

PROGRAM REVIEW 2008-2011

Language Arts Division

Speech Communication Department

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I. Description and Mission of the Program

Which area(s) does this program considerably address (check all that apply):

Basic Skills Transfer Career/Technical Other (Life Skills)

A. Provide a brief description of the program including any services provided and the program's mission.

1. **Program and Services.** The Speech Communication Department at De Anza College offers a range of opportunities for students to develop confidence and acquire communication competence, improve language skills, learn in communities, increase career potential and success, participate in Speech and Debate, engage in civic activities, obtain a Speech Communication Certificate, or major in Speech Communication.
2. **Mission** Our mission is to help students gain greater knowledge and skill in communicating in ways that build trust and respect and lead to creative and wise decisions. As per our college mission, in our classrooms we co-create a learning environment that is supportive and accessible to all regardless of ethnicity, culture, language, disability, gender, sexual orientation, or religion, to ensure every student has equitable opportunity for success in developing her/his own personal, academic, and career potential. We celebrate our diverse perspectives, goals, cultures, and traditions and through our communication education and shared experiences develop the whole person, improve the educational experience, and gain a raised consciousness of our social responsibility and global interdependence. We are continually improving our courses, exploring new ideas, and collaborating with colleagues to foster our own professional growth and to provide the best possible opportunities for our students.

B. Provide a summary of the program's main strengths.

We believe our Speech Communication Department to be strong. Several developments validate this assessment:

1. Our Speech Communication Department was presented with the highest possible acknowledgement of excellence—the Model Teaching Program Award—at the 2005 Western States Communication Association's annual conference. The award paid special tribute to our program's extraordinary depth and breadth, integrated curricular and co-curricular activities, commitment to our institutional mission, and teaching excellence. Our Speech Communication Department continues to lead the nation's community colleges in variety of courses offered, number of sections, and number of transfer and major students served.
2. Our program's reputation for integrity, knowledge, and teaching know how helps us attract and retain top adjunct talent. As an example of our commitment to our faculty, we have strengthened our program with our faculty mentoring and training initiatives (See IIA3). We mentor 100% of our new adjunct faculty. Although our staff-development/training workshops are voluntary—over 80% of adjunct faculty attended two or more workshops in 2008-2009. Due to budget reductions, no money was expended on the program. As testament to the success of the program, the Office of Staff and Organizational Development has expressed interest in replicating this model across campus programs.
3. We were among the first department to make progress toward reforming our curriculum to clarify student learning outcomes (SLO's) and to use classroom assessment techniques to measure success of teaching methods on student outcomes. One of our faculty completed Dr. Patricia Cross' graduate course on Teaching and Learning at UC Berkeley and we think we have much to contribute to this college initiative.
4. One of our faculty pioneered the nationally recognized program that promotes Learning in Communities (LinC) that has immensely affected not only the lives of her students and colleagues, but the direction of learning pedagogy.
5. There is an explosion of interest in all segments—local government, organizations, national governments, and in other countries to involve the "system" (whether that be the organization or the community) in meaningful dialogue and deliberative practices. However, most organizations don't know how to effectively design, manage, and facilitate these processes. Our department has much to offer in this regard, and our faculty think we should position ourselves to be the leaders in showing how it is done. We would like to begin by promoting these processes in our own campus community.

C. Provide a summary of the program's main areas for improvement.

We fully understand that our campus community faces the paradox of increased demands with fewer resources. And thus far, our department has weathered resulting storms without substantial losses to our program and mission. The loss of two full-time faculty positions, the disparity in course load values, staffing constraints, budget constraints, and the various and essential initiatives we have undertaken add to the workload and stretch our faculty very thin. Here is a list of key challenges and areas for improvement as we see them:

1. A decrease in full-time faculty from 56% in 2005-06 to 38% in 2007-08 has seriously impaired our capacity to staff and support our program, placing a greater burden on faculty, and causing a decline in productivity. Budget constraints have delayed hiring replacements for Ben Kanter (who taught the equivalent of 1.5 F.T.E.), and Jim Luotto and Mike Holler (who both taught .5 of their loads in Speech). In the interim we are having to find new ways

to redeploy current teaching resources and create new ones, not only to fill a void in F.T.E.F, but also to add to the overall strength of our program.

