General Education Annual Course Assessment Form

Course Number/Title _COMM 40 _______________ GE Area _A1: Oral Communication _______________

Results reported for AY _2014/2015_ # of sections _16_ # of instructors _9_ ____________

Course Coordinator: _Tina Lim_ E-mail: _tina.lim@sjsu.edu_ ____________

Department Chair: _Dr. Deanna Fassett_ College: _Social Sciences_ ____________________________________________

Instructions: Each year, the department will prepare a brief (two page maximum) report that documents the assessment of the course during the year. This report will be electronically submitted, by the department chair, to the Office of Undergraduate Studies, with an electronic copy to the home college by October 1 of the following academic year.

Part 1: To be completed by the course coordinator:

(1) What SLO(s) were assessed for the course during the AY?

Course Learning Objective 1: Students will be able to identify and assess socially significant and intellectual topics, then compose and deliver extemporaneous oral presentations on these topics.

(2) What were the results of the assessment of this course? What were the lessons learned from the assessment?

Out of 430 students assessed, the following percentages reflect student outcomes:

- Mastered SLO1 at a high level (averaged a “B+” or better on assessment activities): 57.9%
- Mastered SLO1 at an average level (averaged a “C” or better on assessment activities): 34.9%
- Failed to master SLO1 – or did so at a marginal level (“C-“ or below on assessment activities): 7.2%

The lessons learned from the assessment include:
- Students respond to their peers, engaging in formal clash and providing useful feedback following debate activities [one instructor proposed that students may best understand clash as “refutation without hesitation”; another agreed, adding an expectation that students balance direct engagement with a humble demeanor].
- For hybrid section, students appreciate the flexibility but required more guidance and wanted more in class time to share ideas and gain feedback.
- One instructor had themes for major speaking assignments that narrowed down the topic area, but still allowed “wiggle” room and choice, giving students ownership of project and identification with outcomes.
- Online peer editing of outlines was helpful in not just reinforcing outlining, but in topic selection.
- Use of notes and keyword outlines were helpful in delivery of extemporaneous oral presentations.
- Students deliver formal and informal presentations, some instructors require that students flip a coin to select their side of the debate, ensuring that each can conceivably debate both sides of a resolution.
- Students record their mock debates to refine argumentation and improve delivery [instructors agreed that this activity allows students to assess their delivery in a more productive manner than when they only study the results of their formal debates].
• Students in some classes write an analysis paper that calls for them to summarize their evidence, anticipate their opponents’ strategies, and contemplate alternative arguments to the ones they’ve prepared.
• Students practice flowing techniques, and are often expected to flow/evaluate the arguments employed in best-practice videos (e.g., the Dinesh D’Souza/Bill Ayres debate, a University of Wyoming/University of Nebraska debate, and a debate between former SJSU students Sarah Chan and Peter Park that appeared on the local cable-access show Marquita’s Place).
• Students present peer critiques and vote on debate outcomes.

Students are encouraged to participate in the campus intramural debate.

(3) What modifications to the course, or its assessment activities or schedule, are planned for the upcoming year? (If no modifications are planned, the course coordinator should indicate this.)
There are no major modifications, but some of the activities discussed include:
• Students will participate in more in-class refutation exercises.
• Students will engage in more Canvas-based discussions.
• Instructors will consider adding the Kennedy-Nixon debate to the list of exemplars that students can flow and evaluate.
• Increased focus on flowing possibly to work with the COMM Center to develop a debate flowing workshop as flowing was key to effective refutation.
• Instructors will make more use of breakout rooms to reduce the anxiety that some students experience when practicing in a full classroom.
• Instructors will explore whether their schedules will allow classes to debate each other.
• Instructors teaching this course in hybrid mode will continue to modify what assignments/activities work better online and in person – including having all presentations in person during the same class session in different rooms rather than submitting recorded presentations.
• More incorporation of online discussion boards for sharing/evaluating topic ideas and giving peer feedback; as well as post-class meeting discussions on key topics.

Part 2: To be completed by the department chair (with input from course coordinator as appropriate):

(4) Are all sections of the course still aligned with the area Goals, Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), Content, Support, and Assessment? If they are not, what actions are planned?

The course coordinator and instructors are doing an excellent job keeping the goals, SLOs, content, support, and assessment consistent across sections. Regular communication between the coordinator and instructors and between the instructors maintains continuity within and across sections.

(5) If this course is in a GE Area with a stated enrollment limit (Areas A1, A2, A3, C2, D1, R, S, V, & Z), please indicate how oral presentations will be evaluated with larger sections (Area A1), or how practice and revisions in writing will be addressed with larger sections, particularly how students are receiving thorough feedback on the writing which accounts for the minimum word count in this GE category (Areas A2, A3, C2, D1, R, S, V, & Z) and, for the writing intensive courses (A2, A3, and Z), documentation that the students are meeting the GE SLOs for writing.

We cap enrollment in Comm 40 to 25 students, allowing instructors to add only two students beyond the cap. Since we do not offer larger sections, students are able to receive thorough feedback and engage in practice and revisions of their writing within the current configuration of the course and workload of the instructors.