

# Final Assessment Report

## Spanish (BA, Minor), Latin American Literatures and Cultures (Minor), Spanish/English

## Translation (Minor, Diploma)

December 2020

### Executive Summary

External reviewers found that the programs (BA, Minors, Diploma) delivered by the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies (SLAS) were in good standing.

“These programs are currently in good standing (especially the BA and the Minor in Spanish) but only due to the hard work of its few members.”

A total of four recommendations were provided by the reviewers, regarding resource needs, and program marketing and recruitment. In response, the program created a plan outlining the specific actions proposed to address each recommendation as well as a timeline for implementation. The next cyclical review for this program is scheduled for 2026-2027.

### Total Number of Students Registered in All Undergraduate Year Levels

	3-Year General	4-Year General	Honours	Honours Co-op
<b>Fall 2020</b>	0	0	8	0
<b>Fall 2019</b>	0	0	8	0
<b>Fall 2018</b>	0	0	10	0

\*Enrolment based on Active Students Extract retrieved from Quest Dec 17, 2020

### Number of Students Graduating with a Minor/Diploma

	Spanish Minor	Latin American Literatures and Cultures Minor	Spanish/English Translation Minor	Spanish/English Translation Diploma
<b>2018</b>	5	0	0	0
<b>2017</b>	4	0	0	0
<b>2016</b>	6	0	0	0

\*data provided by Institutional Analysis and Planning as part of the Self-Study

## **Background**

In accordance with the University of Waterloo's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the external evaluation and the internal response of the BA, Minors and Diploma delivered by the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies. A Self-Study (Volume I, II, III) was submitted to the Associate Vice-President, Academic on August 30, 2019. The Self-Study (Volume I) presented the program descriptions and learning outcomes, an analytical assessment of the programs, including the data collected from a student survey, along with the standard data package prepared by the Office of Institutional Analysis & Planning (IAP). The CVs for each faculty member with a key role in the delivery of the program(s) were included in Volume II of the Self-Study.

From Volume III, two arm's-length external reviewers were selected by the Associate Vice-President, Academic: Dr. Sophie Lavoie, Associate Professor of Culture and Media Studies, University of New Brunswick, and Dr. Enriqueta Zafra, Associate Professor of Language, Literatures and Cultures, Ryerson University.

Reviewers appraised the Self-Study documentation and conducted a site visit to the University on November 14-15, 2019. An internal reviewer from the University of Waterloo, Dr. Susan Elliott, Professor of Geography and Environmental Management, was selected to accompany the external reviewers. The visit included interviews with the Associate Vice-President, Academic; Acting Dean of the Faculty of Arts; Chair of the Department, as well as faculty members, staff and current undergraduate students. The Review Team also had an opportunity to meet with representatives from the library.

Following the site visit, the external reviewers submitted a report on their findings, with recommendations. Subsequently, the program and Dean responded to each recommendation and outlined a plan for implementation of the recommendations.

This Final Assessment Report is based on information extracted, in many cases verbatim, from the Self-Study, the External Reviewers' Report, Program Response and Dean's Response.

## **Program Characteristics**

Spanish: In addition to providing a fluent knowledge of the Spanish language, the Spanish program offers a multiplicity of practical applications ranging from business to broadcasting and from social work to diplomatic service. At the same time, it provides a deep knowledge of and appreciation for Hispanic literatures and cultures. Spanish is offered in the following credentials:

- Minor (4.0 units/8 courses in Spanish)
- 3-Year General (15.0 units/30 courses, including 6.0 units/12 courses in Spanish)
- 4-Year General (20.0 units/40 courses, including 8.0 units/16 courses in Spanish)
- 4-Year Honours program (20.0 units/40 courses, including 8.0 units/16 courses in Spanish)

This report also technically covers these since-inactivated credentials:

The *Minor in Latin American Literatures and Cultures* (4.0 units/8 courses) aimed to examine the literatures and cultures of Latin America from pre-Columbian times to the present. Students study the major trends in literary and cultural criticism, while developing strong research skills at the same time. The Minor was inactivated effective September 1, 2019 due to low enrolment.