2. Load disparities place an unwarranted and unfair burden on our faculty. Our Speech Communication courses currently have a load value of .0909 which does not adequately represent the academic rigor required to prepare and teach our courses and to evaluate student work. Courses in English, Reading, and ESL with equivalent academic rigor, preparation, reading, research, and writing requirements have higher load values of .1000 and .1250. The load value for equivalent courses taught by our Speech Communication colleagues at Foothill is .1111 compared to our .0909. Although most of Foothill's classes are listed as 4.5 units, the .5 is a "no load" laboratory that does not increase the contact hours, preparation, or assessment responsibilities of the course. This means our colleagues at Foothill teach nine courses per year vs. our eleven courses per year, and most of Foothill's Speech classes have a lower faculty/student ratio with a student cap of 25. Our Curriculum Committee, Faculty Senate, Faculty Association, and administrators need to fulfill their commitment from last year and take action on load disparities.
3. Insufficient financial support may endanger the future of particular courses, programs, support services, and initiatives. We need to find creative ways to sustain specialty courses for Speech Communication Major and Certificate students, our debate program, civic engagement initiatives, and programs directly targeted to at-risk students including LinC and critical support services provided in the Listening and Speaking Lab and Writing and Reading Center. Our Speech and Debate program and Facilitation course (SPCH 60) are now sustained by backbreaking efforts on the part of our faculty. An examination of traditional funding practices for these important initiatives illustrates the need for new funding approaches.
4. Perhaps one of the biggest and most puzzling challenges for our department and discipline is continuing to sort out the role of technology in teaching and learning. Technology has changed the way we communicate with each other. We need to redefine the role of technology while maintaining standards of quality to improve upon the best of traditional teaching, enrich students' learning experience, prepare students for the work place, potentially increase faculty productivity, and reduce costs of delivering higher education. We are progressing in this initiative with smart classrooms, digital recording capability, on-line evaluation technology, and department and faculty webpages. Our next challenge is to design experimental hybrid and/or on-line courses that maintain the integrity of our program.
5. In spite of the challenges listed above we continue to be committed to the success of all of our students and especially to retention and success of our at-risk students. We must better educate ourselves about the challenges and needs of at-risk students, partner in their success, and implement measures inside and outside our classrooms to retain, support, mentor, guide, and give students the confidence and skills they need to succeed (refer to IIB3).
6. Further, we must do more than maintain our deep and helpful relationships across campus. We must forge new partnerships in our own campus community (i.e. counseling, disabilities, basic skills, Puente), and increase level of coordination with Foothill College, San Jose State University, local high schools, and our community.

D. What are your expected outcomes (such as learning outcomes, transfer, career goals, certificate and degrees) for students in your program?

Our outcomes meet those of the campus as stated on the De Anza web site:

1. Provide every student with opportunities to simultaneously acquire knowledge of communication and develop skills through practice. Students with ineffective listening skills fail to absorb much of the materials and many of the ideas to which they are exposed. Their problems are intensified when they respond incorrectly or inappropriately because of poor speaking skills. Students who cannot articulate what they know may be wrongly judged and wrongly treated. Certain speech styles can elicit stereotyped expectations of poor ability. Students who are unable to effectively ask for help from peers, from a teacher, from a co-worker or supervisor will not receive it, and typically reticent students progress more slowly even though they have the aptitude to succeed.¹
2. Prepare students to use effective communication skills in the workplace. Employers identify communication as one of the basic competencies every graduate should have, asserting that the communication skills essential in the workplace include basic oral and writing skills, the ability to communicate in work groups and teams, with persons of diverse background, when engaged in problem solving and conflict management, and to communicate effectively in a computer mediated society.¹
3. Challenge students to become critical and independent thinkers, problem solvers, and leaders in a diverse and globally connected society by providing opportunities for community-based learning, to work in self-regulated teams, develop skills in small group collaboration, listening, deliberation, conflict management, argumentation, problem-solving, and decision-making.
4. Challenge students with a spirit of inquiry, discovery, dialog and reflection.
5. Remain faithful to our task of promoting personal integrity and civic responsibility.
6. Prepare future leaders with our debate program, facilitation course, and civic engagement initiatives, who can both engage their communities and successfully advocate for their needs

¹ Morreale, S.P., M.M. Osborn & J.C. Pearson. *Why communication is important: A rationale for the centrality of the study of communication*. Journal of the Association for Communication Administration, 29, 1-25. January 2000.

