

# COMMUNICATION ASSESSMENT REPORT 2011

## GUIDING QUESTIONS (Revised, Spring 2011)

**1. What are the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for your unit? How do you inform the public and other stakeholders (students, potential students, the community) about your SLOs?**

Students who earn the Bachelor of Arts in Communication should:

1. Send and receive verbal, nonverbal and written messages that meet critical standards;
2. Demonstrate facility in using major theories in message analysis;
3. Demonstrate significant skill in adapting messages to any type of communication;
4. Create formal messages using credible research methods and solid reasoning;
5. Demonstrate an understanding of the ethics, practices, and importance of communication theories in their area of emphases.

The SLOs can be found in the UAM catalogue, on course syllabi, and on the School of Arts and Humanities website.

**2. Describe how your unit's Student Learning Outcomes fit into the mission of the University.**

The SLOs contribute to the University's mission to enhance students' knowledge, ability to synthesize knowledge, ability to use technology, to be creative, and in general to behave intelligently, appropriately, and responsibly in the context of their cultures.

**3. Provide an analysis of the student learning data from your unit. How is this data used as evidence of learning?**

**General Education Communication Assessment:**

Because revisions were being made to the major and to the Public Speaking knowledge pre- and post-tests no data is available for the 2009-2010 academic year. The following are the results for students who completed both the pre- and post-tests in Public Speaking for the 2010-2011 academic year.

Fall 2010

This test consisted of 61 multiple-choice questions, the answers indicating the general communication knowledge of the respondent. Ninety-three respondents completed both the pre- and post-tests. The mean score on the pre-test was 31.52 out of 61 and the mean score on the post-test was 40.40, a difference of 8.88. The matched pair t-test result of 10.46 showed this difference to be significant.

Spring 2011

As in Fall 2010, this test consisted of 61 multiple-choice questions, the answers indicating the general communication knowledge of the respondent. Eighty-six respondents completed both the pre- and post-tests. The mean score on the pre-test was 30.33 out of 61 and the mean score on the post-test was 36.80, a difference of 6.47. The matched pair t-test result of 11.80 showed this difference to be significant.

### **Communication Program Assessment:**

We are restructuring our assessment process to make it consistent with and valuable for the revised Communication major, which now has—in addition to a “Core” of required classes—three Emphasis Areas for students to select from: Speech, Performance, and Media. Our new assessment tools will be as follows:

Pre-test/post-test: These tests are designed to determine whether students demonstrate a number of the SLOs, especially those related to courses in the Communication Core. The pre-test will be administered to all Communication majors, regardless of emphasis area, in Modern Media Literacy. The post-test will be administered in Theories of Human Communication.

Oral Exam: An oral exam will be given to all Speech Emphasis majors to determine whether they demonstrate SLOs particular to the Speech Emphasis.

Portfolio: A portfolio of writings will be required of all Media Emphasis majors to determine whether they demonstrate SLOs particular to the Media Emphasis.

Performance: A public performance will be required of all Performance Emphasis majors to determine whether they demonstrate SLOs particular to the Performance emphasis.

*These tools are still under development at the time of the writing of this report but should be implemented during the 2011-2012 academic year.*

### **4. Based on your analysis of student learning data in Question 3, include an explanation of what seems to be improving student learning and what should be revised.**

- The results of pre- and post-tests in Public Speaking reinforce our perception that we are teaching the course effectively.
- We believe that the modified Communication curriculum will enhance academic standards and the demonstration of SLOs. The first pre-test will be given in the Fall 11 Modern Media Literacy Class. The first post-test will be administered in Spring 2012. All other assessment tools will be administered beginning with Fall 2011 Semester graduates.

### **5. Other than course level/grades, describe/analyze other data and other sources of data whose results assist your unit to improve student learning.**

Speech Majors by Class:

	Fall 00	Fall 01	Fall 02	Fall 03	Fall 04	Fall 05	Fall 06	Fall 07	Fall 08	Fall 09	Fall 10
Freshman	10	4	12	14	6	3	2	5	2	5	3
Sophomore	6	14	5	12	7	9	5	2	6	3	6
Junior	7	9	16	9	9	8	8	6	5	9	6
Senior	7	7	10	13	9	6	7	6	8	5	9
Pre-Freshman	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	2	--	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>24</b>

The number of majors has held steady for several years but at levels well below the peak years of 2002 and 2003. We believe that the modified curriculum, the merger of Journalism with Speech, and new recruitment efforts will bring the number of majors up.

Strategic plan: Creating, implementing, and reviewing an annual Strategic Plan for the School of Arts and Humanities represent a culmination of discussion, observations, and analysis on the part of the faculty in regard to how SAH might better serve students.

**6. As a result of your student learning data in previous questions, explain what efforts your unit will make to improve student learning over the next assessment period. Be specific indicating when, how often, how much, and by whom these improvements will take place.**

We look forward to gathering data assessing the effectiveness of the modified curriculum.

**7. What new tactics to improve student learning has your unit considered, experimented with, research, reviewed or put into practice over the past year?**

Development of Emphasis Areas within the Communication Degree

Review of the Speech program suggested the need for students to have the opportunity to study specific communication disciplines. This need, the merger of Speech Communication and Journalism, and the revitalization of non-musical theatre on the UAM campus provided momentum for the development of the following emphasis areas within the communication program: Speech, Media, and Performance. The revised curriculum became official July 1, 2011, and should better serve students' individual interests and career goals.

**8. How do you ensure shared responsibility for student learning and assessment among students, faculty and other stakeholders?**

Student evaluations: At the end of a course, students receive an evaluative questionnaire and a request for written comments. The information is reviewed by the dean before being forwarded to individual instructors. The potential for course revision in response to student comments exists.

**9. Describe and provide evidence of efforts your unit is making to recruit/retain/graduate students in your unit/at the university. (A generalized statement such as “we take a personal interest in our students” is not evidence.)**

Online Classes: Several Speech courses were available online during the 2010 and 2011 summer sessions to accommodate the lifestyles of students.

Involvement Opportunities

Specific Department Activities include membership on the UAM Speech and Debate Program, membership in Pi Kappa Delta (Speech and Debate Honorary) and membership in Pi Lambda Theta (Speech Honorary).

Communication Students are also strongly encouraged to participate in a variety of other communication-related activities and programs, including Student Government, The Voice (online student newspaper), Foliate Oak (UAM Sponsored Literary Journal), and non-musical theatrical productions.

Financial Support

- Grants are provided through the Speech and Debate Program.
- Placement in work study positions are offered both in and out of the department.
- Endowed Scholarships:
  - o Barbara Murphy Babin Scholarship (speech)
  - o Marty and Erma Brutscher Debate/Forensics Scholarship (debate)
  - o Charlotte Cruce Hornaday Scholarship (debate)
  - o R. David Ray Debate/Forensics Scholarship (debate)
  - o Fred and Janice Taylor Scholarship (debate)
  - o Anna Blace Barron Debate Scholarship (debate)