SDSU’s Fundamentals of Speech Course wins Program of Excellence award

BROOKINGS, S.D. – Dec. 27, 2013 - South Dakota State University’s Fundamentals of Speech Course has been recognized as the 2013 Program of Excellence award winner by the Basic Course Division of the National Communication Association. The division confers only one Program of Excellence per year.

“This is a significant honor for the department of communication studies and theatre, the College of Arts and Sciences and our entire university,” said Laurie Nichols, provost and vice president for academic affairs. “I have had the pleasure to see programs or courses which have reached an optimal combination of rigor and challenge, coupled with support and encouragement. In these courses, student learning is the focus, and faculty understand that their role is to guide and nurture students by creating an exceptional, positive learning environment. I am pleased to say that our basic communication course has done this in the fundamentals of speech course. It is truly exceptional, and as a result, is most worthy of this award.”

The Basic Course Division of the National Communication Association has been recognizing top basic communication courses in the country since 2007. The award is designed to recognize outstanding basic communication courses that can serve as models of best practice for other institutions.

“The basic course at SDSU has been a part of the general education curriculum for nearly 50 years. Although the course has been modified many times, the course’s longevity speaks to its strength, distinctiveness and record of excellence,” said SDSU Assistant Professor Joshua Westwick. He also directs the basic course. “Our course is closely aligned with the mission of the NCA by providing training and development in free/ethical communication, effective communication in public life, communication that improves life, and communication that allows students to solve human problems.”
The SDSU Department of Communication Studies and Theatre, which is in the College of Arts and Sciences, offers approximately 45 sections of the course each semester. Full-time instructors and graduate teaching assistants teach the class in lab/lecture, stand-alone and online formats.

Instructors participate in a two-week training session to enable a consistent experience for the more than 100 students per semester who take the course online and the 1,000 students per semester who take the course in the classroom.

“Overall, the program is doing everything it should,” said Melissa Broeckelman-Post, chair of the Basic Course Division Program of Excellence Award Committee. “They have integrated a number of best practices, have collaborated with other services and departments across campus, have developed an intensive training program, and have implemented a strong assessment component. They have done a nice job bringing everything together into a strong, cohesive program.”

**About South Dakota State University**

Founded in 1881, South Dakota State University is the state’s Morrill Act land-grant institution as well as its largest, most comprehensive school of higher education. SDSU confers degrees from six different colleges representing more than 175 majors, minors and specializations. The institution also offers 29 master’s degree programs, 13 Ph.D. and two professional programs.

The work of the university is carried out on a residential campus in Brookings, at sites in Sioux Falls, Pierre and Rapid City, and through SDSU Extension offices and Agricultural Experiment Station research sites across the state.

**For more information:**

[SDSU News](www.sdstate.edu)