SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY.

Program-Level Assessment: Annual Report

Program Name (no acronyms): **Spanish**

Department: **Languages, Literatures & Cultures**

Degree or Certificate Level: **Major (BA)**

College/School: **College of Arts & Sciences**

Date (Month/Year): **September / 2023**

Assessment Contact: **Ana M. Montero**

In what year was the data upon which this report is based collected? **Academic year 2022-2023**

In what year was the program's assessment plan most recently reviewed/updated? **Academic year 2020-2021**

Is this program accredited by an external program/disciplinary/specialized accrediting organization or subject to state/licensure requirements? **No**

If yes, please share how this affects the program's assessment process (e.g., number of learning outcomes assessed, mandated exams or other assessment methods, schedule or timing of assessment, etc.):

1. Student Learning Outcomes

Which of the program's student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle? (Please provide the complete list of the program's learning outcome statements and **bold** the SLOs assessed in this cycle.)

Learning Outcomes for the Spanish B.A. Program

https://catalog.slu.edu/colleges-schools/arts-sciences/languages-literatures-cultures/spanish-ba/#learningoutcomestext

1. **Graduates will be able to articulate complex ideas and have meaningful interactions in Spanish, both orally** and in writing.
2. Graduates will be able to interpret texts and artifacts produced in Spanish.
3. Graduates will be able to demonstrate an awareness of the diversity of the Spanish language, cultures, and Hispanic populations.
4. Graduates will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the role of Spanish as a major world language with a relevant cultural legacy.
5. **Graduates will be able to engage with Spanish-speaking cultures.** They will be able to explain similarities and differences between cultures.

2. Assessment Methods: Artifacts of Student Learning

Which artifacts of student learning were used to determine if students achieved the outcome(s)? Please describe the artifacts in detail, identify the course(s) in which they were collected, and if they are from program majors/graduates and/or other students. Clarify if any such courses were offered a) online, b) at the Madrid campus, or c) at any other off-campus location.

The assessment method was an oral interview of a sample of our graduating majors, conducted in Spanish, during Spring 2023, the final semester of Spanish studies for most major students. The goal of the interview is two-fold, first to assess the student's linguistic abilities in Spanish, and second to gain insights about the student's experiences in the program and the impact of the learning taking place. Interviews were conducted by fulltime faculty, not as part of a course, and they aimed to measure SLOs 1 and 5 during this academic year, using our agreed upon protocol and bank of interview questions. Generally, we try to have a student's assigned Spanish program mentor conduct these exit interviews, although this is not always possible. If a mentor is unavailable or cannot schedule the interview, then a faculty member of a currently enrolled course may do the interview.

3. Assessment Methods: Evaluation Process

What process was used to evaluate the artifacts of student learning, and by whom? Please identify the tools(s) (e.g., a rubric) used in the process and **include them in/with this report document** (please do not just refer to the assessment plan).

The interviewer completed an assessment of the student's skills, knowledge and experiences following our common rubric; based on the ACTFL proficiency guidelines at the Advanced Low Level which includes: 1) Interpersonal Communication–Oral Mode for Advanced Leaners; and the AAC&U VALUE rubrics on 2) Intercultural Knowledge and Competence. The rubric is submitted with this report, please see below.

4. Data/Results

What were the results of the assessment of the learning outcome(s)? Please be specific. Does achievement differ by teaching modality (e.g., online vs. face-to-face) or on-ground location (e.g., STL campus, Madrid campus, other off-campus site)?

Interpretation of scale (based on rubrics – see below)

5 = exceeds expectations
4 = meets expectations (strong)
3 = meets expectations (minimal)
2 = does not meet expectations

Number of interviews: 12

Student#	Language function	Text type	Comm. Strategies	Comprehension	Language control	Knowledge (Cult. Self-Awareness)	Skills (Empathy)	Attitudes (curiosity)	INDIVIDUAL TOTAL	INDIVIDUAL AVERAGE
1	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	40	5.00
2	3	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	29	3.63
3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	27	3.38
4	4	4	3	4	3	4	4	4	30	3.75
5	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	38	4.75
6	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	40	5.00
7	4	4	4	4	4	4	0	0	24	4.00
8	4	4	4	4	4	4	0	0	24	4.00
9	4	4	4	4	4	4	0	0	24	4.00
10	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	38	4.75
11	3	3	3	0	3	3	0	3	18	3.00
12	4	4	4	0	4	4	4	0	24	4.00

COMPONENT TOTALS	47	49	49	42	47	51	36	35		
COMPONENT AVERAGES	3.92	4.08	4.08	4.20	3.92	4.25	4.50	4.38		

KEY:
0 = NOT SSESSED
GREEN = 4+ AVERAGE
YELLOW = < 4 AVERAGE

Summary of the results and our interpretations

→ assessed students meet expectations comfortably and exceed expectations (Average 4-5) in the following areas:

a. Empathy (4.5)
b. Curiosity (4.375)
c. Cultural Self-Awareness (4.25)
d. Comprehensibility (4.2)
e. Text Type (4.083)
f. Communicative Strategies (4.083)

