

## **Academic Program Review Report**

We were delighted to have the chance to meet with a wide range of individuals during our campus visit to evaluate the Department of Spanish and Portuguese in late January. As a committee, we met with faculty, staff, undergraduate and graduate students in a variety of settings, both individually and as interest-based groups (e.g., professors holding the same rank or those in similar fields). We also had the opportunity to meet with several members of the administration; however, both the Dean and the Deputy Vice Provost for Academic affairs were unable to meet with us during any of the scheduled events. Fortunately, the Associate Deans and the Vice-Provost generously shared their time and insights with us.

### **I. Overview/Current Situation and Strategic Planning**

The Department of Spanish and Portuguese comprises a talented core of fourteen faculty members (head count), who oversee a complex group of programs appropriate for a Research I institution. These programs include: three basic language programs (Spanish as a Second Language; Spanish as a Heritage Language; Brazilian Portuguese), undergraduate majors and minors (Spanish; Portuguese), and graduate degrees (M.A. in Portuguese; M.A. in Spanish with possible concentrations in Linguistics, Hispanic Literature, or Southwest Studies; Ph.D. in Spanish and Portuguese with possible concentrations in Linguistics or Hispanic Literature). The assessments provided in the self-study, the concerted efforts to define assessment standards, the information about the curriculum, and the reports of student satisfaction during the site visit all suggest that these programs have an overall very good quality. The Department is also fortunate to have talented and devoted support staff who consistently go above and beyond to meet the needs of the professors and students alike. (The review team was quite impressed with their stated goal that no one leaves their office without a solution.)

There is, however, some reason for concern at present. Faculty morale is low and the faculty members are stretched thin by their efforts to cover all components of the program. This circumstance creates fragility and competition. On the one hand, there is fragility because certain aspects of the program rely mainly upon a single individual whose departure, for whatever reason, would create a staffing imbalance and curricular gaps (a few examples include Milleret's role coordinating the Portuguese language program, Balestra—who resigned in early January—coordinating the Spanish as a Second Language Program, González coordinating Spanish Heritage Language Program; within Peninsular literature and Southwest Studies, each faculty member spans a wide range of topics and a single loss of faculty would create a significant gap; Spanish American literature is currently at a minimal configuration, and the loss of someone like McKnight would eliminate Colonial Studies). On the other hand, there appears to be an exaggerated awareness of internal competition for resources because different interest groups perceive themselves as unappreciated by others and implicitly in competition for the scarce resources. One faculty member described the unit as “Balkanized.” The department chair is unavoidably placed in a position of making hard choices about allocating diminished resources, and any individual or group who does not perceive their interests to be supported may experience resentment toward the chair, toward colleagues, or toward other components of the unit’s academic programming.

The present number and variety of programs within the Department are appropriate for the state's flagship research university. However, unless additional resources are infused within the unit, difficult decisions will have to be made about whether to sacrifice quality in order to maintain so many programs with a limited number of faculty members, or to identify the key areas of strength and invest in them while scaling back in other areas. Ideally, there will be a coherent plan to rebuild faculty strength, not to repeat the past but to address the needs of the future strategically in order to position the Department for greater success.

The geocultural position of the University of New Mexico has two unique features that are fundamental for the Department of Spanish and Portuguese: close proximity to the United States-Mexico border and the tradition of being a Hispanic-serving institution. The Department is poised to make a unique contribution to the University of New Mexico's strategic plan (2001) that emphasizes the strategic advantages of its geocultural position, and the aspiration to provide quality education to the state's citizens and promote diversity as a force for innovation. The Department of Spanish and Portuguese has for decades enjoyed a national reputation of academic prominence as one of the "areas of marked distinction" at the University of New Mexico. From the 1960s through 1990s, the Department, together with the Latin American and Iberian Institute, have enjoyed the reputation of being leaders in the formation of nationally-recognized linguists as well as literary scholars; graduates of this program have had the unique reputation of bringing a strong understanding of the ways their fields relate to socio-cultural contexts, which was a fairly unique feature before the 1980s. In the 1990s, the field across the United States and internationally changed. The Department sought to make adjustments internally to respond to changes in the discipline. The emergence of Southwest Studies and Spanish as a Heritage Language are both key components of this adjustment. These new programs have strategic benefits for the Department, but in a context of scarce resources they have also increased the divisions and competition within the unit. Although the Department continues to enjoy the benefits of its geocultural advantages, the resource of a remarkable library collection, and the aura of past successes, its overall reputation, while still good and able to attract graduate students, has declined. The fact that the most reliable comparative rankings are hopelessly out of date (we anticipate the NRC will complete its recent survey in the next two years) means that it is somewhat difficult to assess the Department's national standing. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that a recent *Chronicle of Higher Education* article referenced a ranking (*The Faculty Scholarly Productivity Index*, partly financed by the State University of New York at Stony Brook and produced by Academic Analytics) which placed UNM among the top twenty departments nationwide (Vanderbilt ranked as number one). Surprisingly, this positive press was not mentioned in the self study. Moreover, the self study, produced under trying circumstances of changes in departmental leadership, did not question the reliability of institutionally provided data that disadvantaged the Department (e.g., the number of actual Ph.D.s granted is higher than that reported).

