**2019-2020 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 30, 2020. 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:**

**Assessment liaison: Yountae An**

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. \_\_\_\_\_X\_\_\_ Focused exclusively on the direct assessment measurement of General Education Social 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 2019-20.** Include a brief description as reflective of a continuous program of ongoing assessment.

**2. Overview of Annual Assessment project**

In 2019-2020, in compliance with CSUN’s direct measurement of General Education assessment in the category of Social Sciences and U.S. History and Government (Section D), the Central American Studies Department assessed Social Sciences SLOs in CAS 368: Central American Revolutionary Movements. Out of the three courses (CAS 310, CAS 368, CAS 369) offered in Spring 2020 that fell under Section D, we chose CAS 368 as its content was the most suitable and relevant for the assessment activity. The two Social Sciences SLOs (D-1) selected for assessment were:

2. Analyze and explain the multiple perspectives found in the social sciences that underlie

debates on important historical and contemporary issues.

4. Demonstrate an understanding of how social problems impact individuals,

communities and societies.

The assessment was done in the Spring semester 2020. It was completed by 18 students in the final weeks of the semester. Students were given time to complete the multiple-choice test designed to assess their ability to reflect critically upon the social scientific perspectives and analyses on diverse social issues relevant to Central American Studies. In this assignment, students were instructed to read a news article and then answer a series of 6 multiple-choice questions designed to test their competence in accordance with the two SLOs. The article was on recent Nicaraguan history involving the Sandinistas, the Contras, and the U.S. intervention. The questions were created with the contributions of the assessment liaison and the CAS 368 Instructor.

**Summary of Results**

The average overall score was **5.1**/6 = **85.16**%

Average score based on SLOs

Questions #2, #3, #5 (SLO 2): **87%**

Questions #1, #4, #6 (SLO 4): **83.3%**

**Analysis of Results**

Of the 6 total questions, 4 (four) of them show a correct response rate above 80%. All 6 (six) of them exceed the benchmark (70%) set by the Program Assessment Plan. This is even more outstanding when considering the severe challenge students and faculty experienced this year due to COVID-19, and that the Director of the Office of the Academic Assessment had predicted an unusually low performance rate this year. The exceptional result might be indicative of the fact that current CAS 368 class demonstrates a solid curriculum, meeting the learning objectives set by the University. Based on the fact that students show overall a firm grasp of the material (recent Nicaraguan history), it would be reasonable to assume that the two relatively low-score questions (#3 and #4) are not indicative of an area for improvement in the curriculum, but the clarity of the questions.

The results will be shared with the faculty and discussed at the faculty meeting in Fall 2020.

Our department’s assessment activities reflect the university’s commitment to diversity because diversity is built into the very core of all of our courses including CAS 368. The entire curriculum of Central American Studies department is geared towards learning about the historical reality of transnational experience Central American people live in the global world. This year’s assessment questions focused on the recent history of Nicaragua.

**3. Preview of Planned Assessment Activities for 2020-2021**

With the recent changes caused by the pandemic, the College of Humanities has decided to develop a College-wide assessment plan for 2020-2021 with a focus on critical thinking/reading. In compliance with the College’s new plan, next year we will proceed according to the joint-assessment plan laid out by the College.

**APPENDIX A: ASSESSMENT TOOL**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** The goal of this assignment is to assess student learning in Central American Studies course. First, please read the following excerpt from an article that was published in *The New Republic*. After reading the excerpt, answer the 6 multiple-choice questions by circling the correct answer. You have twenty (20) minutes to complete the activity.

\* You are welcome to write on this paper as needed. Please do not write your name.

# Making Sense of Bernie’s Sandinista Sympathies

## Bernie Sanders's presence at a revolutionary rally in 1985 needs to be evaluated in light of what was actually happening in Nicaragua and the U.S. in the 1980s.

### By [JEFFREY L. GOULD](https://newrepublic.com/authors/jeffrey-l-gould) June 6, 2019

Was Bernie Sanders inappropriately, even disloyally, supportive of the Nicaraguan Sandinista government 34 years ago? Two weeks ago, a *New York Times*[report](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/17/us/bernie-sanders-burlington-mayor.html) drew particular attention to his attendance at a 1985 Sandinista rally in Managua, in which people chanted “Aquí, allá el Yanqui morirá” [here and there the Yankee will die]. “Do you think if you had heard that directly, you would have stayed at the rally?” reporter Sydney Ember [asked](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/18/us/bernie-sanders.html) him in a follow up interview. She also questioned his support for Daniel Ortega who led the Sandinista revolution in the 80s, and now as Nicaragua’s current president is highly authoritarian and faces widespread opposition: “Do you believe you had an accurate view of President Ortega at the time?” His responses have drawn criticism. “Sanders went well beyond mere opposition to funding the war,” Jonathan Chait subsequently [wrote](http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2019/05/bernie-sanders-pro-sandinista-past-problem.html) at *New York*magazine. “This is all highly relevant to his presidential campaign.”

