

2014

In a survey conducted by Hart Research Associates on behalf of AAC & U (2013), 80 % of employers say colleges should place more emphasis on communicating effectively orally.

"I know whereof I speak. In fact, I know whereof I do not speak."  
Nishant Choksi

# Oral Communication

At Harold Washington College

"In making a speech one must study three points: first, the means of producing persuasion; second, the language; third the proper arrangement of the various parts of the speech."

Aristotle

Jennifer G. Asimow  
Harold Washington College  
8/27/2014

# **Harold Washington College Assessment Committee 2013 Oral Communication Assessment**

## **Executive Summary**

In 2013, the Harold Washington College Assessment Committee implemented an assessment on the college's general education goal regarding oral communication, one aspect of the broader General Education Goal of Effective Communication. Members of the Assessment Committee developed the tool for this assessment by adapting a rubric from the Association of American Colleges & Universities, creating a companion demographic portion, and developing a new system for data collection.

As this report details, much of the data is unsatisfying, as it has left us asking more questions than we had before the assessment, and has revealed little in terms of absolute findings. It is also clear that an assessment of this magnitude which relied heavily on voluntary faculty for the actual "assessment" of students' oral communication skills would have benefited from more rigorous interrater training. However, it should be noted that 28 faculty volunteered for this effort, knowing full well how much work it was going to be. The faculty should be commended for their efforts.

There are areas, however small, that reveal both strengths and challenges within the Harold Washington College student population in regards to oral communication skills. This report discusses all correlations that were found to be even minimally significant. Much can be learned from the analysis of this data as well as from further discussions about oral communication on the Harold Washington campus.

# **Harold Washington College Assessment Committee 2013 Oral Communication Assessment**

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# I. Introduction

In November of 2013, the Harold Washington College Assessment Committee implemented an assessment on the college's general education goal regarding oral communication. The tool for this Oral Communication Assessment was a combination of an adaptation of a rubric from AAC&U (See Appendix A) and an original demographic survey (See Appendix B) developed by a sub-committee of the Assessment Committee.

Students presented a variety of oral presentations during the last weeks of the fall 2013 semester, and faculty in each of those courses assessed the presentations using the adapted rubric. Students completed the demographic survey prior to their presentations, and faculty then assessed the oral presentations.

The Harold Washington College Assessment Committee thanks sincerely the students of the college for volunteering their time to complete the survey, faculty for volunteering their classes and completing the rubrics, and the administration for supporting the committee with the necessary resources to make this whole project possible.

## II. Methodology

### A. History

The assessment of oral communication skills had been on the committee's agenda for several years. Since the original calendar for general education assessment was developed in 2003, Oral Communication had been discussed and scheduled, but it wasn't until the committee had completed several other complicated assessments that it was finally written in ink for the fall semester, 2013.

Oral communication at HWC is one part of the broad general education goal of "effective communication." Once the committee had completed the Effective Writing Assessment in 2012, it became more and more clear that we needed to assess oral communication. There were many long discussions about *what* oral communication in a classroom looks like, and *how* it is assessed. Committee members were in disagreements about whether or not to include small group discussions in the assessment as well as about how long a presentation needed to be to provide enough information for an assessment, and how to develop a system that included two assessors for each presentation.

It was decided that only oral presentations that were done in front of the whole class would be assessed, that those presentations needed to be a minimum of 7 minutes, and that only the instructor of record would assess them. This simplified the process yet limited it.

A pilot was conducted during the summer 2013 semester, and the assessment took place during the fall 2013 semester. Data were analyzed during the spring 2014 semester, and this report was written during the summer 2014 semester.

## **B. Framing Oral Communication**

Before developing this assessment, committee members first created a definition, goals, and student learning outcomes to serve as the foundation on which the assessment would rest. The goal came from a General Education Goal in the HWC 2008-2010 Catalog, and committee members themselves reworked the definition and spent considerable time creating our specific student learning outcomes.

### **Definition**

Oral Communication encompasses all the abilities necessary for effective expression of thoughts, feelings, and ideas in oral form.

### **General Education Goal for Communication**

To communicate effectively, orally and in writing, and use information resources and technology competently.

#### **Student Learning Outcomes: Oral Communication**

- 1) Create structured, effective presentations with relevant supportive material for the specific context and academic or professional domain.
- 2) Demonstrate command of vocabulary, language and content appropriate to the audience and students' academic or professional field.
- 3) Employ effective oral communication techniques in a range of group settings.
- 4) Express respect for human diversity through oral communications in a range of contexts.

## **C. Development of the Tool**

As with all assessment activities, the discussion regarding the development of a brand new tool versus using a tool that was readily available was lively and instructive. A compromise was reached when the committee agreed to adapt a tool to fit our specific college's outcomes. Many weeks were spent researching the best tools available, and the committee finally settled on a rubric found in *Assessing Outcomes and Improving Achievement: Tips and Tools for Using Rubrics*, edited by Terrel L. Rhodes, 2010, and available through the AA C & U. (see Appendix A.)

The demographic survey was developed to address students' affective responses to oral communication as well as to gather the needed data to ensure a representative sample of our student body. Special attention was paid to keeping the survey as short as possible since a significant portion of class time would be spent listening to students' oral presentations. The committee also learned from past assessments that students may become fatigued when they

are required to complete long and extensive surveys; therefore, the committee adapted past methodology and shortened the survey dramatically. The survey was pared down to the most essential questions and to get at the heart of students' feelings toward speaking in public.

This assessment presented new challenges to the committee, as we had never collected data in this way. We all agreed that the best way to collect this data would be for faculty to collect information from students who were already expected to complete an oral presentation in class, rather than to "make up" oral presentation assignments for the assessment. This organic sampling was a methodology used during the Assessment of Written Communication, and the committee was fairly confident about collecting enough samples for this assessment.

