2.5	
36	2	1	2	2	1.75	ESL
Total					69	
Average					2.02941176	

Learning Outcome F: Delivery

Student #	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3	Rater 4	Average Score	
1	2	2	2	2	2	
2	1	1	2	1	1.25	ESL
3	2	2	2	2	2	ESL
4					0	video lost
5	1	1	2	1	1.25	
6	1	1	1	1	1	
7	2	1	2	2	1.75	
8	2	1	2	2	1.75	
9	2	2	2	2	2	
10	1	1	2	1	1.25	
11	1	1	1	1	1	
12	1	2	1	2	1.5	
13	3	2	2	3	2.5	
14	1	2	1	3	1.75	
15	1	1	1	1	1	ESL
16	1	1	1	1	1	ESL
17	3	2	2	2	2.25	
18	2	2	2	3	2.25	
19	2	2	2	3	2.25	
20	3	2	2	2	2.25	
21	2	1	2	2	1.75	
22	1	1	1	2	1.25	
23	1	1	1	2	1.25	ESL
24	3	2	3	2	2.5	
25	1	1	2	1	1.25	
26	1	2	2	1	1.5	
27	1	1	1	1	1	
28	3	2	3	2	2.5	
29	1	1	1	1	1	ESL
30	2	1	2	3	2	
31	1	1	1	2	1.25	
32	2	1	1	1	1.25	ESL
33	1	1	2	2	1.5	
34	1	1	2	3	1.75	
35	3	2	3	2	2.5	
36	1	1	1	1	1	ESL
Average					1.635714	
Average	nonESL	students			1.76	
Average	all ESL	students			1.25	