1. **Name(s) and Number(s) of Course being assessed for Oral Communication:**

   GEOL 4740 Geology Senior Seminar

2. **Number of Students enrolled per year AND number of those students whose work was assessed for oral communication (SLO 7) competency:**

   Currently enrolled in course: 8  Assessed: 8

3. **Assessment Method(s): Explain how assessment for this SLO - not grading for the course as a whole-was conducted. You may cut/paste rubrics for inclusion here, identify faculty reviewing committees, or identify specific kinds of test questions important to your method.)**

   As COMM 1000 was not part of the Geology Program curriculum, the oral communication requirement (SLO 7) is met by GEOL 4740 Geology Senior Seminar. Prior to Spring 2012, this course consisted of little more than a review of the courses required by the major, followed by a series of examinations in each subject area. The scores were then used as assessment measures to see what percentage of students attained previously designated values.

   In its present form (see attached syllabus and schedule), the course, which is required for all Geology majors, emphasizes written and oral communication skills while ensuring that all students have an undergraduate research experience. The major features of the schedule with regard to oral communication are (1) students receive instruction in oral communication prior to delivery, (2) students present an initial version of their oral presentation, (3) students participate in peer review of other students and receive student as well as professor feedback, and (4) students revise their initial talks and give the presentation a final time. A scoring rubric (attached) examines learning outcomes in the following categories: (1) content, critical thinking, and persuasiveness, (2) organization and length (i.e., total time), (3) slides and illustrations, (4) the speaker’s appearance and mannerisms, (5) style of speech, and (6) the student’s performance in the question and answer period. This rubric was used throughout, including the peer evaluations, so that students could gauge their own achievement level in each of the categories.

4. **If the Assessment methods differ from those initially proposed to the CCGEC, identify the differences and explain the rationale for those changes:**

   N/A

5. **Findings: (what add assessment data tell you about student proficiency in this outcome?)**

   As the attached table shows, most students did reasonably well even on their initial attempt due to their past experiences giving talks in other classes. A few, however, had substantial problems, e.g., student no. 4 gave a weak performance, missing the mark in content (2), by having a talk that was very short (3) and unprofessionally illustrated (3) with essentially all figures taken from the Web. (She gave the presentation using Prezi even though I instructed her not to.) All students but one (no. 8) improved their overall score in their final version. In the case of the poorest student (no. 4), she worked diligently to improve. She chose a different topic, researched it reasonably well, and did a credible presentation (using Power Point).

   In terms of the categories assessed, organization (including total length of the presentation) and quality of slides and images (maps, graphs, etc.) were the biggest problem areas in the first round of talks, both averaging under 4. Both of these criteria were much improved in the final version. In some cases (e.g., student 1) slides contained too much text and the speaker did little more than read the text aloud to the audience.
6. **How did you (or will you) use the findings for improvement?** (What questions /issues/concerns did your data raise for the faculty teaching the course? What discussion did the faculty have about the findings? What future actions to improve student attainment of this outcome will the department / program take as a result of this analysis?)

The new course meets the basic need of oral-communication instruction and student experience in this area, but it also points out improvements that could be made in this course and in the students’ training prior to their final year. Course improvements might involve exercises on how to make/locate better images and graphs and how to compose slides. These would be separate exercises done prior to giving the first version of the talk. To the extent possible, more students should have research experiences earlier than their senior year so that they are more engaged in the process of presenting their findings.

7. **Additional Comments:** (What else would you like the Committee to know about your assessment of this course or plans for the future?)

None

8. **Committee Comments**

2.33/4- No specific comments were made beyond the score through the rubric
GEOLOGY SENIOR SEMINAR
GEOL-4740 001
Spring 2012

PROJECTS SCHEDULE  (Dates are approximate)

1. Audience Exercise    Due week 2 (Jan 17)      10 points
2. Résumés and Job Applications  Due week 4 (Jan 31)    10 points

Research Project:
3A. Topic and Annotated Bibliography     Due week 6 (Feb 14)   10 points
3B. Outline and Progress Report  Due week 8 (Feb 28)   10 points
3C. First Draft of Research Paper  Due week 9 (March 6)  10 points

   Week 10: Spring Break
3D. Final Draft of paper    Due week 12 (March 27)  20 points

4A. Oral Presentation - First Attempt   Due week 14 (Jan 17)   10 points
4B. Oral presentation - Final Version  Due week 15 (Jan 17)   10 points

5. Final Examination       Finals week (week 17)    10 points

STANDARD FORM FOR EXERCISES

Unless informed otherwise, you can assume that exercises will be typed using 11- or 12-point font, double spaced, and with 1-inch margins. All assignments will be due at class time, but will be accepted later that day. Any assignments more than one day late may not be accepted. In addition to a paper copy, please submit an electronic version to me in Word as an e-mail attachment.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR MAJOR PROJECTS

The research paper will be on a subject of your own choosing, once approved by the instructor. The subject can be an ongoing research project, such as research done in a Directed Study course or as part of an Undergraduate Research Fellowship, or it can be a new project, in which case you will most likely write a library research paper. The final written paper must be 8-10 pages long, including illustrations, and should include the standard sections found in published papers in geology. It must be typed using 12-point font and one-inch margins. Refer to 8 or more references (exclusive of Web sites), and list these in the standard format at the end of the paper. The oral presentation on the same topic will be a Power-Point talk of approximately 8-12 minutes duration.