

2017-2018 COM Annual Assessment Report (Presentations)

Department: Communication Studies

Date: September 10, 2018

Department Chair: Dr. Deborah Dunn (2018-2019)/Dr. Lesa Stern (2017-18)

I. Program Learning Outcome (PLO) Assessment

A. **Facilitator:** Elizabeth Gardner

B. **Direct Assessment Methods:** Recorded and evaluated 22 speeches completed by seniors

C. **Indirect Assessment Methods:** Collected evaluations from internship supervisors (see appendix E)

| Program Learning Outcome | Major Findings | Closing the Loop Activities |
|---|--|---|
| Effectively create appropriate messages (Public Speaking) | <p>Our department motto is “<i>wisdom with eloquence.</i>” In alignment with this motto, our students are expected to have well developed presentation skills by graduation.</p> <p><i>Overall, we are pleased with our students’ presentations. The department benchmark of 85% of students evaluated as satisfactory or excellent in all criteria was met; Student performance exceeded our benchmarks on all criteria. Very few students performed unsatisfactorily.</i> (see Appendix C & E)</p> <p>- Students did much better at including a thesis, making claims, and providing reasons than at our last assessment. This year, <i>all</i> of the students had a strong or adequate thesis. We believe that this improvement reflects the emphasis we have put on making a clear argument, particularly through requiring students to complete the “Make an Argument” worksheet in multiple courses.</p> <p>- In the Knowledge category, we found that all students were either strong or adequate in the Evidence category, but many students only provided adequate Evidence. There seems to be a disconnect between our lower-level courses that put a strong emphasis on citing quality sources and upper-level courses that</p> | <p>- We will continue to consistently and systematically use the “Make an Argument” worksheet that we implemented after our last oral communication assessment.</p> <p>- We will circulate the Speech Rubric more broadly across courses to emphasize the various facets of public speaking that students should be attentive to each time they stand up to present. We also discussed the assessment rubric and updated several categories and descriptions in May 2018 to provide a clearer outline of our expectations for students. We will keep principles of good public speaking in the forefront for students by circulating this sheet regularly in courses.</p> |

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| <p>require students to complete larger projects. This weaker performance may be the result of the schedule shifts and missed classes of the spring semester, which added additional challenges to completing a larger project, or it could be that the students' attention was on the larger argument rather than the quality of sources used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Students performed adequately when it came to their poise, fluency, word choice, and creativity, but they were collectively weaker in these areas than elsewhere. We perceive there to be a tendency among students to put more emphasis on their content rather than their presentation skills.- More students were inadequate in Transitions than any other category. On most occasions, students seem to assume that their audience will follow along with them rather than being more deliberate about guiding their audience between their points. Some of these shortcomings may arise from the assignment prompt.- The majority of students showed professionalism and consistently used strong vocal variety in their speaking. <p>*Most of our seniors were evaluated as having <i>exceptional</i> communication skills by their internship supervisors.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Some of our students do not take public speaking until their senior year. We will continue to make a concerted effort in our advising to encourage students to take public speaking in their first or second year.- We reaffirmed among ourselves an understanding that the Strong category encompasses "A" as well as "B+" level work.- We will develop and record three sample speeches for students, which demonstrate a failed speech, an ok speech, and a good speech. These samples will highlight dynamics like proper transitions and the appropriate use of evidence. We will refer to these samples in multiple courses and use them to reinforce principles of good public speaking. We will create these resources in Fall 2018.- We will develop a shared Canvas space for communication studies majors where they can all have access to resources on public speaking, including research and style guidelines, the department Speech Rubric, and the sample speeches.- We will each consider and draw more attention for our students to the consequences of failing to cite evidence in oral presentations. <p>*We want to celebrate with our students. They are doing well with oral communication skills for formal presentations and exceptionally in their professional communication in the workplace.</p> |
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II. Follow-ups

| Program Learning Outcome | Who is in Charge | Major Findings | Closing the Loop Activities |
|---|-------------------|---|--|
| Writing. Discuss how to improve our teaching of writing (from 2016-7 COM annual report) | Lesa Stern | Doing this helped us understand the kind of assignments that students were completing in our classes in the major. We realized (and were pleased that) we have a variety of writing assignments that help develop students in writing for different audiences and purposes. | All Faculty shared their writing prompts and assignments during Fall 2017. We took 30 minutes each during different department meetings and shared our assignments and some of our strategies for helping students to improve their writing. |