Based on our careful review of the materials provided and the information gathered during our campus visit, we strongly believe that there are three central areas that need to be addressed, through multiple strategies. These are: (1) continued work in assessment, especially assessments focused specifically on the features of the basic Spanish language program; (2) faculty morale and collective support for the departmental missions, and (3) the addition of faculty lines that serve to bridge components of the program, strengthen strategic features, and position the unit again as a leader in the field. With regard to any future appointments in the program, there is one recommendation that should be made clear from the start. The Department has been fortunate to have made positive choices in hiring its own students. However, in the future, the Department should stringently avoid appointing any new faculty members with the Ph.D. from the University of New Mexico. Scholars and teachers from other doctoral programs bring the diversity of perspectives, research methodologies, and experiences that will enrich and strengthen the program and ensure its continued national prominence.

## II. Department's Constituencies

The Department of Spanish and Portuguese confronts the internal dilemma faced by all similar units at major Research I universities: how to bring together diverse constituencies within the unit. In many programs there are internal faults that separate linguists from literary scholars, Latin American specialists from Peninsularists, or linguists and literary scholars who work on Portuguese from those who work on Spanish. In the 1980s and the 1990s, as the field of Chicano/Chicana Studies emerged, which is today represented by Southwest Studies within the Department, yet another variation has been added to this panorama. All large Spanish and Portuguese departments must find ways to identify collective goals that unite and establish shared goals beyond some of these differences based on areas of specialization.

### A. Undergraduate Programs (Basic Language Programs, Spanish Major/Minor; Portuguese Major/Minor)

The Department has a variety of programs at the undergraduate level that serve thousands of students each semester. In fact, the data included in the self study indicate that enrollments at the undergraduate level have risen from approximately two thousand students in Fall 1996 to over three thousand in Fall 2006. In addition to the students in the basic language programs, the Department has attracted a large number of majors and minors in keeping with national trends--between 1996 and 2005, a total of 1261 undergraduates declared Spanish or Portuguese as their first or double major. Nonetheless, because of the ever-growing demands on faculty and the strains on existing resources, the Department might consider requiring higher standards (a higher GPA or a relatively higher grade in an existing course, such as **Spanish 307**: Introduction to Hispanic Literature, that could function as a "gateway" for students wishing to declare majors).

Overall, faculty voiced some concerns regarding the level of preparation attained in the undergraduate programs, while students expressed generally high levels of satisfaction.

#### Basic Language Program

The Spanish as a Second Language Program (SSL) is currently in transition as a new language coordinator, Julie Sykes, will begin in Fall 2008. Her strengths in instructional technology should allow the Department to explore innovative ways to overcome some of the challenges it now faces. For example, both faculty and students expressed dissatisfaction with the number of classroom contact hours. Language classes currently meet only three days a week (students complained of the lack of opportunity for oral practice, in part, as a result of this structure) whereas peer institutions usually provide five hours of instruction (at times the fifth hour is dedicated to laboratory practice) in order to develop proficiency. For any programmatic changes to succeed, however, suitable classrooms, equipped with technology, must be provided. Fortunately, the Department has benefited from the heroic efforts of a dedicated language laboratory director (Vigil), and it should maximize the use of these facilities.

Spanish as a Heritage Language (SHL) is a nationally recognized program. It has played a key role as a pioneer in the field and continues to strive to empower heritage learners. A few individuals expressed concern that there is no "real" text book; instead, the program relies on photocopied materials; a few others mentioned that they felt the TAs in the program received preferential treatment **over the TA's in the SSL program, and that the teaching staff has occasionally made disparaging remarks about the SSL students.** For whatever reason, the current configuration and relative lack of articulation between SHL and SSL has contributed to the perception of divisions within the unit. Ideally, SHL should serve as a way to unite rather than segregate an ethnically diverse student population.

We would suggest that the Department carefully consider modifying the current structure. The demands on the SSL coordinator are overwhelming and have led to relatively high turnover in that position. The Department might consider hiring a full-time lecturer (or lecturers) to handle routine matters so that the newly hired director can focus her energies where they will most benefit the program. Though a smaller program by far, the coordination of SHL is an additional burden that may make it more difficult for faculty assigned to that position to stand successfully for tenure. In addition, the fact that there is no clearly delineated relationship between the SSL and SHL coordinators can create an unnecessary sense of competition for limited resources. At a minimum, the coordinators of SSL and SHL should work together to systematize the outcomes for the programs so that students work towards common goals **to avoid the impression that the two programs are in competition with each other**. This would help ensure that the students will have developed the skills necessary to succeed when they enter upper division courses **together**. The Department might consider reconfiguring the existing structure so that SHL functions as part of the Basic Languages Program instead of as a separate entity. No matter what solution is chosen, the SHL program should prepare to respond to the change in student demographics; for example, different approaches may be required to meet the specific needs of immigrant heritage learners.

