

# ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

## 2011-2012

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The planning and implementation of program-based assessment at Washburn University is guided by the goal to be able to answer four fundamental questions

- 1) What are we trying to do in terms of student learning?
- 2) How well are we doing?
- 3) Using the answers to questions 1 and 2, how can we improve?
- 4) How are we sharing the knowledge gained with our constituents?

Program student learning objectives are measurable and characterize what we want our students to know, to think and care about, or to be able to do.

Program assessment plans have been developed to include both direct (students demonstrate) and indirect (students or other reflect) measures. To the extent possible, the learning objectives have been linked to the appropriate curriculum (see Matrix of SLOs), and an assessment cycle has been established.

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### INSERT DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM

## Department of Modern Languages

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### MISSION

Consistent with the mission of the University, the Department of Modern Languages serves as the main source for studying world cultures in their own languages, thus preparing students to communicate in other languages and be knowledgeable about other cultures, so they can compare and connect their culture to others and become engaged citizens in the global community.

Faculty members and language instructors, trained in humanities and linguistics studies, strive to share their knowledge and understanding of diverse cultures. The department collaborates with many other units, such as Music, History, Business, Education, and the Honors program to offer a vast array of opportunities to students wanting to bridge discipline boundaries. Through study abroad programs, and service opportunities at the local and international level, the department continues to support the mission of the university in developing skilled and informed global citizens. The department offers a minor in International Studies, majors and minors in French, German, and Spanish, and maintains course offerings in Japanese and Chinese.

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### Major/Specialization/Concentration Being Assessed

**Major in a Modern Language (French, German, Spanish)**

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### Assessment Period Covered by this Report

**Summer 2011 to Spring 2012**

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### SUMMARY

Provide a brief summary of assessment results. Include any changes to your assessment plan which will be implemented in the upcoming year. Then, proceed to the next page to begin completing information for each individual Student Learning Outcome.

The Department of Modern Languages had the following 15 graduates during the time period covered in this report:

SUMMER 11→0.

FALL 11→Brigit Bowers (FR), Kathryn Jackson (GE), Colin Kostelecky (GE), Lindsay Edwards (SP), Cecilia Gonzales-Rebeck (SP), Alcira Hernandez (SP), Jennifer Loucks (SP), Claudia Saucedo (SP).

SPRING 12→ Rachel Buthorne (FR), Michele Flanagan (FR), Darris Hawks (SP), Joshua Nemecheck (SP), Christen Secrest (SP), Darrin Simmons (SP).

Isaac Fisher (SP) is pending, still waiting some study abroad grades from his studies in France this spring semester. When those hours arrive (unofficially, it seems he has passed his classes), he will graduate.

We also have 4 students who will most likely graduate this summer 2012, since they only have 6 or less hours required to graduate, and are currently enrolled in the summer semester: Bridget Walter, Abigail Squires, Denise Weaver, and Dennis Cook (all in Spanish).

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In order to assess the goals of our program, students majoring in any of the program major languages (French, German, or Spanish) are required to maintain and submit at regular intervals a portfolio which addresses the course work the student pursues in completion of the major. Materials included in the portfolios demonstrate the students' growth in the mastery of the language skills and the content of the course work. We grade the 7 objectives corresponding to the 4 main outcomes of our program along the following criteria: Excellent, Good, and Fair (criteria based on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages' standards).

Of the 15 students graduated in fall and spring (including Mr. Fisher), only 13 portfolios were evaluated. The other 2 students did not submit one because of several reasons (internal miscommunication in one case and the other one was a transfer student who only took a couple of courses with us).

Of the 13 portfolios assessed, all studied abroad through Washburn at one point in their studies (some for a whole year). The 2 students that did not submit a portfolio have also studied abroad, one at his previous institution, and the other one through a Washburn faculty led course abroad.

