

**Program Assessment Report  
Department of Modern Languages  
2004**

**M.A. Spanish**

Goal 1:	Integrate knowledge of literature, culture and linguistics as principal disciplines within Hispanic settings (Spain and Latin America) and across major historic periods.
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Goal 2:	Enhanced Spanish language skills in linguistic structures, oral proficiency, writing, reading and comprehension, research, critical and analytical thinking.
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Goal 3:	Appreciation of the role of Hispanic culture, as a growing field of global importance in the arts and humanities, in every day life, and in the job market.
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Goal 4:	Prepared to seek employment in careers which may utilize the M.A. in Spanish and to demonstrate an advanced proficiency in both writing and oral skills . The M.A. did in fact prepare the graduates to teach elementary and intermediate Spanish at school or college level, as well as for other careers that might need a professional with advanced oral and writing skills in Spanish .
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## 1. Introduction:

This assessment report includes data of the Spring and Fall semesters of 2003. The following assessment tools were collected, in order to have a clear view of the performance of our students:

- research papers [one from a literature class, one from a linguistic class]  
We compared the graduate entrance essay (written in Spanish) of four graduate students with a research paper written at least after a year in the program.
- syllabi [four syllabi]  
We included the evaluation of two syllabi to see that objectives, ways of grading, material assigned by the instructors in congruent with the objectives and expected outcomes presented in our departmental handbook.

During the current academic year we incorporated some new ideas and guidelines to continue improving the quality of our department:

- syllabi We recommended all our instructors to write their syllabi in English (rather than in Spanish), in that way outside reviewers will be able to read them. We also recommended

all instructors to include objectives or expected outcomes.

- rubrics  
We created 4 sets of rubrics (composition, research paper, oral presentation, project) in order to standardized our way of grading within the department. Some of our instructors are already using those rubrics for their classes. Others have already incorporated rubrics of their own construction in their syllabi and evaluation.
- MA oral exam  
The graduate studies committee met several times to make some adjustments in our program. For the oral exam we required the students to submit a research paper, we decided that the minimum length for the paper will be 15 pages. We are also requiring all graduate students taking the oral exam to prepare a detailed outline with all the courses and readings assigned during their years in the graduate program.

## **2. Syllabi:**

We selected two syllabi for assessment. In general the syllabi prepared by our faculty are clear in presenting objectives and expected outcomes. The two syllabi we evaluated were written

in English. This is a big improvement, and our goal is to have everything accessible for external reviewers. We have some model syllabi available for all our instructors in the main office.

### **3. Papers:**

We selected four graduate students' paper for assessment and compared the writing with the essay they wrote as part of the admission requirements. It is obvious that our graduate students improve tremendously in writing and research skills during their years in the master's program. When comparing entrance essays with papers written for one of their classes we can observe improvement in orthography, syntax, and vocabulary selection. The writing and research process give our students an opportunity to expand their knowledge in literature, culture, linguistics and literary theory.

We understand that writing research papers is an essential element in graduate studies. Although most of our graduate courses required a research paper, our goal is that graduate students write a research paper (12-15 pages) for each class they take.

### **4. Study Abroad:**

Study abroad is an important component of both our B.A. and our M.A. programs. We have programs of 20 years' standing in Cuernavaca, Mexico, and in conjunction with various programs over the years in Spain. Study abroad is required for the M.A. and encouraged for the B.A. However, students in other B.A. programs also may participate in these programs. Here we report on the results of the 2003 and 2004 student surveys of B.A. students. All questions were open-ended, though in a couple of cases possible answers were suggested (e.g., Amount of work: too little, about right, too much, followed by open space). Excerpts are provided in the appended table. **Virtually all students felt they had an excellent experience overall and that**

**they also got excellent academic work in addition to the cultural experience.** Our program was praised for its excellent integration (on-target) of the academic program into the overall experience and the students would definitely recommend our programs to other students.

#### **5. Courses:**

Our department offers courses in the areas of Spanish literature and culture, Latin American literature and culture, and language and linguistics. We are making an effort to provide our students a variety of courses to prepare them for the future as teachers or PhD candidates. Our weakest area was linguistics, but during the last three years we have been increasing the number of courses offered in this discipline (one course per semester). We included linguistics as one of the possible areas of concentration available for students in their MA oral/written examination.