→ assessed students meet expectations minimally (3-4) in the following areas:

g. Language Function (3.916)
h. Language Control (3.916)

Conclusions

→ Overall, these data demonstrate that students in our Spanish language program are gaining the advanced language skills we desire, and more impressively, are gaining experiences and training on intercultural competence. We feel the results are satisfactory since scores show that expectations are met at a strong level. This translates into major students "being able to articulate complex ideas and have meaningful interactions in Spanish orally" (SLO 1). Student interviews also showed that SLU majors "able to engage with Spanish-speaking cultures" (SLO 5).

→ The highest category was *Empathy*. This score signals that students demonstrate an ability to recognize and understand the needs and wants of a diverse group of people, and ideally can act in a supportive manner towards another cultural group. Empathy is a highly valued skill in the current job market. Openness to other cultures is emphasized in every course within the Spanish program and we are indeed able to help students achieve SLO 5 through our courses and their experiences in our program. Moreover, in the last years there has been an increase in the service component in courses such as SPAN 4150 within the Spanish program which reinforces the achievement of empathy. Finally, the fact that we have recently lived about 2 years under pandemic conditions may also contribute to explaining that we all may be more attuned to this behavior and demonstrate more empathy to one another.

→ Overall the scores are satisfactory across the rubric. *Comprehensibility* is particularly important to demonstrate that students are able to achieve SLO 1, since it signals that students can make themselves understood by native audiences. *Language control* indicates appropriate mastery of grammar, vocabulary and fluency at the advanced level. *Language function* signals that students can participate actively in all informal and most formal conversations on a variety of topics relating to events of current, public, and personal interest. Furthermore, they can handle successfully and with

ease an unexpected turn of events or complication, for example if the interviewer asked them to comment on an area less familiar to the student**.** These measured categories contribute to the main goal in the program which translates into the ability to connect with other speakers, establish communication, and advance ideas (SLO 1).

We did not factor changes according to teaching modalities (online vs face to face), since most of our 4000-level SPAN courses are offered face to face, and therefore, we did not feel that there would be a marked difference in the data regarding teaching modalities used.

One notable difference that may impact a student's overall achievements in linguistic production, as well as intercultural competence, is whether or not they study abroad. We regularly see that students who have spent at least a semester on the SLU Madrid campus usually show a higher degree of enthusiasm in pursuing their education in Spanish and are able to communicate with more fluency. However, this factor was not measured, and may be a consideration on the next evaluation cycle to correlate study broad, travel or other community engagement activities (such as an internship in Spanish), with the level of linguistic development and cultural self-awareness

5. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

What have you learned from these results? What does the data tell you? Address both a) learning gaps and possible curricular or pedagogical remedies, and b) strengths of curriculum and pedagogy.

Program assessment results are important markers to show the success of the program in leading students to achieve proficiency in Spanish at an advanced level. Specifically, findings are satisfactory since they show that expectations are met and students are able to communicate effectively in Spanish at a low advanced level and show a noteworthy degree of intercultural competence.
Empathy, curiosity and cultural self-awareness (features in a person´s level of maturity and interrelation competence which are not always easy to measure by means of a conversation) show to have the highest scores for almost three years. This is a strength of our program and part of the mission of the department of Languages, Literatures & Cultures.

6. Closing the Loop: Dissemination and Use of Current Assessment Findings

A. When and how did your program faculty share and discuss the results and findings from this cycle of assessment?

Results and findings were shared prior to our first program meeting in the Fall on August 31st. General discussion focused on:

1. Reinforcing the bond between SLOs and activities in the classroom.
2. Selecting a new plan of assessment.

Part of the next undergraduate program meeting (Sept. 28) will be dedicated to the selection of materials and a rubric, the articulation of a new assessment plan, and the establishment of a calendar for its implementation. Recommendations for changes or adjustments are evaluated and decided by all members of the faculty Spanish program.

B. How specifically have you decided to use these findings to improve teaching and learning in your program? For example, perhaps you've initiated one or more of the following:

Changes to the Curriculum or Pedagogies

- Course content
- Teaching techniques
- Improvements in technology
- Prerequisites
- Course sequence
- New courses
- Deletion of courses
- Changes in frequency or scheduling of course offerings

Changes to the Assessment Plan

- Student learning outcomes
- Artifacts of student learning
- Evaluation process
- Evaluation tools (e.g., rubrics)
- Data collection methods
- Frequency of data collection

Please describe the actions you are taking as a result of these findings.

