



University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP) Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan

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| Programs Reviewed: | Spanish, B.A. Hons.: Specialist, Major, Minor Portuguese, B.A. Hons.: Specialist, Major, Minor Spanish, M.A., Ph.D. |
| Unit Reviewed: | Department of Spanish and Portuguese |
| Commissioning Officer: | Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science |
| Reviewers (Name, Affiliation): | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prof. William Egginton, Director of the Alexander Grass Humanities Institute, and Professor, Department of German and Romance Languages and Literatures, Johns Hopkins University 2. Prof. Anna María Escobar, Director of the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, and Professor, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign 3. Prof. Juan Carlos Quintero-Herencia, Professor of Caribbean and Latin American Literature, School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, University of Maryland, College Park |
| Date of review visit: | March 7 – 8, 2018 |
| Date reported to AP&P: | November 1, 2018 |

Unless otherwise noted, all bulleted comments apply to all programs reviewed.

1 Outcome

The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P) concluded that there were no issues to be drawn to the attention of the Agenda Committee but requested a follow up report in one year to address the integration of the Latin American Studies program within the Department. The follow-up report will be considered by AP&P at the Cycle 2 meeting in 2019-20.

Developed by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

2 Significant Program Strengths

- Ranked as first in Canada and top ten in North America
- Excellent experiential learning opportunities available to students due to strong relationships with local community groups
- Large, diverse faculty complement, many of whom are leaders in the field and hold important administrative service roles
- Vibrant and healthy academic community

3 Opportunities for Program Enhancement

The reviewers recommended that the following be considered:

- Adding hires in Latin American and Portuguese literature to enhance the department's stature
- Addressing high administrative workload and providing staff resources to limit the amount of faculty time spent on administrative tasks
- Engaging in wider promotion of the Latin American Literature activities
- Reconsidering the use of continuing faculty resources in large language courses
- Increasing opportunities for students and faculty to interact through research activities in and outside the classroom
- Increasing international student admissions to the graduate programs



4 Administrative Response & Implementation Plan

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF ARTS & SCIENCE

October 2, 2018

Professor Susan McCahan
Vice-Provost Academic Programs
University of Toronto

Re: UTQAP cyclical review of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese

Dear Professor McCahan,

Along with the faculty, staff and students of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, I am pleased with the external reviewers' assessment of the Department and its programs: Spanish, B.A., Hons., (Specialist, Major, Minor); Portuguese, B.A., Hons., (Specialist, Major, Minor); and Spanish, M.A. and Ph.D. The reviewers complimented the Department on being *"a vibrant and healthy academic community, with scholars dedicated to their research in linguistics and literature as it relates to the Hispanic and Lusophone worlds, and to their students, undergraduate and graduate, in equal measure."*

The quality of this program notwithstanding, as per your letter dated July 24, 2018, the review report raises a number of issues and challenges. I am writing to address the areas of the review report that you identify as key. The response to these items and implementation plan are separated into immediate (6 months), medium (one to two years), and longer (three to five years) terms, where appropriate, along with who (Department, Dean) will take the lead in each area. The Department of Spanish and Portuguese has discussed the reviewers' comments through consultation with various groups and has begun to implement changes, where appropriate, that are consistent with the Department's mission.

The response to the Spanish and Portuguese review is taking place at the same time as the response to the review of Latin American Studies (LAS). LAS is currently a stand-alone program, existing outside any departmental or EDU structure, which poses problems as identified in the review. At this point, discussions are ongoing with the Dean's office, the Chair of Spanish and Portuguese, and the Director of the LAS program to determine whether it may be possible to better support both programs through a coordinated response. Possible areas for a collaborative response are identified below.

Faculty

The reviewers suggest hires in colonial Latin America and Portuguese literature to enhance the department's stature.

