



27 February 1997

TO: Members University Senate

FROM: University Senate Council

RE: AGENDA ITEM: University Senate Meeting, Monday, March 10, 1997, 3:00 PM.  
Proposal to establish principles and objectives for evaluating alternate routes for satisfying the oral communication requirement in University Studies.

### **Proposal**

The University Studies Committee shall employ the principles and learning objectives set forth below for evaluating the alternate routes for satisfying the Oral Communication Requirement in University Studies.

### **Rationale**

The University Studies Committee seeks endorsement of the general guidelines (i.e. principles and objectives) set forth below for evaluating the alternate means of satisfying the Oral Communication requirement in the USP. Since alternate routes for completing the Oral Communication requirement vary considerably from discipline to discipline, and since effective evaluation requires a common understanding of what we are seeking to achieve, the Committee thought it best to establish some general guidelines. The Committee does not anticipate that each program will strive to achieve each and every stated objective in the areas of public speaking or interpersonal communication but that each unit will substantially pursue these aims. The Committee also anticipates that individual academic units will pursue these aims in ways which are tailored to particular programs, bearing in mind, however, that the Oral Communication requirement is part of general education and is intended to help students acquire skills which are applicable to a broad range of topics and situations.

The Committee also recommends that for purposes of evaluation the following procedure be followed. The principles and objectives will be forwarded to responsible units with a request for a written statement concerning the ways in which the various units are following the guidelines. Upon receipt of written statements about the methods used by the various units, the USP Committee may request additional information through interviews and conversations with appropriate individuals in the unit. Where differences occur regarding the interpretation of the principles and/or objectives, the Committee will use every effort to reach consensus. If the Committee believes that the program in a specific unit is not substantially following the

guidelines set forth below, it will provide the unit with an opportunity to adjust its program so as to rectify the situation. If the unit does not make adjustments in a reasonable time, the USP Committee will recommend to the Senate Council that the alternate route be discontinued as part of University Studies. In the case of such action, the Senate Council will function as an appeals committee, and its decision shall be final.

The Committee sees this methodology as a type of pilot project in carrying out its responsibility for evaluating all components of University Studies. If the system works as anticipated, it will provide a model for developing similar methodologies for the rest of the Program.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Criteria for Evaluating Alternate Routes in Oral Communication**

### **General Principles**

1. Students will receive instruction from individuals with formal or specialized training in oral communication. This principle does not mean that instructors must have a degree in communication or have taken formal courses in the subject. However, instructors must have acquired sufficient knowledge through activities such as workshops, individual consultations, cooperative projects, and the like with professionals in the field.
2. Students will utilize appropriate resource materials (e.g., textbooks focused on the development of oral communication skills) in order to develop their skills in oral communication.
3. Students will be provided substantial opportunity to practice, receive comment, and be evaluated on their oral communication competencies.
4. Students will be required to develop the ability to communicate with a wide variety of audiences which go beyond specific disciplines.
5. A significant part of the final grade(s) will be dependent on the acquisition of the stated oral communication objectives.

### **Objectives**

#### **Alternate Routes: Public Speaking**

Courses should be designed to increase students' understanding of the principles and processes of communication in public contexts and to facilitate development of effective public speaking skills.

#### **Competencies to be developed**

1. **Message/argument construction** - includes identifying clear specific statement of purpose and central idea, selection of logical and ethical strategies to help audience make necessary connections, gathering and selecting information necessary to formulate complete and coherent arguments.

2. **Audience Analysis** - understand the need to take the perspective on one's audience in order to select appropriate message and delivery strategies.
3. **Message Organization** - includes organizing and outlining messages which will accomplish the speaker's goals.
4. **Message Reception/Critique** - includes active and critical listening both as one hears other students' presentations as well as speakers in other contexts.
5. **Message Delivery/Presentation** - includes the skills needed to present message effectively through use of voice, eye contact, movement and gestures, etc.

### **Alternate Routes: Interpersonal Communication**

1. **Context Situation/Audience Analysis**
  - a) Identify and adapt to perceived needs and desires of other communicators
  - b) Broaden range of possible responses and make effective decisions during communication situations
  - c) Recognize when a message is not being understood
  - d) Express and manage emotions appropriately
2. **Message Development, Support and Organization**
  - a) Select the most appropriate method for communicating a message
  - b) Identify goals and objectives as a communicator
  - c) Anticipate the range of possible responses
  - d) Accomplish communication goals
3. **Conversation Management and Evaluation**
  - a) Understand the differences in communicator style
  - b) Listen carefully and clarify the messages of others
  - c) Analyze assumptions and purposes of others
  - d) Detect and respond to discrepancies in communication with others
4. **Assertiveness, Gaining Compliance and Interpersonal Influence**

a) Motivate others to disclose information when appropriate and change behavior or attitudes of others

b) Effectively assert oneself, manage conflict, and gain the compliance of others

c) Convey empathy when communicating

d) Build and maintain constructive relationships with superiors, peers, and subordinates

5. **Self-Presentation, Impression Management and Message Delivery**

“audience”  
a) Recognize and use appropriate nonverbal behaviors for the message and

b) Describe/express emotions appropriately; cope with negative feedback

c) Accept responsibility for self-presentation and impression management

d) Accept responsibility for own communication behavior

6. **Ethical Communication and Decision-Making**

a) Develop criteria for ethical communication

b) Analyze and apply criteria in a broad range of ethical communication situations

c) Understand and demonstrate the “ethics” of appreciating cultural and communicator style differences

d) Detect and evaluate communication practices which indicate prejudice in regards to gender, race, age, ethnic or sexual/affectional orientation

\*\*\*\*\*

Implementation Date: Fall Semester, 1997