CAT 1
Communication

Competency 1: The USC Upstate graduate should demonstrate an ability to communicate in English, both orally and in writing.

1.1 Students are able to create and deliver coherent, grammatically correct oral presentations.
1.2 Students are able to create coherent, grammatically correct written responses to prompts and questions.

~Approved by Faculty Senate Spring 2009

Assessment Measures

1.1 Assessment rubric in SSPH 201
Assessment rubric for Senior Seminars

1.2 CAAP Writing Essay Test
The CAAP Writing Test consists of two 20-minute writing tasks defined by a short prompt that identifies a specific hypothetical situation and audience. The hypothetical situation involves an issue on which the examinee must take a stand. An examinee is instructed to take a position on the issue and to explain to the audience why the position taken is the better (or best) alternative.

In order to more clearly define the audience and provide a focus for responses, each prompt specifies the basis upon which the audience will make its decision. Situations and audiences defined in the writing prompts are constructed so that the required background knowledge and experience are within the command of college sophomores. The CAAP Writing Essay Test is predicated on the assumption that the skills most commonly taught in college-level writing courses and required in upper-division college courses across the curriculum include:

- Formulating an assertion about a given issue
- Supporting that assertion with evidence appropriate to the issue, position taken, and a given audience
- Organizing and connecting major ideas
- Expressing those ideas in clear, effective language

CAPP Scoring

Upper-range papers: Clearly engage the issue identified in the prompt and demonstrate superior skill in organizing, developing, and conveying in standard written English the writer's ideas about the topic.

6--Exceptional. These papers take a position on the issue defined in the prompt and support that position with extensive elaboration. Organization is unified and coherent. While there may be a few errors in mechanics, usage, or sentence structure, outstanding command of the language is apparent.

5--Superior. These papers take a position on the issue defined in the prompt and support that position with moderate elaboration. Organization is unified and coherent. While there may be a few errors in mechanics, usage, or sentence structure, command of the language is apparent.

Mid-range papers: Demonstrate engagement with the issue identified in the prompt but no evidence of writing skill that would mark them as outstanding.

4--Competent. These papers take a position on the issue defined in the prompt and support that position with some elaboration or explanation. Organization is generally clear. A competency with language is apparent, even though there may be some errors in mechanics, usage, or sentence structure.

3--Adequate. These papers take a position on the issue defined in the prompt and support that position but with only a little elaboration or explanation. Organization is clear enough to follow without difficulty. A control of the language is apparent, even though there may be numerous errors in mechanics, usage, or sentence structure.

Lower-range papers: Fail in some way to demonstrate proficiency in language use, clarity of organization, or engagement of the issue identified in the prompt.

2--Weak. While these papers take a position on the issue defined in the prompt, they may show significant problems in one or more of several areas, making the writer's ideas often difficult to follow: support may be extremely minimal; organization may lack clear movement or connectedness; or there may be a pattern of errors in mechanics, usage, or sentence structure that significantly interferes with understanding the writer's ideas.

1--Inadequate. These papers show a failed attempt to engage the issue defined in the prompt, lack support, or have problems with organization or language so severe as to make the writer's ideas very difficult to follow.
Assessment Results

1.1
Assessment Rubric in SSPH 201
(to be administered in Fall 2010)

Assessment Rubric in Senior Seminar
(Spring 2010)
Range: 1 (poor)-6 (good)
Mechanics/Grammar: 4.68 (SD: 0.99)  N=101
  1-2: 1 (1%)    3-4: 35 (35%)  5-6: 65 (64%)
Organization:  4.71 (SD: 1.13)  N=100
  1-2: 3 (3%)    3-4: 31 (31%)  5-6: 66 (66%)

1.2
CAAP Aggregate Results

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Spring 07</th>
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*the Senior Seminar Composite and Essay 2 scores are significantly higher than SEGL 101 and SSPH 201 scores (p<.05)

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## CAAP Fall 2008 Composite Score Results

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<td>Mean:</td>
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### Chart

- **SEGL 101**
- **SSPH 201**
- **Senior Seminar**
**CAT findings from data**

CAT 1 members reviewed data from the oral communication rubric implemented in Senior Seminar courses and the CAAP Essay assessment. The results from the oral communication rubric indicated that students performed well on both mechanics/grammar and organization of their oral presentations. Obviously, though, national comparisons are not available for this internal assessment, and this was the first implementation, so additional semesters of data will be beneficial. The oral communication rubric will be administered in SSPH 201 courses in future semesters to provide more data regarding students’ oral communication skills.

Similarly, the average of USC Upstate students’ scores on the CAAP Essay was no different from the national average, which is encouraging. Students’ mean scores have remained fairly consistent over the multiple administrations of this assessment. Interestingly, the CAT noted that the Fall 2008 administration which included SEGL 101 students, SSPH 201 students, and Senior Seminar students showed a statistically significant difference (p<.05) between scores of students in senior seminars and both SSPH 201 and SEGL 101, indicating that improvement in writing skills is taking place across the students’ educational experiences at USC Upstate.