Once the committee decided to use Scantron as a means of collecting the data, everything became easier. The instructions for faculty were simplified, the paperwork was minimized, and the assessment became very straightforward, with little room for human error.

#### **D. The Pilot**

The HWC Assessment Committee piloted the assessment in the summer of 2013. The committee solicited volunteers from across the campus who taught during the summer. This solicitation garnered 5 faculty member volunteers across 6 disciplines for a total of 177 potential students in 7 course sections. The actual numbers of volunteers, sections, disciplines, and student participants was lower: 2 faculty for a total of 82 students in 2 sections.

An early observation revealed that the instructions for faculty volunteers were cumbersome, as were the expectations of how faculty were to score the presentations. This led to several of the original volunteers dropping out of the pilot. The drop in participation was also due to the truncated time frame of the summer semester (relative to the fall or spring semesters) and faculty realizing after volunteering that they didn't have enough time to complete the assessment pilot.

The pilot revealed all sorts of impediments to replication, which were then sorted out during early fall before conducting the actual assessment. Perhaps the most important realization was that the process of transferring the rubric data from faculty and the demographic data from students by hand was too antiquated, cumbersome, and unrealistic. Samar Ayesh reported that it took her 2.5 hours to transfer the assessment data by hand from the 82 surveys and rubrics. Thankfully, Phil Vargas and Ray Tse suggested an alternate avenue for the survey and rubric completion using an advanced version of Scantron. This simple change reduced the work of both volunteers and committee members dramatically. It also reduced the possibility of human error in transferring large amounts of data.

#### **E. Implementation**

The Assessment of General Education Goals at HWC has traditionally (since 2003) taken place during the 12<sup>th</sup> week of the semester, and affectionately called “Assessment Week.” The committee realized early that limiting the collection of oral presentations to one week would not work and therefore extended the collection to span from week #12 until week #16 so as to include the possibility of final presentations and end-of-the-semester assignments.

The first 4 weeks of the semester were spent making adjustments to the methodology of the assessment based on the information gathered through the pilot. There were lively discussions about alternate systems for collection, and the committee finally settled on Scantron. Once the committee agreed on using Scantron to collect the data, an easy-to-read training form was developed with clear instructions about how faculty should instruct students about the demographic portion and how faculty were to complete the rubric portion.

After the methodology was sorted out, the committee began communicating with the faculty-at-large about the upcoming assessment. The purpose of this was two-fold: to solicit volunteers and to educate and inform the HWC community about the upcoming assessment.

The committee prepared the materials for the faculty volunteers and readied them early with plenty of leeway for collecting the assessment data.

The assessment materials were distributed during week #10, and the data had to be returned no later than one week after finals.

## **F. Caveats**

As is our commonly established practice, we used a sample of convenience, which relied largely upon faculty participation to generate a large enough student sample size to produce a representative and valid sample. We were quite concerned about this, as we did not know if we could secure enough faculty who had assigned an oral presentation and were willing to complete the assessment task. We found that due to the very specific nature of this assessment, we achieved a smaller sample size than other assessments, but we were very pleased with the final number and believe it was quite an accomplishment. As a general goal, we aim to sample 10% of our student population at the time of data gathering. This allows us to have a large enough sample to speak with some authority about our student body. Our number for the oral communication assessment was well under 10% primarily due to the very complex nature of the assessment itself.

We chose not to use a random sample or other statistical techniques to generate our respondent cohort. While we may sacrifice some statistical representation, we gain in other important ways. The faculty-driven methodology has allowed us to build a strong culture of assessment amongst the many participating faculty and to strengthen their buy-in across diverse departments and individual faculty.

This method relies on the persuasive and explanatory power of faculty with their students and gives an opportunity for assessment activities to be explained to students across the college.

However, this voluntary approach means we exert less control over the number of contributing students, sections and disciplines.

### III. Findings

#### A. Validity

<b>Demographics - Gender - Q15</b>			
	<i>Digest</i>	<i>Survey</i>	<i>Difference</i>
Male	41.91%	38.00%	9.32%
Female	58.09%	62.00%	6.72%
Transgender	*	0.69%	*
Other	*	0.69%	*

<b>Demographics - Ethnicity/Race - Q16</b>			
	<i>Digest</i>	<i>Survey</i>	<i>Difference</i>
African American/Black	37.00%	30.86%	16.59%
Hispanic/Latino/Chicano	30.00%	44.48%	48.28%
Asian American/Pacific Islander	10.00%	10.17%	1.72%
White/Caucasian	18.00%	12.07%	32.95%
American Indian/Alaska Native	*	2.41%	*

<b>Demographics - Age - Q17</b>			
	<i>Digest</i>	<i>Survey</i>	<i>Difference</i>
<21	*	30.69%	*
21-30	*	49.48%	*
31-39	*	13.62%	*
41-60	*	5.52%	*
61+	*	0.69%	*

**\*Unavailable at the time of this writing.**

The charts above outline the demographic data from the Oral Communication Assessment sample relative to the Harold Washington College digest from the same period. There was a statistical difference in the students sampled compared to the Harold Washington College's population. To ensure the population was accurately represented a round robin stratified



sampling was performed and the scores were compared. No statistical difference existed between these subsamples; therefore, the differences in responses on ethnicity and gender did not affect validity.

Status	Participants	Mean Score	Rubric Range
Full-time Students	488	13.06	0-20*
Part-time Students	92	13.87	0-20

There is no statistical difference between full- and part-time students on the assessment.

