

UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

Feedback to Academic Departments on Assessment Activities Reported in 2006-2007 Annual Reports

DEPARTMENT Languages DATE 1/29/08

COMMITTEE MEMBER(S) CONDUCTING REVIEW Mary Askim-Lovseth & Barbara Combs

1. STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| • Were any goals referenced? | YES <u>X</u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |
| • If so, were goals well articulated? | YES <u>X</u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |
| • Do goals address student learning? | YES <u>X</u> | NO <u> </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u> </u> |

Comments:

The Languages Department offers five undergraduate majors for students—Classical Studies, French, German, Norwegian, and Russian. There is a discrepancy in the Languages Department Assessment Plan and the Graduate and Undergraduate Academic Catalog. In the Catalog, Spanish is listed as a major and Russian is listed as a minor.

Undergraduate: All language majors share common goals, yet there is variance of the applicability of the identified objectives for each goal regarding the specific major. Common goals relate to students demonstrating proficiency in the language, knowledge of literatures in the language, and knowledge of the language culture.

Graduate: There is no graduate program in the Languages Department.

In addition to the Departmental goals, please also consider UND's Institutional and General Education goals for student learning (shown in alignment within parentheses). Use 'U' (undergraduate) or 'G' (graduate) to identify UND/General Education goals which are similar to the referenced departmental goals.

- U 1 Communication ("communicate effectively, both orally and in writing")
 U 2 Critical/creative thinking ("think critically and creatively" and "be intellectually curious and creative")
 3 Informed choices ("make informed choices")
 4 Understanding across disciplines ("understand how conclusions are reached in the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the arts and sciences" and "acquire knowledge over a broad spectrum of subject areas")
 5 Lifelong learning ("commit themselves to lifelong learning")
 U 6 Cross-cultural appreciation ("develop some familiarity with cultures other than their own")
 7 Service/citizenship ("commit themselves to...the service of others," and "share responsibility both for their communities and for the world")

Comments regarding Departmental goals and alignment of Departmental Goals with Institutional and General Education Goals:

Undergraduate: The Departmental goals of Languages align with three of the Institutional and General Education Goals. Communication (Goal 1) is evidenced only in the context of speaking and writing the target language, the Program's Goal 1. Critical/creative thinking (Goal 2) is aligned with an objective of Program Goal 2, "Critically read and interpret a variety of literary texts in the target language," and an objective of Goal 3, "Critically analyze differences between US culture and target language culture(s)." Cross-cultural appreciation (Goal 6) is inherent in the Program's Goal 3, "Demonstrate knowledge of target language culture(s)."

Graduate: There is no graduate program in the Languages Department.

2. ASSESSMENT METHODS

Were any specific assessment methods referenced?	YES__X__	NO____	QUALIFIED Y/N ____
• If so, were specifically chosen assessment methods appropriately aligned with individual goals?	YES____	NO____	QUALIFIED Y/N __X__
• Were both direct and indirect assessment methods used as components of a “multiple measures” approach?	YES____	NO__X__	QUALIFIED Y/N ____

Comments:

Undergraduate: Only Program Goal 3, “Demonstrate knowledge of target language culture(s)” was assessed for this academic year; and only within the majors of German and Spanish at the end of the academic year. One class was selected for each. A multiple-choice exam on culture was used for German (last week of class), and some essay questions were used for Spanish (final exam). Though assessment methods were identified, there was no information regarding what content/skills were specifically assessed other than ‘culture,’ nor was it clear which of the learning objectives (3.1-3.4) were assessed.

French was excluded because low enrollment cancelled the class, and Norwegian was not offered due to a vacant faculty line. There was no mention of Russian, another “major” in the Department (see comments under #1).

Graduate: There is no graduate program in the Languages Department.

3. ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Were any assessment results reported?	YES____	NO____	QUALIFIED Y/N __X__
• If so, were the results clear in terms of how they specifically affirm achievement of goals?	YES____	NO__X__	QUALIFIED Y/N ____
• If so, were the results clear in terms of how they indicate need for improvement?	YES____	NO__X__	QUALIFIED Y/N ____
• Were the results tied to goals for student learning?	YES____	NO__X__	QUALIFIED Y/N ____

Comments:

Undergraduate: Very limited information was provided concerning assessment results. Regarding German, “Students performed at average level.” There is no reference made to specifics, no substantive comments; therefore, it is not clear what the Department would consider “average” knowledge about a target language’s culture. Comments regarding the Spanish exam were similar. “Students performed well on cultural material upon which they had previously been tested, less well on material from the last unit of the semester.” Causes of the results were considered: lack of time to assimilate the material and/or lack of attention to historical and cultural events earlier in the program. It was unclear, however, what the Department expected of their students in the area of cultural knowledge since there was not clear alignment to stated objectives 3.1-3.4.

