**Annual Departmental Assessment Report**

**Department or Program:** Romance Languages

**Academic Year of Report:** 2019-2020

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**Section 1: Learning Objectives Assessed for this Report**

The Department of Romance Languages offers instruction in French, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish across all undergraduate levels. Our activities are divided into two main areas: lower-division (language and culture learning) and upper-division (literature, cultures, and linguistics).

**Lower-division.** Learning goals in our 100- and 200-level classes with a focus on language follow the National Standards for Language Learning and the Oregon state benchmarks. See <https://rl.uoregon.edu/undergraduate/grading-criteria> for complete information.

**Upper-division.** RL offers majors in French, Italian, Romance Languages (two languages), and Spanish. These undergraduate majors have parallel structure and learning outcomes. See <http://rl.uoregon.edu/undergraduate> for complete program descriptions. Our students explore the languages, literature and cultures of the Romance world, both modern and historical. They work on understanding, speaking, reading and writing the modern language. Our courses focus on the historical roots of these languages and cultures, on cultural production (such as prose, poetry, theater, film, criticism), and linguistic knowledge.

As indicated in the Flight Path/Major Maps recently published through Tykeson advising, our majors and minors receive training leading to the following learning outcomes:

* Oral and written communication
* Critical thinking and analysis
* Cross-cultural collaboration

In addition, our programs of study set students up for success in careers that involve:

* Language teaching
* International diplomacy
* Translation
* Grant writing
* Advocacy
* Policy development & analysis
* Program administration and evaluation
* Economic and community development
* Public outreach and community relations

Our global grading criteria are posted on the departmental website: https://rl.uoregon.edu/undergraduate/grading-criteria.

**Section 2: Assessment Activities**

**Lower-division.** We administer daily, weekly, and unit assessments in classes, in addition to different types of project-based assessments designed to motivate students with real-world tasks and measure their progress. Also, for the past five years (in French and Spanish) and the past two years (in all four languages), we have administered program-wide assessment using an externally validated instrument, the Standards-based Assessment of Proficiency (STAMP), an online, nationally recognized test for measuring language proficiency.

**Upper-division**. Our upper level classes assess students through traditional exams, take-home and in-class essay writing assignments. We conduct in-class debates, informational and interpretive presentations about literature, culture, and sociolinguistic issues. Students also create podcasts, and work in groups to produce videos, scripts, poetry readings, and short theatrical performances.

**Section 3: Actions Taken Based on Assessment Analysis**

Based on STAMP results over the past few years, we have made a concerted effort to improve instruction in the areas that showed the greatest weakness. Specifically, all lower-division programs have enhanced practice in listening comprehension, which STAMP indicated was the weakest of our students’ skill areas. This important shift in curriculum based on assessment results should prove hugely beneficial, since research shows that access to target-language input is key to improved acquisition.

**Section 4: Other Efforts to Improve the Student Educational Experience**

**Curricular revisions.** Romance Languages has been well represented in President Schill’s LIFT (Language Learning Innovation for Teaching), designed to catalyze innovation in language teaching and learning. Nine RL faculty members were awarded the competitive LIFT grants between 2018-2020, representing a half of all awardees: Claudia Ventura, Harinder Khalsa, Andrew Rothgery, Gina Herrmann, Monica Lara, Amalia Gladhart, Cecilia Enjuto-Rangel, Diana Garvin, Fabienne Moore, Andre Djiffack, Analisa Taylor, Melanie Williams, Kelley Leon Howarth. New curricula developed through LIFT bolsters participation in second-language learning and teaching, provide multiple paths to proficiency and inspire students to persist in language study.

On the program level, we continue to revise our Spanish Language and Society program, we have innovated a new Italian Studies major, and we are revising our minor programs in order to attract more students and make our minor course of study increasingly “career-legible.”

**Advising.** RL has been active in partnering with and training the new Tykeson advisors. At the same time, we continue to maintain the close core advising relationships with our majors and minors regarding our discipline-specific study abroad, internship, and career-facing opportunities.

**Co-curricular activities.** We continue to create opportunities to motivate our students and give them ways to use our languages outside the classroom:

* Our initiatives include offering SLAT internships in local schools as well as integrating students into faculty research (e.g., linguistic landscaping with Professor Devin Grammon and Sr. Instructor II Paula Ellister).
* We have expanded our experiential learning offerings, including the creation of the UO’s first ever “Study Away” program designed by Professor Analisa Taylor: “Local and Transborder Food, Labor, and Environmental Justice” held in the Willamette Valley in the summer of 2020. This Spanish Immersion and Organic Farming in the Willamette Valley features “Spanish Immersion in Action” focused on farming practices as well as community interactive conversations about pluricultural solutions to local and global problems, Indigenous agricultural systems, agribusiness, globalization and human rights. The language immersion component of the program entails homestays with Spanish-speaking families and field trips to local community organizations.
* Two RL career faculty (Connie Dickey, French, and Lauretta DeRenzo, Italian) are proposing a new study abroad experience that takes advantage of two existing sites: Lyon, France (IE3) and Sienna, Italy (GEO). This program is aimed at beginning-level college students and entering freshmen. In addition to learning French and Italian, students will engage in hands-on learning activities, connecting classroom work with tasks in the communities. This innovative approach includes a metacognitive reflection component that should motivate students from their first contact with UO faculty to invest in long-term language and cultural study. Eventually, the faculty in charge plan to connect the participants with French- and Italian-related
* Second-year Spanish hosts an annual poetry contest and gives prizes for outstanding creative work in Spanish and Spanglish: <https://rl.uoregon.edu/2019/12/16/2019-autorretrato-poetry-awards-announced/>

**Credentialing.** In conjunction with the program-wide administration of the STAMP test, we were able to award over 200 UO students in RL programs with the Global Seal of Biliteracy (<https://theglobalseal.com>), a credential that attests to students’ real-world ability in English plus another language. See report at https://rl.uoregon.edu/2019/06/10/uo-language-students-earn-global-seal-of-biliteracy/.

**Section 5: Plans for Next Year**

The previous administrations of the STAMP test have been funded by President Schill’s LIFT initiative, the College of Arts and Sciences, and support from CASLS and the Yamada Center. However, the funding to continue this invaluable assessment has not been difficult to sustain. We hope to integrate externally validated assessments as a regular part of our programs.

Our two recent hires in Spanish Sociolinguistics (Devin Grammon and Sergio Loza) were promised a sociolinguistics lab for undergraduate education. However, to date there has been no movement from the administration to facilitate this crucial resource for their research and for undergraduate engagement. We strongly urge swift action so that these two dynamic colleagues can realize their promise and enhance our students’ involvement in research.