



**College of Letters and Science  
Assessment Report  
African Languages and Literature  
May 1998**

**Department of African Languages and Literature**

**Abstract:**

The focus of the assessment activities for the Department of African Languages and Literature during the 1997-98 academic year has been on improving mechanisms for monitoring the progress of graduate students through their careers as well as the quality of their work. The following mechanisms are used for monitoring progress:

- an Admissions Committee reviews prospective students
- Director of Graduate Studies meets each semester with graduate students
- summaries of student progress are presented to the entire faculty once a year at a department meeting

The following mechanisms are used for monitoring quality:

- M.A. thesis evaluation
- Student colloquia
- Conference papers
- Awards

The following changes have been proposed as a result of the 1997-98 assessment activities:

- strongly recommend all students take course in language teaching pedagogy
- strongly recommend all students take seminars in literary theory and linguistic approaches to literature
- appoint Advising Committee in place of Director of Graduate Studies
- encourage graduate student online journal

**Assessment Tools Used:**

*Direct Indicators*

	Undergraduate Major	Graduate Program
National Exams	_____	<u>GRE (yearly)</u>
Local Exams	_____	<u>Language (yearly)</u>
Capstone Course(s)	_____	_____
Embedded Testing	_____	_____
Student Portfolios	_____	<u>To begin 12/1998</u>
Review theses and dissertations	_____	<u>Yearly</u>
Performance evaluations	_____	<u>Yearly</u>
Pre and Post Testing	_____	<u>Language To begin 10/1998</u>

***Indirect Indicators***

	Undergraduate Major	Graduate Program
Student Surveys	_____	_____
Exit Interviews	_____	_____
Alumni Surveys	_____	<u>To begin 9/1998</u>
Employer Surveys	_____	_____
External Reviews	_____	_____
	<b>Other Tools</b>	
M.A. thesis competition	_____	<u>Yearly review</u>
Student colloquia	_____	<u>Yearly</u>
Conference papers	_____	<u>Yearly</u>

**Narrative:**

The focus of the assessment activities for the Department of African Languages and Literature during the 1997-98 academic year has been on improving mechanisms for monitoring the progress of graduate students through their careers as well as the quality of their work. From 1992 to 1994, as a result of an internal review, the Department realized that an unacceptably high number of graduate students were not making satisfactory progress towards their degrees. To begin to remedy the situation the following steps were taken:

- an Admissions Committee was established to review prospective students
- a Director of Graduate Studies was appointed
- summaries of student progress were prepared for presentation to the entire faculty once a year at a department meeting

These mechanisms helped to insure that potential problems were noticed early enough to rectify them. Once satisfactory progress could be monitored, the Department was able to put more effort into assessing the quality of graduate student work. While we continue to rely on GRE scores, language placement and proficiency tests, course grades, and preliminary examinations, we have strengthened our efforts to evaluate the scholarly activities of our graduate students, including awards, publications, and presentations at conferences.

## Assessment Data:

A summary of our assessment data is presented below:

- M.A. thesis evaluation
  - Two theses nominated for African Studies Program Jordan Prize (one received award)
  - Two theses nominated for Midwestern Association of Graduate Schools Distinguished Master's Thesis Award (one was divisional winner for Humanities)
- Student colloquia
  - Peter Quella: "Aesthetic Considerations of Ditshomo"
  - Cheryl Sterling: "Goin' thru changes: Transformation, Identity and the African Woman's Quest for Self"
  - Cherif Correa: "History and Orality in Ayi Kwei Armah's Two Thousand Seasons and The Healers"
  - Shani Sellman: "Migrant Labor in South Africa: An Apartheid of the Family and Community"
  - Katrina Daly Thompson "Translating *Rungano*: Creating a Performance-Centered Text"
- Conference papers
  - Kevin Barrett: Fantasy, the Fantastic and Islamic Narratives (Conference on Marginalized Literatures, Montana, March 1998)
  - Nasrin Qader: Communication in Abdelatif Khatibi's *L'amour bilingue* (African Literature Association 24th Annual Conference, Texas, March 1998)
- Awards
  - FLAS Fellowships: 4
  - Foreign Travel Awards: 2
  - Teaching Fellows: 2
  - Fulbright Fellowships: 2
  - CASA (Arabic Abroad): 2
  - University Fellowships: (1 academic year; 1 first semester)
  - Advanced Opportunity Fellowships: 2
  - Vilas Fellowships: 2
  - Vilas Special Fellowship: 1
- Other assessment tools include:
  - graduate student scholarly activities reports (to be submitted December 1998)
  - alumni surveys (to begin in September 1998)