Unfortunately, the CAAP Essay score reports are not ideal because they only provide overall scores for the essays with no indication of areas of weakness. The CAT also looked at results from the MAPP Writing Skills Area, since the data was available from other competencies’ assessments, but again, the data did not provide specific information about student deficiencies. Therefore, the CAT is limited to improvement suggestions geared toward many areas of written communication. The CAT is investigating other assessments to replace or support the CAAP Essay as a measure of writing aptitude.
CAT 1
Communication

Suggestions for improvement (from CAT to departments with courses supporting this competency)

CAT 1 has developed the following suggestions for improvement measures based on the data collected from the CAAP Essay assessment and the internal oral communication rubric. These are only suggestions and the list is not exhaustive. Feel free to develop different improvement measures that fit better with your course(s). If you would like to discuss these or other improvement measures, please contact a member of CAT 1.

- Require students to rewrite papers with multiple errors in grammar, mechanics, or organization. (Research in composition shows that revision is one of the most effective means of improving students’ writing.)
- Require students to write answers to questions in complete sentences and comment on grammar, mechanics, etc... as necessary.
- Develop a common rubric to assess writing and/or oral communication across all sections of courses or even all courses in the department.
- Make grammar, mechanics, and organization a percent of the grade for written and/or oral assignments.
- Integrate writing assignments into the course syllabus if they are not already included, and provide feedback on organization, grammar, clarity of thought, etc....
- Integrate writing assignments of more than one page into the course syllabus if they are not already included, and provide feedback on organization, grammar, clarity of thought, etc....
- Integrate oral presentations into the course syllabus if they are not already included, and provide feedback on organization, grammar, clarity of thought, etc....
- Develop opportunities that require students to defend a position rather than simply stating a viewpoint.
- Incorporate a “believing and doubting” assignment where students are required to defend a position with which they do not agree.
- Require students to go to the Writing Lab for at least one written assignment.
- Video record students during oral presentations.
- Have students evaluate each other’s oral presentations and provide feedback to the students.
- Explain the conventions of writing specific to the academic discipline of the course so students understand “good writing” within the discipline.
- Provide samples of both good and inadequate writing specific to the academic discipline of the course and discuss the differences between the two.
Action Plan (from departments with courses supporting this competency)

SATH 101
SLO 1.2 Require students to complete at least one paper assignment that uses correct grammar, spelling and punctuation. The paper(s) should use course vocabulary words throughout and present a well-constructed thesis statement and a conclusion supported by numerous specific examples.

SATH 105
SLO 1.2 Require students to complete essays on quizzes and exams that use correct grammar, spelling and punctuation. The essays should use course vocabulary words throughout and present a well-constructed thesis statement and a conclusion supported by numerous specific examples.

SATH 106
SLO 1.2 Require students to complete essays on quizzes and exams that use correct grammar, spelling and punctuation. The essays should use course vocabulary words throughout and present a well-constructed thesis statement and a conclusion supported by numerous specific examples.

SMUS 110
SLO 1.2 Develop opportunities that require students to defend a position rather than simply stating a viewpoint.

SMUS 140
SLO 1.2 Develop opportunities that require students to defend a position rather than simply stating a viewpoint.

SSPH 201: Public Speaking
SLO 1.1 Students are required to give at least 3 speeches and spend a minimum of 15 total minutes delivering speeches throughout the semester. Delivery is a category of evaluation for all speeches. Delivery includes the ability to deliver coherent and grammatically correct presentations.

STHE 161
SLO 1.2 Students do two projects in the class to demonstrate their abilities in communication: the first project is one in which they work together writing, blocking, designing and acting in a performance scene. All students perform verbally in front of their peers. All students are required to do research for the play. All students are required to communicate the visual elements by designing basic scenery, costumes, lighting and properties for the final project. The second project is viewing three plays during the semester and writing a critical response to the plays they have witnessed. They describe, in detail, the plot, acting, visual elements and the acting process. The student is evaluated on grammar, sentence structure, and critical thinking. Students are required to negotiate the underpinnings of a literary critique of a performance.

(continued on next page)
STHE 170
SLO 1.2 Requires students to distill character information and objectives from a play script and integrate it into performance for the class. Students must also give voice to the language of the play in a clear and audible manner. Students will also present discoveries about character action and the given circumstances of the play in a typed written analysis that should adhere to standard rules of grammar and mechanics.

