

REPORT ON AY2022-2023 ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT

Submission date: 11/15/2023

Assessment Plan covered in the report: Languages BA

College: College of Arts and Sciences

Campuses where the program(s) is delivered: ☒ Anchorage ☐ KOD ☐ KPC ☐ MSC ☐ PWSC

Submitted by: Rebeca Maseda García, Professor of Spanish, rmasedagarcia@alaska.edu

After responding to the questions below, the program should email this form to the dean, with a copy to the appropriate community campus director(s) if the program is delivered on a community campus.

- 1. Please list and number the Program Student Learning Outcomes your program assessed in AY23. For each outcome, indicate one of the following: Exceeded faculty expectations, Met faculty expectations, or Did not meet faculty expectations.**

Example: 1. Communicate effectively in a variety of contexts and formats – Exceeded faculty expectations.

- Communicate effectively in both spoken and written forms, as per the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Guidelines, in the emphasis language (met faculty expectations)
- Demonstrate close reading and critical analysis of authentic texts in the emphasis language, and (met faculty expectations)
- Articulate knowledge of cross-cultural similarities and differences, appropriately communicating this knowledge within a given context in the emphasis language (met faculty expectations)

- 2. Describe your assessment process in AY23 for these Program Student Learning Outcomes, including the collection of data, analysis of data, and faculty (and other, e.g., advisory board) conversations around the findings. (1000 words or less)**

Faculty met on Friday, May 12, 2023 and discussed the data that were gathered from the oral and

written exit exams held in fall and spring. 13 students took the exam, and the average of the results was [(90.08/100) =A-]. Faculty members expressed satisfaction with the outcomes achieved in their respective language programs. There is unanimous agreement that students performing well in the program also tend to excel in the exit exam. The skills developed by students, encompassing receptive, productive, and cultural aspects, align with the ACTFL guidelines and standards adopted nationwide. Our examinees have not only achieved the desired cultural competency and language proficiency but also demonstrated creative thinking and enhanced analytical skills, particularly in responding to culture-specific questions.

3. What are the findings and what do they tell the faculty about student learning in your program? (1000 words or less)

The proficiency of students in our lower-division and upper-division language classes is shaped by a myriad of factors, including their personal learning environment, which encompasses interactions with native speakers, non-native speakers, and heritage speakers, as well as active engagement in extracurricular language activities. Additionally, their dedication and commitment to independent practice significantly impact their progress. In sum, we face a diverse student body with diverse accessibility to resources and family support. Despite the diversity of these influencing factors, we are proud to announce that our students consistently graduate at the targeted proficiency level, typically falling within the range of intermediate-mid to advanced-low according to ACTFL guidelines. This remarkable achievement not only equips them with the skills necessary for advanced language and culture studies at the graduate level but also positions them to obtain credentials for a wide array of professional and career opportunities.

Our evaluation indicates that while our student learning outcomes—effective communication, critical analysis, and cross-cultural fluency—are consistently met, our program also significantly fosters personal, professional, and community responsibility. This is achieved through promoting self-reflection in the language learning process, helping students identify their strengths and areas for growth. Such self-awareness encourages them to take ownership of their learning, independently make decisions, set goals, and monitor their progress. In our classroom environment, we emphasize teamwork, cooperation, and the appreciation of diverse perspectives, thereby extending language skills beyond purely academic contexts. Additionally, our program cultivates an appreciation for diverse cultures, which significantly boosts intercultural competence. This enhancement is clearly evidenced in our assessment tools.

With this perspective, the relevance of our tutor program is apparent. It provides not only extended assistance and additional practice opportunities but has also proven to be an effective tool for community building. It is important to note that as we are writing this review, the tutoring service has moved to the Learning Commons. As language coordinators, however, we have continued selecting and training our tutors and supporting and evaluating the effectiveness of the tutoring service.

However, during the two-year period of the pandemic students' overall learning experience and performance were affected. A comparative analysis with previous years indicates that students

process and comprehend language material more effectively in a traditional, in-person learning environment. This observation underscores the need for a continued focus on optimizing our teaching strategies to suit diverse learning modalities.

4. Based on the findings, did the faculty make any recommendations for changes to improve student achievement of the Program Student Learning Outcomes? Yes

- i. Please describe the recommended action(s), what improvements in student learning the program hopes to see, the proposed timeline, and how the program will know if the change(s) has worked. If no recommendations for changes were made, please explain that decision. (1000 words or less)**

This year we are continuing our efforts to explore the connections between secondary and post-secondary education at UAA and ASD, particularly in light of the increasing number of middle and high school students enrolling in our classes. We recognize that the transition from high school to college can pose challenges for some students, negatively impacting their language proficiency. It is imperative to stress the importance of students adapting their study habits during this transitional period. Mastery of grammatical accuracy in both spoken and written language, along with skills like close reading and text analysis, plays a pivotal role in language acquisition across all educational levels. Addressing ingrained mistakes can prove to be a challenging endeavor, with tutoring and repetitive exercises addressing some, but not all, of these habits. Therefore, providing guidance to students on how to enhance their study habits is crucial. Additionally, collaborating with high school teachers and seeking their perspective is essential to this process.

