Honolulu Community College adheres to the ACCJC standard that students enrolled in the Associate of Arts program develop oral communication skills. Courses qualifying for the Speech Requirement (SR) designation are reviewed by the Speech Requirement Board and periodically assessed to ensure that the classes meet the hallmarks associated with the SR designation. The SR hallmarks are as follows:

1. Each student will conduct or participate in a minimum of three oral communication assignments or a comparable amount of oral communication activity during the class. In addition, at least 40% of the final grade for a 3-credit course will be a function of the student's oral communication activities.

2. Each student will receive explicit training, in the context of the class, in oral communication concerns relevant to the assignment or activity.

3. Each student will receive specific feedback, critiquing, and grading of the oral communication assignments or activities from the instructor.

4. If instructor feedback primarily involves individual or paired students, enrollment will be limited to 20 students. If instructor feedback primarily involves groups of students, enrollment will be limited to 30 students.

In Spring 2012, Karadeen Kam-Kalani (Speech Requirement Board Chair), Douglas Raphael (SR Board), and David Fink (Research Assistant) coordinated the administration of the SR Evaluation. All courses with the SR designation completed the SR evaluation at the end of the Spring 2012 semester. A total of 16 classes (216 students) completed the evaluation.

As part of the assessment, students were asked to indicate the percentage of course material that was devoted to oral communication activities. Results indicated that 93.4 percent of respondents perceived that over 40 percent of course activities were dedicated to developing speech communication skills. This provides evidence that, in general, speech instructors are exceeding the hallmarks of requiring at least 40 percent of the course grade to be devoted to oral communication activities.

The data measuring the degree to which student perceived that SR courses fulfilled the goals of oral communication training also provides evidence that the SR hallmarks are being fulfilled. Five items were assessed using a 5-point interval scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree). Eighty eight percent of students agreed or
strongly agreed that the speech communication assignments covered in their SR course related to the course content ($M=4.38$). Eighty five percent of students reported being more comfortable participating in communication activities ($M=4.29$). Eighty five percent of students felt that their instructor provided sufficient oral training to complete oral communication assignments ($M=4.30$). Eighty four percent reported feeling more competent to meet the speech communication demands in their proposed profession/career ($M=4.24$). Finally, eighty four percent of students indicated that their instructor provided them with specific feedback, critique, and grades for their speech communication activities ($M=4.33$).

The degree to which students perceived improvement in various aspects of their speaking skills was also assessed using 4-point interval scales (1=No Improvement, 4=Tremendous Improvement). On average, students reported significant to tremendous improvement in their ability to choose and narrow a speech topic (86.3%, $M=3.22$), conduct research and demonstrate information gathering techniques (85.8%, $M=3.26$), select and use an appropriate organizational format (90%, $M=3.36$), demonstrate effective listening techniques (87.9%, $M=3.34$), demonstrate the effective use of visual aids (90%, $M=3.34$), demonstrate the principles of effective verbal communication (92.6%, $M=3.41$), demonstrate the principles of effective nonverbal communication (87.8%, $M=3.34$), and adapt their communication styles (89%, $M=3.20$). These data provide further support for the efficacy of SR courses in helping students to develop requisite oral communication skills.

While students reported a significant amount of improvement in various areas of their speaking skills, there is still room for further advancement. Speech faculty members will continue to work with students on choosing and narrowing speech topics, and conducting research and demonstrating information gathering techniques. Some instructors require students to participate in Library Training Sessions conducted by the HCC Library staff. Many students are not aware of the resources available at the library. The training sessions can both help students with topic selection and help students when conducting research. Also, Dr. Kam-Kalani participated in the Real World Academic Institute and has made various recommendations to Speech faculty members based on her participation in the institute. For example, she recommended that all students be required to choose speech topics based on their academic major or career trade. This recommendation was warmly received as it will help students make a connection between their Speech course, their major, and the public speaking that they may have to do on the job after finishing school. In future semesters, Speech instructors will continue to work on improving performance with helping students feel more confident about their ability to choose and narrow a speech topic, and helping students feel more confident when conducting research and demonstrating information gathering techniques.
Students’ proficiency in achieving the student learning outcomes for Speech 151 is assessed using embedded exam questions. Two SLOs are tested per semester on a rotating basis. At the end of a two-year period, each of the eight SLOs assessing concepts or theories of communication will have been tested. In Spring 2012, SLOs 3 and 7 were tested, and all sections were able to achieve the target proficiency rate of 70% with a 80 percent or higher correct response rate. These results provide further validation that course SLOs are being met and the goals of the SR are being fulfilled.

In addition to courses certified by the Speech Requirement Board, HCC also offers Speech 50 “Working with Clients” for students in the Cosmetology Program. In order to assess the Speech 50 SLOs, instructors require students to take quizzes and perform four speaking exercises. The speaking exercises include informative speeches, telephone interviews, employment interviews, and impromptu speeches. Tracking of the SLOs is done with the impromptu speech. In Spring 2012, 7 of the 23 students received a 90% or better on the impromptu speech, 13 students received between 80% - 89%, and 3 students received a grade between 76 - 79%. Cosmetology students must receive a course grade of a “B” or better in order to receive credit for the course. In Spring 2012, 20 of the 23 enrolled students earned a “B” or better.

During the Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 semesters, Speech faculty will continue to assess SLOs using embedded quiz or exam questions. Speech instructors will meet each semester to discuss the previous semester’s assessment results. Instructors who do not meet the proficiency standards will be encouraged to place more attention on that area during classtime.

These abovementioned findings provide evidence that HCC Speech Requirement courses meet or exceed the SR hallmark expectations. Furthermore, 70 percent or more of students were able to achieve proficiency on the SR course SLOs. These results provide evidence that HCC’s Speech Requirement courses have been successful in meeting accreditation standards and ensuring that students receive necessary training in the development of their oral communication skills.