Graduate: There is no graduate program in the Languages Department.

In addition to departmental goals, some assessment results may be applicable to Institutional and General Education goals. A list of the latter goals is included below. Use 'U' (undergraduate) or 'G' (graduate) to identify those results which are applicable to Institutional/General Education goal achievement. For these items, please describe findings in the appropriate section below.

- _____ 1 Communication ("communicate effectively, both orally and in writing")
- _____ 2 Critical/creative thinking ("think critically and creatively" and "be intellectually curious and creative")
- _____ 3 Informed choices ("make informed choices")
- _____ 4 Understanding across disciplines ("understand how conclusions are reached in the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the arts and sciences" and "acquire knowledge over a broad spectrum of subject areas")
- _____ 5 Lifelong learning ("commit themselves to lifelong learning")
- ___U___ 6 Cross-cultural appreciation ("develop some familiarity with cultures other than their own")
- _____ 7 Service/citizenship ("commit themselves to...the service of others," and "share responsibility both for their communities and for the world")

Comments regarding results and the application of results to Departmental, Institutional and General Education Goals:

Undergraduate: As indicated previously, though cross-cultural appreciation (Goal 6) was assessed, there were no substantive comments regarding results; only that results were average/positive.

Graduate:

4. CLOSING THE LOOP

Were any actions taken on the basis of assessment results reported?

YES_____ NO_____ QUALIFIED Y/N ___X___

- If so, do curricular or other improvements/changes arising from assessment results directly address goals for student learning?

YES_____ NO__X___ QUALIFIED Y/N _____

Comments:

Undergraduate: Since no specific results were reported, it is unclear the origination of the actions that were noted. Many did not relate to the understanding of culture(s) that was emphasized in the Department's assessment for the year and/or were not related to the two courses assessed. Comments were made at the program level. One that did have an inference to culture regarded cross-listing upper-level German courses and teaching some in English to provide greater exposure "to German cultural and literary movements."

Other plans included offering a course on African Cultures and Civilizations, suspending the offering Greek to build up the enrollment in Latin, and discussion of revising the Spanish minor and the French major. The latter is "an effort to shift the focus of the program from literature based to cultural/societal based with an emphasis on global issues that affect peoples of all nationalities."

Graduate: There is no graduate program in the Languages Department.

SUMMARY

Strengths

Areas for Improvement

- _____ A specific plan for assessment is in place.
- ___X___ Student learning goals are well-articulated.
- _____ Assessment methods are clearly described.
- _____ Assessment methods are appropriately selected.
- _____ Assessment methods are well-implemented.
- _____ Direct and indirect methods are implemented.
- _____ Results are reported.
- _____ Results are tied to closing the loop.
- (Decision-making is tied to evidence.)

- _____ No specific plan for assessment is in place.
- _____ Student learning goals are not well-articulated.
- ___X___ Assessment methods are not clearly described.
- ___X___ Assessment methods are not appropriately selected.
- ___X___ Assessment methods are not well-implemented.
- ___X___ A single type of assessment methods predominates.
- ___X___ No results are reported.
- ___X___ Results are not clearly tied to closing the loop.
- (Decision-making is not directly tied to evidence.)

OVERALL SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Languages Department has defined specific learning goals that are adaptable to each of their respective majors. Three goals are assessed on a three-year cycle, with Goal 3 assessed this academic year. Each goal is accompanied by a number of clearly articulated objectives that lend themselves well to assessment. There appears to be a lack of clarity and specificity in assessing the goals and objectives. It was noted that each language unit would determine what meets “proficiency” within each of the goals. However, there is no documentation provided; for example, a rubric that describes proficiency for each goal in each language. Articulating this would make clear what to look for in the results of assessments and lead to a more fully developed assessment system.

Identification of a number of courses where goals might be assessed is noted in the Department’s plan. Assessment collection, analysis, interpretation and documentation is left up to the respective faculty teaching the course. Faculty would then meet with colleagues in language units to share and discuss findings and implement change. It is not clear from the Annual Report, however, that this has been done. It might help to develop a calendar of activities for a given assessment cycle that involves the identification of specific assessment measures in specific courses, deadlines for individual faculty reports and a schedule for language unit sharing meetings. This would help ensure closing the loop activities that would strengthen the programs and student learning.

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Section 1: __Y__ Section 2: __?__ Section 3: __NA__ Section 4: __?__

Coding Key:

- Y = yes, this is done appropriately and well
- N = no, this is not done at all, or it is not done in relationship to student learning
- NA = no information available
- ? = action or progress is apparent; however, evidence is lacking that this is completely and appropriately done