

## ASSESSMENT WEBSITE INFORMATION

**College: Business**  
**Chair/Director: Jeffrey Pittman**

**Degree Program: Business Administration**

### **DATA SAY:**

Oral communication is one of the five major learning goals in the College of Business. Business Administration is one of the top three majors with approximately 20 percent of CoB students enrolled as Business Administration majors. CoB students' oral communication skills were initially assessed in 2008 and 2009 (online). In 2008, student presentations revealed weaknesses in closing, point-to-point transitions, and professional dress. In 2009, online presentations revealed a number of issues of concern including the use of the Tegrity technology and lack of affect.

### **SO WHAT:**

Based on historical and current feedback from employers, the ability to make effective and professional presentations, increasingly in an online setting, is critical to student success in business. These noted weaknesses were not acceptable.

### **HOW WE CHANGED:**

Faculty workshops were held to describe and demonstrate the manner in which students are taught to make presentations in BCOM 2563 Business Communications so that upper level courses might build upon this foundation. Workshops were also held to train faculty in using Tegrity for student recordings to address the unique issues involved in student presentations in online courses. The Accounting Club and the ASU Career Management Center held several "fashion shows" and the inaugural Professional Presence Conference was held in 2010 and included a session on "Dress to Impress." This conference was sponsored held in the Delta Center for Economic Development and sponsored by the College of Business, Delta Center for Economic Development, Dillard's, National Association of Black Accountants (NABA), ASU NABA, ASU Career Management Center, ASU Accounting Department, Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), ASU SHRM, ASU Department of Management and Marketing, and the ASU Marketing Club. The Oral Communication Goal Assessment Team revised the rubric based on faculty input after these initial rounds of assessment.

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### **WHAT WE GOT:**

It was difficult to compare the Fall 2010 results to the previous assessment. In any case, however, the results of this assessment were disappointing. While improvement was noted in professional appearance, other rubric items fell below expectations and thus require additional intervention. Furthermore, the online section did not perform as well as the traditional sections of the course. Some of the difference between the online student performance and that of traditional students can be attributed largely to technology. The main problems were lack of enthusiasm and speaking with authority. These are very common challenges when recording presentations without an audience. Preparation and knowledge of material also fell below expectations which could certainly be related to enthusiasm and authority. Grammar, professional appearance, and effective use of PowerPoint slides were all lower for the online section. Given the relatively low performance both the online and traditional groups, the team recommends a response targeted to both groups of students with emphasis on all interventions available online for easy access for all. The following interventions were suggested, shared with the faculty, and implemented in Fall 2011. Suggestions for class management as appropriate:

1. Suggest that students use the presentation practice room in the library or classrooms, perhaps with documentation of practice sessions.
2. Suggest that students record presentations with a small audience of classmates, friends or family to address the issue of enthusiasm and authority.
3. Suggest that students make a brief introductory recording to work with the idea of speaking with authority before recording their presentation.
4. Suggest that students submit slides at least a week in advance for review by professor or GA to address the major grammar and other issues in slides. Curriculum Modification:
5. Business Communication classes add a brief section to oral presentation instructions and unit addressing the point that speaking with authority does not diminish when speaking online, but it does become more difficult and that students should look for that authority and enthusiasm when reviewing their own presentations.

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### WHAT WE GOT (CONT.):

6. Develop Tegrity lectures or some other online resource to address grammar and/or free weekly iTunes podcasts called “Grammar Girl’s Quick and Dirty Grammar Tips” could be promoted and/or required (<http://grammar.quickanddirtytips.com>). Perhaps a weekly quiz in some classes could be a component of professional development. Note: This was implemented in Fall 2011 with the “Communications Skills for CoB Students” Blackboard Learn site. Students in MGMT 4813 Strategic Management are required to participate in this site and to post a 3-5 minute presentation in the medium of their choice in this site. Numerous materials are available in this site including tips for making effective online and face-to-face presentations, RSS feed of Grammar Girl, exemplars of presentations by students and others, etc.
7. Develop “Wear This, Not That” online presentation as an extension of what is currently taught in Business Communication. Suggest that students research audience for presentation and dress appropriately for that audience, e.g. sales presentation in Professional Selling and Sales Management course. This will be implemented as the BBL site develops further.
8. Explore the development of a Student Communications Center as an extension of the CoB Writing Lab, staffed with a GA or adjunct instructor from Communications as well as the current GA from English to review and help with presentations. This will be implemented as resources become available.