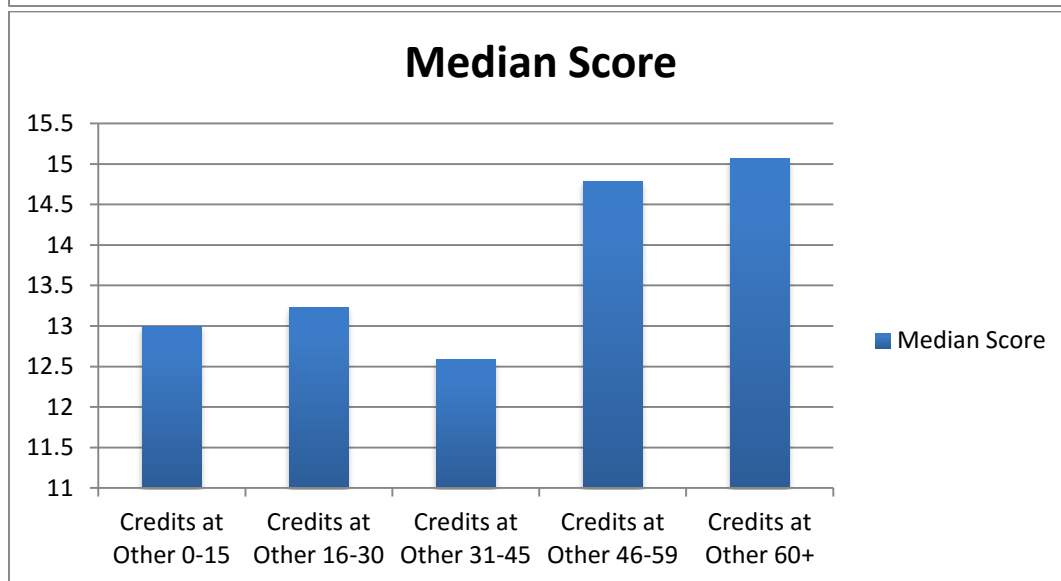
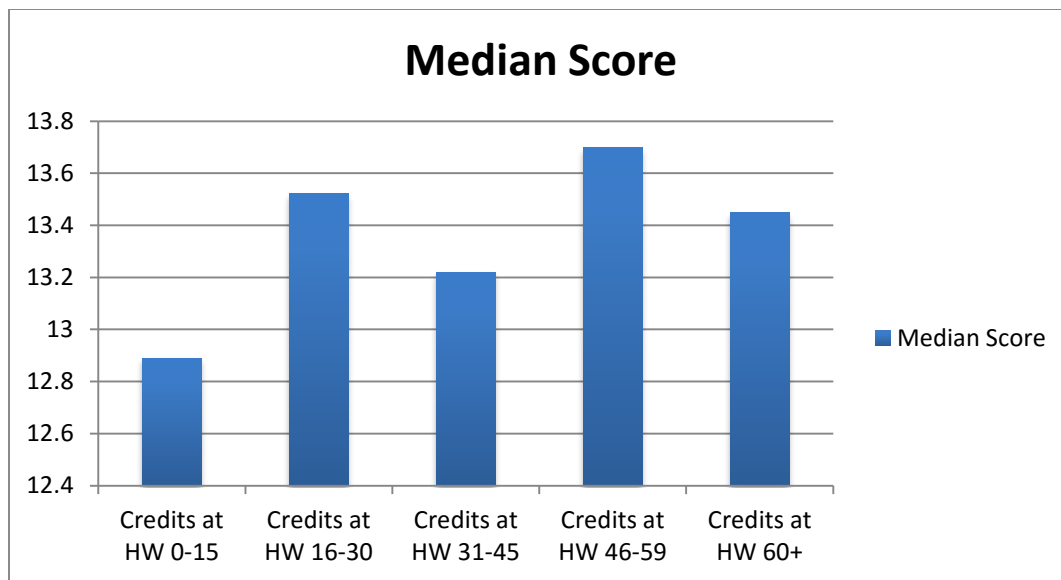
\* See Appendix A for Rubric and range descriptions.

Status	Median Score
Students who Completed Speech at HWC	13.15
Students Who Completed Speech at another college	13.57
Students Who Have Not Completed speech	13.18

There are no statistical differences between students who completed speech at HWC, students who completed the course at another institution, and students who had not completed Speech 101.

## Assessment by Credits Achieved at HWC and at Other Institutions

Credits at HWC	Median Score	Credits at other colleges	Median Score
0-15	12.89	0-15	13.00
16-30	13.52	16-30	13.23
31-45	13.22	31-45	12.58
46-59	13.70	46-59	14.79
60+	13.45	60+	15.07

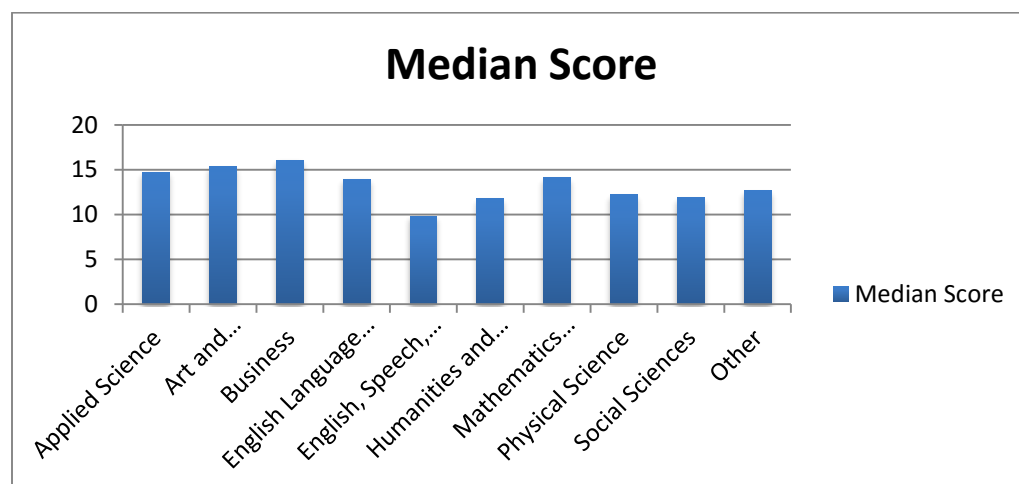


There are no statistical differences between any of the credit levels, except when students have completed at least 46 credits at other institutions.