The *Minor in Spanish/English Translation* (4.0 units/8 courses) provided an opportunity for students enrolled in any degree program to examine a variety of linguistic and stylistic issues directly relevant to understanding culture, civilization, business, and industry. Students were be introduced to current issues of translation (business, technical, literary) and technological resources used today in translation, while acquiring important research skills. The Minor was inactivated effective September 1, 2019 due to low enrolment.

The *Diploma in Spanish/English Translation* (4.0 units/8 courses) provided an opportunity for non- and post-degree students to examine a variety of linguistic and stylistic issues directly relevant to understanding culture, civilization, business, and industry. Students will be introduced to current issues of translation (business, technical, literary) and technological resources used today in translation, while acquiring important research skills. The Diploma was inactivated effective September 1, 2019 due to low enrolment.

### **Summary of Strengths, Challenges and Weaknesses based on Self-Study**

#### **Strengths**

- Dedicated and caring instructors who are invested in their students' success.
- Smaller class sizes in advanced classes allow students a more personalized educational experience.
- Cultural Identities Minor and interdepartmental collaboration with Germanic and Slavic Studies (GSS).
- Strong sense of community among students and faculty.
- A unique opportunity to study the art of translation.

#### **Challenges**

- Attracting more majors and improving enrollment, especially in upper-year courses. One avenue that may be pursued is to foster a stronger relationship with high school teachers in terms of outreach and professional development. This would be mutually beneficial as they would get professional training and the program would attract better prepared students coming into university and more awareness of the programs at the high school level.
- Converting minors into majors.

- Fostering a “learning narrative” between courses so that students can more easily make connections during their learning experiences in Spanish classes.
- Having an office manager who is at the “front line” only 4 hours a day.

### **Weaknesses**

- A very small faculty complement constrains the number of initiatives that can be undertaken at any one time in the Department.
- Large size of first-year courses.
- Lack of resources to offer courses in Spring and Summer to accommodate the needs of co-op students who would like to pursue studies in Spanish.

### **Summary of Key Findings from the External Reviewers**

The reviewers felt that these programs are currently in good standing (especially the BA and the Minor in Spanish) but only due to the hard work of its few members. They felt that this is not sustainable in the long run and the programs’ good standing requires the urgent hiring of a tenure-track position to maintain programs’ requirements. When asked to establish a top priority for the program to address, the reviewers felt that this was a tough question as many of the programs’ perceived issues are interrelated. However, reviewers judged that the renewal of the definite-term position with the possibility of conversion into a tenure-track position once the hiring freeze is over should be the top priority. This would show the Administration’s willingness to support SLAS, for all the reasons provided in this report, and provide some hope for SLAS faculty members, all the while consolidating the department.

### **Program Response to External Reviewers’ Recommendations**

1. SLAS urgently needs a tenure-track position to fulfil program requirements and solve an unsustainable situation in the department. Perhaps the Faculty of Arts could consider a renewal of the definite-term position with the possibility of conversion into a tenure-track position once the hiring freeze is over.

### **Program Response**

The request for a tenure-track position has been denied at this time due to the hiring freeze in place. SLAS feels fortunate, however, to have had their Definite Term appointment extended for another three years. The new appointment begins August 2020. This extension provides SLAS with some breathing room, and the instructor will be able to continue teaching seven courses per year. Nevertheless, SLAS struggles to divide service duties amongst three tenure stream members, while also participating in faculty initiatives (such as Arts First). Moreover, their ability to plan and implement significant changes to their curriculum will also be impacted, but they remain hopeful that the Faculty will be in a stronger financial situation in three years, and that the position they lost to a retirement in 2017 will be reinstated.

**Dean's Response**

The Department is correct in noting that the hiring freeze, in addition to the financial situation of the Faculty, places serious constraints on our current ability to hire tenure-line faculty. We are engaged in ongoing complement planning for the Faculty as a whole, as well as a strategic planning process. We will gain a clearer picture of needs and opportunities over the coming year.

2. Hire a full-time Administrative Assistant who is at the front lines of the department.

**Program Response**

SLAS do not see this happening. The Department has always only had a 0.5 position in the Administrative Manager Role. For many years they shared a person with Classical Studies, so although they only had an assistant for half of the work week, she was in the office 40 hours a week, and she split her time between the two departments. When Classical Studies was awarded a 1.0 position in the role, the shared assistant took the spot and SLAS continued with the 0.5. There has been a good deal of turnover in recent years, as people take on the position and then move on to full time work elsewhere in the University. SLAS has lost 4 people since 2009.

