

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

2012-2013

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.

INSERT DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM

Department of Modern Languages

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 Latin, Japanese, and Chinese. The Modern Languages Department also plays an important role in the Latin American, Caribbean, and Latino/a Studies minor.

Major/Specialization/Concentration Being Assessed

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

Assessment Period Covered by this Report

Summer 2012 to Spring 2013

SUMMARY

The Department of Modern Languages uses a cumulative portfolio as the main means of assessment for its programs and graduates. Each graduate has to present the portfolio to his/her advisor at the end of each semester to see what materials are worthy of inclusion for the courses in the major taken that semester. The portfolio is archived in the department once the student graduates, and upon graduation we assess each portfolio using a rubric which details each of the departmental goals.

We do not have a national exam or any other means to assess our graduates, not because those means do not exist, but because due to budget concerns, whenever we have requested financial support to purchase them, we have been rejected (either “there is no money” or “there is no certainty at this point if there will be money” are the two answers we are given; and we do not have money in our budget to allocate for purchasing a national test.

In November 2012 we decided to change our assessment. Instead of a cumulative portfolio we will be using a

selective portfolio, to be archived electronically, and to be defended orally by the student before the faculty in an oral exam in the target language. This will allow us to accomplish several things:

1. Ensure that there will be an oral component as part of the process, since not all instructors/courses videotape all classes, so some students right now don't have any audiovisual item in their graduating portfolios that allows us to assess goal number one.
2. Create a more effective control mechanism, guaranteeing that all students comply with the graduating portfolio (at present we have issues with transfer students).
3. Save space: our cumulative portfolio is sometimes bulky, and we are beginning to experience problems in terms of physically archiving them.

The new portfolio will be composed of the following items:

1. A reflective essay
2. Three significant papers
 - a. Senior Thesis
 - b. A sample from a literature course
 - c. A sample from another class (preferably culture)
3. An oral defense (question & answer in the target language)

This new format will be implemented as an elective form this next academic year (2013-2014) for those students who prefer this new format and it will be implemented mostly for all graduates in spring 2015.

This academic year we graduated the following 14 students during the time period covered in this report:

SUMMER 12→ Bradley Bell (GE), Abigail Squires (SP), Caitlin Rodenbeek (FR), Bridget Walter (SP).

FALL 12→ Dennis Cook (SP), Fatma Epps (GE), Meghan Ryan (GE), Tom Spresser (GE), Denise Weaver (SP).

SPRING 13→ Maria Cangiani (SP), Shane Kennedy (GE), Samantha Leeds (SP), Magda Medina (SP), Karla Perez-Sanchez (SP).

Of these 14 students, only 8 portfolios were evaluated. The other 6 students did not submit one because of several reasons (internal miscommunication in two cases (one involving a transfer student), accidental loss of portfolio in another case, and the other three were students who began the program years ago, before we implemented the portfolio system (believe it or not, one of them was already in the program when I first came to Washburn 17 years ago!).

Of the 8 portfolios assessed, 6 studied abroad through Washburn at one point in their studies (either a semester, a summer or participated in a faculty-led program). Another student had been abroad before coming to Washburn. One has never been abroad (she was born abroad but came to the U.S. as a small child). We graded the 7 objectives corresponding to the 3 main goals along the following criteria:

Excellent, Good, and Fair. (See *ModLangs Major Portfolio Assessment Rubric*).

Of the 8 portfolios assessed, 5 students were considered excellent, 2 good, and only one fair (this was the student who has not been abroad and she struggled a lot and didn't perform well in some of the classes for the major).

Overall since they were fair or above at the graduation level, we consider our program goals met.

Our goal from last year to move up our requirement and set as a benchmark to graduate all our students at the "good" level in our portfolio failed because of this one student, so we will try again for next year to graduate everybody at the "good" level at least.

Submitted by (Miguel González-Abellás)

(June 27, 2013)

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.

Outcome 1a: Means of Assessment & Criteria for Success

In order to assess the goals of our majors, 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. However, at present, sometimes we have portfolios with no audiovisual material to allow us evaluate properly the skills of the students. Some instructors videotape oral presentations in class that are later included in the portfolio. Therefore we based our assessment on course grades: oral engagement runs through all language courses in the program. From the beginning levels, students are exposed to the target language in terms of listening and speaking, and they are asked questions and need to provide a logical oral answer or response to those questions. There's no particular course for this goal, although Conversation is the class that best reflects the oral component of the program, along with upper division courses in culture and literature.

A grade of C or better in class is proof of accomplishment.

As stated earlier in this report, we plan to include an oral defense of the portfolio and use that as our assessment for this goal.

Outcome 1b: Assessment Results

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

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. However, such a test is not required and the options available cost money. We were pursuing one option (STAMP, which includes oral proficiency needed to measure this outcome) but three years ago, due to the current financial situation, we were informed that there was no money available for such a thing. We tried again this year, but we were told that in view of the uncertainty with the Kansas budget, we could not be guaranteed that money would be available to purchase a national test again. Therefore we rely on indirect measures, such as the PRAXIS exam taken by students who go into teaching (none 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 8 portfolios did not indicate any programmatic changes: with the exception of one student who struggled through the program, all the others did very 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 among faculty members at the beginning of the semester in our first departmental faculty meeting. Both the annual report and the annual assessment are posted on line in the Modern Languages website, and these documents are also shared with students and parents at our annual honors banquet in April.

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.

Outcome 2a: Means of Assessment & Criteria for Success

In order to assess the goals of our majors, 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.

A grade of C or better in class (especially the required courses for the major FR/GE/SP311—Grammar Review—and FR/GE/SP312—Composition; both required for the major) is proof of accomplishment.

Outcome 2b: Assessment Results

Of these 14 students, only 8 portfolios were evaluated, 1 in French, 3 in German, and 4 in Spanish.

We graded the 7 objectives corresponding to the 3 main goals along the following criteria:

Excellent, Good, and Fair.

Portfolios: 5 students were considered excellent, 2 good, and 1 fair.

Grades:

13 students (all students graduating minus one) took 311 or the previous 211. Results:

- 3 students earned a C,
- 2 students earned a B,
- 8 students earned an A

All 14 students took 312. Results:

- 2 students earned a C,
- 5 students earned a B,
- 7 students earned an A

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

Outcome 2c: Use of Results

In terms of level, we seem to be doing fine. As stated earlier (see Outcome 1c), the Department would love to have the possibility of a national-regional test to compare our institution to others in the region-nation. However, such a test is not required and the options available cost money.

The result from these 8 portfolios and from the grades of the required courses did not indicate any programmatic changes: with the exception of one student who struggled through the program, all the others did very 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 2d: Mechanisms for Sharing Results

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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.

Outcome 3a: Means of Assessment & Criteria for Success

In order to assess the goals of our majors, 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.

A grade of C or better in class (especially FR/GE/SP331—Intro to Literature; required for the major) is proof of accomplishment.

Outcome 3b: Assessment Results

Of these 14 students, only 8 portfolios were evaluated, 1 in French, 3 in German, and 4 in Spanish.

We graded the 7 objectives corresponding to the 3 main goals along the following criteria:

Excellent, Good, and Fair.

Portfolios: 5 students were considered excellent, 2 were considered good and 1 fair.

Grades: 12 of the 14 students took 331. Two students did not have this class because they were in the program before it was required. Another student who was not required to take it, chose to do it as an elective.

Results:

- 2 students earned a C,
- 4 students earned a B,
- 6 students earned an A (one was a transferred class).

Overall they were above fair at the graduation level. Therefore, based on the results, we consider our program goals met. As a benchmark, we try that 75% of our majors get a B or A in this class. This has been met this year.

Outcome 3c: Use of Results

In terms of level, we seem to be doing fine. As stated earlier (see Outcome 1c), the Department would love to have the possibility of a national-regional test to compare our institution to others in the region-nation. However, such a test is not required and the options available cost money.

The result from these 8 portfolios and from the grades of the required course (FR/GE/SP331) did not indicate any programmatic changes: with the exception of one student who struggled through the program, all the others did very 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 3d: Mechanisms for Sharing Results

The results of this report are shared among faculty members at the beginning of the semester in our first departmental faculty meeting. Both the annual report and the annual assessment are posted on line in the Modern Languages website, and these documents are also shared with students and parents at our annual honors banquet in April.

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.

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 (25 to 30 pages) on the topic in the target language, 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 all 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.

Outcome 4b: Assessment Results

All our students obtained at least a C, so we consider this SLO met. We did have two weak students who only obtained a C. One student earned a B and 10 earned A's. One of the students who had been in the program for a long time, before senior thesis became a requirement, opted for not taking it, whereas the other two who did not have it as a requirement, opted to complete it. As a benchmark, we plan to graduate all our students with at least a B in their FR/GE/SP400 class in the future.

Outcome 4c: Use of Results

In terms of level, we seem to be doing fine. As stated earlier (see Outcome 1c), the Department would love to have the possibility of a national-regional test to compare our institution to others in the region-nation. However, such a test is not required and the options available cost money.

The result from these 8 portfolios and from the grades of the required course (FR/GE/SP400) did not indicate any programmatic changes: with the exception of two students who only managed to earn a C, all the others did very 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 4d: Mechanisms for Sharing Results

The results of this report are shared among faculty members at the beginning of the semester in our first departmental faculty meeting. Both the annual report and the annual assessment are posted on line in the Modern Languages website, and these documents are also shared with students and parents at our annual honors banquet in April.