

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

**Undergraduate BA Programs in French and Francophone Studies  
and French/Secondary Education  
AY 2015-16**

**Key Assessment Findings**

*Senior Assessment*

Three candidates completed the senior assessment requirements during the AY 2015-16 (Table 1 and 2). One candidate was completing the French/Secondary Education program, the last student to be enrolled in this now discontinued program. The other two were in French and Francophone Studies. In the fall, they took a senior level research seminar, which allowed them to develop a better understanding of primary and secondary sources and how to use them. In the final month of the fall semester, the students began refining the topic for their senior thesis. They could either continue working on the topic of this seminar or develop another topic. In the spring, the three students took 489 where they further developed their research topic into a 20 page paper, under the guidance of Dr. Stieber. All three students were evaluated according to two sets of rubrics, one for the senior thesis and the other for the oral defense of the senior thesis.

**Table 1: Senior Thesis Results (AY 2015-16)**

Trait	Level						Mean	SD	Total N
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)				
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
<b>1) Topic</b>	0	33%	2	33%	1	33%	2.50	0.00	3
<b>2) Content</b>	0	0%	2	67%	1	33%	*	*	3
<b>3) Treatment of culture</b>	0	33%	3	67%	0	0%	2.33	0.58	3
<b>4) Sources</b>	0	33%	2	67%	1	0%	2.33	0.58	3
<b>5) Organization</b>	1	33%	2	67%	0	0%	2.33	0.58	3
<b>6) Language use</b>	1	33%	2	0%	0	67%	1.50*	0.00*	3
<b>7) Vocabulary</b>	1	33%	2	67%	0	0%	2.33	0.58	3

**Table 2: Oral Defense of Senior Thesis Results (AY 2015-16)**

Trait	Level						Mean	SD	Total N
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)				
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
<b>1) Content of thesis summary</b>	1	33%	2	67%	0	0%	2.33	0.58	3
<b>2) organization</b>	1	33%	2	67%	0	0%	2.33	0.58	3
<b>3) Non-verbal effectiveness</b>	1	33%	2	67%	0	0%	2.33	0.58	3
<b>4) Pronunciation</b>	1	33%	1	33%	1	33%	2.00	1.00	3
<b>5) Comprehension of questions</b>	1	33%	2	67%	0	0%	2.33	0.58	3
<b>6) Response to questions</b>	1	33%	1	33%	1	33%	2.00	1.00	3
<b>7) Reflectiveness</b>	1	33%	2	67%	0	0%	2.33	0.58	3

*Summary and Curricular Improvements*

Table 1 represents the final evaluations of the senior theses. While two students were found to have met expectations overall on their theses, one student did not. Given that the written thesis was completed in mid April, the student had time to consult with French faculty and make revisions to her work, and the subsequent version of the thesis was evaluated as meeting expectations. Recent changes to our procedures have proved to have positive results. Now that the writing process is carried out in well structured steps, students have been able to follow the timetable and produce better delineated topics, select appropriate sources and make linguistic corrections as needed. We plan to continue this step-by-step approach in the future.

The oral defenses were also held in mid April. Another recent procedure helped improve the orals: students were required to practice their presentations ahead of time. As a result of this preparation, the students did a good job summarizing their topics in an organized fashion and communicating effectively to the audience (see Table 2). One student's French pronunciation was found to be below expectations, something that is a concern for our program. This student had spent a year studying abroad but she still had difficulty with pronunciation. It should be noted that this student was deaf as a child, something that impacted her English development as well. The one student who did not respond well to questions was the student who needed to make revisions to her thesis; at the time of the defense, she had not clearly developed her ideas around her topic, so her responses were weaker than expected. One student, a native speaker of French, did an outstanding job of the oral defense and was considered as completing this component with distinction. We plan to continue holding rehearsals for the oral defense. Furthermore, we are adding a public performance (ungraded), where students presented their work to their peers. We find that this helps students who are juniors know what to expect in their senior year, and also allows our majors to share their accomplishments with a larger audience.