

PROGRAM REVIEW 2008-2011

Division: INTERCULTURAL/INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Department or Program: SPANISH

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I. Description and Mission of the Program

- ◆ The Spanish Program considerably addresses: Transfer Basic Skills Career Other
- ◆ Elementary (first-year) Spanish courses provide an introduction to the language and cultures of Spanish-speaking world areas. Intermediate (second-year) courses focus on reading and discussion of texts dealing with the literature, arts, culture, history, and geography of the Spanish-speaking world. The two-year Spanish Conversation curriculum offers students the opportunity to develop accuracy and fluency in oral communication and listening comprehension skills. The one-year sequence of Elementary Spanish for the health professions offers development and practice of elementary language skills for health care professionals, and an introduction to selected cultural, geographical and linguistic aspects of Spanish-speaking world areas relevant to these professional fields.
- ◆ The Spanish Department's mission is reflected in the definition of objectives and expected outcomes described in the program's Course Outlines, which were written to reflect the program's concurrence with established ACTFL language proficiency and cultural literacy descriptions. The primary expected outcome of the program's mission is successful completion of Spanish GE courses for transfer to 4-year institutions.

B. Significant areas of strength.

- ◆ **The curriculum addresses a range of language goals and interests.** The Spanish program serves a diverse population with varying reasons for acquiring language proficiency in Spanish. Many students enrolled in GE classes, particularly in the evening schedule, are taking Spanish courses to fulfill career objectives. Others are linked by family or personal relationship to local Hispanic communities and are seeking to perfect their Spanish language skills in the formal academic setting of our GE curriculum, while the Beginning and Intermediate Conversation courses provide more extended practice for the development of oral communication skills. The Spanish for Health Professionals courses are offered on-site and specifically address the particular language proficiency needs of health professionals.
- ◆ **Definition of instructional objectives and learning outcomes.** All Spanish course outlines reflect the Department's commitment to instructional objectives that define expected language proficiency outcomes within the framework of language as an expression of culture. At each level of the two-year language sequence the study of structures and development of communication skills explores the geographical diversity of Spanish-speaking world areas various socioeconomic and cultural contexts. Throughout the two-year curriculum, there is an incremental examination of the diversity of Spanish-speaking peoples and cultures that promotes student engagement in critical thinking. Learners are actively invited to perform both objective and introspective analyses of their own cultures as encoded in their native languages, to then compare their findings to the diverse cultural perspectives that express themselves in Spanish, a language rich in lexical and geographical variations.

- ◆ **Online Resources.** The textbook used in the first-year Spanish sequence incorporates a companion web site that is now an integral component of instruction and common access point for all students enrolled in the first three quarters. It provides students with a portal containing a wide range of learning resources that current technology makes instantly available from any location beyond the classroom. The web site greatly facilitates e-mail communication between instructors and students, which is particularly important in addressing the diverse occupational and personal circumstances of community college students. The web site provides tutorial activities for building language skills in advance of required homework activities, a complete range of homework activities in all language skills, and assessment activities for self-evaluation of individual progress.

The web site also provides an optional virtual version of the textbook, which is much more economical for students with financial concerns, or who prefer online access to the required textbook.

- ◆ **Enrollment and retention.** There has been an increase in retention rates from 84% in 2006-07 to 87% for fiscal year 2007-08. This increase, while representing a continuing demand for Spanish to meet academic transfer requirements, also reflects an interest in the community, particularly the technology and health professions, in attaining Spanish language proficiency.
- ◆ **Curriculum.** 95% of Spanish Department courses are transferable; 100% of Spanish courses are degree applicable; Beginning and Intermediate Spanish offerings are General Education courses.

C. The Spanish Department identifies the following areas for improvement:

- ◆ The anticipated **Mediated Learning Center**, while still two years away from completion, will begin to meet the need of all World Languages Programs for a language lab and classrooms spaces that will provide the technology resources and space configuration flexibility to address our urgent need for direct classroom access to language learning resources that are not currently available in our classrooms. Full-time Spanish Instructor Cristina Moreno represents all World Languages in the IIS Division on the Mediated Learning Center Committee, which oversees the design and development of the MLC.
- ◆ The department must address the need to incorporate **in-class instructional assistants**, particularly into Spanish 1 and Spanish 2 classes, to meet in a more prompt and effective manner the needs of students at risk for non-success. It is anticipated that the consistent use of in-class tutors would significantly reduce the recent increase in the rates of non-success. Higher non-success rates from 2006-07 to 2007-08 fiscal years are observable in all ethnic designations: Asian (2% to 7%), Black (7% to 17%), Filipino (4% to 7%), Hispanic (5% to 10%), Pacific Islander (0% to 17%), White (4% to 9%). In addressing the average 5% increase in non-success rates for most groups, the Department must focus particularly on the 10% increase among Black and Pacific Islander students. Tutorial Services provide out-of-class individual assistance to at-risk students, but tutorial sessions are one or two hours a week, which may be insufficient to address in a timely fashion the particular challenges of at-risk students. In-class tutors, in this regard, would much more effectively provide immediate support and remediation under direct Instructor supervision, with no significant interruption or disruption of class activities.

More often than not, students who are most in need of help are the ones who hesitate to approach student services or ask for assistance. With tutorial help in the classroom, help comes to the student who would otherwise not be likely to seek it outside of the classroom.

- D. Expected learning outcomes** for GE classes focus on the applicability of language skills to transfer and degree requirements, career objectives, and community outreach and involvement. The Spanish program is fundamentally concerned with three aspects of the students' learning process: (1) facilitating the acquisition of the language skills needed to meet both short and long-term educational and occupational goals; (2) expanding students' appreciation of the Spanish language as the most essential and first line of approach to Hispanic communities in this region of California or wherever in the United States students' career needs and personal interests may lead them, and (3) understanding the acquisition of language proficiency as a process commensurate with the acquisition of cultural awareness and literacy.

