**2017-2018 Annual Program Assessment Report**

Please submit report to your department chair or program coordinator, the Associate Dean of your College, and to [james.solomon@csun.edu](mailto:james.solomon@csun.edu), Director of the Office of Academic Assessment and Program Review, by September 28, 2018. You may, but are not required to, submit a separate report for each program, including graduate degree programs, which conducted assessment activities, or you may combine programs in a single report. **Please identify your department/program in the file name for your report.**

**College: Humanities**

**Department: Central American Studies**

**Program: Undergraduate**

**Assessment liaison: Beatriz Cortez**

1. **Please check off whichever is applicable:**

**A. \_\_\_🗸\_\_\_ Measured student work within program major/options.**

**B. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Analyzed results of measurement within program major/options.**

**C. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Applied results of analysis to program review/curriculum/review/revision major/options.**

**D. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Focused exclusively on the direct assessment measurement of General Education Natural Sciences learning outcomes**

1. **Overview of Annual Assessment Project(s).** On a separate sheet,provide a brief overview of this year’s assessment activities, including:

* an explanation for why your department chose the assessment activities (measurement, analysis, application, or GE assessment) that it enacted
* if your department implemented assessment **option A**, identify which program SLOs were assessed (please identify the SLOs in full), in which classes and/or contexts, what assessment instruments were used and the methodology employed, the resulting scores, and the relation between this year’s measure of student work and that of past years: (include as an appendix any and all relevant materials that you wish to include)
* if your department implemented assessment **option B**, identify what conclusions were drawn from the analysis of measured results, what changes to the program were planned in response, and the relation between this year’s analyses and past and future assessment activities
* if your department implemented **option C**, identify the program modifications that were adopted, and the relation between program modifications and past and future assessment activities
* if your program implemented **option D**, exclusively or simultaneously with **options** **A, B, and/or C**, identify the basic skill(s) assessed and the precise learning outcomes assessed, the assessment instruments and methodology employed, and the resulting scores
* in what way(s) your assessment activities may reflect the university’s commitment to diversity in all its dimensions but especially with respect to underrepresented groups
* any other assessment-related information you wish to include, including SLO revision (especially to ensure continuing alignment between program course offerings and both program and university student learning outcomes), and/or the creation and modification of new assessment instruments

**3. Preview of planned assessment activities for 2018-19.** Include a brief description as reflective of a continuous program of ongoing assessment.

**2. Overview of Annual Assessment Project:**

During the Fall 2017 the department conducted the assessment of CAS 421 Seminar on Central American Literature, as part of the assessment of the department's writing basic skills at an advanced level. This is an assessment of our major's SLO #1: Students will develop critical thinking, writing, and reading skills. CAS 421 serves as the equivalent of a capstone course for our majors, and SLO #1 is addressed at an advanced level in CAS 421.

During the Fall 2017, the Department designed an assessment of CAS 421. The assignment that was selected for the assessment was the final essay: Students were required to write an original analysis of one of the literary texts read in class, and to apply at least four of the philosophical or theoretical works discussed during the semester. In addition, they were asked to conduct research at the Oviatt Library and in online databases.

14 students were enrolled in the course, most of them graduating seniors as Majors or Double-Majors in Central American studies. Our rubric was based on five categories: Thesis Statement (original thesis statement analyzing the literary text); Well developed argument (including the application of philosophical and theoretical works discussed in class); Evidence (including examples from the literary text that demonstrate that this is a valid way to read the text); Organization; and finally, use of language (including that the essay is well written and shows correct use of grammar. Student essays were scored for each category according to the following scale: 1 (unacceptable or beginner level); 2 (acceptable or developing writing skills); 3 (good or accomplished); and 4 (excellent writing skills). Each writing sample was graded twice, as a draft and in its final form, by two senior professors in the Department.

In the evaluation of the final version of the research papers, we found that 1 student excelled with 20/20 points; 7 students presented outstanding essays with an average of 18/20 points; one student followed with 17/20 points; 1 student received a very good grade of 16/20 points; 3 students wrote a good essay with 15/20 points; and 1 student wrote an average essay with 10/20 points. We found that students enrolled in the course excelled in their writing skills when they received ample feedback and when they had the opportunity to engage in peer reviews of their work. The original drafts had shortcomings, particularly in terms of the originality of the thesis statements and the development of their argument. However, the final drafts were essays of very good quality. We note that it was important that between the time that the students submitted their first draft and the time when they submitted their final essay, they had to present their work in the Central American Studies student symposium. This presented an incentive for students to further polish their writing.

Finally, we had planned to conduct a re-assessment of the writing basic skills during the Spring 2018, however, we decided to table this assessment project until Spring 2019.

**Preview of Planned Assessment Activities for 2018-2019:**

During the Fall 2018 the department will conduct the assessment of CAS 201 Survey of Central American Literature, as part of the Department's assessment of Section C, GE in Arts and Humanities, which is taking place this year university-wide.

In addition, during the Spring 2019 semester, our department will conduct a re-assessment of the writing basic skills with a redesigned rubric that will better reflect the learning process followed by the students enrolled in the CAS writing courses, particularly taking into consideration that these courses are at an introductory level. In addition, faculty teaching in the CAS Writing Program have met and have designed a common assignment that has been inserted in their syllabus as part of their course.