Medium-to-longer-term response: The Department of Spanish and Portuguese has expressed its interest in increasing its faculty complement through hires in Portuguese and in the Latin

American sector. In the Faculty of Arts and Science, units submit requests for new faculty positions through a formal process to the Faculty Appointments Committee (FAC). Units submit requests in March of each year for consideration by the FAC, which includes faculty representatives from across the three FAS sectors (the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Sciences) as well as the Colleges. After considering the full range of requests, the FAC makes recommendations to the Dean. Any request for additional faculty has an impact across the division, and as such, faculty appointments are considered not in isolation, but with respect to needs that exist across the Faculty.

In the interim, the Dean's office is engaged in discussions with the Chair of Spanish and Portuguese and the Director of the Latin American Studies program, as noted above. Both programs have identified areas of teaching needs in the Latin American sector. Should the change currently under discussion take place, the Dean's office has proposed the allocation of funds to Spanish and Portuguese, equivalent to one full-time faculty, that will support teaching in both programs, including areas recommended by the reviewers.

Administration

The reviewers commented on the high administrative workload and recommended additional staff resources to limit the amount of faculty time spent on administrative tasks.

Immediate-term response: The Faculty of Arts & Science has requested an HR Staffing Review of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese to determine the nature and degree of support required by the Department.

As noted above, the Department is currently engaged in discussions around bringing the Latin American Studies major and minor programs under the umbrella of the Spanish and Portuguese Department. This will likely entail additional administrative support. Should this change with respect to the LAS program take place, the Dean's office has proposed the allocation of an additional .5 FTE to assist with ongoing support required in Spanish and Portuguese as well as the LAS programs.

The reviewers also noted the high percentage of faculty serving in administrative roles in the Department.

A number of faculty members have been involved in leadership roles in other units, which has had an impact on the Department. Over time, this impact will be reduced as these leadership terms come to an end. For example, the term of the Director of the LAS program will end June 30, 2019.

The reviewers recommended wider promotion of the Latin American Literature activities.

Immediate-term response: The department has invited senior scholars in Latin American Studies to departmental colloquia and will continue to do so.

The department will increase the promotion of the events organized by the LAS program

The department has undertaken an initiative, discussed in the self-study, to increase connections with community organizations and with NGOs (e.g., Latin@s en Toronto, Collective 65).

Medium-term response: Two faculty members (Antebi & Rodríguez) have started a new series on Latin American literature with UTpress. This will increase the visibility of the program

As noted above, discussions are ongoing regarding the development of a closer relationship between LAS and Spanish and Portuguese. Such a change would increase the profile of Latin American teaching and research in the Department. The Department is also seeking to attract postdoctoral fellows in the Latin American sector.

Undergraduate

The reviewers commented that the engaging continuing faculty in language courses, while positive for department morale and collaboration, results in large class sizes that are not optimal for language acquisition.

The Department has worked to mitigate the effects of class size by adding contact hours (an additional hour was added to each course in the language sequence) and creating multiple opportunities for students to use the language outside the class (cultural events, support to conversation groups).

The Department is also evaluating the possibility of moving to a system of four-hour tutorials (capped at 25). Implementing such a system poses several challenges, and would in particular require a large number of TA hours. The Chair is leading a consultation process within the department and with the Vice-Dean, Faculty and Academic Life, to assess the feasibility of this option.

Finally, the Department is evaluating the possibility of a new half course (capped at 30) to attend to the needs of those students who have some knowledge of Spanish but are not yet ready to jump into SPA 220.

Immediate-term response: The Spanish and Portuguese Department Curriculum Committee continuously monitors and assesses students' performance in the language sequence. As noted above, the Department has already implemented changes to improve students' fluency. These measures include: (a) adding one contact hour to the three courses in their language sequence (the Department moved from three to four contact hours per week); (b) the introduction of cultural events and experiential learning opportunities (especially in SPA 220 and SPA 320); (c) conversation labs through a partnership with community organizations and the Spanish student organization; (d) increase in the number of listening and speaking activities in the tutorials; (e) the introduction of a new textbook, which has a very good online component (listening and speaking activities).