Of the 13 portfolios assessed, 7 students were considered excellent and 6 good. None of our graduates was only fair. Overall since they were above fair at the graduation level, we consider our program goals met. In view of our results this year, we plan to move up our requirement and as a benchmark for next year: we plan to graduate all our students at the "good" level in our portfolio (see portfolio rubric at the end of this document).

We have also polished our Assessment Matrix. In the past, we have included as a capital part of our program the study abroad component. However, since not all our majors are required to study abroad (although most of them do it), we were notified that we shouldn't include study abroad in our Assessment Matrix. Therefore, at our annual retreat this year, we decided to eliminate the Study Abroad option and delete it from our matrix. We have also reevaluated in the other four required courses which SLO's were only taught and which ones were assessed in the class. We have discovered that our capstone course, FR/GE/SP400 basically assesses all seven SLO's. You can see a copy of the new Assessment Matrix for Modern Languages at the end of this document.

We have established these three benchmarks for next year in terms of program assessment:

- 1) As stated earlier, we plan to graduate all our students at the "good" level in our portfolio (see portfolio rubric at the end of this document).
- 2) So far we have a 75% success rate in passing the PRAXIS exam since it was implemented as a requirement to obtain the teaching licensure in the State of Kansas (for our graduates who go into teaching at the P-12 level). We would like to increase that to 80% in the future. The problem is that some years we do not have graduates in that program, and other years we have students who will only take the Washburn licensure, which means they take the test but didn't take enough coursework with us, since they transfer that from other schools. We are evaluating some mechanisms to address this issue.
- 3) We plan to initiate and institute STAMP as an assessment tool for our program. One of our main shortcomings is the unavailability of comparative data with other national programs (that is, how do our graduates do compared to those of such and such school?). In order to solve this, and in view of the lack of a national standardized organization or test, we are looking at STAMP (Standards-Based Measurement of Proficiency). STAMP 4S/4Se is an objective, real-world, web-based assessment used to determine language proficiency at any point along the learning path. When repeated periodically, STAMP assessments help educators monitor and evaluate progress through scaled scoring. It is now a commercial program developed after an educational initiative, and it covers the three languages in which we offer a B.A., French, German, and Spanish. We plan to explore costs and options in the fall, and begin implementation in our 202 level in the spring.

**Submitted by (Miguel González-Abellás)**

(May 29, 2012)

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## **OUTCOME 1 (State Student Learning Outcome)**

Students majoring in French, German or Spanish should be linguistically competent in the target language:

1. Demonstrate the ability to engage in conversation by providing and obtaining information, expressing ideas and emotions, and exchanging opinions in the target language on a wide variety of topics with accurate pronunciation and intonation.

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### **Outcome 1a: Means of Assessment & Criteria for Success**

A grade of C or better in the classes taken in the language is proof of accomplishment. This is a cumulative grade, not attached to any single particular course. In some cases (depending on the advisor), there's audiovisual material in the graduating portfolio the students submit before graduation. We will work to make inclusion of audiovisual performance samples in the portfolio a standard.

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### **Outcome 1b: Assessment Results**

Overall they were above fair at the graduation level. Therefore, based on the results, we consider our program goals met.

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### **Outcome 1c: Use of Results**

In terms of level, we seem to be doing fine. The Department would love to have the possibility of a national-regional test to compare our institution to others in the region-nation. The Department has created a subcommittee to explore the possibility of using STAMP (a standard's test used in other states, which includes oral proficiency needed to measure this outcome). We explored this option a few years ago, but due to the financial situation at that time, we were informed that there was no money available for that purpose. Since the economy is changing and financial support is again available, we will explore this year the possibility of implementing this test to our majors. So far, we rely on indirect measures, such as the PRAXIS exam taken by students who go into teaching (but no student has taken the PRAXIS this year) and admission to graduate school (one was admitted this year).

In terms of our assessment matching the standards of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), our excellent matches ACTFL's advanced (and the occasional proficient), our good would be ACTFL's high-intermediate, and our fair ACTFL's low-intermediate.

