Background
This survey is part of a multi-year project exploring the integration of curricular and co-curricular activities. A cohort of undergraduate students participated in the project throughout the 2005-2006 school year. The purpose of this study was to benchmark Texas A&M students’ experience with public speaking. Participants were given the following definition of public speaking: “Formal speeches or presentations prepared in advance for a specific purpose and for a specific audience.”

528 out of 741 participants completed the web-based survey for a response rate of 71%.

Results
Have you had classes that required formal speeches or presentations?
• 88% had classes requiring public speaking before coming to A&M
• 59% had classes requiring public speaking while attending A&M

Have you received specific feedback on how to improve your public speaking skills?
• 78% received feedback before coming to A&M
• 42% have received feedback while attending A&M

Has anyone pointed out the things you do while giving a speech that are distracting (i.e., fillers, speaking too fast or too slow, looking at the floor, etc.)?
• 83% had distracting behaviors pointed out before coming to A&M
• 44% had distracting behaviors pointed out while attending A&M

Have you participated in organizations, activities, or community groups that required public speaking from its members?
• 45% participated in activities before coming to A&M
• 25% have participated in activities while attending A&M

Have you participated in organizations, activities, or community groups that offered its members opportunities to engage in public speaking?
• 49% participated in activities before coming to A&M
• 39% have participated in activities while attending A&M

For what purposes did you give speeches or presentations? (select all that apply)
• 85% said that before coming to A&M, they gave speeches “to obtain a grade in an academic class”
• 58% said that while attending A&M, they gave speeches “to obtain a grade in an academic class”

Agreement Statements
• 83% agreed that they need public speaking skills to be successful in their careers
• 76% agreed that they are prepared to handle public speaking activities in their career
• 59% agreed that they are comfortable with public speaking
• 51% agreed that they are good speakers
• 41% agreed that they enjoy public speaking

Have you given speeches or presentations to a variety of audiences?
• 63% said yes

Have you ever had a speech or presentation videotaped for the purpose of providing you with feedback on your public speaking skills?
• 46% said yes

Have you ever participated in public-speaking contests?
• 19% said yes

Have you ever been hired to give a speech or presentation?
• 3% said yes

Who has mentored or assisted you in your public speaking skills? (select all that apply)
• 62% said former teacher
• 54% said a relative

When giving a presentation, how do you measure your success? (open-ended)
• Feedback from the audience (n=442)
• Meeting personal standards (n=289)

Prepared on: July 6, 2006
For a complete report, please visit the Student Life Studies web page.