To support our diverse student body, we are consistently enhancing our teaching strategies and resources. Our long-standing practices include: advising students on study habits, collaborating with high school teachers, and broadening our teaching technique, small group discussions, close readings, intensive analytical writing, well-structured assignments, and individual presentations into our curriculum. Additionally, our courses feature interactive activities and real-world language experiences, making use of authentic materials like films, literature, and news articles in the target language. We promote peer collaboration and group projects, and use cutting-edge instructional methods such as TILT, Team-Based Learning, e-portfolios, flipped classrooms, Unessays, and the integration of research methods. Our commitment to continually revise and update our teaching methods ensures they stay aligned with the latest educational trends and training.

Moreover, we commit to regularly assessing the effectiveness of these strategies and making adjustments as needed to ensure that they align with specific learning outcomes and contribute to the overall success of our students. We will employ several assessment methods: Our Exit Exam, language and culture proficiency tests, surveys and feedback, and individual monitoring of students' performance.

To further our educational goals, we have been working on an internship course which will be on the Fall 2024 schedule. The internship will demonstrate how language curriculum and the skills obtained and refined in language education translate to career. Students will be able to utilize not only their linguistic and intercultural skills in a work environment but they will also utilize and demonstrate extensively personal and social responsibility, teamwork, and critical and analytical skills which are considered today's top employability skills.

In addition to the internship, we are also introducing an integrative capstone course. This innovative component will offer students the chance to delve into cross-cultural issues from a critical perspective. It will enable them to understand the dynamics of globalization and diversity through the lens of the arts. This approach not only enriches their academic experience but also broadens their understanding of the world's cultural mosaic.

While student achievement in the student learning outcomes remains robust, we are aware of the decreasing enrollment numbers. We have doubled our efforts by intensifying community outreach programming encompassing a wide range of events. These initiatives include tea time conversation roundtables, active participation and presentations within the ASD, welcoming ASD students, teachers and parents to our campus, hosting an international film festival, and more. These efforts also provide students opportunities for applying and practicing the knowledge they have gained. Furthermore, as indicated above, we have added two new elective courses, internship and capstone. The latter is expected to be of interest to students from all disciplines to pursue studies in language and culture.

5. In the past academic year, how did your program use the results of previous assessment cycles to make changes intended to improve student achievement of the Program Student Learning Outcomes? Please check all that apply.

- ☒ Course curriculum changes
- ☐ Course prerequisite changes
- ☒ Changes in teaching methods
- ☐ Changes in advising
- ☐ Degree requirement changes
- ☐ Degree course sequencing
- ☐ Course enrollment changes (e.g., course capacity, grading structure [pass/fail, A-F])
- ☐ Changes in program policies/procedures
- ☐ Changes to Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)
- ☐ College-wide initiatives (e.g., High-Impact Practices)
- ☐ Faculty, staff, student development
- ☐ Other
- ☐ No changes were implemented in AY23. *(If no options above were selected)*

If you checked “Other” above, please describe. (100 words or less)

- 6. Do you have any information about how well these or other past improvements are working? Are they achieving their intended goals? Please include any data or assessment results that help you demonstrate this. (1000 words or less)**

Our language instructors are committed to continually enhancing the learning experience in upper-division courses. By integrating supplementary materials, we aim to further develop students' reading and writing abilities. Through additional drills and regular practice of grammatical concepts, we focus on fostering accurate language use, thereby improving students' comprehension and writing proficiency.

Outside the classroom, our language conversation tables and other activities, such as dedicated office hours for class-related discussions, have proven to be invaluable in strengthening both spoken and written language skills. These initiatives have been particularly beneficial for students facing challenges in keeping pace with course materials.

Moreover, our graduates continue to achieve remarkable success in various fields, demonstrating the real-world value of their language education at UAA. One of our graduates has been awarded a prestigious year-long international scholarship (USTA to Austria) and is currently teaching at two high schools in Bregenz. Another graduate is employed by the Alaska Public Defender's Office. Several alumni are actively involved with local NGOs, where they are certainly applying the skills acquired during their language studies. One graduate has reported that she has found work as a travel planner with GoNorth Travel in town primarily because of her language skills.

DEAN SECTION (Due to the program on January 15)

After completing the Dean Section and signing it, the dean should email this form to the program, and copy uaa_ooo@alaska.edu for posting. If the program is delivered on one or more community campus, the dean should consult with the appropriate community campus director(s) on the response and copy the appropriate community campus director(s) when emailing the response to the program.

- 1. Based on the program's responses above, what guidance and support do you have for the program moving forward? (200 words or less)**

The program is encouraged to continue to investigate ways to increase enrollment especially in upper division courses. This would provide larger numbers to make the assessment results more meaningful as well as strengthen the program overall.

- 2. Discuss what the program is doing particularly well in terms of its processes for the assessment and improvement of student learning, for example, the use of a common rubric or prompt, a signature assignment, etc. (200 words or less)**

Program is doing a good job of training students as benchmarked by national ACTFL standards. Additionally, the high impact practices (E.g. flipped classes, team-based learning, tutoring) are especially appreciated.

Dean's signature: Jenny McNulty

Date: 1/12/2024