The result from these 13 portfolios did not indicate any programmatic changes; in fact, we seem to be doing well. Our portfolios kept showing that most of the students who studied or spent time abroad jumped from their previous level to the next. Therefore, at this point, and based on these results we will continue to encourage our majors to make study abroad an integral part of their studies at Washburn, supporting their efforts with generous scholarships and direct exchange or faculty-led programs. We are satisfied to report that almost all our majors spent time abroad at least for a summer, activity that also benefits the transformational experience in international education.

### **Outcome 1d: Mechanisms for Sharing Results**

The results of this report are shared in multiple ways among our constituencies:

1. Among faculty members at the beginning of the semester in our first departmental faculty meeting.
2. Both the annual report and the annual assessment are posted on line in the Modern Languages website.
3. These documents are also shared with students and parents at our annual honors banquet in April.

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## OUTCOME 2 (State Student Learning Outcome)

Students majoring in the target language should be linguistically competent in the target language:

2. Demonstrate the ability to understand, interpret, discuss and explain a variety of written and spoken non-technical topics.
3. Demonstrate the ability to use with accuracy the grammar, syntax, basic vocabulary and idioms of the target language.
4. Demonstrate a functional contrastive knowledge of the grammar, syntax and basic idiom of the target language and English.

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### Outcome 2a: Means of Assessment & Criteria for Success

A grade of C or better in class (especially FR/GE/SP311—Grammar Review—and FR/GE/SP312—Composition) is proof of accomplishment. Materials from these two courses are included in the portfolios (tests from 311 and final compositions from 312), so we are allowed a second look before the majors graduate.

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### Outcome 2b: Assessment Results

Of these 15 students graduating, only 13 portfolios were evaluated. One of the students whose portfolio was not submitted was a transfer student who also didn't take SP311 and SP312 with us. The other 14 students who took both classes (311 and 312) got a grade of C or better. Detailed grades for these graduates in these courses are as follow:

FR311: A-3; GE311: A-2; SP311: A-4; B-4; C-1; waived-1 (transfer student). Total: 9 students with A, 4 with B, 1 with C, and one who had the class waived before coming to Washburn.

FR312: A-3; GE312: A-2; SP312: A-6; B-3; C-1. Total: 11 students with A, 3 with B and 1 with C.

In terms of grades, they all received C or above (in fact, only 1 C in 311 and 1 in 312). Their portfolios show all well that, overall, they were above fair at the graduation level. Therefore, based on the results, we consider our program goals met.

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### Outcome 2c: Use of Results

In terms of level, we seem to be doing fine. We have concerns with transfer students, as the case with one of our graduates this semester demonstrates: if these courses (311 and 312) transfer from another institution, we don't have control. The only option to solve this would be to require everybody to take these courses, but that would create a problem since Banner would consider the courses duplicates (if they already transferred with a C or better).

As stated in the previous outcome, the Department would love to have the possibility of a national-regional test to compare our institution to others in the region-nation. We have created a subcommittee to explore the possibility implementing such a test this coming year.

The result from these 13 portfolios did not indicate any programmatic changes.

Our portfolios kept showing that most of the students who studied or spent time abroad jumped from their previous level to the next. Therefore, at this point, and based on these results we will continue to encourage our majors to make study abroad an integral part of their studies at Washburn, supporting their efforts with generous scholarships and direct exchange or faculty-led programs. We are satisfied to report that almost all our majors spent time abroad at least for a summer, activity that also benefits the transformational experience in international education.

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## OUTCOME 3 (State Student Learning Outcome)

Students majoring in the target language should be literate in the culture(s) of the countries studied:

5. Understand relationships between historical and current practices and perspectives of the culture(s) where the language is spoken.
6. Understand the institutions, history, social practices and literary tradition(s) of the country(ies) and culture(s) in which the language is spoken in their socio-historical background and/or their literary significance.

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### Outcome 3a: Means of Assessment & Criteria for Success

A grade of C or better in class (we have single out especially FR/GE/SP331—Intro to Literature) is proof of accomplishment.

