2015-2016 Yearly Assessment Report
Spanish Studies Program
Department of Modern and Classical Languages
College of Arts and Sciences (CAS)

1. **Identifying Information**

Name of Program: Spanish Studies
Type of Program (Major, Minor, Graduate Program, Non-Degree Granting):
Major
College of Arts and Sciences Division (Arts, Humanities, Sciences, or Social Sciences):
Humanities
Name/Title/Email Address of Submitter:
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Karyn Schell (kschell@usfca.edu)
Rakhel Villamil-Acera (new Spanish Studies faculty member with no USF address until August)

2. **Mission Statement:**

Per the USF Mission, the Department of Modern and Classical Languages (MCL) aims to give students "the knowledge and skills needed to succeed as persons and professionals, and the values and sensitivity necessary to be men and women for others." We inculcate both linguistic proficiency and cultural literacy that our students can deploy in their future academic and professional endeavors, *and* in their service to the greater good.

Has this statement been revised in the last few years?
Yes, the statement was revised in Spring 2016 as the department prepared our self-study report for its external review.

3. **(Optional) Program Goals:**

1. To communicate clearly and effectively in Spanish, both in written and oral discourse
2. To understand spoken Spanish from different registers and places

3. To demonstrate a concrete knowledge of major artistic works, literary figures and movements of the Spanish-speaking world.
4. To apply analytical skills to the interpretation of a wide spectrum of cultural phenomena, including literature, art, music, film and popular media
5. To respect and appreciate the differences and complexities of Spanish-speaking communities while understanding the linguistic, political, social and historical processes that have shaped these cultures.

Have these goals been revised in the last few years?
Yes, they were just revised this spring.

4. Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

1. Demonstrate the ability to express information and opinions verbally in a consistent, effective and clear Spanish.
2. Demonstrate the ability to write coherently in Spanish using the disciplinary conventions and methodologies that constitute proficient literary and cultural analysis.
3. Demonstrate the ability to understand complex oral discourse on a variety of subjects produced by native speakers from a range of Hispanic cultures and through various means of presentation.
4. Demonstrate a critical competence to identify and evaluate the main ideas of literary texts and formal artifacts
5. Identify major artistic and cultural figures of the Spanish-speaking world and situate them in the context of their historical, cultural, and aesthetic traditions.
6. Apply analytical skills to interpret a wide spectrum of cultural phenomena, including literature, art, music, film and popular media.
7. Demonstrate an awareness and appreciation of the linguistic, ethnic, racial, religious, cultural and social diversity of Latin America, Spain and the Hispanic communities within the US.

Have these PLOs been revised in the last few years?
Yes, they were revised just this spring.

5. Brief Summary of Most Recent Assessment Plan

Spanish Studies has reviewed, discussed, and updated its learning goals, program learning outcomes and curriculum mapping to reflect the new configuration of its major and to meet the requirements of the university. The previous PLOs—13 in all—have been reduced to 7, and our goals now clearly address four distinct areas of expected competency for our majors: linguistic competence, content knowledge, critical analysis and cultural awareness. Moreover, the new PLOs are more easily measurable and better aligned with the department and university's mission. Over

the course of the next academic year, we will work on developing standard performance rubrics to assess student's progress in the different areas and courses.

6. **Academic Program Review**

Date of most recent Academic Program Review's External Reviewer Visit:
Spring 2010
Date of most recent Action Plan Meeting:
Spring 2016 (Spanish Studies Program)
Brief Summary of the most recent Action Plan:
Spanish Studies discussed our previous assessment plan and updated the Learning Goals and PLOs of our program.

7. **Methods**

What did you do with regard to assessment of your program/department in 2015-2016?
Spanish Studies chose to assess PLO 1, a learning outcome that relates to linguistic competence: "**Demonstrate the ability to express information and opinions verbally in a consistent, effective and clear Spanish**". This specific PLO is defined by the achievement of a common **Intermediate High** on the ACTFL proficiency guidelines, which is the national average for graduating majors who specialize in Romance languages.

The method used to assess PLO 1 was an Oral Proficiency Interview* (OPI) performed by Professor Nadina Olmedo, a full-time member of our faculty in Spanish Studies and a certified ACTFL tester. Nadina conducted interviews with the four students enrolled in SPAN 422 who were about to graduate with a Spanish Studies major in Spring 2016.

**The ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview, or ACTFL OPI as it is often called, is a standardized procedure for the global assessment of functional speaking ability. It is a face-to-face or telephonic interview between a certified ACTFL tester and an examinee that determines how well a person speaks a language by comparing his or her performance of specific communication tasks with the criteria for each ten proficiency levels described in the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012 – Speaking. (http://www.actfl.org/professional-development/certified-proficiency-testing-program/testing-proficiency)*

What were your questions?
Each OPI is unique, and therefore the questions asked varied from one interview to another. Professor Olmedo wanted interviewees to reflect on their individual background, life experiences, interests and opinions to test their functional abilities (patterns of strength), as well as the limits of their linguistic abilities (patterns of

weakness). In other words, Professor Olmedo's line of questioning was determined by the responses of each student; the answers given allowed her to adjust the level of difficulty of the tasks then posed. An OPI does not measure discrete aspects of language use; rather, the interview determines how well a person speaks the language by comparing his or her performance of specific communication tasks with the criteria for the different proficiency levels described in the ACTFL guidelines.

How are these questions related to your most recent Academic Program Review and/or Action Plan?

The reviewers recommended this type of assessment to determine current levels of student proficiency, in order to allow setting appropriate proficiency goals for each course.

What PLOs are these questions related to?

PLO 1

What direct (most important) and/or indirect methods did you employ?

Some Possible Direct Methods (pick ≥ 1 and *briefly describe*):

a. Published (Standardized) Test (e.g., Major Field Test)
b. Class Tests & Quizzes with Embedded Questions
c. Class Presentations
d. Off-Campus Presentations (NGOs, clients, agencies, etc.)
e. Research Projects Reports
f. Case Studies
g. Term Papers
h. Portfolio
i. Artistic Performances, Recitals & Products
j. Capstone Projects
k. Poster Presentations
l. Comprehensive Exams
m. Thesis, Dissertation
n. Pass Rates on Certification or Licensure Exams
o. Group Projects
p. In/Out-of Class Presentations
q. Competency Interviews (e.g., oral exams)
r. Simulations
s. Juried Presentations
t. Other

• OPI (Oral Proficiency Interview)

• Every Spanish Studies course includes individual presentations to help students develop their oral skills and allow faculty to evaluate the spoken language proficiency of their pupils. These assignments are graded for content, style, vocabulary, etc. While all the instructors who teach sections within the language sequence (SPAN 101-202) follow the same rubric for consistency, faculty members offering individual upper-division courses use their own rubric.

Some Possible Indirect Methods (*briefly describe*):

a. Student Survey
b. Student Interview
c. Focus Groups
d. Reflection Sessions
e. Reflection Essays
f. Faculty Survey
g. Exit (end of program) Survey
h. Exit (end of program) Interview
i. Alumni Survey
j. Employer Survey
k. Diaries or Journals
l. Data from Institutional Surveys (e.g., NSSE, SSI, GSS)
m. Curriculum/Syllabus Analysis
n. Other

8. Results

What were the direct data results?
Two Spanish Studies majors performed at an Intermediate High Level, while the other two did not meet these expectations. They could not accomplish successfully or consistently some of the tasks during the interview; for example, there was a clear deterioration in the quality and quantity of language produced, an avoidance to address some of the linguistic tasks that Prof. Olmedo asked them to address, and even a propensity to use English words or phrases when they couldn't think of the Spanish term.

What were the indirect results?

What surprised you?
The fact that half of the students interviewed couldn't perform at an Intermediate High Level was surprising, and troublesome.

What aligned with your expectations?
All Spanish Studies graduates were able to sustain a conversation on a variety of topics, create with the target language, and produce sentence to paragraph-level discourse. In addition, they were able to use all major time frames (even if some of them were not consistent, especially when it came to talk about the past). The four Spanish Studies majors interviewed could easily be understood by interlocutors unaccustomed to dealing with non-native speakers of a language (though, again, some students mixed in English words when expressing their thoughts).

What do you understand these results to mean?
While the sample of students tested was extremely small, these results could mean the following:
• Proficiency levels established in this PLO possibly need minor adjustments
• Additional pedagogical strategies may need to be implemented in the classroom so that students achieve the expected level of proficiency when communicating verbally in Spanish
• Changes might be needed at the curricular level
• The college policy on cancellation of low-enrolled classes should be revised. Faculty, especially those teaching required courses for the major, now believe they must "invite" students into their class who do not have the appropriate level of proficiency to avoid cancellation.

What are the implications of the data?
• We must reassess this PLO in the coming semesters

• We may need to adjust the level of proficiency that we expect our majors to have when they graduate
• We should make sure that every course provides ample opportunities for students to interact in a variety of contexts and registers in and out of the classroom.
• We simply have to encourage more of our students to study abroad, not to mention participating in our Spanish Conversation Tables, or enrolling in our Intermediate Spanish Conversation class.

9. Closing the Loop

What might you do as a result of these assessment results? What curricular or programmatic changes might you implement?

Possible Closing(s) of the Loop(s) (pick ≥ 1 and *briefly describe*):

a. Revision of PLOs
b. Changes in pedagogical practices
c. Revision of program course sequence
d. Revision of course(s) content
e. Curriculum Changes (e.g., addition and/or deletion of courses)
f. Modified program policies or procedures
g. Designed measurement tools more aptly suited for the task
h. Improved within and across school/college collaboration
i. Improved within and across school/college communication
j. Revised student learning outcomes in one or more courses
k. Modified rubric
l. Developed new rubric
m. Developed more stringent measures (key assessments)
n. Modified course offering schedules
o. Changes to faculty and/or staff
p. Changes in program modality of delivery
q. Other

• Before we embark on a revision of course content, we need to reassess this PLO. Perhaps modified Oral Proficiency Interviews should be administered after students complete the language sequence (101-202), and again during the last two semesters of study, to provide a useful benchmark of student progress.
• To assess how Spanish Studies majors are developing oral skills for communicating clearly and effectively in the target language, a standard rubric for presentations must be created and then used for all upper division courses.
• As our last external reviewers wrote, the university should "recognize that language enrollments vary from year-to-year depending on global and economic trends" and "support low-enrollment upper-level courses through lean years as programs adjust to enrollment changes"

Have you or will you submit any course or program change proposals as a result of these results?

• Because the sample was so small, we believe it is important to reassess this PLO in the next four semesters before we can determine if curricular changes or revised new pedagogical strategies are needed. If the assessments of PLO 1 we conduct in the Fall 2016, Spring 2017, Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 show similar results, Spanish Studies will implement the necessary changes.