

Oral Communication Focus Board Year End Report 2003 B 2004

Chair: Kelly Aune

Summary:

The past year was more eventful than it should have been. We should have seen the beginning of a stabilization period during which operating procedures became comfortably standardized and events more predictable. Instead we found ourselves facing controversies over hallmarks, unhappy community college teachers, and a potential shortage of O classes. The makeup of the board included 2 first year members, 2 second year members, and one member in his last of three years.

Significant Events:

- B We held two workshops for potential O instructors. Workshops were well received and attendance improved from the previous year. The second workshop included presentations from instructors who have run O classes in prior semesters.
- B Aune met with teachers of Speech and Communication classes from the community colleges to discuss their concerns about changes in the hallmarks limiting O eligibility to 300-400 level classes. An understanding was achieved and the CC instructors indicated an intent to pursue a system-wide lower-division O requirement rather than pursue further changes in the hallmarks to include lower-division classes.

Recruitment Efforts:

- B The O board sent letters to all deans and department chairs asking that departments develop and offer more O classes. The letter addressed the general education need for O classes and the advantages enjoyed by departments -- particularly their majors -- offering O classes.
- B O board members contacted all department chairs via phone to reinforce the message offered in the letters.

Hallmarks and Instructor Concerns:

- B Resistance from instructors wishing to develop O courses usually focused on the portion of the total grade that must consist of O assignments. Through direct contact with departments (see above) and workshops the O board spent significant energies alleviating instructors concerns over this hallmark by pointing out that writing efforts associated with or supporting O assignments (creating outlines, critiquing self or other presentations, drafts of presentations) would contribute to the portion of the total grade associated with O work. The O board also emphasized the complementary nature of O and W work.

Numbers of O Classes:

- B Though lower division classes were no longer eligible for O status (as of Summer '04 for Manoa, Spring '05 for the rest of the UH system) resulting in the loss of a significant number of O seats, recruitment efforts were successful enough to maintain the overall number of O seats available in upper-division classes for students for Fall '04.

Course Acceptance Rates

- B Most course submissions (estimate 70% to 75%) were accepted on their first submission. Submissions requiring additional information were resolved via contact with the instructor and submission of further detail. Final acceptance rates approached 100%. Problems with submissions usually focused on hallmarks addressing a) how instructors would teach O materials in classes; and b) the explicit nature of O assignments.