

Year Year 2

1. Identify the PLO your program assessed this academic year

2. Identify the artifact(s) (i.e. student work) that you used to assess the PLO.

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Results of Exit Surveys: This survey asked students (majors and concentrators) to assess their undergraduate experience and offer feedback for improvement. By the end of the Spring 2016 semester, all four of the graduating students in the LAS Program completed and returned these surveys. The satisfaction of graduates was gauged through items addressing specific aspects of the Latin American Studies program. Students were asked to identify two or three things they like best about the program. Students reported to like best the expertise and enthusiasm of LAS faculty; the opportunities for learning outside the classroom (LAS film festivals, speakers, service, and study abroad); and the variety of disciplines in which LAS classes are offered. The survey also asked the students to mention two or three things students like least about the program. Students stated to like least the course variety/scheduling issues; the lack of students undertaking Study Abroad (in locales other than Spain) and the lack of variety in travel/intercession courses (to locales other than Mexico); the language requirement; and the lack of unity amongst LAS students and faculty. The final point mentioned above also came up in the analysis of the Exit Interview in the PAR for 2014-2015, and to this point, LAS made an effort this academic year to have two informal talks, with the support of Education of Justice, where LAS professors presented on topics of interest to the LAS students. These events were the following: Mike Allison conducted a discussion entitled,

“IDPs, Asylees, Refugees, Migrants: What’s the Difference?” in the Fall 2015 semester and Susan Méndez conducted a discussion entitled, “What’s in a Name?,” detailing the differences between the cultural and identity labels of Hispanic, Latino, Chicano/a, and Tejano/a, in the Spring 2016 semester. These events were advertised to current LAS students, refreshments were provided, and the events were well-attended. It bears mentioning that LAS is aware of this issue and is working to address it. Lastly, there is the following statement written by a graduating LAS concentration student on the Exit Survey: “Us students recognize how tirelessly you all work to make sure we learn as much as possible about other peoples, languages, and ourselves through the LAS program. Younger students may not understand that the work you give us and the time you devote to the class material is not for your benefit, but for ours. Thank you so much.” It is unclear how or if the OEA could assess or would like this statement to be assessed for the LAS program, but it does bear placing on LAS’s Program Assessment Report for 2015-2016.

Results of Exit Interviews: On May 13, 2016, Kevin Nordberg met with Lynda Zayas, the graduating LAS major for 2015-2016, in order to discuss PLO #2: Describe how Latin Americans have contemplated the human condition and the need for self-transcendence, and the Latin American Studies Program overall. On May 19, 2016, Janice Voltzow met with Lynda Zayas in order to discuss PLO#3: Demonstrate how Latin America’s natural history has had a tremendous influence on the development of the cultures of the people who live there, and how humans have adapted to and altered their environment, and the Latin American Studies Program overall. Zayas was informed in advance that the Latin American Studies Program and its Student Learning Outcomes were to be discussed in both meetings. In Nordberg’s interview, Zayas preferred to speak about the overall direction of the Latin American Studies Program as opposed to the idea of how Latin Americans have contemplated the human condition and the need for transcendence. Zayas spoke with great enthusiasm and gratitude for her two semesters of Study Abroad in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Not only does she now enjoy a great facility with Spanish due to her language immersion experience, but she also got the chance to experience new perspectives on the issues of race (inclusive of African ancestry and indigenous populations) and gender in Argentina. From Zayas’ time in Buenos Aires, it was clear to her how the presence and influence of indigenous populations were wiped out due to a preference for the city’s Italian and Spanish immigration history and heritage. Zayas also could see how residents of darker skin color were often thought to be of a lower social-class and/or to be from Brazil or Africa, but definitely not from Argentina. As for gender, Zayas remarked how the level of machismo was higher in Argentina than in the USA, and how women in Argentina did not have the same health reproductive rights as women in the USA. Zayas noted how the difficulty in terminating pregnancies legally in Argentina led to a higher rate of mortality for women (as they sought illegal and unsanitary methods of terminating pregnancies) and a striking rate of femicide (murders of women and teen-age girls by male partners or boyfriends when an “untimely pregnancy” occurs). Nevertheless, Zayas remarked how Argentina is ahead of the USA in the areas of universal healthcare and free public education. In Zayas’ interview, it was clear to Nordberg that Zayas was very aware of political and social developments in Argentina over the last several decades, if not in fact well-versed in how Latin Americans have contemplated the human condition and the need for transcendence. As for the Latin American Studies Program overall, Zayas stressed how LAS students should be encouraged strongly to not only do Study Abroad but to do Study Abroad in a Latin American nation, not Spain or Mexico. She thought promoting such opportunities when LAS faculty visit other LAS and Spanish language classes might be advisable. Students who have studied abroad and representatives from the Study Abroad office could also come and speak to LAS classes on this topic. In this same vein, she also mentioned how more advising for students undertaking Study Abroad might be beneficial to students; this advising could address not only

curriculum but also government regulations. In Voltzow's interview, Zayas more readily demonstrated her knowledge about how Latin America's natural history has had a tremendous influence on the development of the cultures of the people who live there, and how humans have adapted to and altered their environment. She explained how her Study Abroad experience strengthened what she learned about Latin America's natural history and its influence on Latin Americans, and how Latin Americans have shaped their relationship with their environment. For instance, Zayas appreciated how the major urban center of Buenos Aires was located at the mouth of one of the largest rivers on the continent. Moreover, she also understood the environmental impact of that urban population on the river delta and estuary. She explained how BIOL 204 (the class information learned and the presentations that she made) helped her understand the relationship between the land and the people during her Study Abroad experience. As for the Latin American Studies Program overall, Zayas again stressed how LAS students should be encouraged strongly to not only do Study Abroad but to do Study Abroad in a Latin American nation, not just Spain or Mexico. As in the interview with Nordberg, she again recommended promotion of Study Abroad by LAS faculty, Study Abroad office personnel, and students who have undertaken Study Abroad in LAS and Spanish language classes. In conclusion, it is fair to state the Latin American Studies Program has achieved successfully PLO #3 but still has work to do in successfully achieving PLO #2.

5. Where applicable, outline the steps you will take to make improvements to the program based on the results of assessment activities identified in #3.

Steps or actions that we can take to make improvements to the LAS program are as follows: a.) Continue having informal talks/discussions on topics of interest to LAS students (and prospective LAS students) in order to increase the size and feeling of co

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