III. Other Assessment-Related Projects

| Project | Who is in Charge | Major Findings | Action |
|--|------------------|---|---|
| 1. Senior capstone design & implementation | All COM faculty | 1. We started brainstorming common elements that should be required for all capstone courses. However, we realized that we needed all 4 full time faculty present to move forward on this item. | 1. During Fall 2018, we need to discuss and decide on the required capstone elements. These will be implemented (as a trial run) in Spring 2019 with the first few transfer students who will be taking the capstone courses. Lesa volunteered to oversee the COM 197 (at no extra pay) in Spring 2019 if there are 4 or fewer students who sign up for the research option (COM 197). She also added COM 197 in consultation with Michelle Hardley (registrar). |
| 2. Develop Library "resource guide" Webpages for COM (see 2016-17 report) | Lesa Stern | 2. We love our new resource guide on the library website and have been referring to it in classes so that students know it is a "first place" to go when they need help with finding resources. | 2. We reviewed and completely reconstructed the COM resource guide (on library website) so that it is useful to our majors. |

IV. Adjustments to the Multi-Year Action Plan – **NO Changes**

V. Appendices

Appendix A: Description of Assessment Process and Instruments

Process: We agreed to record the presentations done by all seniors for assessment purposes. At the start of the fall and spring semester, we identified all the COM courses that required a significant presentation during the semester. Faculty were then assigned to assess specific seniors in their courses. Before we assessed the first assignments, our department reviewed and updated our Speech Rubric and then normed two sample student presentations. Following our data collection, we met to discuss the results and our Speech Rubric.

Nature of data collected:

- We collected speeches from a variety of courses: COM 015, COM 103, COM 130, COM 138, COM 190, and COM 196.
- There were 22 speeches in our sample, which is almost all of our graduating seniors for the year.
- These speeches represented a variety of speaking assignments, such as presenting a paper that was just one component within a class, to presenting an overview of their internship experience, to presenting a senior project that they engaged in throughout the entire semester.
- The presentations ranged in length from 5 minutes to 45 minutes.

Appendix B: SPEECH / ORAL PRESENTATION EVALUATION FORM
Strong/Excellent (B+/A); Adequate/Acceptable (C/B); Inadequate (=/ $<$ C-)

| | | <i>Strong/Excellent</i> | <i>Adequate/Acceptable</i> | <i>Inadequate</i> |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|---|---|--|
| Knowledge | <i>Thesis</i> | Highly adapted to audience | Appropriate for audience | Inappropriate to audience |
| | <i>Claims</i> | Thoughtful | Straightforward | Shallow |
| | <i>Reasons</i> | Well-tied to claim | Relevant | Unclear or Poor |
| | <i>Evidence</i> | Persuasive | Basic/Sufficient | Inadequate |
| | | | | |
| Organization | <i>Introduction</i> | Compelling | Clear | Abrupt/Uninteresting |
| | <i>Clarity/Flow</i> | Clear & Flowing | Discernible | Disconnected |
| | <i>Transitions</i> | Clear | Present | Missing or awkward |
| | <i>Conclusion</i> | Compelling | Adequate | None or Inadequate |
| | | | | |
| Presentation | <i>Poise</i> | Imperturbable | Composed | Anxious |
| | <i>Fluency</i> | Consistently, Fluent, No/few fillers | Fluent at times, disjointed at others. Some fillers | Inarticulate/ Disjointed; many fillers |
| | <i>Word Choice</i> | Striking/varied | Clear but ordinary | Dull or vague |
| | <i>Creativity</i> | Innovative | Routine | Minimal |
| | <i>Eye Contact</i> | Direct EC to all audience | Makes EC some of time | Sporadic or no EC |
| | <i>Vocal Variety</i> | Engaging | Modulated | Monotone |
| | <i>Gestures</i> | Varied & effective | Adequate | Wild, Stiff, or None |
| | <i>Appearance</i> | Professional | Appropriate | Unprofessional |
| | <i>Energy</i> | Dynamic | Conscientious | Disengaged |