## Assessment by Discipline in which the Oral Presentation Took Place

Discipline in which the Oral Presentation Took Place	Student Samples Collected	Mean Score
Applied Science	61	14.75
Art and Architecture	13	15.38
Business	16	16.06
English Language Learners	114	13.95
English, Speech, and Theatre	32	9.84
Humanities and Music	29	11.79
Mathematics and Computer Information Systems	78	14.13
Physical Science	23	12.22
Social Sciences	123	11.87
Other	91	12.70
Total	580	

There are no statistical differences between the scores of oral presentations depending on the discipline of the class in which students completed the assessment.



Totals	
Total viable samples	580
Total student participants	700
Total faculty volunteers	21

## **Analysis - Correlations**

Correlation Coefficient	Strength
0 – 0.2	None
0.2 – 0.4	Weak
0.4 – 0.6	Moderate
0.6 – 0.8	Strong

### **Frequency**

Correlations exist with other frequency questions but not with other survey questions or the scored presentation. The data presented below focuses solely on findings that were found to have correlations regardless of how weak. For the purposes of this report, comparisons that did not reveal a correlation were omitted.

For purposes of this report, the student survey questions were grouped together as a means of categorizing and comparisons. The following categories were analyzed for positive or negative correlations: Workplace, Background Research, Speech Knowledge, and Nervousness.

### **Workplace**

Question # 1 -Oral communication is an important skill that I will use in the workplace.

Question #2 - I don't need to be a good oral communicator in order to achieve my career goals.

Question #3 - I am very nervous about classroom oral presentations.

Question #4 - I always do a great deal of background research for classroom oral presentations when they are being graded.

Question #7 - I am confident in my ability to deliver a strong oral presentation in class.

Question # 8 - I am confident in my ability to effectively plan and organize a strong oral presentation for class.

Question #9 - I am not confident in my ability to use examples, illustrations, statistics, quotations and evidence from relevant authorities to support my oral presentation.

Question #18 - Please indicate your current academic status

	All Faculty	Non-Speech Faculty	Speech Faculty
Q1 & Q2	-0.34	-0.36	-0.15
Q1 & Q3	-0.11	-0.10	-0.30
Q1 & Q4	0.20	0.21	0.08
Q1 & Q7	0.24	0.24	0.26
Q1 & Q8	0.25	0.28	0.09
Q1 & Q18	0.00	-0.05	0.25
Q1 & Q9	-0.25	-0.26	-0.16
Q2 & Q8	-0.22	-0.21	-0.19
Q2 & Q9	0.37	0.37	0.31

Although there are no moderate or strong correlations between awareness of the importance of oral communication in the workplace and confidence about skills or nervousness, there were

a few weak correlations to note. Students who reported that they believe that oral communication is important in the workplace also understand that they need to be good at communicating orally in order to achieve their career goals. Students who do not feel confident in their abilities to support their oral presentations through the use of additional supportive materials also do not feel that they need to be strong oral communicators in order to achieve their career goals.

## Background Research

**Questions # 4** - I always do a great deal of background research for classroom oral presentations when they are being graded.

**Question # 5** - I always do a great deal of background research for classroom oral presentations even when they are *not* being graded

**Question # 7** - I am confident in my ability to deliver a strong oral presentation in class.

**Question # 8** - I am confident in my ability to effectively plan and organize a strong oral presentation for class.

**Question # 9** - I am not confident in my ability to use examples, illustrations, statistics, quotations and evidence from relevant authorities to support my oral presentation.

**Criterion # 51** - Content

**Criterion # 53** - Language

**Criterion # 54** – Organization

	All Faculty	Non-Speech Faculty	Speech Faculty
Q4 & Q5	0.51	0.51	0.53
Q4 & Q7	0.26	0.28	0.19
Q4 & Q8	0.33	0.36	0.21
Q4 & Q9	-0.28	-0.30	-0.15
Q4 & Q51	0.09	0.05	0.33
Q4 & Q53	0.07	0.02	0.23
Q4 & Q54	0.10	0.05	0.27
Q5 & Q8	0.19	0.18	0.20
Q5 & Q51	0.10	0.04	0.33

In regards to background research, the assessment revealed that there was a moderate correlation between students who prepare for oral presentations both when they are being graded and students who prepare for oral presentations when they are not being graded. However, there are weak to no correlations between those students who perceive they do a great deal of research when preparing for their oral presentations and the rated content, language and organization of their actual presentations. These correlations were somewhat higher when those students were being assessed by speech faculty.

## Speech Knowledge

**Question #6** - There are different styles of oral presentations depending on the audience.

**Question #8** - I am confident in my ability to effectively plan and organize a strong oral presentation for class

**Question #9** - I am not confident in my ability to use examples, illustrations, statistics, quotations and evidence from relevant authorities to support my oral presentation.

	All Faculty	Non-Speech Faculty	Speech Faculty
Q6 & Q8	0.26	0.29	0.10
Q6 & Q9	-0.21	-0.23	-0.05

Although the above correlations are weak, the assessment revealed that there is a correlation between students who understand that there are different styles of oral presentations depending on the audience and those students' confidence levels in planning and organizing strong oral presentations in their classes. Students who did not feel confident in their abilities to support their oral presentations with additional materials also did not know that there are differing styles of oral presentations depending on the audience.

