1. Name(s) and Number(s) of Course being assessed for Oral Communication: (e.g. ENGL 4444; Capstone in Literature)

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:

11

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 originally was not part of the Geology Program curriculum, the oral communication requirement (SLO 7) is met by GEOL 4740 Geology Senior Seminar. The course is required for all Geology majors and 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 reviews 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. Their oral presentations were scored using two rubrics (attached). Rubric 1 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. These findings were re-evaluated in terms of rubric 2, which is related to rubric 1 as the color scheme illustrates.

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

See attached rubrics

Attachment FileName: Revised SLO 7 rubric.pdf

5. Based on the comprehensive rubric for the appropriate SLO, indicate the extent of competency of the average student who has completed this course:

intermediate

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

Tables 1 and 2, attached, shows the rubric conversion scheme as follows: Advanced (4.5-5.0), Intermediate (3.5-4.0), Basic (2.5-3.0), and Little/None (1-2.5). As the table shows, most students did reasonably well even on their initial attempt because of their past experiences giving talks in other classes. Large-scale organization was good overall, but arguments were not well developed in some cases. Illustrations were a problem for many students, chiefly because of their use of Web-based sources, which resulted in cartoon-like figures and/or low-resolution images. In some cases, illustrations lacked proper documentation of the source. Some students used vernacular and style of presentation that was not appropriate for the occasion and the audience. As found previously, students used colloquialisms that would have been more appropriate in casual communications. All students did
well in the question-and-answer period, demonstrating a reasonably good mastery of their subject matter. The oral presentations were critiqued in class and students submitted peer reviews of each presentation. Presenters had the opportunity to revise their work, and the results were much improved, as Table 2 shows. Students dressed for the occasion, and it was clear that they had practiced. For the most part, they appeared confident and were able to concentrate on their delivery technique and be more attentive to their audience than previously.

7. 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?)

Although this year’s students did reasonably well, we would still like to see substantial improvement in their awareness of the importance of good oral communication skills. We also want to see our majors have more opportunities in carrying out research. One of the drawbacks this year was that the students did not have topics to present; if students came to the class with more research background, they could do a better job of both written and oral presentations. For these and other reasons, the senior seminar course was revised to include (1) increasing the contact and credit hours (to 3 instead of 1 credit hour), (2) combining seniors from the Geography program with Geology students, and (3) the incorporation of ePortfolios. In Spring 2015, when the revised course is taught, more in-class time will be devoted to oral communication skills. Having a mix of geography and geology students will ensure that students can address different audiences. Student presentations will likely be videotaped, and the final project may be selected by the student as one of the artifacts for the final ePortfolio. This will motivate the student to reflect on the quality of the presentation and how it may be perceived by the audience, which may include potential employers or graduate-school supervisors.

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

9. Committee Comments