II. Retention and Growth

- A. During the academic year 2007-2008, while retention rates increased by 3% from 2006-07, there has been a slight decrease in overall enrollment figures: from 1,783 in fiscal year 2006-07, to 1752 in 2007-08.
- B. Over the past three years, there has been a slight growth in enrollment by Black students (65, 67 and 89% respectively for years 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2008-09, with comparable increases for Filipino students, and slightly higher increases for Pacific Islanders. Hispanic student enrollment has remained constant over the three-year period.
- C. The language basic skills identified by the Statewide Basic Skills Initiative, while targeting English, reading, writing and ESL, are also addressed through the Spanish curriculum in terms of developing essential language skills in all functions of communication: oral proficiency, listening comprehension, reading and writing competence, and cultural literacy. Students who come to Spanish classes with strong English language skills are almost invariably highly successful in second-language acquisition.

III. Student Equity

The faculty of all World Languages in the IIS Division share the common concern that students enrolled in our classes who lack the basic skills stipulated as pre-requisites in our Course Outlines, significantly impact success rates for our programs, not only for those at-risk students with developing basic skills, but also for their classmates whose rate of progress is affected by the additional time and attention that at-risk students require during class activities. In the previous section, it was noted that there exists a need for in-class Spanish-speaking assistants to support Instructors in the classroom, particularly at the beginning levels, notably Spanish 1 and 2, where success is essential to maintaining a healthy continuity from one language level to the next. Students who, at the lower course levels become discouraged regarding their ability to succeed, will tend to either drop the course or to continue on (but achieve limited success and begin the next level with significant challenges), or to remain in the class but fail to meet the requirements for successful completion.

It is a shared view of the Spanish faculty and our colleagues in other languages, that the gap between students who possess the expected basic skills for successful outcomes in our classes, and those students who are lacking such skills, is perhaps the most significant

factor in non-success rates and should be regarded as a high priority for corrective measures at this time.

A challenge in reaching the goal of student equity is having at our disposal the instructional and technological supports that are needed to close the gap. It is anticipated that the current gap in student outcomes will be much better addressed when we are able to count on in-class tutors and to teach our classes in the Mediated Learning Center language classrooms, where technology access, and classroom designs and configurations, will strongly support instruction and produce significantly higher retention and success rates.

Instructors in the Department have shared their expertise in the Spanish language with campus programs and offices whose focus is outreach to and recruitment of at-risk high school students of Hispanic ancestry, including undocumented students. By providing accurate English-Spanish translations of brochures/letters that are instrumental to reach the parents of this population of students, the Department has indirectly collaborated to decrease the equity gap of this target group.

Instructors in the Department maintain close collaboration ties with the LEAD program (its student members and advisor Marc Coronado), by promoting pride in the study and use of the Spanish language and by providing and supervising translations that are instrumental in some of the campus workshops and/or events serving students of Hispanic ancestry. This quarter, materials were translated to instruct undocumented students about their rights to college education through the AB540 law. In addition, our department helped identify a Spanish speaking immigration lawyer (an alumnus of several Spanish courses at De Anza) who provided his pro bono services as a panelist in an AB540 event hosted by LEAD and the Latino/a Heritage Program.

Together, full and part time instructors in the Department represent a variety of countries of origin and cultural backgrounds, with which students of target groups can identify. Our instructors foster and mentor students informally, sometimes on a one-on-one basis, and at other times in the classroom, by validating the cultural backgrounds of these target groups in class activities and discussions. Our instructors acknowledge and honor the cultural roots of varying target groups as powerful elements that have shaped the Spanish language or Hispanic cultures. For instance, students' cultural pride and awareness are validated when students themselves are asked to identify elements of their own African or native American roots that have shaped Hispanic cultures (e.g., music, food, rituals for remembering the dead, etc.), or conversely, when they are asked to reflect on how Spanish has influenced other cultures and languages, such as Filipino, and similarly, the English language itself in the United States.

IV. Budget Limitations

- A. To be effective on a departmental level, the integration of in-class assistants requires funding that will guarantee instructors a continuity of support from quarter to quarter. Without a guarantee of tutor availability, sporadic assistance will yield inconsistent results and would in the long run prove to be a wasteful use of funds. The Spanish Department, in consultation with the Division Dean and the District, needs to ascertain the level of funding that would be available initially for one academic year, the time that would be required to derive reliable statistics of success and expected outcomes.
- B. The Spanish Department does not envision the elimination or significant reduction of its program. Our daytime classes enjoy robust enrollment, with waiting lists, of students who take GE Spanish courses to meet transfer and graduation goals. Our evening GE classes are also generally filled to capacity, often with substantial waiting lists. Reducing Spanish

course offerings would significantly impact the WSCH in the IIS Division, and would most certainly impact student outcomes, as it would result in fewer class sections with unmanageably large enrollment, which in turn tends to generate lower retention and success rates. Many area professionals take evening classes to meet career and occupational goals. If deprived of the opportunity to study Spanish at De Anza College, they would migrate to evening classes offered by other college districts, since the evening student population is for the most part unable to attend classes in the daytime.

One budget limitation that has been known to impact some students' ability to remain in a class, is financial need. There is a limited Division budget for book vouchers at the beginning of each quarter, some book loans are also available at the district level, and there are two or three copies on reserve for use at the library. However, these resources do not cover all students in need who might enroll in a class they would not otherwise take, or drop a class in view of the textbook cost. While in the large context of Program Review this may not be viewed as a major budget consideration, in all probability a significant number of financially at risk students, often those who are also academically at risk, would be very encouraged to enroll and/or stay in class if the cost of the textbook can be guaranteed for them.