ADDENDUM

**Results from the Brown Chair in English Literacy 2017 survey presented to regional employers of U of A graduates. The survey garnered 27 responses regarding U of A graduates’ degree of competency in written, spoken, and multimodal professional communication.**

Key to response measures: 1 - Strongly agree, 2 - Agree, 3 - Neutral, 4 - Disagree, 5 - Strongly Disagree, 6 - N/A

Item pertaining to written communication skills

1. Employees communicate clearly and written work is easy to read. Average response: 2.6

      1 - 18.5%

      2 - 25.9%

      3 - 37%

      4 - 14.8%

      5 - 3.7%

      6 - 0

2. Written work and/or correspondence contains few grammatical errors. Average response: 3

      1 - 11.1%

      2 - 25.9%

      3 - 22.2%

      4 - 37%

      5 - 3.7%

      6 - 0

3. Written work and/or correspondence contains few syntactical errors. Average response: 3

      1 - 11.1%

      2 - 18.5%

      3 - 22.2%

      4 - 44.4%

      5 - 3.7%

      6 - 0

4. Written work and/or correspondence is coherent and concise. Average response: 2.8

      1 - 11.1%

      2 - 33.3%

      3 - 25.9%

      4 - 25.9%

      5 - 3.7%

      6 - 0

5. Written work and/or correspondence reflects the level of professionalism required of company employees. Average response: 2.6

      1 - 22.2%

      2 - 29.6%

      3 - 22.2%

      4 - 22.2%

      5 - 3.7%

      6 - 0

6. In formal reports and/or technical writing, ideas transition smoothly from one to the next. Average response: 3.1

      1 - 11.1%

      2 - 18.5%

      3 - 33.3%

      4 - 29.6%

      5 - 3.7%

      6 - 3.7%

7. In formal reports and/or technical writing, ideas are grouped together by topic and presented in a logical order. Average response: 2.8

      1 - 11.1%

      2 - 29.6%

      3 - 33.3%

      4 - 22.2%

      5 - 0

      6 - 3.7%

8. In formal reports and/or technical writing, employees identify any necessary steps or "big picture" issues. Average response: 3

      1 - 11.1%

      2 - 22.2%

      3 - 37%

      4 - 25.9%

      5 - 0

      6 - 3.7%

Items pertaining to oral communication skills

1. Oral presentations are clear and well-articulated. Average response: 2.8

      1 - 11.1%

      2 - 22.2%

      3 - 44.4%

      4 - 22.2%

      5 - 0

      6 - 0

2. Oral presentations are coherent and concise. Average response: 2.7

      1 - 14.8%

      2 - 18.5%

      3 - 44.4%

      4 - 22.2%

      5 - 0

      6 - 0

3. Oral and/or multimodal work successfully addresses the topic and/or issue. Average response: 2.6

      1 - 11.1%

      2 - 37%

      3 - 37%

      4 - 14.8%

      5 - 0

      6 - 0

4. Oral and/or multimodal work adheres to company conventions and formatting. Average response: 2.4

      1 - 11.1%

      2 - 44.4%

      3 - 40.7%

      4 - 3.7%

      5 - 0

      6 - 0

5. Employees create presentations that are dynamic and innovative. Average response: 3.3

      1 - 11.1%

      2 - 11.1%

      3 - 25.9%

      4 - 44.4%

      5 - 7.4%

      6 - 0

Also, some significant comments:

I feel this is a very important skill set that is not getting the attention required by employers.

The grammatical portion of the reports are good, but sometimes I think the graduates have trouble telling the entire story. My staff is required to write traffic reports a lot. Since public speaking is scary to a lot of people, I think more practice at doing this would be good for the students.

Classroom experience, prior to graduation, would be a plus. This experience would help them understand the importance of these skills prior to entering the workplace.

The need more practice in the form of reports and presentations. Most of the problems are not lack of fundamentals but lack of practice with supervision that assists with meeting report or presentation objectives.

Overall, our UA grads do well in communication. Oral communicating skills is where they could improve the most. Stronger emphasis on the listed skills is needed to set U of A graduates apart and to give students an opportunity to contribute and add more value to their employer. The goal of this effort is should be to bring normality to communication while adequately addressing the technical needs without overwhelming the audience with engineer speak.

Spelling, grammar and punctuation in business email is considered secondary to the intent of the writer. Email has become a form of speech but without tone or inflection the writer's intent is not always apparent to the reader. Business communication needs to be more precise than social conversations.

Yes. For engineering graduates, this is a significant weakness. In my experience, the top executives of most engineering and construction firms were not those with best technical skills, but those with superior communication skills. Our graduates need formal training in this area.

Graduates need to understand that "selling an idea" is sometimes as important as the idea itself.

Yes, students need more options for productive classes outside of the engineering curriculum.

Here at ODOT we only have 4 U of A graduates and I would say that the communications skills of the group are average at best.