To: Sher Hruska
From: Duane Fish

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RE: Report for the Oral Component of Capstone.

During the spring of 2006 an evaluation of the oral presentation
component of capstone courses was undertaken. This constitutes the final
report for the initial baseline study done based upon the capstones that
were completed during the 2006-2007 academic year.

The Process

The speech communication faculty began by developing a rubric for oral
presentations. This rubric was initially developed from the one that was
being used in the speech communication capstone course, Sophomore
Seminar. Once this rubric was initially developed it was distributed to all
members of the department in order to be evaluated and for additional
feedback. After several revisions an oral presentation rubric was decided
upon. The rubric consisted of seven categories: attire, preparedness,
vocal delivery, physical delivery, content, organization, and supporting
materials. Once the rubric was developed it was necessary to gather all of
the oral presentations across all of the capstone courses offered in both the
fall and the spring semester.

There was some difficulty in gathering all of these presentations and
getting them all copied to DVDs. Technical problems in the copying
from VHS to DVDs resulted in the loss of some capstones. In addition,
some tapes had been misplaced and were not able to be copied and in one
case the instructor for a capstone course refused to allow the students to
be videotaped for use in this study. The end result was we were able to
gain one hundred and thirty three student's recordings on DVD for use
in this study. This represents a significant number of the students who
participated in capstone throughout the year.

Three copies of each of the videos were made so that they could be
provided to three different reviewers. Two of the reviewers were from
the communication department. The third reviewer was from outside the
department and two different people constituted that third reviewer. Each
reviewer viewed the DVD and then filled out the rubric for each student.
The data for each rubric was then compiled. This created a number of
problems particularly since there was no clear identification on the DVDs

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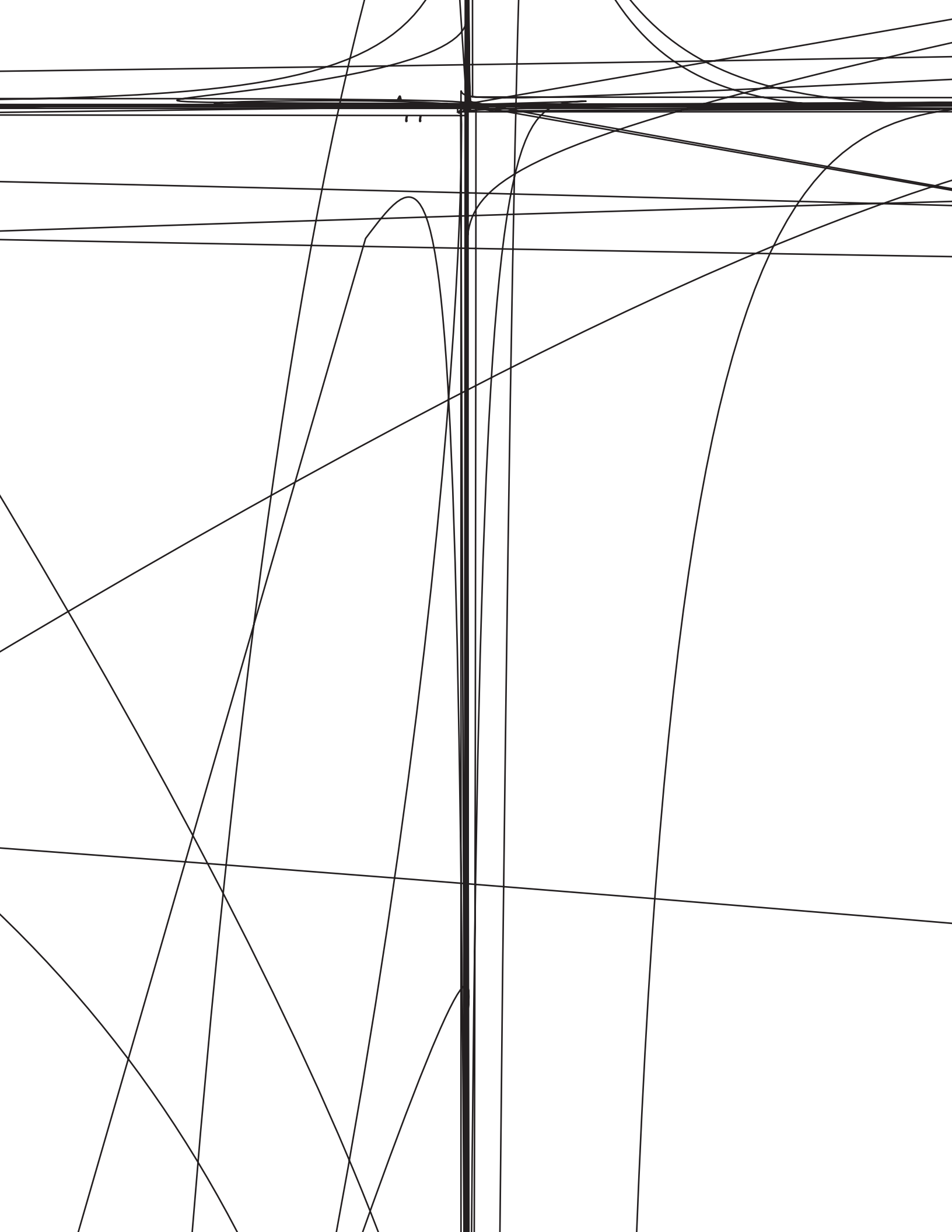
<u>Problem and Further Analysis</u>

Given that this was the baseline study, several suggestions for working to improve not only the oral presentation but the method of evaluation of those are provided.

One of the biggest problems as far as conducting the study dealt with identifying students from their DVDs. This can be easily rectified by asking faculty who are taping to have students begin with a statement of their name and their topic prior to beginning their capstone presentation.

We also need to work to train faculty members in the use of the rubric evaluation. This might eliminate some of the unevenness that was seen across the various departments or departmental individuals who were evaluating the capstone. The amount of variation and the difference between variance for the communication faculty and the outside reviewers indicate significant difference between these two groups.

Further analysis and study may also indicate that faculty members in some disciplines do not emphasize or deal with presentational issues. It may also be the case that students do not get that training with their class-work. The obvious solution would be a general education requirement that includes oral communication similar to what the University of Wyoming does.

It was clear that supporting materials was by far the weakest of the seven categories. Identification of the elements and who and what was emphasized for supporting materials might provide information on why this was the case. This would also require a change in the rubric to help to identify these elements.

Much more analysis and study should be done, but this provides some baseline from which to work. More specific analysis of baseline data may be undertaken upon request.