The Department has made great strides in proposing assessment measures for its students; these mechanisms should be formalized for both SSL and SHL. In addition, the graduate students teaching in the programs should have the opportunity to evaluate their supervisors, which would help address areas of concern before they become problematic. It would serve to formalize the mentoring relationship. Inevitably, some problems will arise and the Department should develop mechanisms for resolving conflicts that arise between supervisors and TA's in a systematic way that ensures the smooth functioning of the classes.

Issues of supervision and coordination also need to be addressed at the 300 level. At the very least, there should be an experienced faculty member assigned to serve as a mentor to the students teaching at this level (with appropriate compensation for their efforts—e.g., release time, research assistant). A graduate class on the "Pedagogy of Literature" that could be taken concurrently with teaching such a class might be a way to give the supervisor some credit for supervising this level and also provide some structure/grade accountability for helping the instructors keep on track. Or, perhaps, the Department might consider having a lecturer assist with supervision of this level as well. Graduate students should be encouraged to conceive of their teaching as part of their professional development and should receive assistance in developing a well documented teaching portfolio.

The Department should be proud of its majors and its solid track record in attracting and retaining students. Yet, as the program continues to grow, advising students becomes a greater burden. At present, the Department has responded to this need by training a talented and dedicated staff member to handle routine advising. Students with more complicated cases or those requiring mentoring or career counseling are referred to the Director of Undergraduate Studies, a position that rotates among faculty. The Department might encourage a faculty member with a true vocation in this area to assume the position for a lengthier period in exchange for additional research support.

The Department should think creatively about opportunities for service learning, considering the natural connections with the community that could be fruitfully explored. Given the current circumstances, there are limitations to how much the Department can take on successfully. In fact, in order to develop such initiatives in a systematic way, faculty will require release time or additional support. In general, whenever faculty accept additional duties for the good of the Department, their efforts should be recognized and rewarded.

## **B. Graduate Programs: MA/PhD Hispanic Literature, Portuguese, Hispanic Linguistics, Southwest Studies**

Graduate students in the Department spoke highly of their professors and the education they receive at UNM. Many stated that they felt better prepared than peers they meet at professional conferences because of the quality mentoring they benefit from in the Department. In fact, the Department has graduated an enviable number of well-placed Ph.D.s, especially in linguistics (unfortunately, some of the data regarding this issue are incorrect or incomplete in the Self-study because of problems with data management at higher levels).

Of grave concern to us as a committee is that fact that some comments we heard revealed that professors have not always succeeded in protecting students from the effects of rivalries and tensions among faculty members. This, combined with the substandard office accommodations for graduate student TAs, produces unnecessary stress for the students and proves counterproductive.

Because the faculty are stretched so thin as they try to fill myriad demands, graduate students sometimes do not receive as much professional guidance as they might require. In the self-study, the Department mentions the possibility of beginning a colloquia series, which might work well to encourage graduate student participation in presenting their own research. The Department might consider initiating a series of workshops aimed at helping graduate students develop as professionals (e.g., how to write an abstract, compose a cover letter, apply for grants, interview successfully at the MLA) or strive to incorporate these elements in graduate courses already offered.

There is a great deal that could be done in terms of graduate student recruitment. Since the Department is blessed with a dedicated graduate secretary, perhaps the Graduate Studies Committee could generate a letter promoting its programs, request that each faculty member identify ten colleagues to whom such a letter should be sent, and then have the secretary prepare the letters to be sent out once signed by a faculty member acquainted with the addressee. The personal connection yields better results. In addition, the graduate committee should personally contact the students it most hopes to recruit and put them in touch with faculty and students with shared interests. The Department might also want to consider sponsoring a graduate student symposium featuring local resources that would attract prospective students nationwide. Finally, the department should bear in mind that talented graduate students usually apply to programs with high profile faculty with broad connections across disciplines—this might be yet another reason to consider a few senior hires as part of an overall strategy to strengthen its profile.

## **III. Faculty**

The faculty within the Department view themselves as divided among six different areas: Linguistics, Peninsular literature, Brazilian Portuguese language and literature, Spanish American literature, Southwest Studies, and the Basic Language Programs. At the time of the site visit, one of the coordinators for one facet of the Basic Spanish Language Program had resigned (Balestra) and one Spanish American literature professor has recently decided to retire (Maloof). Although there was excitement about a new hire in Linguistics who would be joining the program for the next academic year, there is also the reality that Rebolledo, a distinguished professor, has generously given of her time to serve in a second term as department chair and within the next several years she may decide to move toward her own retirement. Some faculty members contribute in more than one area (e.g., González covers both Linguistics and works with the Basic Spanish Language program; M. López as a Latin Americanist also contributes to Southwest Studies; there is some fluidity between Brazilian and Spanish American literature faculty under the rubric of Latin American literature) and some hold split appointments in other units (Travis holds a joint appointment in the Department of Linguistics; Lamadrid holds a joint

appointment in Chicano Hispano Mexicano Studies). The chart below identifies the main area of responsibility for each faculty appointment (without double-counting anyone in two categories).

Linguistics	Peninsular	Brazilian Port.	Spanish Amer.	Southwest Studies	Spanish Lang.
Cacoullos	Cárdenas	Lehnen	K. López	LaMadrid	González
Travis	Quinn	Milleret	M. López	Rebolledo	Sykes (new)
	Rivera		K. McKnight		
			Santiago-Díaz		

This group of individuals is spread remarkably thin over a large number of complex degree programs. They strive to remain active within their own research areas, serve classes needed for each component of the academic program, and provide professional service both locally and nationally. With this level of staffing, it is a challenge to administer effectively such a wide array of programs with a high level of quality. Three sets of numbers stand out for substantiating the significant causes for low morale experienced by faculty and their repeatedly voice concern about their workload.

First, Table 16 (“Total Faculty by Contract Type and Faculty Category”) shows that in 1996 there were 14 instructional faculty and one executive/administrative appointment for a total of 15. In 2005, the overall number had shifted downward slightly to 11 instructional faculty and 2 executive/administrative appointments for a total of 13.

Second, Table 3 (“Full-Time/Part-Time Enrollment by Level of Students Admitted to Program”) as well as Table 8 (“Student Credit Hour Production”) both demonstrate an increased demand on professors by students in the program. Counting total full-time and part-time students in Table 3, there has been an 83% increase in students in the program between 1996 and 2005, which points toward a dramatic increase in advising and other student-related services that the Department must provide. Table 8 points toward increases in student credit hour production during the period between 1999 and 2005 (information back to 1996 was not provided). In Table 8, by combining the total undergraduate and graduate SCH, and by combining the totals for Portuguese with Spanish, the Department has gone from generating 8,787 SCH in Fall 1999 to 9,541 SCH in Fall 2005, which is an increase of 8.6%. Our expectation is that if SCH were compared back to 1996, the percentage increase would be even larger. These numbers suggest that the Department is operating at capacity, struggling to meet additional enrollment demands, and that its perception of being stretched thin is not exaggerated.

Third, Table 14 (“Assistantships by Job Title”) indicates the increase in the number of funded assistants between 1996 through 2005, rising from a total of 39 in Fall 1996 to 59 in Fall 2005. This increase largely explains how the Department has managed to staff the growing demand for instruction in basic Spanish language classes. In addition, in order to meet enrollment demand for the gateway courses in the Spanish major, increasingly advanced graduate teaching assistants have been assigned the responsibility of developing and teaching their own courses at this level. While this arrangement does provide graduate students with important experience that will provide a strategic advantage on the job market, the increase from 39 to 59 is a 51% increase in assistantships, and in order to maintain quality programming and academic standards, such an increase also means that significant faculty time must be invested in training and supervising this cohort of assistants.

The Basic Spanish Language programs were addressed in another portion of this evaluation and the comments below focus specifically on the other key areas of the faculty. There is a clear need for additional faculty appointments; however, future hires should be allocated based on a persuasive strategic hiring plan focused on building departmental cohesion.

### **A. Hispanic Linguistics**

The Hispanic Linguistics program is represented by professors that distinguish the Department positively from a number of the programs with which it competes for national rankings. This unit is an asset that the Department should foster. There are presently three professors (Cacoullous, Travis, and González), all of whom work in some way in Sociolinguistics. As stated earlier, one professor is on a split appointment with the Linguistics Department, while another professor is also the coordinator of the Spanish Heritage Language program. Because of their common interest in Spanish of the Southwest, they are a decidedly cohesive group that has an already formulated plan to establish a national center on heritage languages through a federal grant, to focus on Spanish of the Southwest. The university should support this endeavor to the fullest extent, because it is very much in keeping with a national trend to study and preserve heritage languages in the U.S. in order to inform educators, politicians, and a myriad other officials and citizens who must address the population that speaks these languages and issues that confront them. As the demographics of the state and region change (for example, with the rising influx of Spanish native speakers from Latin America who intend to stay in the United States), the center will also have to change its focus to include their linguistic issues as well. Following their own recommendation, we support the proposal that the next hire in the Department should be an Assistant Professor of Spanish Phonology, for the following reasons: (1) the Hispanic Linguistics section needs more people in theoretical linguistics, since the three current professors all work in the same area, which is considered an applied area; (2) the current linguists can barely cover their course offerings, and need another professor to help at the undergraduate and graduate levels; (3) if the proposed center is funded by a grant, the principal investigators will need more support to bridge from the center to the academic programs of the university.

### **B. Spanish Peninsular Literature**

The Peninsular section of the Department is small, with three professors (Cárdenas—Medieval; Quinn—Early Modern; and Rivera—20<sup>th</sup> Century); at times, one of the Latin Americanist professors includes 19<sup>th</sup> century Peninsular novels in a comparative course (K. López). This group is small and diverse in their approaches; at the same time, they seemed congenial toward each other and the senior faculty appeared particularly supportive of Quinn's innovative approaches to teaching, which is organized more around cultural topics than time periods and literary genres. They staff advanced level Peninsular literature classes for undergraduate majors/minors as well as for graduate students. They report that when Peninsular courses are offered, the courses always fill. Viewing this component of the program through the lens of the "coverage model" (i.e., sufficient faculty expertise to cover the major historical periods and genres), there are too few faculty within this area to "cover" all of the major Peninsular areas. The group identified their preference for two additional faculty appointments: one in the late Medieval or Early Modern period (complementary to the work of Cárdenas and Quinn) and a second in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century studies.

The coverage model assumes a stable range of genres and historical time periods that need to be covered, and missing areas constitute gaps. The study of Peninsular literature was generally the dominant literary force within Hispanism up through the 1960s, and the coverage model was the dominant strategy for assessing departmental strength. However, the interests of graduate students and the specializations advertised for new faculty positions have driven changes within

United States Hispanism from the 1970s to the present. During this time there has been a growing emphasis on Latin American literary studies and, increasingly, on Latina/Latino literary studies. Within this changing panorama, the dialogue between Peninsular literary studies and Latin American and Latina/Latino literary studies becomes a crucial issue. Viewed from this perspective, it would be more productive to conceptualize future Peninsular hires not simply in terms of coverage, but most importantly in terms of their ability to maintain a strong dialogue with other components of the program. The goal of new faculty appointments that contribute to Peninsular literary studies should not be the re-establishment of a staffing level or Peninsular/Latin American “balance” from the past, but rather a vision that focuses on methodological approaches, cultural themes/topics, and new research configurations that ensure comparative dialogues and engagements among all literary areas within the Department. The engaging dialogue between Quinn and McKnight in the Department’s newsletter is evidence of the importance and success of such an effort.

### **C. Portuguese**

The Portuguese section is small but is led by two dedicated and productive faculty members (Milleret and Lehnen). Their efforts are hampered by three problems: difficulty in staffing courses; a perceived lack of support by other sections of the Department and other programs; and the need to restructure program goals at the graduate level. Regarding staffing problems, one professor also teaches Spanish American literature so fewer courses in Portuguese are taught than would have been offered had both professors been dedicated solely to Portuguese. There are presently 3 students in the Portuguese graduate program, and 150 students in the undergraduate program. The professors offer 3-4 upper-division courses as well as 1 graduate class each semester. The graduate students can also study with undergraduates in 2-3 double-listed courses per semester. The paucity of graduate courses in Portuguese is not conducive to the development of this important part of the Department. The Portuguese professors expressed that they feel a lack of support on the part of other sections of the graduate program and the Latin American Studies program, in that their courses are not consistently recommended to students and study of the Portuguese language is not required by the latter program. Finally, one professor has become interested in researching more pedagogical and curricular issues of less commonly taught languages, while the other professor researches Brazilian literature and culture, which are the more traditionally-recognized areas of study. There are two concerns here. First, it is not clear whether research in programmatic/pedagogical issues will be recognized by colleagues in the field of Portuguese studies and at various levels in the Dean’s committees and the administration as valid scholarly work. Second, if the professor continues to devote her research to an area outside of her recognized field of expertise, this might create a burden for the other faculty member who is doing research that directly supports the graduate program and that attracts graduate students to study Portuguese at UNM. The committee believes that the Portuguese section could be helped if other professors in the Department who also have expertise in Portuguese in some way could offer classes to help with course offerings. Future hires should also express a preference for candidates who can offer Portuguese courses. The Portuguese faculty should be supported by the Latin American Studies program as well as Spanish American faculty within the Department. Finally, the professor who is doing pedagogical research should be informed of how her work in this area is being perceived by the university and her colleagues in other institutions, and also be aware of its effect on the UNM graduate offerings and status.

## **D. Spanish American Literature and Culture**

The Spanish American faculty, with the retirement of Maloof, includes four professors. Because Brazilian Portuguese, Spanish American, and Southwest literary studies are conceptually linked by the larger concept of “Latin America,” there is the perception that this group constitutes the single largest component of the Department. This perception depends on how these different areas are grouped, and in terms of the need to staff different courses in different fields, the grouping is not accurate. The professors who stand out as mainly Spanish American literature specialists include K. López (19th and 20th century Spanish American literature, emphasis on narrative), M. López (Mexican literature, emphasis on narrative), K. McKnight (Colonial literature), and E. Santiago-Davis (Caribbean literature, Afro-Hispanic literature, emphasis on poetry). Viewed through the “coverage model” described above, colleagues described Maloof as “covering” the Southern Cone/Central American component of the program. The field of Spanish American literary studies today juggles more traditional coverage categories alongside new ways of defining the field. Comparisons that trace a topic across historical periods, new methodological approaches to cultural production across various genres and media in a historical period or geographical region, and cross-regional comparisons are some of the ways that the field is changing. The current cohort of Spanish Americanists is keeping pace with these changes. New appointments within the area of Spanish American literary studies need to contribute to unit cohesion, as mentioned earlier. But, the designation of future Spanish American hiring priorities also needs to emphasize intellectual diversity. K. López, M. López, and Maloof have all published on related topics, themes, and literary works; their research has responded to dominant themes of the day within the field. It would be ideal to add specialists who promote cohesion but who also have significantly different research areas and/or approaches. For example, a specialist who works on drama and performance would add a new feature to the program (although it is worth noting that the Brazilianist Milleret, who is already stretched to cover multiple areas, is a drama specialist); a specialist who works from a Transatlantic perspective would provide a new comparative focus; or, a specialist whose research agenda focuses mainly on the Southern Cone, on the Andes, or on Central America, to name a few possibilities, would also diversify the faculty. There are many possibilities that could be considered in concert with changes in other areas of the Department with the goal of promoting greater breadth and at the same time more cohesion.

## **E. Southwest Studies**

Southwest Studies is the designation used within the Department to identify what might be called Chicana/Chicano or Latina/Latino Studies in other institutions. Given the unique geocultural position of the University of New Mexico and the wider tradition of Southwest Studies within the state, this area of study is crucial to the program. The name “Southwest Studies” may give leverage within the institution or have a special resonance locally, but it created an initial obstacle for the evaluation in understanding the main focus of this component of the program and its faculty. The professors who cover this component include two administrators who have only limited time allocated to teaching: Rebolledo (Department chair) and Lamadrid (Director for Chicano Hispano Mexicano Studies). Rebolledo is a pioneer in the field of Latina/o Studies and especially the study of writing by Latinas. She attracts graduate students to the University of New Mexico seeking to study under her direction. Lamadrid brings a unique focus that blends folklore, popular culture, and literature and also combines an interest in both Native American and Latino communities in the Southwest. The area of the programs draws upon the sociolinguistic expertise of González as well as the interest in U.S.-Mexico border studies of M. López. This area of faculty expertise and curriculum are relatively new and strategically important to the Department. It is an area of research that is growing in importance and it must respond to the struggles of both the longstanding Latino communities that have resided within

what is now the United States but also respond to the reality of dramatic shifts currently taking place because of immigration. One faculty member noted during the site visit that “the border is not a line, it is a corridor and we are in the middle of it.” Given the intellectual dynamism within this field, there is clearly a need for at least one additional faculty hire within this area.

It is also noted that given the particular demographic composition and history of the state of New Mexico, with a tradition of “nuevo mexicanos” who have been in the state for generations, and with the emerging presence of new immigrants (or children of recent immigrants) and a growing population of Mexicans from Mexico, this is an area of intellectual inquiry that requires faculty members to work with complicated and often tense political issues of identity and citizenship. There is an inherent tension that the faculty must address in conceptualizing the field of “Southwest Studies” within the state of New Mexico and in dialogue with the trends in the larger field of Latina/Latino Studies within the United States. While there may be local advantages derived from the attention given to state traditions, graduates need to be prepared to engage in a larger intellectual dialogue within academe.

Given the current strengths of the Department, it might make sense to revision the Department as a center for the study of cultures in contact. This focus would bring together the exciting work already being done within specific areas of specializations. It would, perhaps, promote greater intellectual exchange between the faculty in Southwest Studies and the Peninsularists, the Latin Americanists, and the Brazilianists, and the literature professors and linguists. UNM could easily gain greater national prominence by highlighting its unique position to serve as a leader in this burgeoning area.

#### **IV. Mentoring and Faculty Development**

There are two topics of mentoring that require some comment. First, untenured assistant professors within the Department, who are working hard, seem somewhat vulnerable. Given the tensions within the Department, they are called upon to become aligned with groups and participate in the “Balkanization” of the unit. Given the growing enrollments and the consequent teaching and service demands created by this growth, there are significant demands upon their time that take them away from their research. While faculty should demonstrate their accomplishments in teaching and demonstrate a track record of service that ensures their future participation in departmental life, these junior faculty members must also have support for developing their scholarly records. The abrupt transition caused by the appointment and rapid departure of Clancy Clements, former department chair, added to the stress experienced by these untenured faculty members. While untenured faculty members should not be “coddled” or completely shielded from service roles, they do need to have a clear sense of the expectations for tenure, frank feedback about their progress toward meeting these demands, and appropriate support developing the track record expected by the University of New Mexico.

The second mentoring question involves the significant cohort of associate professors within the unit. Of the fourteen faculty members, one half are currently at the associate rank (K. López, M. López, McKnight, Milleret, Rivera, Torres Cacoullós, and Travis is up for promotion). Because these faculty members are tenured, the service demands placed upon them increases, as is reasonable. At the same time, they are also assuming additional teaching responsibilities in the area of graduate student supervision and committees. Within a unit that has had significant increases in demand and little increase in resources, associate professors must shoulder a particularly large service responsibility. The solutions for this situation are not easy, but there are some practices that can help clarify the choices and contributions that the individual faculty members need to make:

- Clarify explicitly the expectations required for a successful dossier for promotion to full professor. Ideally, promotion expectations can be included within the departmental documents about faculty evaluation and they should refer to appropriate College and University expectations.
- In accordance with the promotion practices, each associate professor should receive a brief, one-page written evaluation every other year outlining his/her progress toward promotion. Whereas the annual evaluation looks at performance within a twelve-month period and is typically linked to merit salary considerations, this evaluation should involve consultation with the appropriate faculty group that might vote on promotion cases, such as a committee of Full Professors, and it specifically looks at the larger trajectory and requirements for promotion to professor. These should be formative evaluations that provide constructive advice.
- At present, major departmental committees rotate on a two-year basis. During the first year the person learns the new role; during the second year he or she is able to fulfill more easily what was learned during the first year. The committee suggests extending the length of time that a person chairs a major committee. It is during the third and fourth year of service that one has sufficient experience needed to propose adjustments that may streamline procedures. Shifting roles and learning committee assignments every other year is a fast pace of turn-over and may contribute to some of the workload frustration.
- The overall committee structure should be reconsidered, with the goal of streamlining all processes. The Department's self-study document provides evidence of significant investments in areas such as assessment, standards, and program evaluation. At this point, it would be reasonable to transition to a "monitoring mode" in order to implement the assessments and standards that exist so that at a given point four or five years from now departmental trends can be analyzed.
- There were comments made during the site visit about past faculty retreats, about goals and plans, and at the same time a sense that there was little follow through as a result of the planning event. For both such planning discussions as well as annual committee activity, it would be wise to begin each year with a list of goals or an action plan linked to dates; committee chairs can share such information in May, during the last monthly faculty meeting, regarding their plans for the upcoming year. The following May, the committee chair can report on progress toward meeting the previous year's goals, and use this information to identify the next year's goals. It is wise to keep the collective focus on concrete goals that can be accomplished each year. A shared vision of this nature may help eliminate some of the sense of "spinning wheels without making headway" noted by some very dedicated associate professors.

## V. Recommendations

Because of the stated mission of UNM, Spanish and Portuguese should be a key unit for the university and should be supported as such. The frequent turnover in departmental and upper level administration has caused some tensions that need to be addressed in a fruitful manner in order for the unit to fulfill its tremendous potential. The faculty have shown great dedication to the institution despite very challenging circumstances and we applaud their efforts. We were especially impressed by Professor Rebolledo's willingness to fill the void created by the sudden departure of the former chair.

At this time, it seems the Department is at a crossroads. The faculty need to come together to formulate a clear, well-informed vision of the Department for the future beyond 2010 that builds on their existing strengths. **The Department gives the impression at this time of being too riven by internal disputes and competition between programs to be able to work together toward a common purpose which will bridge these gaps.** We strongly recommend that UNM support the Department in this crucial endeavor by providing a skilled outside facilitator to help faculty members develop a shared sense of purpose, to articulate short and long-term goals for the unit. Without question, faculty members need to become stakeholders in the success of the Department as a whole, and each individual needs to support unit.

As faculty look at the Department's future, they may want to consider restructuring programs to maximize the contribution made to the university mission as well as exploring ways to foster connections with units across campus. Also, departmental decisions need to respond to the direction of the field and the goals that the Department sets for itself, not to local fluctuating enrollment pressures. We hope that some of our suggestions, made throughout this report, may prove helpful in providing different ways of conceptualizing the Department's contribution to our discipline.

As we see it, the Department's greatest need at present is for strategic faculty hires in accord with its vision for the future. The second urgent need is adequate space and resources. Specifically, there is a dire need for adequate space. This includes classrooms capable of supporting current technology (we must note that many classrooms we visited were woefully substandard, not even meeting the most basic needs) and office space for instructors to allow for meaningful teacher/student interaction. In addition, faculty should be provided with technological resources (including the regularly scheduled "refreshing" of computers, etc.) and with training in innovative approaches that would facilitate both research and teaching.

Within this general framework, we would like to make the following specific recommendations:

- a. As stated above, since the Hispanic Linguistics unit, which has been highly successful in producing successful Ph.D.'s (since 2000, 67% of the Ph.D.'s graduating in Spanish and Portuguese have been from Hispanic Linguistics), has already developed a plan for their unit and justified the need for a hire due to a lack of faculty and in light of a proposed Heritage Language Center, the committee recommends that the Department hire a Spanish phonologist/phoneticist, as the linguists have requested, or someone in another theoretical field (e.g., syntax/semantics).
- b. The committee believes that it would be equally important to hire a chair from another institution whose research bridges existing fields. Ideally, the candidate would be someone who is broadly interdisciplinary, such as someone who studies cultural, literary and/or cognitive theory, and who is perceived as not representing or aligning with any one area within the Department. This interdisciplinary focus is intended to (1) fill a need for more theoretical offerings within the course offerings; (2) help unite the many divisions within the Department

and also (3) inform a dialogue that the new chair could initiate among the various departmental factions. The faculty would need to work together under the guidance of the new chair to ensure the success of the unit. *In view of occasional miscommunications and confrontations between the faculty and a few of the recent chairs, it is important that the faculty work towards an understanding of their chair as an advocate for them in their progress toward tenure and promotion, as well as a spokesperson for the entire department who works to promote and hold the various programs together. Clearly, the faculty has sometimes fallen short of this kind of positive attitude toward the chair on occasion in the past, resulting in friction. It is obviously important that the department choose a chair with whom such a relationship has a fair chance to develop, which means, among other things, that a chair should not be selected who is likely to be seen as a partisan supporter of one program over the others.*

c. The committee also believes that other fields in the Department that require more staffing include Southwest Studies and Spanish Peninsular literature. The Southwest Studies professor should also be someone who has a theoretical focus in research. Regarding the Peninsular position, there would be a preference for a professor with a transatlantic focus who can also bridge between Peninsular and Hispanic American literatures.

d. In response to concerns expressed by the Associate and Assistant Professors regarding a lack of support and information about what they need to prepare themselves for promotion, the committee encourages a systematic mentoring of faculty for tenure and also for promotion to full professor. This process should be done at the departmental and university levels for both professorial ranks. At the same time, the chair should encourage faculty to seek mentors outside the Department as well and to build relationships with professors of other departments and disciplines. **Such an expansion of the mentorship program would bring a broader, university-wide perspective to the process of tenure and promotion and contribute to the fairness and balance which the faculty especially needs at this time when there have been disagreements and misunderstandings.**

## Perceived Institutional Barriers to Success and Recommendations (Action Items)

1. The committee perceived several issues that should be addressed by the University because they are related to the success of the Spanish and Portuguese Department. One such issue that is directly related to the lack of physical space and support for resources for language teaching is that of the need to create opportunities for web-based instruction and, by extension, distance learning. In order to become a nationally-recognized department, the University must invest in technological advances that not only help language instruction, but also teaching in general. While such an undertaking requires a tremendous commitment of time, money, and personnel to form a solid instructional technology unit and also develop smart classrooms and training, not to mention maintenance of these programs, it would help bring the University up to national prominence in all areas. Regarding language learning and teaching, if all classes were taught in smart classrooms, all UNM language departments would be able to use the commercial language teaching technology that are becoming an industry standard for all textbook packages. Moreover, a strong technology unit could also support technological innovation on the part of the faculty as well, perhaps leading to the elimination of commercially-produced materials in favor of materials created as property of the University itself. Some examples are:

Example of online language textbook: <http://www.laits.utexas.edu/fi/>

Example of online grammar resource: <http://www.laits.utexas.edu/tex/>

Example of language podcasts: <http://tltc.la.utexas.edu/brazilpod/tafalado/>

Example of database of native speaker clips: <http://www.laits.utexas.edu/spe/>

Examples of other web-based projects by professors:

<http://www.laits.utexas.edu/its/courses.html>

The investment in such projects can be justified by the fact that the fees paid by students and the institution are materially returned directly to the students and faculty. These materials are not intended to replace faculty, but rather to enhance their teaching efforts. They can, however, be used remotely one day per week, thus allowing space to be freed somewhat. The idea behind this proposal is to support the existing language program, to maximize its efforts and enrich the learning environment.

2. The review committee has made several recommendations in this document that will require considerable work by the faculty. Recognizing the fact that the institution cannot burden an already overburdened department with more tasks, the University should recognize that it must consider institutionalizing a systematic process of offering incentives for creative curricular development and for innovative research in pedagogical materials. At present, there do not seem to be any incentives offered to the faculty to do this kind of work. The committee recommends that the faculty be encouraged to do this extra service by offering them small grants to work during the summer, funding to help them attend workshops or visits to campuses with successful programs, or even resources in terms of a graduate research assistant to help them realize these projects.

3. The issue of Study Abroad programs is one that requires immediate attention. These programs have functioned at other institutions as way to increase departmental resources, in that profits return to the department. Moreover, the courses offered abroad complement campus course offerings by providing courses that may not be offered at a given time and allowing courses to be enriched by teaching them *in situ*. The Study Abroad programs can also offer

further opportunities for faculty and graduate students to spend time in the target culture and to gather data for their own research. At present, it appears that the Study Abroad Office is ineffective because it is underfunded and faculty are allowed to offer courses randomly when they can muster the effort to organize a trip. The University should explore ways to organize the study abroad programs and find resources to realize them, beginning with the department that is most impacted by such endeavors, which is Spanish and Portuguese.

4. The Department should think creatively about how to complement their own curriculum by incorporating courses from other departments. This is a two-way street: Spanish already cross-lists some of its courses with other programs, and has several faculty with joint appointments (Travis with Linguistics; Lamadrid with Chicano-Hispano-Mexicano Studies), but it could do more reaching out to other programs as well as actively encouraging its students to supplement their programs with related courses in other fields.

For example, it would be appropriate and desirable for the Spanish faculty to be more directly involved in the Comparative Literature/Cultural Studies program. CL/CS 223-224, Introduction to Literature, is a Core Curriculum course that ought to be taught occasionally by Spanish faculty. On the graduate level, Spanish offers 601, Literary Theory, which overlaps with CL/CS 500, Introduction to Comparative Literature; the possibility of these two courses being taught in alternative years or team-taught by Spanish faculty could be considered.

Similarly, courses taught outside the Department by History, American Studies, Linguistics, Media Arts, and Fine Arts, which relate either to Spain, Southwest Studies, or Latin American studies, could become a more integral part of the Spanish program, and advisors could more actively encourage its students to explore these areas. More courses in film, just to mention one area, would be a great enhancement of Spanish literary studies.

Spanish culture and history permeates many areas of study. New alliances that will integrate existing programs with Spanish, and highlight the variety and richness of Spanish culture, could be forged. This is not a question of making additional hires but of celebrating the diversity that already exists on campus.