The argument has been made on many occasions to change the position to a full-time role, particularly in light of how much additional work has been downloaded to people holding the spot but has been unsuccessful. SLAS conducted a search to cover a secondment that has been extended and hired a replacement who began on December 1, 2020.

Faculty members and teaching staff have learned to work around this situation and have become accustomed to handling various responsibilities independently but running a department with a part time administrative assistant has presented several challenges. An example of this can be as simple as having to re-arrange a workday schedule to allow for their Admin. Manager to attend a meeting or workshop that requires SLAS representation, or as complicated as having no one in the office.

**Dean's Response**

Our current structures in the Faculty of Arts present some operational challenges, of which the situation with the SLAS admin manager is an example. With the strategic planning process currently underway in the Faculty, we should be able to identify such challenges and address the structural issues contributing to them.

3. Solve the Conversation Class Director issue.

**Program Response**

SLAS will continue to make their case for this important position. They hope to be able to offer a sessional rate of pay to the individual in charge of teaching, assessing and offering support to approximately 200 SPAN 101/SPAN 102 students per week. SLAS will not be able to attract someone with the necessary level of maturity and expertise if they continue to offer them merely 16.00 an hour (the rate of pay currently given to undergraduate students).

**Dean's Response**

The 2020/21 budget year has been a particularly challenging one, with the 15% holdback. If the University's financial situation moving forward is more secure, it may be that we will be able to revisit this request.

4. Market programs in creative ways to attract students.

**Program Response**

The Department has an active presence on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, and will continue to be active on these platforms. Moreover, SLAS is in regular contact with local teachers at the secondary school level and have organized events for them to come to campus with students so as to showcase their programs and campus. SLAS has also contacted several of their alumni and have been working with Creative Services to create a video highlighting what Alumni have been doing since graduating with a degree from the Department. SLAS plans to share these video segments with their secondary school contacts, as well as online and on various platforms.

Finally, in light of their remote reality, they have held departmental Town Hall meetings to give students currently enrolled in our courses and plans the opportunity to get their questions answered in real time with staff and faculty. These have been well attended and offer the students the chance to connect with SLAS outside of a "remote" classroom setting.

Although the Review Team did not specifically recommend that SLAS make substantive changes to their various academic plans, they have begun to do just that. They understand that the Faculty is looking for all departments to streamline their plans with a view to making them more flexible for students. SLAS is in the process of cleaning up their section of the calendar, removing intensive specializations and changing the lens through which their courses are offered. After a great deal of discussion, SLAS has decided to move away from a program focused on Literary Studies and will shift their focus to Cultural Studies. This change will be reflected in the language of instruction in their upper level courses. While they will continue to offer all levels of language courses, their senior content courses will be offered in English and will hopefully open the pathway for students across the Faculty of Arts to engage

in their offerings. Once these changes are approved it is their hope that SLAS courses can be “cross-listed” or “held with” other departments and that students can then opt to combine Spanish and Latin American Studies more easily with other majors.

When teaching Hispanic cultural production, SLAS emphasizes the shared complex and oppressive heritage of the colonial experience and traces the historical evolution of the sociocultural forms created by colonial power. They frame much of the study of cultural production around a postcolonial critique of these power structures and examine the creation of alternative epistemologies to highlight the creativity of cultures faced with oppression.

After a lengthy application process the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies was thrilled to learn that it had been selected once again to participate in the [PRAGDA Film Festival](#) in 2020-2021. SLAS intends to re-apply for the rights to participate in the festival on a yearly basis. The festival will be tied to all course offerings and will create a narrative across their curriculum.

SLAS also collaborated with the Kitchener-Waterloo Public Library and showed movies in their space where members of the K-W community came to enjoy the films and the follow-up discussion that was moderated by one of their faculty members. With the help of technology, the bi-weekly screenings have continued throughout the COVID crisis and attendance at the virtual screenings has been very consistent and strong. SLAS is hopeful that their collaboration with [PRAGDA](#) will continue and that the new course in Film Studies can be supported by this ongoing collaboration.

In addition to the film festival and the shift to offering courses in English and through a cultural studies lens, SLAS is a co-founder of the Cultural Identities Minor. A collaboration with the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies, the Cultural Identities Minor is an interdisciplinary program that brings together colleagues from multiple departments eliminating the necessity for additional resources. This Minor focuses on the complex role culture plays in the formation, negotiation, and interpretation of individual and group identities. It rests on the research and teaching strengths in the two hosting departments, which integrate different approaches to cultural analysis and have developed a particular emphasis on transcultural perspectives. It also adds complementary perspectives from other departments and programs in Arts.

Our sense of our own identity and place in the world relies on our understanding of shared values and practices, which includes beliefs, customs and activities, languages, and discourses. Aspects of cultural identity also guide our perceptions of other cultures and our interactions with other people. To navigate these challenges effectively we need to develop

not only an understanding of how cultural identity helps us derive a sense of who we are and what our place in the world is, but also a respectful appreciation of how different cultural backgrounds provide others with a different, and irreducible, sense of who they are and their place in the world. SLAS is proud of their involvement in the CI Minor and are working with colleagues on how best to help it grow. In the interim SLAS has cross-listed several of their newer/updated courses with the CI program so that students can benefit from content offered in their department while pursuing the Minor in CI.

**Dean's Response**

I am pleased to see the Department's forward-looking and innovative plans for its curriculum. I did not see a reference to the new(ish) interdisciplinary Cultural Identities plan in the Department's response, but that too represents a genuine effort by the Department to establish curriculum attractive to students.



**Implementation Plan**

	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Proposed Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility for Leading and Resourcing (if applicable) the Actions</b>	<b>Timeline for addressing Recommendations</b>
1.	SLAS urgently needs a tenure-track position to fulfil program requirements and solve an unsustainable situation in the department. Perhaps the Faculty of Arts could consider a renewal of the definite-term position with the possibility of conversion into a tenure-track position once the hiring freeze is over.	The current Definite Term Appointment, which ends July 31, 2020, has been extended for another 3 years. Dean: As stated above, resource constraints mean that no action on a tenure-line position is being contemplated at this time.	Dean of Arts Office	We will have our current Definite Term Lecturer until August 2023. At that time we will request a tenure track appointment. As we have said elsewhere, this position would not be an incremental gain, but a recovery of the position we lost to retirement.
2.	Hire a full-time Administrative Assistant who is at the front lines of the department.	Likely not to happen. Dean: Under the current structures, it is not feasible to hire a full-time Administrative Manager for SLAS. However, with some structural changes, we may be able to alleviate the current problem.	Dean of Arts Office	Please see my comments made elsewhere on the history of the Administrative Manager Role in Spanish and Latin American Studies.
3.	Solve the Conversation Class Director issue.	We will continue to make the case for this important position.	Dean of Arts Office	Ongoing.
4.	Market programs in creative ways to attract students.	We are already active on social media and we are collaborating with the Kitchener Public Library (with the PRAGDA film festival)	Department Members and Student Society	Ongoing.

The Department Chair/Director, in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty shall be responsible for the Implementation Plan.

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to make connections across the Faculty to include more courses that align with Cultural Identities</li> <li>2. Look to adapt existing SPAN courses or create new ones in our Department that offer a cultural studies perspective</li> <li>3. Continue our work to develop the BA in Cultural Identity</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Members of Spanish and Latin American Studies with our partners in Germanic and Slavic Studies</li> <li>2. Dean of Arts Office</li> <li>3. Members of Spanish and Latin American Studies</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It will likely take 2-3 years to get the BA in Cultural Identities on the books</li> <li>2. Our Department's own curriculum updating is ongoing</li> <li>3. Ongoing</li> </ol>
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The Department Chair/Director, in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty shall be responsible for the Implementation Plan.

Date of next program review

**2026-2027**

Date

**Signatures of Approval**



March 10, 2021

Chair/Director

Date

AFIW Administrative Dean/Head (*For AFIW programs only*)

Date

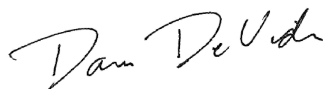


June 10, 2021

Faculty Dean

Date

**Note:** AFIW programs fall under the Faculty of ARTS; however, the Dean does not have fiscal control nor authority over staffing and administration of the program.



March 11, 2021

Associate Vice-President, Academic  
(For undergraduate and augmented programs)

Date

Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs  
(For graduate and augmented programs)

Date