Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements
Department of Semitic and Egyptian Languages and Literatures
Academic Year 2010-2011

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 AY2010-2011 was a total of 12. All students except one passed with a level within the rubrics of "2" (meeting expectations), with the new rubrics fully implemented as of the summer of 2010, which results are included within this report. The results table for the past two AY's is appended at the end of this report. The exception was one student who failed (achieved a level of "1" or below) 1 of 2 MA comprehensives. The rest of the students achieved a "2" (meeting expectations) or "3" level (exceeded expectations) (see tables below). In general, the rubrics have proved useful; however, since the comprehensive exams are not standardized (that is, different questions are set for different students) it can be hard exactly to quantify performances within the broad wording of the rubrics. The table of rubrics results are appended below .

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

The planned language placement exams in the area of Biblical Hebrew have not yet been prepared for use. They will not be principally relevant for students admitted within the department, but will have an impact on judging the readiness of non-departmental students (principally from the School of Theology) to take graduate courses in Biblical Hebrew.

Curricular improvements have been implemented for the 2011-2012 school year as follows:

o Six credits in ancient Greek, previously a departmental requirement for every degree, is now a requirement only for the degrees in Near Eastern Christian Languages and Literatures.

o The additional requirement to take electives outside of the department has been changed to a recommendation.

o The previous requirement of 12 credit hours in the major language beyond the beginning course has been reduced to 9 credit hours beyond the beginning course. This was changed

principally for the benefit of students who chose Arabic as their major language; since the beginning course in Arabic lasts 2 semesters, MA students were unable to accrue credits for the language until their second year. In many cases, they had reached a third year of course work before accumulating the required number of credits. The reduced requirement will now allow MA students to choose Arabic as a major language and to take MA comprehensives in Arabic by the end of their second year of coursework.

The summer curriculum is under review. The courses offered in Syriac and Classical Armenian were successful, but no students registered for Coptic or Biblical Hebrew. It is hoped that a renewed departmental effort to vary and publicize our offerings will attract more students to the summer session.

GRADUATE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION RESULTS
Department of Semitics
AY2009-2010 through AY2010-2011

	Fail		Pass		High Pass		Pass w/Distinction		Pass w/Honors		
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	TOTAL
MA program											
AY2009-2010	0	0.00%	3	100.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	3
AY2010-2011	1	11.11%	4	88.89%	4	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	9
PhD program											
AY2009-2010	0	0.00%	5	100.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	5
AY2010-2011	0	0.00%	1	100.00%	2	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	3

Table of Results
Student Learning Assessment Rubric
Department of Semitics
Rubric for Master's Comprehensive Exam AY10-11

	Level								
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)				Total
Trait	N	%	N	%	N	%	Mean	SD	N
1) Knowledge of the grammar, syntax, and basic vocabulary of the major and minor languages	4	44%	4	44%	1	11%	2.33	0.71	9
2) Identification and discussion of selected grammatical and syntactical features in an assigned text in a major or minor language	4	44%	4	44%	1	11%	2.33	0.71	9
3) Ability accurately to translate selected texts in the major and minor languages into English	4	44%	4	44%	1	11%	2.33	0.71	9

Note: 1) The "N" represents the number of students at each level of performance for each trait.

    2) The "%" represents the percentage of the number of students falling at the level performance

      for each trait against the total number of students.

    3) The mean is the average of all scores across the levels within the trait.

    4) The standard deviation (SD) is the measure of the variability of the data set, indicating how "spread out" these data are from the mean value.