Medium-term response: The Department will work with the Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning, to examine the possibility of alternative sections of Spanish 100 for students who are interested in learning the language through less traditional methods that avoid the use of textbooks and focus on the development of the oral component.

The reviewers affirmed the importance of increasing opportunities for students and faculty to interact, for example through research activities in and outside the classroom.

Immediate-term response: The department has undertaken several initiatives to further involve undergraduate students in research. First, faculty members regularly engage work-study students in their projects. Second, the Portuguese sector has developed initiatives in which faculty take undergraduate students to conduct research abroad (e.g., ROP399 – Brazilian Indigenous Languages). Third, the Department has now created a mailing list and developed their social media presence to ensure that undergraduate students are aware of and involved in the activities organized by the Department. Finally, the Department now includes undergraduate representatives at department meetings.

Medium-term response: The Department has proposed the creation of a new fourth-year seminar to train program students in research methods appropriate to each of the disciplines taught in the department. The Department will work with the Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning, on the new course proposal.

The Department will meet with undergraduate students to develop initiatives aimed at supporting informal research gatherings in addition to more formal research colloquia.

Graduate

The reviewers suggested working with University administration to considering increasing international student admissions to the graduate programs at the Department.

Immediate-to-medium-term response: The availability of funded international graduate student spots is an ongoing challenge throughout the Faculty of Arts and Science. In a review of international student allocations in 2016, the Faculty recognized that the Department of Spanish and Portuguese had a lower than average allotment of international graduate student spots available. The Faculty has subsequently supported the Department's efforts to increase the number of international students by providing one additional permanent, funded international graduate student spot, international bridge spots and a quota top-up for Connaught awardees. As a result of these efforts, international graduate student intake increased from zero in 2015-16, to 2 in 2016-17, 3 in 2017-18 and 2 in 2018-19. (We note that the graduate unit has a funded Master's program and a 0.5 cap on the usage of spots for international Master's students. The fact that some of the students were only in the program for a year explains the differences in intake from year to year.) The Department would like to increase this intake further, which will be facilitated by the University's recent decision to reduce tuition fees paid by international PhD students to those paid by domestic PhD students. This policy change should have a significant positive impact on the Department's efforts to recruit and retain top international students.

To conclude, we appreciate that the external reviewers identified the Department of Spanish and Portuguese's strengths and noted a few areas for development. The Department has already begun to move forward with plans to address the recommendations as presented by the reviewers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Cameron".

David Cameron, CM, FRSC
Dean and Professor of Political Science

cc.

Laura Colantoni, Chair, Department of Spanish and Portuguese

Poppy Lockwood, Vice-Dean, Academic Planning and Strategic Initiatives, Faculty of Arts & Science

Daniella Mallinck, Director, Academic Programs, Planning and Quality Assurance, Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Andrea Benoit, Academic Review Officer, Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science

5 Executive Summary

The reviewers identified the programs' strengths as the department's ranking as first in Canada and in the top ten in North America; excellent experiential learning opportunities available to students due to strong relationships with local community groups; large, diverse faculty complement; and the department's vibrant and healthy academic community. The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: adding hires in Latin American and Portuguese literature to enhance the department's stature; addressing the high administrative workload and providing staff resources to limit the amount of faculty time spent on administrative tasks; engaging in wider promotion of the Latin American Literature activities; reconsidering the use of continuing faculty resources in large language courses; increasing opportunities for students and faculty to interact through research activities in and outside the classroom; and increasing international student admissions to the graduate programs. The Dean's Administrative Response describes the Faculty, unit and programs' responses to the reviewers' recommendations, including an implementation plan for any changes necessary as a result. The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P) concluded that there were no issues to be drawn to the attention of the Agenda Committee but requested a follow up report in one year to address the integration of the Latin American Studies program within the Department. The follow-up report will be considered by AP&P at the Cycle 2 meeting in 2019-20.