Appendix C: Table of Results from Presentations

Percentage of COM speeches rated Strong/Excellent, Adequate/Acceptable, or Inadequate

| | | <i>Strong/Excellent</i> | <i>Adequate/Acceptable</i> | <i>Inadequate</i> |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Knowledge | <i>Thesis</i> | 50 | 50 | 0 |
| | <i>Claims</i> | 50 | 45 | 4 |
| | <i>Reasons</i> | 59 | 36 | 4 |
| | <i>Evidence</i> | 36 | 64 | 0 |
| | | | | |
| Organization | <i>Introduction</i> | 41 | 55 | 4 |
| | <i>Clarity/Flow</i> | 50 | 41 | 9 |
| | <i>Transitions</i> | 41 | 45 | 14 |
| | <i>Conclusion</i> | 36 | 59 | 4 |
| | | | | |
| Presentation | <i>Poise</i> | 36 | 64 | 0 |
| | <i>Fluency</i> | 36 | 64 | 0 |
| | <i>Word Choice</i> | 18 | 77 | 4 |
| | <i>Creativity</i> | 32 | 68 | 0 |
| | <i>Eye Contact</i> | 50 | 50 | 0 |
| | <i>Vocal Variety</i> | 73 | 23 | 4 |
| | <i>Gestures</i> | 55 | 45 | 0 |
| | <i>Appearance</i> | 86 | 14 | 0 |
| | <i>Energy</i> | 55 | 45 | 0 |

N = 22

Appendix D: Updated Speech Rubric for COM

May 14, 2018-- As a result of this years' assessment

| | | <i>Strong/Excellent</i> | <i>Adequate/Acceptable</i> | <i>Inadequate</i> |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Knowledge | <i>Thesis</i> | Highly adapted to audience | Appropriate for audience | Inappropriate to audience |
| | <i>Reasons</i> | Well-tied to claim | Relevant | Unclear or Poor |
| | <i>Evidence</i> | Persuasive | Basic/Sufficient | Inadequate |
| | | | | |
| Organization | <i>Introduction</i> | Compelling | Clear | Abrupt uninteresting |
| | <i>Structure</i> | Well Ordered | Discernible | Disconnected |
| | <i>Transitions</i> | Flowing | Present | Missing or awkward |
| | <i>Conclusion</i> | Compelling | Adequate | None or Inadequate |
| | | | | |
| Presentation | <i>Poise</i> | Imperturbable | Composed | Anxious |
| | <i>Fluency</i> | Consistently Fluent No/few fillers | Fluent at times, disjointed at others Some fillers | Inarticulate/ Disjointed; many fillers |
| | <i>Word Choice</i> | Striking/varied | Clear but ordinary | Dull or vague |
| | <i>Creative Engagement</i> | Innovative | Routine | Minimal |
| | <i>Eye Contact</i> | Direct EC to all audience | Makes EC some of time | Sporadic or no EC |
| | <i>Gestures</i> | Varied & effective | Adequate | Wild, Stiff, or None |
| | <i>Appearance</i> | Professional | Appropriate | Unprofessional |
| | <i>Vocal Variety & Energy</i> | Dynamic | Modulated | Disengaged |

| | | | | |
|--|-------------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| | <i>Visual Aid</i> | Enhancing | Supportive | Distracting |
|--|-------------------|-----------|------------|-------------|

Appendix E: Internship Supervisor Evaluations

Data collection: Additional data was collected in order to assess how well students communicate orally in the workplace outside of Westmont. Supervisors complete evaluations related to many different aspects of workplace performance and attitudes. Three performance elements relate to oral communication: (1) Listens actively and attentively, (2) participated effectively in group settings, and (3) demonstrates effective verbal communication skills.” Data related to oral communication was taken from supervisor evaluations of interns in communication studies over the past three years.

Results and Interpretation of data: Data reveal that supervisors evaluate communication studies interns (at the end of 15 weeks and 144 internship hours) as demonstrating *exceptional* active listening skills, participation in groups, and verbal communication skills. We want to celebrate the fact that most supervisors think our seniors have exceptional communication skills.

Table of Results for Supervisor Evaluations of Interns’ Oral Communication

Percent of interns for each oral communication rating by supervisors

| | Exceptional | Commendable (exceeds expectations) | Fair | Uncomplimentary | Unsatisfactory |
|--|-------------|---------------------------------------|------|-----------------|----------------|
| Listens actively and attentively | 94 | 6 | - | - | - |
| Participates effectively in group settings | 87 | 13 | - | - | - |
| Demonstrates effective verbal communication skills | 87 | 13 | - | - | - |

* n=16