Samples of this class performance are included in the students graduating portfolio.

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### Outcome 3b: Assessment Results

Of these 15 students graduating, only 13 portfolios were evaluated. One of the students whose portfolio was not submitted was a transfer student who also didn't take SP331 with us. The other 14 students who took 331 got a grade of C or better.

The students graduating this year have the following record in this class:

FR331: A-2; B-1 (one A was on a study abroad equivalent course).

GE331: A-2.

SP331: A-4; B-5.

Total grades across languages: 8 students with A; 6 students with B. No C or below.

Overall they were above fair at the graduation level. Therefore, based on the results, we consider our program goals met.

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### Outcome 3c: Use of Results

In terms of level, we seem to be doing fine. We have concerns with transfer students, as the case with one of our graduates this semester demonstrates: if this course (331) transfers from another institution, we don't have control. The only option to solve this would be to require everybody to take it at Washburn, but that would create a problem since Banner would consider this course a duplicate (if it has already transferred with a C or better).

As stated in the previous outcome, the Department would love to have the possibility of a national-regional test to compare our institution to others in the region-nation. We have created a subcommittee to explore the possibility implementing such a test this coming year.

The result from these 13 portfolios did not indicate any programmatic changes.

Our portfolios kept showing that most of the students who studied or spent time abroad jumped from their previous level to the next. Therefore, at this point, and based on these results we will continue to encourage our majors to make study abroad an integral part of their studies at Washburn, supporting their efforts with generous scholarships and direct exchange or faculty-led programs. We are satisfied to report that almost all our majors spent time abroad at least for a summer, activity that also benefits the transformational experience in international education.

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### Outcome 3d: Mechanisms for Sharing Results

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## OUTCOME 4 (State Student Learning Outcome)

Students majoring in the target language will have the tools for continual learning:

7. Demonstrate a functional knowledge of the strategies for independent and continuing learning of the foreign language.

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### Outcome 4a: Means of Assessment & Criteria for Success

In order to assess this goal, all graduating majors in Modern Languages are required to take FR/GE/SP400 Senior Thesis. This is a capstone project in which, under guidance from a faculty mentor, each student prepares a final project that demonstrates that the student is able to work on his/her own in terms of finding a topic, doing the corresponding research, writing a long paper on the topic in the target language (25 to 30 pages, typed double space, with quotations and bibliography), and polishing the product towards its public sharing via a departmental showcase or any other venue such as *Apeiron* or Day of Transformation. This year, two of this senior thesis in Spanish led to oral presentations (in Spanish) at *Apeiron*, whereas other projects were showcased in the department. The students must include a copy of the senior thesis in their graduation portfolio.

A grade of C or better in FR/GE/SP400—Senior Thesis is proof of accomplishment.

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### Outcome 4b: Assessment Results

All our students obtained an A in this class during this academic year, so we consider this SLO met (However, A is not a given for having taken the class: as a note, we will have two students graduating this summer who have not performed that well, so one received a B and the other a C in SP400 Senior Thesis).

As a benchmark, we plan to graduate all our students with at least a B in their FR/GE/SP400 class in the future.

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### Outcome 4c: Use of Results

In terms of level, we seem to be doing fine. We don't have any major concerns with transfer students, since everybody graduating from Washburn with a modern language degree needs to go through this class with us.

As stated in the previous outcome, the Department would love to have the possibility of a national-regional test to compare our institution to others in the region-nation. We have created a subcommittee to explore the possibility implementing such a test this coming year. Until that happens, we still rely on our grades and our students' portfolios.

The result from these 13 portfolios did not indicate any programmatic changes.

Our portfolios kept showing that most of the students who studied or spent time abroad jumped from their previous level to the next. Therefore, at this point, and based on these results we will continue to encourage our majors to make study abroad an integral part of their studies at Washburn, supporting their efforts with generous scholarships and direct exchange or faculty-led programs. We are satisfied to report that almost all our majors spent time abroad at least for a summer, activity that also benefits the transformational experience in international education.

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