II. Retention and Growth

A. **How has the program responded to the institutional goal of increased access, growth, and retention? (Include the number of students enrolled in the program and the retention rate of the past three years.)**

1. Student enrollment in Speech Communication classes continues to outpace our ability to offer a sufficient number of sections. Enrollment increased from 3,882 in 2002-03 to 4,335 in 2005-06 to 4,806 in 2007-08. The department offered 245 sections of Speech Communication in 2007-08, up from 187 in 2002-03—a substantial 38% increase over five years. During this same period retention has remained steady at 90%-91% and WSCH increased steadily from 19,922 to 25,059.
2. We are finding new ways to redeploy current teaching resources and create new ones, not only to fill a void but also to add to the overall strength of our program. We have successfully expanded our strategic hiring and mentoring to target racially/ethnically diverse faculty for our adjunct faculty pool.
3. Over the past two years we hired a disproportionate number of adjunct faculty to fill the void of two FTEF. Most adjunct faculty are not trained to teach our most popular transfer course—Fundamentals of Oral Communication, so we increased our mentoring efforts and conducted a series of training workshops. Participants shared teaching philosophies, designed a course syllabus for Fundamentals of Oral Communication, modeled opening day activities, and set up and managed formal and informal learning groups.
4. English language learners often feel challenged in Oral Communication courses due to apprehension, low confidence in language skills, and the fast pace in the classroom. ESL faculty presented strategies for retention and success at our most recent annual department retreat.
5. Every quarter a large contingent of underprepared and second language students succeed in our Oral Communication classes as a direct result of faculty support and support from Speech Communication Majors and Honors students offering tutorial services in the Speaking and Listening Lab. Working with Mary Anne Ifft, our faculty recruit a highly diverse team of student assistants from our Speech classes who are trained to tutor, coach, offer workshops, and offer individual assistance to any speech or ESL students needing help. This support service has been one of our biggest success stories for improved retention and success of underrepresented students, underprepared students, second language students, and returning students. We plan to continue to collaborate with colleagues, especially to improve success rates of marginalized groups.
6. We have successfully expanded course offerings including day, evening, and weekend sections to support access for working students, parents, and all students needing more flexible options.
7. For three consecutive years we offered a De Anza Public Speaking class at a local high school. Additionally, our Speech and Debate team has twice hosted a high school speech tournament that brought over 1,000 high school students on to our campus. Both of these efforts expose high school students to higher education and De Anza.

B. **How has the program responded to the institutional goal of increased access, growth and retention specifically for the identified targeted populations of African Ancestry, Latino/a, and Filipino/a students? (Include the number of and percentage of the program's enrollment that was made up of the targeted populations and the retention rate of the targeted populations over the last three years.)**

1. Our institutional data shows us that in our program African American (4%), Filipino/a (7%), Hispanic (14%), and Native American (0%) are greatly underrepresented. While retention for these groups is in the 85%+ range, we need to do more to improve access, growth, retention, and success.
2. In pursuit of ways to improve access, growth, and retention we have made significant progress to diversify our adjunct faculty pool, mentor at-risk students to help with college adjustment, support Learning Communities targeted specifically to these at risk populations, promote available resources and support services, initiate early intervention measures, use the on-line world to improve student access to faculty (e-mail and websites) and access to course resources (assignments, course calendars, sample speeches, and outlines), and provide incentive for our speech students to participate in cross-cultural partners.
3. Of particular note, retention improved among all target groups from 2004-05 to 2007-08 with the exception of Hispanics. Our college-wide and department mentoring efforts are directly targeting our at-risk Hispanic students and we need to do even more to collaborate with our colleagues to increase access and retention. For example, two of our Speech Communication faculty participated in the Fall '08 De Anza College Faculty Mentoring Pilot Program. Results from this pilot project show a significant improvement in persistence (to the 90% range²) among De Anza students contacted and reached by faculty mentors. During winter quarter these two Speech Communication faculty informally replicated this model for students in their own classes—calling or e-mailing at-risk students (identified by absences and/or poor performance)—making one-to-one connections—with a notable improvement in retention and success especially of targeted populations. We plan to expand these efforts to further increase retention, success, and persistence of at-risk students enrolled in our classes.

² Catlin, Tiffany and Andrew LaManque, Ph.D., February 24, 2009. "The De Anza College Faculty Mentoring Program: Fall 2008 Pilot Results."