We are reinforcing the set of actions recommended in the last two or three years. Those are:

- inclusion of the SLOs for the B.A. in all syllabi;
- strengthening the bond between SLOs and activities in the classroom—this involves being more intentional in the design and purpose of classroom activities and exercises, calling students' attention to the goals of the program regularly, and increasing students' motivation.

The new assessment plan aims to assess #2, #3, and #4 SLOs starting in the Spring of 2024. All members of the faculty Spanish program will participate in the creation of the next assessment plan. Its implementation should be conducted by most members too. It was recommended that:

- assessment is conducted earlier during the Spring semester (for instance, February) so that a conversation on how to improve the program can be tackled at the end of the Spring semester and changes can be implemented by the beginning of the Fall;
- all students at the 4000 level are assessed;
- a stronger connection is established among SPAN 4000-level courses;
- a calibration session for the rubric was successfully held in the past (April 2022). It should be considered whether a calibration session could be conducted regularly.

If no changes are being made, please explain why.

7. Closing the Loop: Review of Previous Assessment Findings and Changes

A. What is at least one change your program has implemented in recent years **as a result of previous assessment data**?

SLOs for the Spanish B.A. are included on the syllabi and faculty members are invited to connect them to activities implemented in the classroom so students get more involved and feel more enthusiastic in the task of achieving mastery of them. In other words, faculty members in Spanish are regularly reminded and encouraged to design content for their courses more intentionally with the SLOs in the program in mind.

B. How has the change/have these changes identified in 7A been assessed?

The student interviews conducted this year for the third time aim to measure students' success in achieving oral proficiency and in strengthening intercultural abilities. More categories scored higher than in other years—that is, more analyzed categories score beyond 4—which shows a degree of improvement by our students and the success of the program in general.

C. What were the findings of the assessment?

Findings overall are satisfactory since they show the success of the Spanish program in helping students achieve an advanced proficiency in Spanish—that is, students are able to communicate effectively in Spanish at a low advanced level and show a noteworthy degree of intercultural competence. Specific findings in the last three years show more empathetic attitudes in students.

D. How do you plan to (continue to) use this information moving forward?

We plan to prepare a new assessment plan for the next three academic years to make sure we have a more complete, rounded vision of the successes, challenges and needs of the program; we continue to improve our assessment procedures.
All full-time faculty members are engaged in the assessment process. This means a higher involvement in the wellbeing of the program. Recommendations for changes or adjustments should be evaluated and decided by all members of the faculty Spanish program.

IMPORTANT: Please submit any assessment tools (e.g., artifact prompts, rubrics) with this report as separate attachments or copied and pasted/appended into this Word document. Please do not just refer to the assessment plan; the report should serve as a stand-alone document. Thank you.

Interpersonal Rubric—Advanced Learner (ACTFL, 2003)

CRITERIA	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations: Strong	Meets Expectations: Minimal	Does Not Meet Expectations
	ADVANCED+/SUPERIOR 5	**ADVANCED** 4	ADVANCED LOW 3	INTERMEDIATE 2
LANGUAGE FUNCTION Language tasks the speaker is able to handle in a consistent, comfortable, sustained, and spontaneous manner	Narrates and describes fully and accurately in all major time frames. Can discuss some topics abstractly, especially those related to particular interests and expertise. May provide a structured argument to support opinions and may construct hypotheses.	Consistently and extensively narrates and describes in all major time frames by providing a full account. Participates actively in all informal and most formal conversations on a variety of topics relating to events of current, public, and personal interest. Can handle successfully and with ease an unexpected turn of events or complication.	Consistently narrates and describes in all major time frames. Able to participate in most conversations, informal and some formal, on familiar topics, which may include current events, employment, and matters of public interest. Can handle appropriately an unexpected turn of events or complication.	Handles successfully uncomplicated tasks and social situations requiring exchange of basic information related to work, school, recreation, particular interests, and areas of competence. Narrates and describes in all major time frames, although not consistently.
TEXT TYPE Quantity and organization of language discourse (continuum: word - phrase - sentence - connected sentences - paragraph - extended discourse)	Uses paragraph-length discourse and some extended discourse.	Uses connected, paragraph-length discourse that conveys meaning with a clear beginning-middle-end to thoughts. Invites continued engagement in the discourse.	Uses connected sentences and paragraph-length discourse.	Uses mostly connected sentences and some paragraph-like discourse.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES **Quality of engagement and interactivity; how one participates in the conversation and advances it; strategies for negotiating meaning in the face of breakdown of communication**	**Converses with ease, confidence, and competence. Maintains, advances and/ or redirects conversation. Demonstrates confident use of communicative strategies such as paraphrasing, circumlocution, and illustration.**	**Converses with ease and confidence. Maintains and advances conversation. Uses communicative strategies such as rephrasing and circumlocution.**	**Maintains conversation. May use communicative strategies such as rephrasing and circumlocution.**	**Converses with ease and confidence when dealing with routine tasks and social situations. May clarify by paraphrasing.**
COMPREHENSIBILITY **Who can understand this person's language? Can this person be understood only by sympathetic listeners used to interacting with non-natives? Can a native speaker unaccustomed to non-native speech understand this speaker?**	**Is readily understood by native speakers unaccustomed to interacting with non-natives.**	**Is understood by native speakers unaccustomed to interacting with non-natives.**	**Is understood by native speakers, even those unaccustomed to interacting with non-natives, although this may require some repetition or restatement.**	**Is generally understood by those unaccustomed to interacting with non-natives, although interference from another language may be evident and gaps in communication may occur.**
LANGUAGE CONTROL **Grammatical accuracy, appropriate vocabulary, degree of fluency**	**Demonstrates full control of aspect in narrating in present, past and future time. Uses precise vocabulary and intonation, great fluency, and ease of speech. Accuracy may break down when attempting to perform the most complex tasks**	**Demonstrates good control of aspect in narrating in present, past and future time. Has substantial fluency and extensive vocabulary. The quality and/or quantity of speech generally declines when attempting to perform functions or handle**	**Demonstrates minimal fluency and some control of aspect in narrating in present, past and future time. Vocabulary may lack specificity. Speech decreases in quality and quantity when attempting to perform functions or handle**	**Demonstrates significant quantity and quality of Intermediate-level language. When attempting to perform Advanced-level tasks, there is breakdown in one or more of the following areas: the ability to narrate and describe, use of**