Department Chair Signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________
Action Plan (from departments with courses supporting this competency)

Department: History, Political Science, Philosophy, & American Studies
Course(s):

Note: all actions to be implemented beginning Spring 2011

SGIS 201: American National Government

- Require students to rewrite papers with multiple errors in grammar, mechanics, or organization. (Research in composition shows that revision is one of the most effective means of improving students’ writing.)
- Integrate writing assignments into the course syllabus if they are not already included, and provide feedback on organization, grammar, clarity of thought, etc.
- Integrate writing assignments of more than one page into the course syllabus if they are not already included, and provide feedback on organization, grammar, clarity of thought, etc.
- Develop opportunities that require students to defend a position rather than simply stating a viewpoint. Example: Students write several “response papers” throughout the semester. The instructor’s feedback includes comments about grammar and clarity.

SGIS 301: Introduction to Political Science

- Include at least one writing assignment in the syllabus. This assignment should be in response to a question where the student has to establish and defend a position.
- Base a portion of the writing assignment should be graded based on grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Encourage students to orally defend positions – either through class discussion or presentation of an assignment.

SGIS 320: Comparative Politics

- Integrate writing assignments of more than one page into the course syllabus if they are not already included, and provide feedback on organization, grammar, clarity of thought, etc.
- Explain the conventions of writing specific to the academic discipline of the course so students understand “good writing” within the discipline.
- Evaluate paper drafts on organization, grammar and clarity of thought. In addition, students learn some of the basic conventions of writing a political science paper including organization, development of research questions, making and testing hypotheses and citation methods. The changes to the course to include this specific type of writing assignment took place in the Fall 2009. As a result, the action plan will be to continue the current assignment, since it dovetails well with the Committee’s suggestions.
SPHL 102: Introduction to Philosophy

- Require writing coherent and grammatically correct responses to a question concerning the assigned reading. Faculty member will give written feedback, including comments on grammar, mechanics, and organization.
- Grade grammar, mechanics and organization of the essay as 10% of the final essay grade.
- Require students to state a clear essay exam thesis and defend it within the essay. The faculty member will give feedback as to the clarity of the thesis and the strength of the argument.

SPHL 211: Contemporary Moral Issues

- Require exams concerning the contributions moral philosophers have made to the history of ideas. Each essay exam will require students to summarize these theories clearly and then evaluate them.
- Require paper assignments requiring discussion and critical analysis some controversial ethical controversy. Evaluate content, grammar and style.

Department Chair Signature: ________________________ Date: November 3, 2010
Action Plan (from departments with courses supporting this competency)

Department: Informatics
Course(s): SIMS 101

SLO 1.1 Oral presentations...
The third submission of the 4-phase project is a 5 minute PowerPoint presentation offering a high level view of the excel submission (phase 2) showing results of the study.

Students choose from list of pre-determined topics to research for accuracy, safety and suitability. They also rate the sources that support their findings for accuracy and suitability. The results are posted to a discussion forum where they will be discussed in class.

SLO 1.2 Written responses...
The fourth and final submission of the 4-phase project is a 750-word paper describing the entire process including information from both the excel file and the PowerPoints. Additional cited sources and APA or MLA formats are also required.

Department Chair Signature: [Signature]
Date: 11/18/10
Action Plan (from departments with courses supporting this competency)

Department: Languages, Literature, and Composition
Course(s):

SEGL 101, SEGL 102
- Develop opportunities that require students to defend a position rather than simply stating a viewpoint.
- Require students to rewrite papers with multiple errors in grammar, mechanics, or organization.

SEGL 252, 275
- Require students to write answers to questions in complete sentences and comment on grammar, mechanics, etc.

SAAS 201, SAAS 204, SEGL 250, SEGL 279, SEGL 280, SEGL 283, SEGL 289, SEGL 290, SEGL 291, SFLM 240
- Explain the conventions of writing specific to the academic discipline of the course so students understand “good writing” within the discipline.

Department Chair Signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________
Action Plan (from departments with courses supporting this competency)

| Department: Mathematics and Computer Science |
| Course(s): SMTH 102, 120, 121, 122, 126, 127, 141, 142, 202, 231 |

Explain the conventions of writing specific to the academic discipline of the course so students understand “good writing” within the discipline.

This will involve having students write interpretations in properly constructed complete sentences that are mathematically correct.

Department Chair Signature: Jerome Lewis  Date: 11/24/10
Action Plan (from departments with courses supporting this competency)

**Department:** Natural Sciences and Engineering  
**Course(s):**

**SPHS 201 & L**  
SLO 1.2 Students are assigned homework problems requiring a written response, which is graded by the instructor.

**SPHS 202 & L**  
SLO 1.2 Students are assigned homework problems requiring a written response, which is graded by the instructor.

**SPHS 211 & L**  
SLO 1.2 Students are assigned homework problems requiring a written response, which is graded by the instructor.

**SPHS 212 & L**  
SLO 1.2 Students are assigned homework problems requiring a written response, which is graded by the instructor.

Department Chair Signature: Lisa Lever  
Date: 1/8/11