

Spanish Program Assessment Plan 2006-2007

**Department of Modern Languages
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Park University**

Introduction

Park University's program for Spanish Majors is committed to the ongoing assessment and enhancement of its curriculum to promote student learning. The assessment plan for the undergraduate Spanish program is based on the University and College of Liberal Arts and Sciences mission and vision statements, as well as the Spanish Program's mission and goals. Program assessment measures are linked to standards defined by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Linguistic competencies are linked to ACTFL standards in its Collaborative Project, titled National Standards for Foreign Language Education. The Major's standards for expertise in Spanish, Spanish American, the Hispanic Caribbean and U.S. Latino cultures, literary and artistic productions are designed by the Modern Language Department's faculty, in accordance with best practices in leading universities of comparative size. The Modern Language Department's Assessment Plan measures student competence in defined areas in addition to providing assessment of overall program effectiveness.

Foundations of the Plan

The Spanish Program Assessment Plan at Park University was established by a collaborative process of faculty within the Spanish Program and is based on the following principles:

A. Flows from the institution's mission:

The plan is based on building connections between the University, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the Department of Modern Languages mission statements.

University Mission Statement:

The mission of Park University, an entrepreneurial institution of learning, is to provide access to academic excellence which will prepare learners to think critically, communicate effectively and engage in lifelong learning while serving a global community. □

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Mission Statement:

The College of Liberal Arts & Sciences of Park University will prepare graduates who are articulate, literate, reflective, lifelong learners and active global citizens.

Mission Statement Department of Modern Languages: □ The Spanish Program at Park University educates students to communicate well with Spanish speakers in the pluralist United States and abroad, to appreciate knowledge and perspectives gained from the language's history and diverse populations, to listen and learn from other speakers of the language, and to enjoy the great variety and impact of Hispanic art, architecture, music and cultures.

B. Has a conceptual framework:

The conceptual framework of the Spanish Program responds to the University's focus on preparing "learners to think critically, communicate effectively ... while serving a global community." In this light program assessment is designed to measure a senior's knowledge of multi/cultural, national and international competencies as expressed through oral, listening, speaking, reading and writing fluencies.

C. Has faculty ownership/responsibility: □

The Spanish faculty is committed to continual re/assessment of our programs, goals and pedagogies in the service of students' lifelong enjoyment of and benefit from knowledge of the Spanish language, literatures and cultures in its different national and cultural manifestations.

D. Has institution-wide support: □

Spanish faculty view the assessment plan as approved only after it has received institution-wide support. That support typically consists of, but is not limited to, the Department of Modern Languages, the Council of Chairs, the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the University Assessment Committee, and the Provost.

E. Uses multiple measures: □

The Spanish Program assessment plan employs both a Capstone Project and a Comprehensive Exam, in addition to core assessments in all courses taken by Majors.

F. Provides feedback to students, faculty and the larger institution:

1. Feedback to students through:

- a. Graded assignments and exams
- b. Course grade

2. Feedback to faculty through:

- a. Course evaluations
- b. Capstone Portfolio
- c. Senior Comprehensive Exam

3. Feedback to the university through:

- a. Course evaluations
- b. Alumni surveys
- c. Annual Departmental Assessment Report

G. Does not restrict or inhabit goals of access, equity, and diversity established by the institution:

The Spanish Program assessment plan represents faculty commitment to progressively educate others with regard to racial inequities, gender and class roles, class and ethnic diversity, globalization and internationalization issues.

H. Leads to improvement:

The purpose of this assessment is to systematically distinguish areas of strength and areas in need of improvement. Assessment tools are evaluated at least annually to incorporate changes and improvements. Outcomes of surveys are evaluated as they become available each year. The development of this assessment plan has already resulted in curricular changes for the program.

I. Includes a process for evaluating the assessment program:

Assessment tools are evaluated to ascertain that they provide required information. Student and faculty feedback assist in the determination of the Assessment Plan's effectiveness in evaluating Program achievements. Modifications are made as evaluation indicates.

Spanish Major Undergraduate Program Standards, Goals & Competencies

The Department of Modern Languages abides by standards, goals and competencies outlined by the **American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages**. These are:

- 1) **COMMUNICATION:** Students provide and obtain information, understand and interpret written and spoken language, and present information, concepts and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.
- 2) **CULTURES:** Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between practices and perspectives of the cultures studied, and of the relationship between products and perspectives of the culture studied.
- 3) **CONNECTIONS:** Students demonstrate knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language, acquire information and recognize distinctive viewpoints only available through the foreign language and its cultures.
- 4) **COMPARISONS:** Students demonstrate understanding of cultures, their similarities and distinctions, and in comparison with their own.
- 5) **COMMUNITIES:** Students use the language both within and beyond the university setting, and show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the languages for personal enjoyment, enrichment and in many instances, in employment.

