

**To: Faculty Senate**

**From: Anand Rao, SI Program Director**

**Re: SI Committee Proposal for SI Learning Outcomes**

In response to a University-wide call to identify Learning Outcomes for all courses, the SI Committee developed a series of LOs that was based upon the goals and objectives of the SI Program (see “Attachment A: Speaking Intensive Program Learning Outcomes” below). However, it was apparent that the list was unwieldy and it was unrealistic for any SI course to support all of these Learning Outcomes. The Committee worked to review those Learning Outcomes to find a set that should be met in every SI course. The result is the proposal that is attached. These Learning Outcomes will replace those in Attachment A.

This proposal makes a minor change to the current SI graduation requirement. While students are still required to take 2 SI courses, at least one of those SI courses must be designated as SI+, meaning that it includes an individual presentation. This change would go into effect in the next catalog.

Here are answers to some FAQs about the proposal:

*Will current SI courses have to be reviewed by the SI Committee?*

No- all current SI courses will retain the SI designation without review.

*What if current SI courses do not already include the items listed under the required LOs for SI designated courses?*

We feel that the Learning Outcomes for SI courses are limited and reasonable in scope- they are very much in line with both the original goals of the SI Program, and with how SI courses are being taught. Many SI courses already include all of these elements. If there is a LO that is not currently supported by an SI course, then we ask the instructor to include that element in their course. We are, of course, happy to work with any faculty member to help support their course, and can provide materials to help them develop any aspect of their course.

*What is meant by ‘students will be able to metacommunicate’ – how can an SI course support this?*

This means to talk about how one communicates. We are looking for students to have a chance to reflect on their communication patterns, and this can be done with most any SI assignment that is already in use. Most SI courses already satisfy this LO through self- and peer-evaluation. For those courses that do not

already include a self- and peer-assessment component, they can do so easily by adding this to an existing assignment. We have plenty of sample assignments and evaluation forms to choose from.

*How will SI+ courses be designated?*

An SI+ course is simply an SI course that includes an individual presentation. There are many current SI courses that meet this requirement. Once the proposal is approved, Anand will contact each SI instructor to ask if they include an individual presentation in their SI course. If they do, then their course can carry the SI+ designation. If not, then their course will retain the SI designation. New course proposals will be asked the same question, and will be designated appropriately. Since this change to the SI requirement will not take effect until the next catalog, we have plenty of time for the designations to be made.

*Will the Learning Outcomes in the FSEM be required of all FSEM courses?*

The Learning Outcomes for the FSEM that are included in this proposal are taken from the QEP proposal, which includes LOs that will be required of all FSEM courses. The QEP also includes reference to new resources that will be available to support these, and other, FSEM requirements.

## **Speaking Intensive Program Learning Outcomes Proposal Spring 2012**

The Learning Outcomes (LOs) for the SI Program will be satisfied through three student experiences: the FSEM, one SI+ course, and one SI or SI+ course.

### Speaking Intensive Learning Outcomes found in the FSEM:

The following Learning Outcomes are embedded in the FSEM as part of the QEP:

- Students will be able to implement elements of the communication process, drawing on basic theories and principles of oral communication.
- Students will critically evaluate mediated and face-to-face communication.
- Students will communicate effectively in a variety of settings, including public speaking and group discussion.
- Students will utilize a variety of research techniques to retrieve information efficiently, evaluate retrieved information and synthesize information effectively to support their messages / arguments.

Rationale: the FSEM has long been recognized as a vital part of the SI experience for all students. The QEP builds upon this tradition and outlines the Learning Outcomes above, among others, as important for the development of UMW students' communication skills. These LOs are listed in the March 19, 2012 QEP draft at the beginning of Chapter 3: Student Learning Outcomes (page 13).

### Learning Outcomes for SI Designated Courses

Courses designated as SI will be placed in two categories: those that include an individual presentation (designated SI+), and those that do not (designated SI). All courses currently designated as SI will retain that designation. The SI+ designation can be added to any SI course. While the graduation requirement of completing two SI courses will remain the same, at least one of the required SI courses must be an SI+ course (meaning that it includes an individual presentation).

The following Learning Outcomes will apply to all Speaking Intensive courses:

- Students will understand and be able to explain the conventions and expectations of oral communication as practiced within the discipline of the course taken.
- Students will apply theories and strategies for crafting messages (verbal, nonverbal, and visual) for particular audiences and purposes.
- Students will be able to craft oral messages after a conscious process in which various options are reviewed and will be able to explain and support their choices.

- Students will be able to metacommunicate about their own communication patterns.

Speaking Intensive courses that require an individual presentation (SI+ courses) will also include the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will plan, research, organize, support, and deliver ideas and arguments in a public speaking setting.

Rationale: the Learning Outcomes for the SI program, as drawn from the approved goals and objectives, were not only unwieldy in their number, but were also too expansive and unrealistic for most any SI course to encompass. This proposal is an attempt, on the part of the SI Committee and the SI Program, to simplify and focus on the communication elements that we feel the faculty would expect to find in any SI course.

## **Attachment A: Current Speaking Intensive Program**

### **Learning Outcomes**

Students satisfy the Speaking Intensive (SI) requirement through successful completion of two Speaking Intensive courses. SI courses are found across the University and at every level, though more are found at the upper-level in many programs. SI courses are not the only opportunities for students to develop their oral communication skills as many courses that are not designated as Speaking Intensive include SI-related components. The Speaking Center is available for use by all students, and is often used to support and supplement work done in SI and non-SI courses. Through the satisfaction of the SI requirement, students are expected to meet the following learning outcomes.

#### **Learning Outcomes**

- Students will engage course content effectively through the use of well-designed oral communication activities.
- Students will understand and be able to explain the conventions and expectations of oral communication as practiced within the discipline of the course taken.
- Students will understand and be able to identify basic theories and principles of oral communication.
- Students will apply theories and strategies for crafting messages (verbal, nonverbal, and visual) for particular audiences and purposes.
- Students will critically evaluate mediated and face-to-face communication.
- Students will communicate effective oral messages in a variety of settings, including public speaking, group discussion, and interpersonal communication.
- Students will plan, research, organize, support, and deliver ideas and arguments orally.
- Students will utilize a variety of research techniques, including web-based search and information retrieval resources, to synthesize information and support their messages.
- Students will understand and be able to explain the differences between varying modes of delivery such as memorized, manuscript, extemporaneous and impromptu speaking.
- Students will be able to craft oral messages after a conscious process in which various options are reviewed and will be able to explain and support their choices.
- Students will have an increased appreciation for the importance of oral communication competence as a component of personal, educational, and career goals.
- Students will be able to metacommunicate about their own communication patterns and how those patterns affect the various social roles they play.