



University of Wisconsin-Madison

LATIN AMERICAN AND IBERIAN STUDIES PROGRAM

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Dec. 9, 1996

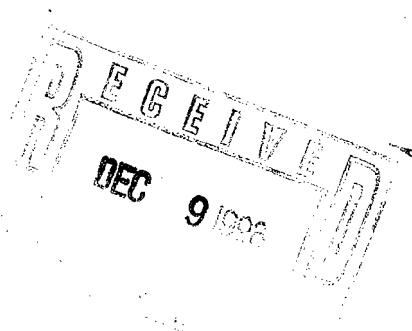
Dear Dean Certain:

I am enclosing the assesment plan proposal for the Latin American and Iberian Studies Program undergraduate major and Masters program. The assesment plan was unanimously approved by the LAISP Executive Committee on Dec. 7, 1996. We believe it is a viable plan, and if approved, we look forward to its implementation because we believe it will provide the kind of feedback which will surely enhance our already strong program.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Alda Blanco", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Alda Blanco
Director



LATIN AMERICAN AND IBERIAN STUDIES PROGRAM
College of Letters and Science
University of Wisconsin-Madison

**PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT OF THE
UNDERGRADUATE MAJOR AND GRADUATE PROGRAMS**

Preamble

In the fall of 1994, the College of Letters and Science informed all Departments and Programs of the requirement to develop an assessment plan for each undergraduate major and in graduate education by December 31, 1996. During the 1995-96 academic year, six departments on campus participated in a pilot program to develop assessments; these pilots, along with guidance from the College, have served as a basis for the design of the present plan in the Latin American and Iberian Studies Program (LAISP).

We understand that formal assessment of programs is a relatively new activity and as such is to a certain extent experimental. We do not expect that all aspects of this plan will meet with immediate success, but rather that we will be given the opportunity to adjust and review the plan in future years. As an interdisciplinary program with no faculty, we have designed a plan that we hope will not be an excessive burden on our affiliated faculty and very limited staff. Moreover, in the area of language training assessment we will have to depend on the goodwill of the Departments of Spanish and Portuguese and Anthropology, that house the language teaching staff for the language components of our programs, to provide the necessary evaluative testing. Our assessment plan, thus, completely relies on faculty that will also be involved in the assessment of their own departmental programs.

Educational Goals and Objectives

The Latin American and Iberian Studies Program has three fundamental missions: quality education and curriculum; intellectual and cultural enrichment; and infrastructural support for faculty, students, and academic staff engaged in research and learning on Latin America, Spain, and Portugal. These three missions are organically related to one another rather than rigidly separate. They all promote holistic, interdisciplinary approaches to the creation, learning, application, and dissemination of knowledge about Latin America, Spain, and Portugal, and a firm belief in the importance of such knowledge. To fulfill its mission, LAISP must excel in several areas.

1. Provide an interdisciplinary foundation for the study of Latin America, Spain, and Portugal.
2. Train students in a basic working knowledge of Spanish, Portuguese, or Quechua.
3. Provide concentration in one group of academic disciplines and/or professional schools.

A. Undergraduate Major

The aims of the undergraduate major include the broad exposure to Latin American and Iberian Studies by requiring area content courses in several disciplines, concentrated training in one group of academic disciplines and/or professional disciplines, and a basic working knowledge of Spanish and/or Portuguese.

B. Graduate Program (MA)

LAIS is an MA granting program. At the graduate level our goals and objectives include: a detailed knowledge in at least two fields of concentration; certification of basic language proficiency in Spanish or Portuguese; and seminar instruction to train students in research methods and approaches to investigation and field work as well as to develop their ability to read critically, analyze information, communicate ideas clearly, and formulate independent research based on bibliographic data, field work, knowledge, and critical thinking.

Instruments and Methods for Assessment

Given the diverse areas covered by the LAISP programs, we consider it appropriate to use diverse methods to arrive at a satisfactory assessment. These include language proficiency testing results provided by the Department of Spanish and Portuguese and the Quechua instructor, the evaluation of portfolios assembled by undergraduate majors and MA candidates, and external and internal evaluation of our undergraduate and graduate program. Given the large number of undergraduate majors, our necessary reliance on faculty housed outside of LAISP to carry out the assessment and evaluation project, and our limited staff (two part-time undergraduate advisors), we propose to undertake assessment on a three-year basis, with staggered assessment of the undergraduate and graduate programs.

