

**Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements  
Department of Modern Languages and Literatures/A&S**

**Undergraduate BA Programs in Spanish, Spanish for International Service and  
Spanish/Secondary Education  
AY 2010-11**

**Key Assessment Findings**

*Senior Assessment*

Eleven candidates completed senior assessment in Spanish for International Service in AY 2010-2011. Nine of them were successful; two failed. Four candidates successfully completed senior assessment in Spanish. There were no candidates this year in Spanish/Secondary Education. Students completing the SIS and Spanish programs completed an original research project completed during the course of the Senior Seminar (spring 2011) and also made a public presentation of their results. Both the written project and the presentation were assessed following established rubrics, shared with the students at the outset of the project. The projects elected by each student were tailored to the specific goals and requirements of their program. In all cases written and oral competence in Spanish was stressed. The theme for the research project was chosen by each student in consultation with the instructor for the Senior Seminar.

**Undergraduate Comprehensive Assessment Results [Summary]**

	Fail		Pass		TOTAL
	#	%	#	%	
Major: Spanish for International Service	2	18.18%	9	81.81%	11
Major: Spanish	0	0.00%	4	100.00%	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	2	13.33%	13	86.66%	15

**Research Paper and Oral Presentation of Senior Project (SIS)**

Trait	Level						Mean	SD	Total N
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)				
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
<b>1) Language and Writing</b>	1	9%	8	73%	2	18%			11
<b>2) Content and Analysis</b>	1	9%	8	73%	2	18%			11
<b>3) Oral Presentation</b>	1	9%	8	73%	2	18%			11

### Research Paper and Oral Presentation of Senior Project (Spanish)

Trait	Level						Mean	SD	Total N
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)				
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
<b>1) Language and Writing</b>	0	0%	4	100%	0	0%			4
<b>2) Content and Analysis</b>	0	0%	4	100%	0	0%			4
<b>3) Oral Presentation</b>	0	0%	4	100%	0	0%			4

#### *Summary and Curricular Improvements*

The mixed results above show that while we generally prepare students well to carry out research and present their findings in Spanish in a public forum, some students have passed through the program without the proper training. These events sparked a vigorous debate among the faculty about our curriculum and the desired outcomes, not only in Spanish but across the languages represented in our Department. There is great concern about students' abilities to design and organize lengthy research papers, and we are taking a critical look at our course offerings and how the sequence of courses will cultivate the skills necessary for the successful completion of the Senior Seminar. In addition to the two students who failed their comprehensive exams, the students faced varying levels of difficulties in formulating research questions, using adequate primary and secondary source materials, and writing a substantial paper (approximately 20 pages) in AY 2010-11.

While the Senior Seminar for the academic years 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 had placed both the Spanish and SIS majors into a single section, for the AY 2011-2012, we are going to separate the sections again, having Professor Damiani teach the Spanish majors (7 students) and Professor Colón teach the SIS majors (6 students). It is our hope that this will allow students to have courses more tailored to their needs and interests and, therefore, improve results. While we will have separate sections again as we had in the past, both Senior Seminars will have matching expectations regarding reading, in-class participation, and the evaluation of a final research paper—therefore, we will not be returning to the old format of a survey for Spanish literature students and “field trips” to Latin American embassies and events for SIS students. Faced with the reality that students do fail their comprehensive exams, we are also preparing a set of guidelines and procedures to have in place in the event of another unfortunate incident.

In order to prepare students to respond positively to these new and evolving demands (a process started in AY 2009-2010 by combining the sections and introducing the research component),

the Department's Curriculum Committee is currently engaged in a process of revising the language programs in general, starting from the early courses in the major. They are now revisiting the outcomes statement, focusing specifically on preparing students consistently throughout their careers in the Department. As a Department we plan to develop a process to measure students' proficiency throughout their course in order to have reliable metrics for assessment; possible assessment models are DELE, OPI and ECF. By developing students' written and oral proficiency, as well as the critical and analytic skills necessary to complete a significant research project, we hope that they will leave CUA with the sorts of skills our graduates will need in graduate school or in the professional world.