#### **6. Some changes, improvements, success' stories:**

- During the current academic year 11 graduate students completed their MA in Spanish, and 2 completed the MEd with emphasis in Spanish. Most of our MA graduates remain in the area as "Master Teachers."
- Since 1993 a total of 69 students have earned the MA/MEd in Spanish from CSU.
- Since 2000, 4 of our students have been accepted to PhD programs in Spanish, three of them were accepted this year. We have not had a single case of student who wished to continue to Ph.D. studies and who worked with our faculty to make a good case for their academic preparation be denied admission. All of the four have been awarded TAships or scholarships. One student is currently writing her dissertation at the University of

Florida. The other students will be attending UCLA, University of Pittsburgh and University of Kentucky during the fall 2004.

- During the last two years our graduate students have been very active by presenting papers in national/international conferences (Kentucky Foreign Language Conference, Pennsylvania Foreign Language Conference, University of Cincinnati's Conference, Ohio Foreign Language Association's Conference, and others). One of our students published a paper in one of the Proceedings.
- Through our connection with our sister school in Cuernavaca, Mexico we have received two students for the MA program, and one more is expected to start this coming fall.

#### **7. Conclusion and goals for the future:**

This assessment report is an indication of how our goals for the MA program have been fulfilled in different ways. The classes we provide, the experiences (study abroad, conferences), the research focus is helping us to enhance knowledge of literature, culture and linguistics among our students. The writing progress in our students is an indication of the way we are enhancing Spanish language skills, and through the process of writing research papers our students are improving in their critical and analytical thinking. The popularity of our study abroad programs increase, without any doubt, the appreciation our students have for the Hispanic culture.

Although we have no statistical evidence, we know our students have been successful in getting jobs which have been helping them to use the skills they acquired in our program. In the case of our graduate students, some of them have been accepted in PhD programs, other are teaching as instructors in community colleges and universities in the area, and others are teaching in different high schools.

We will continue improving the services we offer our students. It is important for us to continue having a good communication with all our graduate. Our excellent communication with our graduate students is one of our main strengths. We will continue encouraging our students to participate and present papers in conference. This experience help them to mature as scholars and to learn form other researchers. Our MA program is preparing our students to serve in different areas and to have a excellent understanding of the Hispanic World.

Appendix: Excerpts from the Study Abroad evaluations

E. Academic program	SPAIN 2003	MEXICO 2003
1. Academic component Good?	Excellent: 4 Very good: 1	Excellent: 1 Challenging but well worth it: 1 Very: 2.
2. Coursework integrated into the experience?	Very well 1; yes 3.	Excellent: 2 Very well: 3
3. Amount of work expected good?	About right: 4, but 1 said they needed more computers available. Too little: 1	A little too much: 2 About right: 3
Recommendations to improve?	Nothing: 2 Add more interview assignments.	Make it a full semester program. Make more of the excursions optional. It would be nice if the final exam were not on the last day of our stay. I didn't realize that dress was so important—please draw attention to this next time.
G. What you learned (both quotes and paraphrases)	Actually seeing the living and ancient history of Spain side by side. The fantastic way of living in a Spanish country. Adapt and succeed. The culture is really very different. Meeting Spaniards and speaking Spanish.	Made me appreciate what we have in the U.S. Truly learned about the differences in cultures. The small class sizes helped me a lot. How Mexicans actually live. Great life experience and learning about the culture. I realized how spoiled I am.
Would you recommend the program to other students?	Yes, I got what I wanted out of it. Yes, I do. Yes, to absolutely anyone! Yes, this experience cannot be duplicated in the classroom! Yes.	Yes: 1 Yes, because it was a great cultural experience. Definitely, I had a wonderful time. Yes, but I would warn students that this is not a vacation! Yes, it's a great way to learn about the culture hands-on. Absolutely. It is a wonderful program.

