

**APR Mid-Cycle Check-In**

**Unit Name:** Department of Spanish & Portuguese

**Previous APR Site-Visit Dates:** March 6-8, 2017

**Next Scheduled APR:** Fall 2024

**Unit Chair: Updates to Recommendations**

*Address all APR-related recommendations incorporated in the Unit Response and Action Plan documents, **adding rows as necessary**. New initiatives can be included and discussed, even if they were not included in the Unit Response or Action Plan.*

<b>Reviewer Recommendation or Finding</b>	<b>Action Taken since Review</b>	<b>Future Action</b>
<i>Describe the recommendation for change that resulted from the self-study, external review, department response, and initial action plan.</i>	<i>Describe the actions taken to implement the recommendation. If none, why?</i>	<i>Describe additional actions planned to implement the recommendation, or changes in the unit affecting implementation of recommendation.</i>
<p>The external reviewers noted the strength of the department on a regional and national level. They noted this strength was due to the “three pillars” of the department which they identified as (in order): Hispanic Southwest, Spanish as a Heritage Language (SHL), and Hispanic Linguistics.</p>	<p>Hispanic Southwest has continued to thrive. Despite the need for a folklorist (professor Enrique Lamadrid retired in 2014) it remains the section with the most work produced.</p> <p>SHL is not a section, but faculty who work in the area—who are both in Southwest and Hispanic Linguistics— continue to lead the charge for heritage language studies on a regional and national level.</p> <p>Since the APR, Hispanic Linguistics has lost one faculty member—Professor Rosa Vallejos—who chose to transfer her entire line to Linguistics. Both professors Vallejos and Shin have joint appointments Spanish and Linguistics.</p>	<p>Southwest hopes to gain approval for a hire in Southwest Folklore. This position is important not just for the history of the department, but also for the university at large as our recognized strength as an institution is providing our Hispanic students with a greater understanding of the Hispanic Southwest in general and of New Mexico in particular.</p>

<p>Due to a dearth of Full Professors, make a senior hire in one of the three pillars of the Department: Hispanic Southwest, Spanish as a Heritage Language, or Hispanic Linguistics</p>	<p>We have hired in Portuguese, however, because soon after our last APR, our Portuguese section left UNM for another university.</p>	<p>We have submitted a request for a hire in Hispanic Southwest Studies.</p>
<p>A series of retreats to address, among other things, the improved integration of components across the department.</p> <p>Improve Administrative transparency.</p>	<p>We have continued to have retreats to discuss these issues.</p> <p>Our 2020 retreat was postponed due to the pandemic, as was our 2021 retreat.</p>	<p>At the next retreat, scheduled for Spring 2022, I will engage the department in a discussion towards a unified departmental vision.</p>
<p>Pursuit of Cross-Campus Connections, especially in the Portuguese and Iberian Studies sections, to contribute to increasing enrollments.</p>	<p>Discussions were begun to form a Portuguese for Business course but were suspended due to the departure of the section.</p> <p>In 2019, we were able to restart our Portuguese program, and we now have two junior faculty members in the area, professors Paulo Dutra and Jessica Carey-Webb. They are focused on cross-campus collaborations with an eye towards bringing enrollment numbers back up.</p>	<p>With our new faculty members in Portuguese, we plan to rebuild the program to sustainable numbers, and also improve upon the concerns that were raised by former Portuguese grad students.</p>
<p>Integrate Medical Spanish into the curriculum</p>	<p>We have added courses to the area at the 300 and 400 levels. There remains, however, faculty resistance to doing more.</p>	<p>Two Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work with faculty to see the potential benefits for Medical Spanish housed in our department.</li> <li>2. Discuss with the faculty the idea a Certificate in Medical Spanish.</li> </ol>
<p>Improve Placement into 100-200-300 levels</p>	<p>Placement exams have been improved and more targeting is being done to ensure that</p>	

	students are enrolling in the correct classes.	
Underrepresentation of Hispanic Linguistics in upper division undergraduate curriculum	The Hispanic Linguistics section has improved their offerings at the 300/400 level.	
Improve Spanish assessment	Our assessment protocols have improved and become more formalized.	
Improve Grad Student funding support	<p>We have been successful in attracting fantastic students due to the hard work that our current and former Director of Grad Studies puts into communicating with prospective students and also tapping into potential funding sources to improve what we can offer.</p> <p>Our students have been successful in presenting their work at conferences as well as at research events hosted by the university (LoboBytes).</p>	Work with the college to develop other revenue sources to improve funding support for our students.
Staffing Issues	We have lost one staff person, but have gained two work study students.	

### **Unit Chair: Assessment Reflection**

*Consider the unit's assessment practices since the last APR. Please provide a small narrative reflecting on assessment impact, strengths, concerns, or obstacles that exist within the unit, focusing on those areas that would be well-served by leadership feedback and/or highlighted to reviewers at the unit's next APR.*

Though our 2016/17 APR was uniformly positive there were, and remain, a number of areas for improvement suggested by the external reviewers. First, the positive: the external reviewers assessed that the strength of the department was coming from the areas that focused on the Southwest; Hispanic Southwest, Spanish as a Heritage Language, and Hispanic Linguistics. They arrived at this assessment through interviews with faculty, grad students, and by reviewing the CV's of the faculty members. They identified three pillars supporting the department, the first being Hispanic Southwest, the second Spanish as a Heritage Language, and the third Hispanic Linguistics. While the external reviewers noted that Spanish as a Heritage Language was the second pillar, the reality is that SHL is a program that works with faculty from both Hispanic Southwest and Hispanic Linguistics. But the point remains, the strength of the department is in Southwest cultural studies —literary and linguistic. In fact, Spanish as a Heritage

Language is a historic strength in the department, as we were one of the first—if not the first—Spanish departments in the nation to offer courses for students who grew up speaking Spanish in the United States. As a professor who has previously taught at several institutions, I would argue that this is one of the three historic strengths of the department. The other, as identified by the external reviewers, is in having Hispanic Southwest as an integral part of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. Many Spanish departments across the United States offer courses on the US Latinx experience, but few have more than one faculty in that area. We have three (previously four). This is important because it shows that our department is a pioneer.

