

## Program Assessment Plan Template

Program Name: Latin American Studies      Department: Multidisciplinary

Assessment Year: '07-'08      Plan Contributors: E. Dávila and L. Greenow

### **Step One : Who are you and how do you do what you do?**

#### *I. A. Mission Statement: (Who are you and what do you do?)*

The Latin American Studies Program is an interdisciplinary program of academic work designed to give students a broad understanding of Latin America's people, cultures, politics, and history. The program has offered a minor in Latin American Studies since 1985, and a major since 1994.

The Program's mission is to offer an academic program of the highest quality possible with the resources available. The Program is coordinated by the Latin American Studies Committee, composed of faculty members in several disciplines who teach courses about Latin America and provide academic advising to students who are majoring or minoring in the program. The Committee seeks to maintain high academic standards in the program by reviewing the progress of students and approving appropriate courses for credit towards students' program.

As a region, Latin America is fascinating in its complexity and diversity, and this diversity is reflected in the variety of courses offered through the Program. Courses from a number of departments are accepted for completion of a Latin American Studies major. These departments include Anthropology, Black Studies, Foreign Languages, Geography, History, Political Science and Theater. Most courses are taught in English, although some are in Spanish.

Assessment of future employment trends indicate that thousands of employees with expertise in Latin America will be needed by government and business employers in the near future. As examples, major U.S. banks hire college graduates with expertise in Latin American Studies. As international trade expands through new agreements and trade associations, employees with experience and training in Latin America will be increasingly valuable. For these reasons, the Latin American Studies Program strongly supports internships and study abroad. Students majoring in international business, communication, and international relations find that a second major in Latin American Studies enhances their job prospects.

In government, diverse agencies such as the Department of State, the Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service, the Department of Education's Office of International Education and the Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration also hire college graduates with background in Latin American subjects. In addition, community organizations, NGOs and local hospitals and businesses look for graduates with experience, knowledge and skills that can be acquired in the Latin American Studies major.

#### *I.B. Scope of your program: (What are the boundaries of your program?)*

We are primarily an undergraduate program, although a few of our courses can be taken for credit by graduate students in Education programs. Students majoring in Latin American Studies are required to successfully complete courses in both language study (primarily Spanish) and in academic content. The latter includes courses in social sciences and history (Group A) and in literature and the arts (Group B). Students are also required to take a course that provides an introduction to Latin American Studies, and to complete an independent study course, which serves as a capstone course in which students build on their previous coursework in an intensive research project for one semester.

I. C. *What activities/processes contribute to the program? (How you do what you do?)*

Our faculty are well-prepared and are committed to research and teaching about Latin America. Because of the multidisciplinary nature of our program, we offer a body of courses that includes many topics and skills, while each course is grounded in the disciplinary specialties of the instructor. We encourage our students to study abroad and to pursue intensive language study. Our faculty maintain active research agendas, publishing and presenting their research in national and international outlets. A U.S. Department of Education Title VI grant enabled us to offer extensive faculty development opportunities in order to strengthen our curriculum in Brazilian topics and in international business Spanish.

## **Step Two: Where are you heading and what performances show your progress?**

II. A. *What are your priority goals for the next five years (5-8 total)?*

1. *What do you want graduates to know? Be able to do? To believe?*

a) Students will understand the diversity of Latin America's cultures and peoples, and the diversity of approaches to gaining that understanding (concepts, theories and original works in the social sciences, history, literature, the arts).

b) Students will achieve proficiency in Spanish.

c) Students will complete an in-depth research project on a Latin American topic.

2. *What goals do you have for your program? (e.g. out of class experiences, advising, curriculum, faculty development)*

a) Latin American Studies majors will be able to complete their degrees in a timely manner.

b) The Program will sponsor events on campus to enrich students' coursework and to provide opportunities for the public to learn about Latin America.

c) The Program will support the faculty's research, teaching and service work.

II. B. *What is the performance you desire to gauge your progress?*

1. *Student Learning Performances (outcomes)*

a) Students will successfully complete a variety of courses from the social sciences and history (Group A) and from literature and the arts (Group B), and participate in study abroad programs and/or internships.

b) Students will successfully complete Spanish language and literature courses.

c) Students will apply what they have learned in their courses to successfully complete a senior independent study project.

2. *Program Performances*

a) Latin American Studies majors will be able to choose from an array of appropriate courses to complement their interests and abilities, offered with sufficient frequency to enable them to complete their degrees in a timely manner.

b) The Program will organize or support campus programming events, such as guest speakers, panel discussions and theatrical productions.

c) The Program's faculty will participate in research, creative work and service that will support their professional development

### Step Three: Describe your methodology

<b>II. B. 1 and 2</b> <i>Desired Performance (from previous step)</i>	<b>III. A.</b> <i>What aspects of the performance are critical to measure?</i>	<b>III. B.</b> <i>How (by what means) will you gather the data?</i>	<b>III. C.</b> <i>When will Assessment Begin?</i>	<b>III. C.</b> <i>Who is Responsible for What?</i>
			Because the report has to be completed before final grades are submitted, and because some of these measurements can't be completed until after final grades are submitted, reports submitted in April may be based on data for the previous fall semester and the spring semester of the previous year	
1. Students will successfully complete a variety of courses in order to understand the diversity of Latin America's cultures and peoples, and the diversity of approaches to gaining that understanding (concepts, theories and original works in the social sciences, history, literature, the arts).	a. Majors complete courses from Group A and Group B, and study abroad programs.	Majors' progress reports at time of graduation	In May 2008, report on majors who graduated from 12/02 through 12/07.	Program coordinator
	b. Enrollments in Latin American Studies courses	Argos enrollment reports	In May 2008, report on majors who graduated from 12/02 through 12/07.	Program coordinator
2. Students achieve proficiency in Spanish language.	a. Levels of Spanish reached by majors and minors.	Grades of Spanish language courses completed.	In May 2008, report on majors who graduated from 12/02 through 12/07.	Program coordinator

3. Students successfully complete independent study projects that focus on developing writing, research skills and an in-depth understanding of a topic based on previous course material.	a. Review of majors' independent study projects to evaluate their progress in writing, research and mastery of an advanced topic based on previous course material.	Faculty supervising projects will meet once each year after the end of the spring semester, to evaluate success of that year's projects in the three areas shown in III A 3a, and to make recommendations about designing future independent study projects.	Fall 2008, to report in April 2009	Latin American Studies faculty supervising independent study projects
4. Majors will complete their programs in a timely manner.	a. Time to degree of majors.	Review of majors' progress reports.	Fall 2008, to report in Spring 2009	Program coordinator will report and Latin American Studies committee will review
5. Latin American Studies programming of events on campus.	a. Number and type of events, relative success.	Committee review of events for the year and estimate of participation.	After end of spring semester 2008, to report in April 2009	Faculty sponsoring events will report on outcomes and make recommendations for future events
	b.			
	c.			

*D. What additional resources will you need to complete your plan?*

*An accurate, up-to-date list of Latin American Studies majors and minors would be helpful.*

*A list of LAM courses offered each semester and their final enrollment figures would be useful.*