## COMPOSITION PROFILE

### COMMENTS:

<b>FOCUS/CONTENT</b>	30-27	Excellent-Very Good	has fully anticipated questions in selecting information; topic well-thought-out carefully developed with effective supporting detail; interesting to read
	26-22	Good-Adequate	has anticipated most reader questions in selecting information; topic may not be fully explored; development is adequate although some ideas may be incompletely supported or irrelevant; interesting ideas in places
	21-17	Fair-Poor	has anticipated few reader needs in selecting information; topic explored only superficially and inadequately developed with many ideas unsupported or irrelevant
	16-13	Needs a lot of work	shows no awareness of reader needs; ideas superficial and/or uninteresting with little development; OR not enough to evaluate
<b>ORGANIZATION</b>	20-18	Excellent-Very Good	has fully anticipated reader needs in organizing and presenting information; clear thesis; flow of ideas fluid and logical; a pleasure to read
	17-14	Good-Adequate	has anticipated most reader needs in organizing and presenting information; main ideas stand out, but sequencing of ideas sometimes choppy or disconnected; reader may sometimes have difficulty following flow of ideas
	13-10	Fair-Poor	has anticipated few reader needs in organizing and presenting information; ideas frequently confused and/or disconnected, with logical breakdowns apparent; reader frequently has difficulty "getting the point" of message as communicated
	9-7	Needs a lot of work	shows no awareness of reader needs; logical organization absent; OR not enough to evaluate

<b>GRAMMAR</b>	25-22	Excellent-Very Good	wide range of structures with few or no significant errors (e.g. sentence structure)
	21-18	Good-Adequate	adequate range of structures, but little variety; tends to overuse simple constructions; both significant and minor errors (e.g. agreement) present, but meaning seldom obscured
	17-11	Fair-Poor	limited range of structures with control of grammar uncertain; errors frequent, especially when more complex constructions attempted; meaning often confused or obscured
	10-5	Needs a lot of work	frequent and persistent errors of basic grammar and sentence construction; meaning blocked as text dominated by errors; OR, not enough to evaluate
<b>VOCABULARY</b>	20-18	Excellent-Very Good	language choices appropriate for topic, purpose and reader; excellent use of idioms and precise, colorful vocabulary; little or no evidence of English interference
	17-14	Good-Adequate	language choices usually appropriate for topic, purpose and reader; vocabulary accurate but may be somewhat limited; some errors or interference may be present but meaning rarely obscured
	13-10	Fair-Poor	language choices sometimes inappropriate for topic, purpose and reader; vocabulary very limited, with overuse of imprecise or vague terms; English interference evident, particularly with respect to idioms; meaning often confused or obscured
	9-7	Needs a lot of work	language choices often inappropriate for topic, purpose and reader; range of vocabulary extremely limited; English interference frequent; OR not enough to evaluate

<b>CONVENTIONS</b>	5	Excellent-Very Good	very few or no faults with respect to spelling/accenuation, punctuation or presentation (handwriting or typing)
	4	Good-Adequate	occasional faults in spelling/accenuation, punctuation or presentation (handwriting or typing)
	3	Fair-Poor	frequent errors in spelling/accenuation or punctuation; messy presentation that is sometimes illegible
	2	Needs a lot of work	persistent errors in spelling/accenuation and punctuation; handwriting often illegible; OR not enough to evaluate
<b>TOTAL</b>	/100		

FROM: Valdés, Dvorak and Hannun

## ORAL PRESENTATION PROFILE

<b>Oral skills:</b>		
40-36	Excellent-Very Good	Excellent use of language, mostly spontaneous with minimal reading, use of audiovisuals, excellent communication with the audience, interesting and creative.
35-32	Good-Adequate	Use of language is adequate and clear, mostly reading but good communication with the audience, interesting and creative.
31-28	Fair-Poor	Mostly reading, monotonous, minimal connection with the audience.
27-20	Needs a lot of work	Unclear, no connection with the audience.
<b>Other skills:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of audiovisuals: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</li> <li>• Understanding of the material or topic: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤</li> </ul>	5 Excellent 4-3 Good 2 Fair 1 Needs a lot of work.
<b>TOTAL:</b>		/50

## PROJECT PROFILE

<b>Focus/Content</b>	25-22	Excellent-Very Good	Excellent overall, no major weaknesses. Ideas are very clear, precise, and well presented.
	21-18	Good-Adequate	More strengths than weaknesses. In general ideas are clear and well presented.
	17-11	Fair-Poor	More than a minimal level of skill. Ideas are inconsistent and with frequent lack of clarity.
	10-5	Needs a lot of work	Effort in presenting interesting and original ideas is minimal.
<b>Objectives</b>	25-22	Excellent-Very Good	Excellent presentation of objectives taking into consideration the audience of your project.
	21-18	Good-Adequate	Objectives are clear but incomplete or not very well defined.
	17-11	Fair-Poor	Objectives are not very well related to the content of your project.
	10-5	Needs a lot of work	Objectives are poor, unclear or no objectives at all.

