Outside Evaluation of Program Review
Department of Modern Languages
University of La Verne
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The Department of Modern Languages Program Review document outlines a clear vision and mission for the program. It is apparent the Faculty has a strong commitment to providing an excellent Language Program. The Department has thought in depth about the strengths and needs of the program and the Review document gives an ample and accurate view of the Program's current status. In addition, it is evident the Department has done an outstanding job of assessing and collecting data. The following document outlines evaluation of the written "Executive Summary" compiled by the Department, as well as recommendations for continued growth of the program that resulted from the examination of the Summary, and from a meeting with the Department in June 2008.

Evaluation of Executive Summary

The Department offers majors and minors in French, German, and Spanish. While the Department has experienced growth in enrollment over the last six years, the number of Full Time Faculty has declined, and more than half of all language courses are taught by part-time faculty. Currently, there are only three Full Time Faculty members in Modern Languages, and this number is much too low to sustain three majors and three minors. The addition of a faculty member in Spanish would be beneficial to the Department in a number of ways. It would provide for more ample distribution of departmental responsibilities, which are currently not evenly dispersed and quite heavy. Relieving some of the administrative load would allow for more faculty productivity. It would also afford the program a broader spectrum of expertise and provide students with more resources for advising and outside classroom help, as adjuncts are not normally available for the same kind of student interaction.

The Program Mission as stated is to "familiarize students with the cultural richness and diversity of the world though the intensive study of the linguistic, literary, and cultural expressions of other nations, and to prepare students for their academic, professional, and personal futures as informed world citizens." The Program Goals and Outcomes are clearly stated and the Department addresses each one through the required curriculum by offering courses that are specific to the linguistic, literary, and cultural study, as well as attending to the particular desired skills defined in the Goals and Outcomes. Preparation for Graduate Study should be explicitly included in the Mission and Goals and Outcomes, especially since a noted 64% of graduates pursue advanced degrees.

While the Spanish Major is able to maintain a healthy number of majors and minors, French and German are not. The Department might consider the possibility of offering a Romance Languages Major that would be a hybrid of French and Spanish in order to encourage numbers in French. Especially given the University's significant population of Spanish speakers, a hybrid program could persuade some of these students to venture into a new language without too much difficulty.

Catalog copy should reflect accurate course descriptions. As program changes occur, catalog copy is often overlooked. However, the University Catalog is not only the student's first encounter with the program, but it constitutes a binding contract, and therefore should accurately present the Program and its content.

The University currently approves only two Study Abroad Programs. More flexibility and opportunity for more countries would be desirable for both students and faculty. The amount of units granted from Study Abroad Programs is a concern. Programs led by ULV Faculty would address this issue. The Department needs to ensure owning of program by restricting the amount of units that can be obtained outside of the Department.

Students demonstrate a great deal of satisfaction with the Program. They perceive a high level of skills and knowledge attained. The Senior Project seems to present some difficulty. The Department should consider changing this requirement and substituting it with a more streamlined means of assessment such as a Senior Portfolio and/or a Capstone course requirement.

In addition, Students reported dissatisfaction with the Language Laboratory.   The University should consider updating the Language Laboratory. A fully digital Laboratory could meet the very specific needs of language students and be used by the University as a whole as a computer laboratory. Training to Staff and Faculty on new software would be required.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **CURRICULAR**

    1. Change Core Requirements: Delete ANTH 340/ENG 270
        Goals and outcomes of this requirement could be met within the Department and this would offer more breadth to the Spanish Program, as well as give faculty more opportunity for teaching upper division courses. Add Spanish Linguistics or other course that would meet the desired goal.

    2. Add an Introduction to Literature course. This course is fundamental in preparing students for satisfying the demands of Literature courses and essential to understanding the field, especially for students intending to pursue graduate studies.

3.   Add an Upper Division skills course requirement. The Major could be strengthened with the addition of an Advanced Grammar course or an Advanced Composition course. Given that the majority of Majors are Heritage speakers, an Upper Division skills course would assist in giving uniformity to the level of skills and provide clarity of expectations in all other Upper Division courses. This one should be a pre-requisite.

4.   Add a Senior Seminar Capstone course. This course would provide the opportunity to synthesize the various content areas, as well as offer a space for a summative evaluation including language proficiency. This course could substitute for the current Senior Project units.

5.   Change the Senior Project Requirement to a Senior Capstone course where students can assemble a portfolio and can test in the various content areas through an exit exam and exit interview in order to meet graduation requirements.

6.   Review courses for possible sequencing. If this is not possible, offer courses sequentially in order to create sequencing. The sequencing of courses facilitates depth and breadth in particular areas of study, and it allows for a more uniform experience, thereby also assisting assessment.

7.   Ensure students get courses from each area of study: Latin American and Peninsular. If this is left to student's choice, their degree may not be balanced enough for Graduate Study or Teaching.

- **ASSESSMENT**

  1. Obtain ACTFL OPI Training, in order to assess language proficiency. The ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview is the standard for assessing oral proficiency. It could also serve as an assessment tool in the Capstone course to conduct exit interviews.

  2. Add a Capstone Course to aid in the completion of the Senior Project or to substitute it, and to better assess the program. A Capstone course offers the space to gather much needed data and to conduct the assessment needed for graduation.