A. Undergraduate Major

The program will encourage students to declare a LAISP major as soon as possible so that the staff can begin assembling assessment files. The undergraduate advisors will keep a file on each undergraduate major (identified only by students' UW ID numbers) which will include:

1. Results of oral proficiency interviews in Spanish and Portuguese as administered by the Department of Spanish and Portuguese.
2. A portfolio consisting of 4 pieces of written work chosen by the student. The interdisciplinary nature of our program require that the student submit papers from at least two disciplines, one paper in either Spanish and Portuguese, and a final paper of their choice. Those undergraduates who declare a LAISP major late in their Senior year will be required to produce items from previous courses taken in the Program (or courses at other institutions, accepted by the Program as transfer credits; this includes those earned in study-abroad programs).
3. Completed exit survey which will measure the degree to which the graduates feel their training has prepared them for their intended career goals and plans. A sample copy of the survey is attached.

In order to have further instruments for undergraduate program assessment, the Program will track students upon graduation in order to amass placement data.

Graduate MA Program

To assess the program's MA program the following methods will be used.

1. Indicators of the Program's success in graduate education can be established by internal College review and external review, including results of Title VI competition.
2. Other measures of success, available from program records, include the number of applicants for entrance into our program, the percentage of those admitted, and GRE scores of incoming

graduate students. From our records, and from those kept by the Graduate School, we can also establish the percentage of students to complete the MA degree, the average semesters for completion, as well as the percentage of MA students that continue on for the Ph.D.

3. We will also evaluate the placement of graduates in employment both within and outside of the academy. This information will be evaluated from our records not only to determine the percentage of graduates placed in employment positions, but also to evaluate the level and type of institutions into which our graduates are hired.

4. As an important measure of the success of our MA graduates, the Program will conduct a survey of graduates two years after completion of their degrees. The survey will provide information regarding placement success, professional activity, and the measure to which the graduates feel their training has prepared them for excellence in the field. Although the information may not reflect a direct measure of quality, it will indicate a great deal about the Program's position in the field. A sample copy of the survey is attached.

5. The program will compile a file for each MA student (identified by student ID only) which will include a portfolio of written work and the results of oral proficiency interview in Spanish or Portuguese in order to further assess graduate program. The portfolio will contain at least two seminar papers and the final MA paper.

The Feedback Mechanism

LAISP will establish a Committee of Program Assessment from our affiliated faculty on a **voluntary basis**. Members of this committee will evaluate a selection of student files in terms of how their content demonstrates to what extent undergraduate majors and MA graduates are attaining the goals of the program.

Evaluation in LAISP will occur in a three-year cycle. Every three years, all undergraduates who declare a LAISP major will be informed of the requirement to take the oral proficiency interview administered by the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, and to compose a portfolio; along with their declaration, they will sign a form confirming that they have received this information. This process will begin in the Fall Semester of year 1. In the Spring Semester of the **following academic year** (year 2) they will take the oral proficiency interview. The CPA will earmark a statistically valid selection of files and evaluate them. In addition, the committee will review the results of the exit survey completed by graduating LAISP majors. The committee's report will be submitted to the Program Director, who will add her/his recommendations, and submit them to the Executive Committee of LAISP.

Each year, the graduate student survey will be sent out to those who have completed the MA program two years previously; in year 3 of every triennium, the CPA will be charged with reviewing the data from the internal and external reviews, GRE scores, GPA and information on graduate admittance as well as results of the graduate survey. The committee will submit a report of the graduate program assessment to the Program Director, who will add her/his recommendations, and submit them to the Executive Committee of LAISP.

The CPA's report, and the Directors' recommendations, should address the following issues:

- a) Ways in which the LAISP programs are successful in preparing students in the educational goals set out by the Program..
- b) Ways in which changes in requirements might improve the attainment of those educational goals.

c) Changes in the methods of evaluation if the CPA believes that current practices do not accurately reflect the quality of the programs.

Timetable for Implementation

If this plan is approved by the Dean and the L&S Academic Planning Council, LAISP sees the first assessment cycle as taking place in the triennium 1997/8-1999/2000. In the Fall Semester of 1997-98, the process of establishing portfolios will begin for those undergraduates who declare a LAISP major or a joint major and for MA students. The first undergraduate portfolio evaluations will take place and the first oral proficiency interview will be administered through the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. Before the end of September 1998, the CPA will present its first report on the assessment of the undergraduate major program.

Beginning in the Fall Semester of 1997-98, the graduate surveys will be sent out to all those who completed a postgraduate degree two years earlier. The assessment report on the graduate program will be due before the end of 1999-2000 academic year.

SURVEY FOR GRADUATE PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Dear LAISP Alumnus/a:

As part of a plan designed to improve our graduate program, we are asking you who have completed a UW-Madison LAISP MA in the last two years to answer this brief questionnaire and return it to us, if at all possible by (DATE)_____. Your answers will help us improve an already successful graduate program, so please take the time necessary to respond to this questionnaire. As you respond to questions, we would request that you refrain from mentioning specific professors by name. Enclosed is a stamped envelop for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Alda Blanco
Program Director

1. How many years ago did you graduate from the LAISP graduate program?_____

2. What is your current occupation (check as many as apply)?

Employed full-time (where and in what capacity)?_____

Employed part-time (where and in what capacity)?_____

Unemployed_____

Graduate school (where and what field?)_____

Other professional school (where and what field?)_____

3. How did you find out about the graduate program at Madison?

Bulletin/Catalogue_____

Friend_____

Advisor or Professor_____

LAISP Home Page_____

Other_____

4. How many semesters did you attend the UW-Madison program?_____

What degree did you complete?_____

What was the area of concentration for your MA?_____

5. On a scale of 1-5, where 1=low and 5=high, rate your overall experience taking graduate courses regarding the following:

Reading load_____

Writing load_____

Your interest level in courses offered_____

Professors' interest and enthusiasm conveying material_____

Professors' accessibility_____

6. On a scale of 1-5, where 1=not at all and 5=a great deal, please tell us to what extent your work in the program improved your ability to:

read critically_____

analyze material_____

formulate and develop arguments_____

conduct individual research in your field_____

7. Does one course stand out in your memory either as good or bad? Which course? Why? (Please do not mention specific professors, but refer to courses generally by number or title)

8. On a scale of 1-5, where 1=very unsatisfactory and 5=excellent, rate the advising and professional direction you experienced within your program.

During course work_____

In connection with your MA paper_____

COMMENTS:

9. Looking back over your experience as a graduate student in our program, what aspect(s) do you value the most?

10. What would you like to see changed about the way we teach and/or administer the program?

11. Please comment on the value of the graduate education you received in our program with relation to your perception and understanding of the field of study.

12. If you have enrolled in another graduate or professional program, please rate how our program has prepared you for your subsequent studies, using a scale 1-5, where 1=very unsatisfactory and 5=excellent. _____

COMMENTS

13. Overall, please indicate the measure to which your training at Madison prepared you for excellence in the field of Latin American and Iberian studies.

FURTHER COMMENTS:

LATIN AMERICAN AND IBERIAN STUDIES PROGRAM
UNDERGRADUATE MAJOR EXIT SURVEY

Name: _____

Permanent address: _____

Major(s): _____

1. How did you find out about the LAIS major?

Bulletin/Catalogue _____

Friend _____

Advisor or Professor _____

LAISP home page _____

2. How many language credits did you take and at what level?

3. What are your career plans?

4. Do you intend to use your language training in your career plans? How?

5. On a scale of 1-5, where 1=low and 5=high, rate your overall experience taking LAIS courses regarding the following:

Reading load _____

Writing load _____

Your interest level in courses offered _____

Professors' interest and enthusiasm conveying material_____

Professors' accessibility_____

6. On a scale of 1-5, where 1=not at all and 5=a great deal, please tell us to what extent your work in the program improved your ability to:

read critically_____

analyze material_____

formulate and develop arguments_____

7. Does one course stand out in your memory either as good or bad? Which course? Why? (Please do not mention specific professors, but refer to courses generally by number or title)

8. On a scale of 1-5, where 1=very unsatisfactory and 5=excellent, rate the academic advising and career advising you experienced within your program.

During course work_____

By the LAISP undergraduate advisors_____

Yearly career day forums organized by LAISP_____

COMMENTS:

9. Looking back over your experience as a student in our program, what aspect(s) do you value the most?

10. What would you like to see changed about the way we administer the program?

11. Have you studied abroad? How long? In what program?

12. How will this degree contribute to your future goals?