The Academic Plan for the Spanish Major Reflects National Standards with Regard to Language Skills

ACTFL standards and university-level reading and analytical skills are reflected in all course syllabi and curricula. Courses in the Major are interconnected and draw upon the critical thinking and analysis skills integral to a Liberal Arts education. At all times the focus of the Spanish Program is on the student's individual and professional goals and abilities. These standards reflect University and the Department mission statements, are developed, assessed, revised and/or elaborated by department faculty in conversation with appropriate administrators and with input from University colleagues.

PROGRAM GOALS

It is the **goal of the Spanish Program** to have our students become useful and productive members of our global society and the communities in which they reside.

- The Modern Language Department educates students who are linguistically and culturally equipped to work, travel and communicate successfully in international settings and in the pluralistic United States.*
- Spanish-speaking U.S. students who come to the University find diverse opportunities to develop further proficiencies in the language.
- Spanish Majors acquire a broad and diverse background knowledge of Spanish-speaking countries, including the United States, and reflect critically upon this knowledge base for assisting others in understanding differences between cultures and people.
- Spanish Majors are encouraged to demonstrate in all contact with the Department, the University and the larger community a respect for international cultural, political, racial and intellectual diversity.

*An academic immersion study abroad program or individual experience through immersion service projects of at least 6 weeks, approved in advance by the Department, is strongly recommended.

Program Competencies:

Students will be engaged in competences linked to five interconnected components recommended by ACTFL for assessing individual progress and needs in the process of language learning and the practice of multicultural thinking:

- 1) Consistently demonstrate advanced-level competence in verbal, written and nonverbal communication as well as the use of various cultural resources to enhance communication
- 2) Describe and analyze current social and political issues shaping at least three Spanish-American countries, including one whose indigenous population is emerging or already present in national politics.
- 3) Relate and discuss the importance of the Muslim occupation of the Iberian Peninsula, the Christian Re-Conquest and Inquisition, the Spanish Civil War, and Spain's entry into the European Community.
- 4) Examine and discuss at least three contemporary Spanish American and/or Spanish; explain the characteristics of at least one literary genre in both Spanish American and Spain.
- 5) Describe at least five major characteristics of U.S. Latino literatures; explain the importance of at least one work in each of the following literatures: Dominican, Cuban, Puerto Rican and Mexican-American.

- 6) Research, write a paper on a literary or local community topic, and present results to the University audience.

□

Measures of Assessment

1. Capstone Project Paper and Public Presentation

The Capstone Paper is carried out during the SP399 Capstone course.

The paper, written in Spanish, represents original research on a topic chosen by the student with the instructor's approval. The instructor will assure that the chosen topic reflects the student's course of study for the major.

The course syllabus constitutes a checklist for each step of the Paper process.

Public presentation of the paper project is delivered, in English, at the Undergraduate Research or Honors Symposium during the semester the course is taken.

As an assessment mode the Capstone Project Paper and Presentation cover the Competencies 1, 3, 4, 6:

- ✓ Speaking and intercultural communication skills
- ✓ Research, reading, writing, critical thinking, analytical and interpretive proficiencies
- ✓ Multicultural comprehension, analysis and interpretation.

2. Spanish Senior Comprehensive Exam

The Spanish Senior Comprehensive Exam, comprising both written and oral sections, is given at mid-semester during the student's final academic semester.

The written exam includes grammar, cultural topics and composition skills. The oral exam is given separately, after the written exam is graded. Both exams address topics from courses taken by the student. At least two Department faculty members conduct the Oral Comprehensive Exam.

This assessment mode addresses skills included in Competencies 1-5

- ✓ Effective communication of knowledge

- ✓ Literary, historical, analytical and interpretive proficiencies
- ✓ Chronological and cross-cultural thinking; historical, linguistic and cultural comprehension

Course assessment measures include, but are not limited to Papers, Quizzes, Projects, Dramatic and other kinds of Oral presentations and Examinations.

As described above, **program assessment measures** includes: □

Direct Evidence:

Scoring of the Senior Comprehensive Exam which covers all courses taken in the major and requires demonstration of analytical and synthesizing skills in addition to oral fluency standards.

Evaluation of the Capstone Project which requires a research essay written in Spanish and an oral presentation of research in English at the Honors Symposium.

Indirect Evidence:

Alumni Surveys
Education PRAXIS exams

