

**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 2011-12**

Key Assessment Findings

Senior Assessment

Fifteen candidates completed senior assessment in Spanish in AY 2010-2011, twelve of them were successful; three failed. Of these fifteen candidates, eight completed senior assessment in Spanish for International Service; seven passed and one failed. Five of the total fifteen took senior assessment in Spanish; four passed their comps and one failed. Two of the fifteen Spanish majors took senior assessment for the degree of Spanish/Secondary Education; one student passed the exam and one student failed.

All students completed an original research project completed during the course of the Senior Seminar (spring 2012) 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.

All students who passed their senior comprehensive assessment passed with “Meets Expectations;” the three students who failed earned a “Below Expectations” in their average performance. In January 2012, the department’s chair left CUA very suddenly. She was also the section coordinator for Spanish. Due to this abrupt change in personnel in the Spanish section, I was not able to retrieve the detailed statistics for the undergraduate comprehensive assessment in Spanish. The faculty evaluating the students written and oral exams used the rubrics and assessed student performance on the basis of the rubrics but they failed to keep the detailed scoring sheets. I will provide detailed numbers again next year and apologize for this oversight.

Undergraduate Comprehensive Assessment Results [Summary]

| | Fail | | Pass | | TOTAL |
|--|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|--------------|
| | # | % | # | % | |
| Major: Spanish for International Service | 1 | 12.5% | 7 | 87.5% | 8 |
| Major: Spanish | 1 | 20% | 4 | 80% | 5 |
| Major: Spanish/Secondary Education | 1 | 50% | 1 | 50% | 2 |
| TOTAL | 3 | 20% | 12 | 80% | 15 |

Summary and Curricular Improvements

The three students who failed their senior comprehensive exams in the spring 2012 had problems formulating a research thesis and making steady progress completing their senior thesis. All three of them repeatedly missed deadlines for almost all of the steps that were put in place to guarantee their success in the project; they failed to submit complete drafts of their thesis and two of the three turned in incomplete final versions of their senior thesis on the due date.

The faculty in the department is very disturbed by the poor performance of three of our Spanish majors. To address this situation, we have restructured the courses for our language seniors and are implementing a new model for senior assessment in all languages. We are currently piloting this new model in our Spanish program:

Starting in fall 2012, Spanish seniors enrolled in a new course, SPAN 488 (Special Topics in Spanish Studies). This seminar is a research seminar that prepares the students to an in-depth study of a selected topic in Hispanic literature, film, and culture. The content of this seminar will change each year to ensure that it is up-to-date and linked to current research in the field. The seminar will be taught by various faculty members in rotation in an effort to introduce the seniors to faculty research areas and their current projects. Students enrolled in SPAN 488 will be guided through the steps involved in defining and completing a research project. They will find a topic, conduct research through intensive and in-depth study of primary and secondary source material, formulate a thesis, write a prospectus that outlines their research project, compose an outline for their research paper, and finally submit a 10-page research paper written in Spanish by the end of the fall semester.

In the spring semester of their senior year, all Spanish majors will enroll in SPAN 489 (Senior Research Seminar), which replaces the former SPAN 452/453 (Senior Seminar). This new seminar will guide the students in expanding a previously written seminar paper (ideally the paper for SPAN 488) into their senior thesis. In a colloquium format, students will present their readings of the primary and secondary materials to their peers and instructor and they will work on completing their senior thesis. An integral component of SPAN 489 is to practice oral presentation skills. Students will prepare and present a number of short research presentations in class and also practice the presentation of their senior thesis. The last third of the semester will be devoted to preparing the majors to the realities of the job market. Students will compose resumes, write application letters, and practice job interviews in Spanish.

The senior comprehensive exam will remain the same as in AY 2011/12: Students complete a research thesis (20-25 pages in Spanish) and present it in an oral presentation to the Spanish faculty. The rubrics for the written and oral thesis will also remain the same as for AY 2011/12.