In 2010-11 the University at Albany assessed the degree to which students were achieving student learning outcomes in the Math and Oral Discourse General Education categories. As with previous assessments, the assessment of General Education courses offered through the University in the High School (UHS) program were conducted at the same time. A representative sample of classes from the Oral Discourse category was selected by IRPE and the General Education Committee. The UHS sample was chosen to be generally representative of the categories rather than random. The UHS office provided materials electronically, and IRPE redacted instructor information.

There were a total of 141 courses offered through UHS in 2010-11 that met the Oral Discourse General Education requirement. Forty three of those courses were selected for the sample, with enrollments ranging from 5 to 16. Twenty one of the instructors sampled responded. Of those, 9 respondents either didn’t properly complete the General Education assessment forms or didn’t submit supporting documentation. The data contained in this report represents 12 classes, with a total enrollment of 272 students.
The Oral Discourse General Education requirement has four learning objectives that must be fulfilled:

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate ideas (creative, expressive, intuitive, intellectual) according to a specific set of criteria.

2. Students will demonstrate the ability to establish and maintain an appropriate performer/audience relationship in a given oral exercise, and actively engage with listeners/audience.

3. Students will demonstrate the ability to respond to and, where appropriate, incorporate listener's comments and questions.

4. Students will demonstrate the ability to critique, orally or in writing, an oral performance.

Figure 1: Oral Discourse Learning Objective 1
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to establish and maintain an appropriate performer/audience relationship in a given oral exercise, and actively engage with listeners/audience.

![Pie Chart](image)

**Figure 2: Oral Discourse Learning Objective 2**

3. Students will demonstrate the ability to respond to and, where appropriate, incorporate listener's comments and questions.

![Pie Chart](image)

**Figure 3: Oral Discourse Learning Objective 3**
Large majorities of the assessed students either met or exceeded expectations in all three learning objectives in this category.

Recommendations:

1) The GEAC should give consideration to dramatic differences in performance between UHS and on-campus populations (this is detailed in the results section below.

2) IRPE needs to work closely with UHS to improve the quality of the data submitted by instructors. Perhaps a tutorial or sample assessment forms should be provided to all instructors participating in UHS courses that meet General Education requirements.

3) IRPE needs to work closely with UHS to reinforce the importance of the assessment process to instructors in an effort to improve response rates.
In the Oral Discourse category, performance is significantly higher in the UHS sample. We harbor some concerns that the number of students “approaching” and “did not meet” is so low as to raise speculations about grade inflation. In the UHS sample, the percentage of students who were “approaching” or “did not meet” each of the learning objectives ranges from a low of 1.5% in category 3 to a high of 4% in category 1. In the on-campus sample, the percentage of students who were “approaching” or “did not meet” each of the learning objectives ranges from a low of 5% in category 3 to a high of 17% in category 4. Perhaps more striking though is the percentage of students “exceeding” General Education goals. In the UHS sample, this ranges from a low of 58% in category 4 to a high of 64% in category 3. In the on-campus sample, the percentage of students who were “exceeding” each of the learning objectives range from low of 21% in category 1 to a high of 37% in category 2. While slight variation across populations would be normal, these results appear aberrant.

![Figure 5: Performance on the Oral Discourse Learning Objective 1](image)

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1 Note that the complete report of the assessment of the Oral Discourse General Education category from 2010-11 is available from IRPE.
Figure 6: Performance on the Oral Discourse Learning Objective 2

Figure 7: Performance on the Oral Discourse Learning Objective 3
It is important to note that the majority of students who enroll in University in the High School courses tend to be highly motivated and high performing. In fact, only juniors and seniors with an overall average of B or better are allowed to enroll in UHS classes. One could reasonably expect students who have a high average overall to perform well in these classes. Additionally, on-campus students taking courses meeting this General Education requirement may be doing so only to fulfill the General Education requirement, and that is a potential explanation of the differences across these populations.
Process notes

- This year the UHS office collected all the requested materials and scanned the sample documents into .PDF format before sending them to IRPE electronically. The names of the instructors were redacted from the forms, which were then coded. While this was a labor intensive endeavor for the IRPE office, it saved a substantial amount of paper, as well as additional copying time and paper when the material is be made available to the General Education Assessment Committee. IRPE encourages instructors to submit electronic versions of their teaching materials and assessment forms.