There is a third historic strength, overlooked by the external reviewers because it was not highlighted by the department, is in the strength of its creative writing faculty. Because it is not a formal area or section, this is often overlooked. My move to UNM after helping design and create the MFA in Creative Writing in Spanish at the University of Iowa was because of the creative writers who have called this department home. It is an illustrious roster from all areas of the Spanish speaking world. From Spain, we have had Ramón J. Sender and Angel González, two major figures in 20<sup>th</sup> century post-Civil War Spanish literature. From Mexico, Gustavo Sainz used to be a faculty member. In Chicano and Chicana literature, we have had such important writers as Sabine Ulibarrí, and Erlinda González Berry. Currently, our creative writer faculty includes professors Eleuterio Santiago Diaz, Paulo Dutra, and me. One of our senior lecturers, Carmen Julia Holguín Chaparro is an important figure in Mexican poetry from the US/Mexico Borderlands. Having this area recognized as important for the history of our department is one of the tasks that I am working on as department chair. As more Spanish departments across the United States start to offer more courses in creative writing in Spanish, I hope that our department can become a leader in training future creative writing in Spanish faculty. To that end, I hope to propose before the end of my tenure as chair not an MFA program in creative writing in Spanish, but a PhD in the area. This would complement our PhD's in Hispanic Cultural Studies and in Hispanic Linguistics.

Currently, at the mid-point of our APR cycle, the Hispanic Southwest and Hispanic Linguistics sections continue to be most visible in terms of scholarship, as is the area on Spanish as a Heritage Language. This is despite the fact that Hispanic Southwest is currently not represented as a requirement in the major, and the Spanish as a Heritage Language program has been cut back. At the current rate, however, I expect that Southwest and Hispanic Linguistics will remain at the forefront of scholarship being produced by the department. Another goal of mine as chair is to work towards improving the research output of our faculty in Latin American Cultural Studies, currently our largest departmental section.

With regards to the findings made by the external reviewers, aside from concerns regarding the Portuguese program at the time, the major recommendations were in the areas of hiring, graduate student support, and Medical Spanish. The first two require support from the College and the third is an ongoing discussion. With regards to Portuguese, the professors left UNM in spring 2018 and we were authorized to hire two new faculty in the area. Professor Paulo Dutra joined the department in fall 2019. Professor Jessica Carey Webb was also hired but chose to postpone her start date until fall 2021 because of a fellowship that she had received. Both professors are working to rebuild the Portuguese program. Regarding Medical Spanish, this has been an issue that our two previous chairs were unable to tackle. When I first stepped in a chair, in fall 2020, I broached the subject of exploring the possibility of a certificate in Medical Spanish with several faculty but was warned off pursuing this option because of the pandemic. I plan to bring this idea back to the faculty at a future departmental retreat once I can poll the full faculty on how they feel about Medical Spanish.

As we move forward to the next APR, the departmental makeup has changed. Of the 16 tenure line faculty who were in the department for the 2016/17 APR, four have retired or moved to other universities—two members of the Spanish Peninsular faculty, including our only Full Professor at the time, retired; and our Portuguese section took jobs at another university, and one professor in Hispanic Linguistics shifted her line to the Linguistics Department (her line was shared between our two departments). Since then, we have only replaced tenure line faculty in Portuguese. In 2017, we had 18 faculty—16 tenure

line, 2 lecturers— and now we have 17 —14 tenure line, and 3 lecturers. While we hope for a hire in Southwest —to a replacement a core area in the field, and to partially fulfill a recommendation by the external reviewers (a senior hire in one of the three pillars of the department)— we also note the need for at least one other hire in the area of Spanish peninsular cultural studies. Currently, we have one professor in the area, and she is expected to cover approximately 11 centuries of literature AND advance to full professor.

The department has faced several challenges since our last APR, primarily due to faculty departures and declining enrollments —exacerbated by the pandemic— but we hope to arrive to our next APR in a better position. That will begin, I hope, by discussions on how we as a department with historic strengths in Hispanic Studies plan to position ourselves as a major program not just in New Mexico, but in the region.

**Unit Chair: Review and Confirmation**

**Comments:**

The items provided in the Mid-Cycle Check in align with information provided in the previous Unit Response Report and Action Plan.     YES     NO     PARTIALLY   

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Santiago R. Vaquera-Vásquez  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
11/30/2021  
Date (MM/DD/YYYY)

**Dean/Associate Dean: Dean's Office Review and Approval**

**Comments/Feedback:**

Arash Mafi

Print Name



Signature

12/16/2021

Date

**Provost/Associate Provost: Office of the Provost Review and Approval**  
**Comments/Feedback:** A Mid-cycle review was conducted on April 13, 2022.

Associate Provost Pamela Check



5/5/2022

Print Name  
(MM/DD/YYYY)

Signature

Date