## Nervousness

**Question #3** - I am very nervous about classroom oral presentations.

**Question #7** - I am confident in my ability to deliver a strong oral presentation in class.

**Question #8** - I am confident in my ability to effectively plan and organize a strong oral presentation for class

**Question #9** - I am not confident in my ability to use examples, illustrations, statistics, quotations and evidence from relevant authorities to support my oral presentation.

**Criterion #51** - Content

**Criterion #52**-Delivery

**Criterion #53** - Language

	All Faculty	Non-Speech Faculty	Speech Faculty
Q3 & Q7	-0.44	-0.42	-0.51
Q3 & Q8	-0.30	-0.33	-0.22
Q3 & Q9	0.26	0.30	0.12
Q3 & Q51	-0.12	-0.08	-0.21
Q3 & Q52	-0.17	-0.16	-0.30
Q3 & Q53	-0.06	-0.04	-0.21

Here we see a moderate correlation between students' feelings of nervousness and their confidence level in using supporting materials to support their presentations. There is a weak correlation between students' feelings of nervousness and their confidence in planning and organizing strong oral presentations as well as with their confidence levels about supporting their oral presentations with additional materials. There are very weak correlations between students' feelings of nervousness and their actual oral presentations, the strongest of these between nervousness and delivery as assessed by Speech faculty.

## Confidence

**Question #7** - I am confident in my ability to deliver a strong oral presentation in class.

**Question #8** - I am confident in my ability to effectively plan and organize a strong oral presentation for class.

**Question #9** - I am not confident in my ability to use examples, illustrations, statistics, quotations and evidence from relevant authorities to support my oral presentation.

**Question #12** - How frequently are/were you required to give prepared oral presentations in Humanities classes?

**Question #18** - Please indicate your current academic status:

**Question #21** - Have you successfully completed Speech 101 (with a final grade of A, B or C) at HWC?

**Criterion #51** - Content

**Criterion #52** - Delivery

**Criterion #53** - Language

**Criterion #54** – Organization

	All Faculty	Non-Speech Faculty	Speech Faculty
Q7 & Q8	0.57	0.64	0.30
Q7 & Q9	-0.34	-0.40	-0.14
Q7 & Q12	0.14	0.12	0.24
Q7 & Q21	0.15	0.15	0.23
Q7 & Q51	0.08	0.06	0.20
Q7 & Q52	0.14	0.11	0.29
Q8 & Q9	0.20	-0.48	-0.36
Q8 & Q21	0.16	0.14	0.21
Q9 & Q18	-0.09	-0.06	-0.25
Q9 & Q21	-0.07	-0.10	0.21
Q9 & Q51	-0.09	-0.08	-0.20
Q9 & Q53	-0.14	-0.10	-0.21
Q9 & Q54	-0.17	-0.14	-0.20

In terms of correlations with confidence levels, students who felt confident in their ability to present strong oral presentations also felt confident about their ability to plan and organize those presentations. There was a stronger correlation between students who were assessed by non-speech faculty than speech faculty in terms of confidence. Conversely, students who did not feel confident about their oral presentation abilities also did not feel confident in planning and organizing their presentations. There was very little correlation, however, between confidence levels and actual performance of the oral presentations in any of the rubric criteria.

## Oral Presentation Scores

Rubric Breakdown	Mean Score
Content	2.89
Delivery	2.38
Language	2.62
Organization	2.70
Supporting Materials	2.60

There is no statistical difference between any of the 5 areas of the oral presentation rubric. However, it is important to note in all areas of the rubric that the student mean score was above average (on a scale from 0-4). That is promising news. Although there are no statistical differences between scores, the highest mean score was in the *content* area, and the lowest was in the *delivery* area. This may be worth further exploration as faculty may have differing expectations for oral presentations, with some focusing on content over delivery (in non-speech courses) and others focusing on delivery over content (speech courses).

## E. Other Findings

Most of the correlations discussed above are weak to moderate and can therefore mean many things. It is not the purpose of this report to make assumptions about the meaning of weak correlations; however, we can infer multiple theories and posit several plausible explanations. Once another iteration of this assessment takes place at HWC, the data will most likely become more meaningful.

Although there is a statistical difference between oral presentation scores by students who have completed a minimum of 46 credits or more from other institutions and all other students, we cannot assume that this means students from HWC or students with fewer credits are less prepared to give quality oral presentations. It is possible that the scores achieved by students in their first three semesters of college are not very strong and that students do not make significant gains during this time. Students with 60+ credits from other institutions may in fact already have a four-year degree, a graduate degree, and/or several more years of experience giving oral presentations. Yes, we know for this assessment that this set of students scored statistically higher, and we should expect that.

There is no statistical difference between students who are in (or have completed) their first three semesters of college either at HWC or other institutions. We would expect to see improved scores from students as they progress through their undergraduate education. Is this an anomaly? Replication of this assessment would provide a more sound foundation for inference.



In addition, there is no statistical difference between students who have completed speech at HWC or another institution. This data means that students who have completed speech at HWC are able to give oral presentations at about the same level as students who completed speech elsewhere. However, we do not see a statistical improvement between students who have completed speech and those who have not. Naturally, we would assume that students would perform better once they have spent a semester focusing on this skill. There are most likely several reasons for this result. Possibilities include:

1. Non-speech faculty are not well-trained to evaluate oral presentations.
2. Non-speech faculty are more concerned with content over delivery or emphasize certain aspects of oral presentations over others.
3. Past assessments have revealed that students struggle with generalizing what they have learned in specific courses to the rest of their courses.
4. Students are not getting better at giving oral presentations even after they have completed speech.

## **IV. Recommendations - Oral Communication**

In light of our findings on Oral Communication at Harold Washington College, the Assessment Committee makes the following recommendations:

1. Harold Washington College should continue to have high standards for oral presentations throughout the curriculum, not only in the Speech Department.
2. Faculty should consider varying the types of oral presentations assigned, clearly identifying the scope of the assignment and reinforcing the concept of “audience.”
3. An article in the Wall Street Journal (June 15, 2015) reports that speaking in public is people’s No. 1 fear, more frightening than flying or death. In light of this, faculty should make every effort to put students at ease before their oral presentations.
4. All faculty would benefit from professional development focused on teaching oral communication skills and assessing those skills.
5. Building confidence in students’ abilities to prepare oral presentations well and to present orally in class should be a pedagogical priority.
6. Further assessments about the efficacy of the HWC speech program are encouraged.
7. Speech faculty should provide professional development for non-speech faculty about creating strong oral presentation assignments, assessing those assignments, and teaching the skills associated with those assignments.
8. Further discussion about the purposes of assigned oral communication assignments should be encouraged between speech and non-speech faculty with the following questions posited:
  - a. Are oral communication assignments designed to strengthen students’ skills in public speaking or to provide another vehicle for transmitting information?
  - b. If students are expected to improve their skills in oral communication, are those skills being taught in non-speech classes?

- c. Does content weigh more heavily than other areas of skill?
- d. Does delivery weigh more heavily than content?

## **V. Recommendations - Future Iterations of the Oral Communication Assessment**

In light of our experiences designing and implementing this very complex assessment, the Assessment Committee recommends the following for future iterations of this assessment.

1. Care should be taken in ensuring the oral presentations used for this assessment meet minimum criteria for length.
2. More time should be spent training faculty volunteers to use the rubric in order to ensure stronger inter-rate reliability.
3. Ideally, all faculty would be informed before the semester of the Oral Communication Assessment so that they could include an oral presentation as an assignment that meets the minimum criteria for this assessment.
4. The information collected during this assessment should be used as comparative data with future iterations.

## **VI. Conclusion**

The opportunities for students at Harold Washington College to speak in class and give oral presentations are vast. This is evidenced from the wide array of faculty volunteers ready and willing to gather data organically for this assessment. These faculty did not add oral presentations to their syllabi or course expectations, but rather wove these options into their courses as a regular part of their classroom assessments of student learning. In addition, this assessment asked much more of faculty volunteers, in terms of time and effort, than ever before for a college-wide assessment. All faculty volunteers deserve a hearty “Thanks” for taking the time to participate in this assessment.

In a workforce readiness report (2006) presented in collaboration with The Conference Board, Corporate Voices for Working Families, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, and the Society for Human Resource Management, “Oral Communications ranks among the top five applied skills reported by employer respondents as “very important” across all three educational levels. Seventy percent (70.3 percent) of employer respondents report that Oral Communications skills are “very important” for high school graduates entering the workforce, 82.0 percent for two-year college graduates, and 95.4 percent for four-year college graduates.”

The skills associated with being a competent public speaker are important in every arena of life, both public and private. Ensuring that students leave HWC with strong oral communication skills

is the responsibility of each and every member of the faculty and should therefore be taught and assessed throughout the college and throughout a student's career at the college.

This report reveals more questions than answers; that is sure. However, it is clear that another iteration of this assessment will uncover more detailed data about oral communication from which to draw conclusions.

Appendix A (following page)

<b>Scantron #</b>	<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	<b>No Evidence [A]</b>	<b>Beginning [B]</b>	<b>Progressing [C]</b>	<b>Competent [D]</b>	<b>Exemplary [E]</b>
<b>51</b>	<b>Content (Subject Knowledge)</b>	Missed the point, no connection with expected subject.	Explanation of concepts is inaccurate or incomplete. Key points and message can be deduced, but are not explicitly stated in the presentation.	Central message and some key points are basically understandable but are not often repeated and are not memorable. There are some distinctions in content sections.	Central message is clear and consistent with the supporting material. Accurate explanation of key concepts and points of note. Differentiated content is obvious.	Central message is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported). Depth of content reflects thorough understanding of topic. Broad and pertinent content.
<b>52</b>	<b>Delivery</b>	Techniques not evident (too much reading, no eye contact.)	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) detract from the understandability of the presentation, and speaker appears uncomfortable.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation understandable, and speaker appears tentative.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation interesting, and speaker appears comfortable.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation compelling, and speaker appears polished and confident.
<b>53</b>	<b>Language</b>	Inappropriate to audience, language choices demonstrate lack of awareness.	Language choices are unclear and minimally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is not appropriate to audience and context.	Language choices are mundane and commonplace and partially support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience and context.	Language choices are thoughtful and generally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience and context.	Language choices are imaginative, memorable, and compelling, and enhance the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience and context.
	<i>If applicable to context...</i>	<i>Discriminatory words used and detracts from oratory.</i>	<i>No awareness of discriminatory power of words.</i>	<i>Limited awareness of discriminatory power of words.</i>	<i>Uses inclusive words and chooses labels and names with care.</i>	<i>The power of language choices is acknowledged and inclusive words, labels and names are used with care throughout.</i>
<b>54</b>	<b>Organization</b>	No structure evident.	Lack of structure. Ideas are not coherent. No transitions. Difficult to identify introduction, body, and conclusion.	General structure/ organization seems adequate. Difference between main points and supporting details is blurred. Logical flow, but no clear signposts for transitions.	Clear organizational pattern. Main points are distinct from supporting details. Smooth transitions differentiate key points.	Effective organization well suited to purpose. Main points are clearly distinct from supporting details. Graceful transitions create coherent progress toward conclusion.
<b>55</b>	<b>Supporting Material</b>	No discernible evidence of supporting materials in use. No credibility or authority to speak on the topic.	Insufficient supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make reference to information or analysis that minimally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that partially supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that generally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	A variety of types of supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that significantly supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.
	<i>If applicable to context...</i>	<i>Lack of visual aids detracts from oratory.</i>	<i>No visual aids used to support oral presentation.</i>	<i>Limited visual aids to assist in oral presentation.</i>	<i>Visual aids and/or other materials provided for audience to accompany &amp; support oratory.</i>	<i>Presentation is accompanied by strong use of supportive visual aids.</i>

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Appendix B.

## HWC Oral Communication Assessment Student Survey Fall 2013

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this Oral Communication Assessment. All of your answers must be marked on the **Scantron** given to you with this survey by your instructor. Please write your name and the class in which you are taking this survey on the **Scantron**. Your instructor will collect your **Scantron** sheets and will assess your Oral Communication presentation by marking the same **Scantron**. Your name and your personal responses are private and no student, class, or instructor details will be used in the results of this survey.

**Your answers help us improve student learning outcomes in Oral Communication for *all* HWC students, so your time and effort is truly appreciated.**

Please mark the **Scantron** as follows for your answer to each numbered question:

[A] [B] [C] [D] [E]

On the **Scantron** make dark marks – Erase any mistakes completely – Make no stray marks

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. There are no correct or incorrect answers.	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Oral communication is an important skill that I will use in the workplace.	[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]
2. I don't need to be a good oral communicator in order to achieve my career goals.	[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]
3. I am very nervous about classroom oral presentations.	[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]
4. I always do a great deal of background research for classroom oral presentations when they are being graded.	[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]
5. I always do a great deal of background research for classroom oral presentations even when they are <i>not</i> being graded.	[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]
6. There are different styles of oral presentations depending on the audience.	[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]
7. I am confident in my ability to deliver a strong oral presentation in class.	[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]
8. I am confident in my ability to effectively plan and organize a strong oral presentation for class.	[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]
9. I am not confident in my ability to use examples, illustrations, statistics, quotations and evidence from relevant authorities to support my oral presentation.	[A]	[B]	[C]	[D]

**10. How frequently are/were you required to give prepared oral presentations in Math classes?**

[A] Always [B] Often [C] Sometimes [D] Never [E] Not Applicable

**11. How frequently are/were you required to give prepared oral presentations in **Natural Science** classes?** (Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Physics)

[A] Always [B] Often [C] Sometimes [D] Never [E] Not Applicable

**12. How frequently are/were you required to give prepared oral presentations in **Humanities** classes?**

(Humanities, Fine Arts, Philosophy & Music)

[A] Always [B] Often [C] Sometimes [D] Never [E] Not Applicable

**13. How frequently are/were you required to give prepared oral presentations in **Social Science** classes?**

(Anthropology, Economics, Geography, History, Political Science, Psychology & Sociology)

[A] Always [B] Often [C] Sometimes [D] Never [E] Not Applicable

**14. How frequently are/were you required to give prepared oral presentations in **English** classes?**

(English 100, English 101, English 101/97, English102, & any Literature class)

[A] Always [B] Often [C] Sometimes [D] Never [E] Not Applicable

**15. What is your gender?**

[A] Female [B] Male [C] Transgender [D] Other

**16. Please select one race/ethnicity designation from the following list. If you are multi-racial, you may select the designations that represent *how you* identify yourself.**

[A] American Indian [B] Asian [C] Black/African American [D] Hispanic/Latino [E] White

**17. What is your age?**

[A] Less than 20 [B] 20-25 [C] 26-40 [D] 41-60 [E] 61 +

**18. Please indicate your current academic status:**

[A] Full Time

[B] Part Time

**19.** How many credit hours have you successfully completed at HWC (a final grade of A, B or C from courses numbered 101 or above)?

[A] 0-15    [B] 16-30    [C] 31-45    [D] 45-60    [E] 60+

**20.** How many credit hours have you successfully completed at other colleges or universities (a final grade of A, B or C from courses numbered 101 or above)?

[A] 0-15    [B] 16-30    [C] 31-45    [D] 45-60    [E] 60+

**21. Have you successfully completed Speech 101 (with a final grade of A, B or C) at HWC?**

**[A]** Yes                      **[B]** No

**22.** Have you successfully completed Speech 101 (with a final grade of A, B or C) at other colleges or universities?

**[A]** Yes                      **[B]** No

**THANK YOU and good luck with your presentation!**

## c. Scantron Instructions

KEY ☐ K ☐ VERIFY ☐ V ☐ RESCORE ☐ R ☐

(T) (F)

1 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

2 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

3 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

4 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

5 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

6 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

7 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

8 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

9 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

10 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

11 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

12 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

13 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

14 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

15 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

16 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

17 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

18 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

19 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

20 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

21 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

22 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

23 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

24 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

25 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

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27 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

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36 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

37 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

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45 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

46 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

47 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

48 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

49 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

50 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

(T) (F)

51 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

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57 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

58 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

59 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

60 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

61 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

62 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

63 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

64 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

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67 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

68 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

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73 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

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90 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

91 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

92 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

93 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

94 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

95 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

96 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

97 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

98 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

99 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

100 ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E

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STUDENTS

• REORDER  
• MAKE DARK MARKS  
• ERASE COMPLETELY TO CHASE  
• MAKE NO STRAY MARKS

### Rubric

Question Number	No Evidence (A)	Beginning (B)	Progressing (C)	Competent (D)	Exemplary (E)
51	Content (Subject Knowledge) No evidence of content knowledge. Key points and details are not included in the presentation.	Content (Subject Knowledge) Explains concepts in inaccurate or incomplete. Key points and details are not included in the presentation.	Content (Subject Knowledge) Central message and some key points are basically understandable but are not memorable. There are some distinctions in content sections.	Content (Subject Knowledge) Central message is clear and consistent with the supporting material. Accurate explanation of key concepts and points of view. Differentiated content is obvious.	Content (Subject Knowledge) Central message is compelling, accurately stated, appropriately supported, memorable, and strongly supported. Depth of content reflects thorough understanding of topic. Broad and polished content.
52	Delivery Techniques not evident (no eye contact, no voice control, no eye contact).	Delivery Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) are not evident in the presentation, and speaker appears uncomfortable.	Delivery Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) are evident in the presentation, and speaker appears comfortable.	Delivery Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) are evident in the presentation, and speaker appears comfortable.	Delivery Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) are evident in the presentation, and speaker appears polished and confident.
53	Language Inappropriate to audience. Language choices demonstrate lack of awareness.	Language Language choices are unclear and minimally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is not appropriate to audience and context.	Language Language choices are mostly understandable and support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience and context.	Language Language choices are thoughtful and generally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience and context.	Language Language choices are thoughtful, memorable, and compelling, and enhance the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience and context.
54	Organization No structure evident.	Organization Lack of structure. Ideas are not clearly stated. Difficult to identify main points, key points, and supporting details.	Organization General organizational pattern is evident. Main points are clearly stated. Supporting details are clearly stated. Logical flow, but no clear transitions.	Organization Clear organizational pattern. Main points are clearly stated. Supporting details are clearly stated. Logical flow, but no clear transitions.	Organization Clear organizational pattern. Main points are clearly stated. Supporting details are clearly stated. Logical flow, but no clear transitions.
55	Supporting Material No discernible evidence of supporting materials in use. No credibility or authority to speak on the topic.	Supporting Material Insufficient supporting materials (examples, statistics, evidence, quotations from relevant authorities) make reference to information or analysis that minimally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Supporting Material Supporting materials (examples, statistics, evidence, quotations from relevant authorities) make reference to information or analysis that partially supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Supporting Material Supporting materials (examples, statistics, evidence, quotations from relevant authorities) make reference to information or analysis that generally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Supporting Material A variety of types of supporting materials (examples, statistics, evidence, quotations from relevant authorities) make reference to information or analysis that strongly supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
SUBJECT \_\_\_\_\_  
PERIOD \_\_\_\_\_

APPERSON EDUCATION PRODUCTS 800.827.9219  
#26720-RR 06/11 A1804 U.S. Patent No. 6,079,824 03/12

RESORE

SCORE

Student uses #1 to #22 for survey data.

Professor uses #51 to #55 for Oral Communication Assessment using Rubric.

Student fills in his/her name and course/section information on the subject line. Please date.



#### Appendix D. Letters to Faculty

Dear Fall 2013 Assessment Team Colleagues:

Thanks so much for volunteering your students and your time to help us collect data, for the first time, about our student's oral communications capabilities.

We have selected one or more of the class sections you volunteered for this college-wide assessment. I wanted to let you know you are part of 28 faculty committing to this assessment, giving us a potential raw student count of over 1,300. We know class sizes drop as we get to week 12 through 16, which is when we ask you assess your individual student presentations. We estimate you will help us assess over 800 student presentations. If we achieve this, it will be a spectacular sample size of something that is a "live performance" and thus very hard to capture.

We cannot thank you enough for your support in making our first-ever Oral Communication Assessment a huge success.

Packets for each of your selected class sections will be delivered to your mailboxes next week. We have really tried to simplify the process and make it easy for you to organize during your routine classroom work over the last four weeks of semester.

Your packet will contain full instructions for you and your students with the following documents:

Student Surveys – 2-sided, for every student in your volunteered class – it should take them no more than 8 minutes and you can get them to do this at any time.

Scantrons – one for every student in your class - all student and instructor data goes on this.

Scantron Explanation Sheets – Yours is on your envelope and the packet also contains one for every student in your class.

Oral Communications Assessment Rubric – one for every student in your class. You can use this while assessing their presentations and you can circulate it in advance to students so they know how you will assess their presentation.

Please don't hesitate to contact myself, Jeff Swigart or Jen Asimow if you have any questions. Over the next few days you will receive an individual email letting you know exactly which of your class sections we have selected for the student sample.

It is a pleasure to work with such dedicated colleagues. We have volunteered sections from every department on campus and all disciplines! Amazing HWC faculty.

Dear Teaching Colleagues:

For the first time ever, we will assess Oral Communication student learning outcomes this semester. These outcomes form the important companion to Written Communication outcomes as part of our General Education requirements. We are looking for as many faculty as possible to contribute to this Oral Communication Assessment process. We are really interested in getting as many adjunct instructors involved in this assessment as possible and we support the very important contribution you make to HWC student learning and college life.

In the fall of 2012, we had over 1,500 students take our Human Diversity Assessment and the results of this will be circulated to you all soon – there are some fascinating findings about how HWC and our students have changed since 2005. This was one of our largest student samples ever, and is a testament to the great faculty we have here at HWC – thank you.

We are looking for faculty who would normally expect students to make an in-class oral presentation between weeks twelve and sixteen of this semester, or faculty who would be happy to add one to their class so that they can contribute data to this college-wide assessment.

If you want to volunteer one or more of your classes this semester, please follow the link below:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1z2Pb9IlqVG7Cb9d80-ja4z9IfF6HfM1Ftz2eNwWwuHw/viewform>

Thanks for your consistent support and for keeping our assessment culture strong and nationally recognized!