C. The Statewide Basic Skills Initiative defines “basic skills” as English, mathematics, reading, writing and ESL skills. In what ways does your program address the basic skills needs of students? For programs that do not directly address basic skills, how does the lack of basic skills impact student success rates for your program?

1. The ability to clearly and competently communicate one’s intent and understanding is fundamental to success in college and in life. The communication and critical thinking skills taught in our Speech Communication classes help students lacking basic skills to better perform in all of their classes. For example, our focus and emphasis on clearly articulating an argument and outlining thoughts serve as fundamental skills that provide value in many other classes.
2. Students who come to our classes lacking basic skills are a challenge. Since our classes all fall in the G.E. pattern it would be easy to expect students to arrive at our classes having completed the developmental level classes in Reading and English that should prepare them for G.E. work. However, we know this is not the case. As a department we have never felt that it was the responsibility of other instructors to “get students ready” to take our classes—rather we have felt the need to address all students who enter our doors. To this end we have always supported the faculty and initiatives that are centered on developmental education. We have participated in the Developmental Task Force and supported our college readiness programs. Foremost, we have paid particular attention to those students in our classes who need extra assistance—whether to strengthen their reading and writing skills or confidence in English language skills, manage speech anxiety, or to give support and direct them to resources needed to deal with challenges in their personal lives. Support services (i.e. counseling, Speaking and Listening Lab, Writing and Reading Center, tutorial, readiness) are more crucial than ever before.

III. Student equity.

A. What progress or achievement has the program made towards decreasing the student equity gap? (Include student success rates for targeted populations compared with other students over the last three years.)

1. While success rates for Asian, White, and Filipino/a were in the 84-88 percentile in our program for 2007-08, African American, Hispanic, and Native American were succeeding at a slightly lower rate at 79%, 77%, and 75% respectively. In addition to the measures used to retain targeted populations (listed in II.B.2), this year our faculty have successfully undertaken new initiatives to involve teaching assistants who assist and model desired results from targeted populations.
2. Oral tradition is an important part of African American, Latino/a, Hispanic, and American Indian culture. In addition to providing a forum for students to successfully express themselves as individuals and share their life experiences, Speech Communication faculty incorporate sample speeches from diverse populations/cultures, as well as culture discussions and culture speech assignments as a context for cultural exploration and expression. All students gain confidence to use the spoken word to proactively confront issues directly affecting them.

B. In what ways will the program continue working toward achieving these goals?

1. Progress toward equity in all respects has been and will continue to be a cornerstone of our efforts. We will continue to receive faculty training on the needs of targeted populations; also, we will work closely with other programs to provide support and assistance and bring our expertise to bear when appropriate.
2. We will continue to develop and use assessment measures such as Small Group Instructional Feedback, (SGIF) and Classroom Assessment Techniques (CAT’s) to better understand our students and determine how best to achieve equity goals.

C. What challenges exist in the program in reaching these goals?

1. Staffing, time, and money are the three critical factors slowing our progress.

IV. Budget Limitations

A. Identify any limitations placed on the program based on limited funding. What increases in resources are critical to the program and what are the consequences of continued limited funding on the program?

1. Hiring full-time faculty and allowing the continuation of our specialized classes and programs are the most critical financial issues we face. Several of our outstanding programs, particularly Speech and Debate and Facilitating Collaborative Communication (SPCH 60), have been made successful with minimal institutional support. These programs and their corresponding classes are sustained by backbreaking efforts on the part of our faculty. Speech and Debate alone has required over 100 hours of unpaid, off-campus time (attending tournaments) so far this year. To make these programs sustainable and to help them grow will require more institutional support. Both Speech and Debate and Facilitating Collaborative Communication provide a vital setting for applied communication that benefits not just Speech Communication majors, but the campus as a whole.
2. Although all of our classrooms are equipped with instructional technology, the computer and recording equipment is outdated and needs refreshed/replaced. We video tape student speeches using old VCRs when most students don’t have VCRs to look at their tapes. Students are often unable to open their PowerPoint and other presentation software because our computer software isn’t up to date. With so much campus demand for technology support, these issues are increasingly difficult to address. Many corporations and educational institutions find leasing a more affordable option for technology repair and replacement.

B. Describe the consequence to students and the college in general if the program were eliminated or significantly reduced. Please be specific.

1. Students would not be able to meet their G.E. and transfer requirements. Our department offers course work meeting two of the “Golden Four” areas.

V. Additional Comments (optional)