

Assessment Plan for the Department of African Languages and Literature May 2006

The Department of African Languages and Literature, founded in 1964, is the only such department in the United States, and one of a few outside of Africa. We offer three degrees: the BA, MA, and PhD. Our mission is to teach and conduct research in the areas of African languages, linguistics, literature, and oral traditions, with an emphasis on analytical and methodological tools that enable our students to work effectively and imaginatively in these four areas. These areas are, in fact, not mutually exclusive: the interconnections of these disciplines are studied closely and creatively. It is through the linkages between these disciplines that the Department makes its most significant and original contributions to knowledge.

The Department's mission is also to produce graduate students who are both capable of conducting original research as well as communicating their knowledge through the teaching of African languages, linguistics, oral traditions, and literature – students who will meaningfully contribute to the future strength and health of these fields and who will carry our work to other institutions both here and abroad. Through the teaching and research conducted by both students and faculty we strive to inform and define, develop and give richness to our several disciplines, thereby lending a shaping influence to the field in general.

As importantly, we seek to have an impact on the larger university community and beyond through our work with undergraduate students, as we cultivate their interests, give depth and breadth to their education, work to eliminate ruinous stereotypes, and foster intercultural understanding.

Over the past 19 years through June 2005, we have averaged about 2 graduates in each of three degree programs (to be more precise, 44 BA degrees, 44 MA degrees, and 32 PhD degrees).

Table 1 below illustrates our goals and assessment tools for each of our programs. In this table we have grouped the eight goals covering all of our degree programs into three groups, labeled A, B, C, respectively. We plan to carry out our assessment in periodic stages in three-year consecutive cycles, with the three years of each cycle to focus on assessment of at least one of the three sets of goals. As is shown in the timeline specified in **Table 2**, associated with each year of a given cycle is an assessment of one of these groups of goals. Thus, in the first year of each cycle -- i.e., the Spring of years 2007, 2010, and 2013, respectively -- we plan to assess Group A goals; in second year, Group B goals; and in the third year, Group C goals. In the Spring of each year with Department plans to meet to discuss the assessment of the goals set for that particular year.

Table 1: Assessment of the Three Degree Programs in African Languages and Literature

| Group Code | GOALS | MEASURES | | |
|------------|--|--|--|--|
| | | BA | MA | PhD |
| A | 1. Attain proficiency in one or more African languages at the "intermediate-mid" (or higher) level on the ACTFL scale in the skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening comprehension, in addition to acquisition of cultural competency. The level of "intermediate-high" or higher is expected of those completing six or more semesters of a single language for the BA and PhD degrees. | 1. Analysis of exams and papers from 4th and 6th semester language courses. | 1. Analysis of exams and papers from 4th and 6th semester language courses. | 1. Analysis of exams and papers from 4th and 6th semester language courses. |
| | | 2. Administration of an OPI at the end of the 4th and 6th semesters. | 2. Administration of an OPI at the end of the 4th and 6th semesters. | 2. Administration of an OPI at the end of the 4th and 6th semesters. |
| | | 3. Administration of a non-graded test (not based on the curriculum) to test listening comprehension, reading, and writing skills. | 3. Administration of a non-graded test (not based on the curriculum) to test listening comprehension, reading, and writing skills. | 3. Administration of a non-graded test (not based on the curriculum) to test listening comprehension, reading, and writing skills. |
| A | 2. At the PhD level: With respect to at least one African language, acquisition of specialized knowledge of (1) the breadth of that language's literary and oral traditions through history and/or (2) the wide spectrum of issues of possible linguistic inquiry relevant to the family of languages of which it is a member. | Not applicable | Not applicable | Review of written work in courses, theses, and dissertations, in addition to oral exit interviews administered to graduates. |
| B | 3. Gain a general understanding of the linguistic structure of at least one African language, with knowledge of its morphology and syntax to a degree specified for each individual language. | Oral interview and/or review of test papers. | Oral interview and/or review of test papers. | Oral interview and/or review of test papers. |
| B | 4. Acquire analytical tools for the analysis of literary texts and/or linguistic data. | Examination of senior term papers. | Examination of term papers and MA theses. | Examination of term papers, MA theses, and PhD qualifying examinations and dissertations. |

| Group Code | GOALS | MEASURES | | |
|------------|--|--|---|--|
| | | BA | MA | PhD |
| B | 5. Acquire the analytical tools for the study of texts with approaches bringing to the fore the interplay between literary and linguistic features. | Oral interview of graduating seniors by a faculty committee and/or survey of senior term papers. | Oral interview of graduating MA students by a faculty committee and/or survey of MA theses. | Oral interview of graduating PhD students by a faculty committee and/or survey of PhD dissertations. |
| C | 6. Demonstrate the ability to teach a given African language using a proficiency based communicative approach | Not applicable | Video-taped class demonstration | Video-taped class demonstration |
| C | 7. Grow in the ability to both (1) frame for scholarly discussion literary, linguistic, and/or pedagogical issues and then (2) investigate these issues with imagination and creativity. | Survey of senior term papers. | Survey of MA theses. | Survey of PhD dissertations. |
| C | 8. Grow in the ability to write effectively and in conformity with established scholarly practice. | Survey of senior term papers. | Survey of MA theses. | Survey of PhD dissertations. |

Table 2: Implementation and Timeline.

| Cycle | A meeting will be convened annually to discuss the data collected and to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum. Achievement of the various goals will be assessed at least once every three years in a repeating cycle, as shown in the following chart: | | | |
|-------|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | Spring Semester of Given Calendar Year | Group A Goals | Group B Goals | Group C Goals |
| 1 | Year One -- 2007 | x | | |
| | Year Two -- 2008 | | x | |
| | Year Three -- 2009 | | | x |
| 2 | Year One -- 2010 | x | | |
| | Year Two -- 2011 | | x | |
| | Year Three -- 2012 | | | x |
| 3 | Year One -- 2013 | x | | |
| | Year Two -- 2014 | | x | |
| | Year Three --2015 | | | x |