	associated with the Superior level.	**topics associated with the Superior level.**	**topics associated with the Superior level.**	**paragraph-length discourse, fluency, breadth of vocabulary.**

Intercultural Knowledge and Competence VALUE Rubric*

CRITERIA	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations: Strong	Meets Expectations: Minimal	Does Not Meet Expectations
KNOWLEDGE *Cultural self-awareness*	Articulates insights into own cultural rules and biases (e.g. seeking complexity; aware of how her/his experiences have shaped these rules, and how to recognize and respond to cultural biases, resulting in a shift in self-description.)	**Recognizes new perspectives about own cultural rules and biases** (e.g. not looking for sameness; comfortable with the complexities that new perspectives offer.)	Identifies own cultural rules and biases (e.g. with a strong preference for those rules shared with own cultural group and seeks the same in others.)	Shows minimal awareness of own cultural rules and biases (even those shared with own cultural group(s)) (e.g. uncomfortable with identifying possible cultural differences with others.)
SKILLS *Empathy*	Interprets intercultural experience from the perspectives of own and more than one worldview and demonstrates ability to act in a supportive manner that recognizes the feelings of another cultural group.	**Recognizes intellectual and emotional dimensions of more than one worldview** and sometimes uses more than one worldview in interactions.	Identifies components of other cultural perspectives but responds in all situations with own worldview.	Views the experience of others but does so through own cultural worldview.
ATTITUDES *Curiosity*	Asks complex questions about other cultures, seeks out and articulates answers to these questions that reflect multiple cultural perspectives.	**Asks deeper questions about other cultures and seeks out answers to these questions**.	Asks simple or surface questions about other cultures and always in comparison to the self.	States minimal interest in learning more about other cultures.

Definition: Intercultural Knowledge and Competence is "a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support

effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts." (Bennett, J. M. 2008. Transformative training: Designing programs for culture learning. In *Contemporary leadership and intercultural competence: Understanding and utilizing cultural diversity to build successful organizations*, ed. A. Moodian, 95-110. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.)

Glossary: *The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.*

- **Culture**: All knowledge and values shared by a group.
- **Cultural rules and biases**: Boundaries within which an individual operates in order to feel a sense of belonging to a society or group, based on the values shared by that society or group.
- **Empathy:** "Empathy is the imaginary participation in another person's experience, including emotional and intellectual dimensions, by imagining his or her perspective (not by assuming the person's position)". Bennett, J. 1998. Transition shock: Putting culture shock in perspective. In *Basic concepts of intercultural communication*, ed. M. Bennett, 215-224. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.
- **Intercultural experience:** The experience of an interaction with an individual or groups of people whose culture is different from your own.
- **Intercultural/cultural differences:** The differences in rules, behaviors, communication and biases, based on cultural values that are different from one's own culture.
- **Suspends judgment in valuing their interactions with culturally different others:** Postpones assessment or evaluation (positive or negative) of interactions with people culturally different from one self. Disconnecting from the process of automatic judgment and taking time to reflect on possibly multiple meanings.
- **Worldview:** Worldview is the cognitive and affective lens through which people construe their experiences and make sense of the world around them.

*The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The core expectations articulated in all 15 of the VALUE rubrics can and should be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can by shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success. See more at: https://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics