

**Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements
Department of Semitic and Egyptian Languages and Literatures
Academic Year 2009-2010**

**Master's Program in Ancient Northwest Semitic Languages
Master's Program in Near Eastern Christian Languages & Literatures
Doctoral Program in Ancient Northwest Semitic Languages
Doctoral Program in Near Eastern Christian Languages & Literatures**

Key Assessment Findings

Comprehensive exams are a requirement for both M.A. and Ph.D. students in the Semitics department. The M.A. comprehensive exams are designed to demonstrate that the student has reached an acceptable level of competence in his/her major and minor languages. Presuming competence in these languages, the Ph.D. comprehensive exams test the student's abilities to interpret selected passages from texts pertinent to the student's academic focus and to answer a set of linguistic, cultural, and historical questions based on these selected texts.

The number of students who took M.A. and Ph.D. comprehensive examinations in AY2009-2010 was a total of 8. All students passed with a level within the new rubrics of at least "2" (meeting expectations), although the new rubrics were not fully implemented until the summer of 2010, which lies outside the limits of this report.

Curricular Improvements for Master's Program and Ph.D. Program

The department has now implemented language placement exams for all students who want to skip the introductory-level courses in Coptic, Syriac, and Classical Arabic languages. These have proved useful in placing newly admitted students for Fall 2010 who have studied these languages before beginning their course of studies in the department. It is evident that similar language placement exams will be useful and necessary in the area of Biblical Hebrew, and they are being prepared for use in 2011-2012.

The departmental rubrics developed under the previous mandate for key assessment of student learning were first applied in rudimentary fashion in 2009-2010. They proved to be useful, when fully implemented, in gauging the level of student performance on MA comprehensive examinations taken in the summer of 2010.

Curricular improvements now being considered are as follows. The 6-credit Greek requirement is being reconsidered as a departmental requirement and discussion is under way to determine whether it should be changed to a prerequisite for certain courses. The additional requirement to take electives outside of the department is also being reconsidered, as it tends to reduce enrollment within the department and impose an extra burden on students.

The Department plans to expand its course offerings during the summer session to include Coptic in addition to Biblical Hebrew and Syriac. It is hoped that the Coptic and Syriac can be offered as intensives in order to attract students nationally, as a similar program does at Notre Dame.