<b>Written expression</b>	25-22	Excellent-Very Good	Includes a wide range of structures with few or no significant errors, language choices appropriate for the topic, few problems with spelling/accenuation and punctuation.
	21-18	Good-Adequate	Includes an adequate range of structures, language choices are usually appropriate, occasional faults in spelling/accenuation and punctuation.
	17-11	Fair-Poor	Includes a limited range of structures, language choices are sometimes inappropriate, frequent errors in spelling/accenuation and punctuation.
	10-5	Needs a lot of work	Includes frequent and persistent errors, language choices are inappropriate, persistent errors in spelling/accenuation and punctuation.
<b>Creativity/Presentation</b>	25-22	Excellent-Very Good	Excellent presentation, very creative, interesting, and very useful for the audience.
	21-18	Good-Adequate	Interesting and useful, but with some lack of creativity.
	17-11	Fair-Poor	Interesting and useful at some level but with many inconsistencies and lack of creativity.
	10-5	Needs a lot of work	Minimal work or effort added to your project.
<b>Total:</b>	/100		

## RESEARCH PAPER PROFILE

<p><b>Focus/Content</b></p>	<p>75-68</p>	<p>Excellent-Very Good</p>	<p>Excellence overall, no major weaknesses. Work demonstrates excellent understanding, interpretation and analysis of the readings. Ideas are very clear, precise, and well reasoned, with occasional lapses into weak reasoning.</p>
	<p>67-60</p>	<p>Good-Adequate</p>	<p>More strengths than weaknesses. Work represents demonstrable achievement, with some problems with the understanding, interpretation and analysis of the readings. The work demonstrates a mind beginning to take charge of its own ideas, assumptions, inferences, and intellectual processes.</p>
	<p>59-52</p>	<p>Fair-Poor</p>	<p>More than a minimal level of skill, but it is also inconsistent, with as many weaknesses as strengths. Some but inconsistent achievement in the understanding, interpretation, and analysis of the readings. Work shows only modest and inconsistent reasoning and critical analysis skills.</p>
	<p>51-40</p>	<p>Needs to work a lot</p>	<p>Work demonstrate only minimal level of understanding, interpretation and analysis of the readings. Work does not show mature reasoning and critical analysis skills.</p>

<b>Research</b>	30-27	Excellent-Very Good	Includes five or more references. Student was very careful in examining the literature related to the topic. Excellent incorporation and analysis of quotes. Original ideas.
	26-24	Good-Adequate	Includes between four and three references. Student was careful in examining the literature related to the topic. Incorporation and analysis of quotes with some level of difficulty in using the quotes adequately. Some original ideas but mostly informational.
	23-21	Fair-Poor	Includes two or one references. Student does not pay enough attention to the literature related to the topic. Weakness in incorporating and analyzing quotes. Lack of originality.
	20-15	Needs to work a lot	Minimal research skills. Immature analysis with no quotes, and no references to other studies.
<b>Written Expression</b>	30-27	Excellent-Very Good	Includes a wide range of structures with few or no significant errors, language choices appropriate for the topic, few problems with spelling/accenuation and punctuation.
	26-24	Good-Adequate	Includes an adequate range of structures, language choices are usually appropriate, occasional faults in spelling/accenuation and punctuation.
	23-21	Fair-Poor	Includes a limited range of structures, language choices are sometimes inappropriate, frequent errors in spelling/accenuation and punctuation.
	20-15	Needs to work a lot	Includes frequent and persistent errors, language choices are inappropriate, persistent errors in spelling/accenuation and punctuation.

<b>Format/Organization</b>	15-13	Excellent-Very Good	Excellent use of MLA or APA format according to the most recent publications
	12-10	Good-Adequate	Use of MLA or APA shows some inconsistencies.
	9-7	Fair-Poor	Use of MLA or APA format is obsolete or invented by the student.
	6-3	Needs to work a lot	No sign of MLA or APA format.
<b>TOTAL</b>	/150		
<b>Comments and Recommendations:</b>			