It’s important to evaluate Sanders’s support for Ortega in the context of the 1980s, as well. Ortega’s regime today is certainly dictatorial and deplorable. But was that an accurate characterization at the time? The Sandinistas, after all, led the overthrow of a 43-year dictatorship. Most Nicaraguans at that point, including Sandinistas, wanted the new society to be free. The Sandinista Revolution was highly contradictory, at once emancipatory and repressive. In addition to stimulating positive reforms and social mobilization, the Sandinistas also instituted some truly misguided policies, such as mandating that all peasants sell their produce to a state distribution agency. Similarly, they often created state collective farms despite peasant desires for individual plots. But the revolutionary government did respond to popular protest, too, eliminating the distribution center and, by 1985, distributing significant portions of state-owned property to peasants.

The Sandinistas also won elections in 1984 that most European observers deemed fair and honest. The Sandinistas won 67 percent of the vote in a six-party race, with some 25 percent abstentions, many from Christian evangelicals. (In our rural neighborhood, no pressure was put on those who had stated such an intention to abstain.) However, the Reagan administration and many Democrats delegitimized the elections, largely based on a complicated sequence of events involving the early opposition candidate Arturo Cruz, who withdrew from the race after some Sandinista supporters threw rocks at his rallies. In a subsequent meeting in Rio with one of the Sandinista leaders, Cruz ironed out campaign ground rules that would ensure his participation. The Sandinista leader, Bayardo Arce, was prepared to sign on behalf of the government. Before signing the document, Cruz had to make a phone call and when he returned to the table, he withdrew his support for the pact and from the electoral process, thus providing critical evidence for the illegitimacy of the elections.

At the time, even the [U.S. ambassador](https://www.adst.org/OH%20TOCs/Quainton,%20Anthony.toc.pdf) [recognized](https://www.nytimes.com/1984/01/04/us/briefing-152653.html) that the Sandinistas still enjoyed wide popular support. Even after the Contra War had savaged the economy and ruined countless families, the Sandinistas still garnered over 40 percent of the vote in 1990 when they lost to an opposition coalition. They then peacefully ceded power.

These qualities of the Sandinista government went largely, but not entirely, unrecognized in U.S. media at the time, and have remained only at the fringes of American awareness since. Bernie Sanders neither spoke Spanish nor spent much time in Nicaragua, and thus failed to grasp the complexity and the contradictions of the revolution. He did, however, recognize that after more than seventy years of U.S. direct and indirect interventions in Nicaraguan political affairs, the Sandinistas had earned the right to chart their own course.

There were ample reasons, during the final stages of the Cold War, to oppose the U.S.-sponsored attack on the Nicaraguan government. And, of course, one did not need to support the Sandinistas, as Sanders largely did, to do so. But blindly accepting American propaganda about the revolutionary government obscured the real, if limited, grassroots democratic advances and efforts to improve the quality of formerly impoverished and violently repressed lives. Even if Sanders did not fully understand Nicaragua—and who did?—and did not sufficiently criticize the revolution’s flaws, more than anything he refused to accept another chapter in a history of U.S. interventions in Latin America that have besmirched our democratic ideals and reputation. In that sense, his actions and comments could be construed not as disloyal, but perhaps even as patriotic.

Questions

1. The Sandinistas of the 70’s and 80’s Nicaraguan revolution took their name from

Augusto Cesar Sandino who was:

a) A martyred priest under the Somoza dictatorship

b) The president of Nicaragua in early 20th century

c) The founding father of Nicaragua

d) The leader of Nicaragua’s armed struggle against the U.S. invasion in early 20th

century

2. The Sandinista government was often accused of being influenced by:

a) Evangelicalism

b) Communism

c) Market capitalism

d) Elitism

3. What was the U.S. Government’s (Reagan administration) relationship with the

Contras, the armed rebel forces that emerged against the Sandinista government in the

80’s?

a) The U.S. government had no ties to Contras despite sharing a similar view

b) The U.S. government sent armed forces to Nicaragua to subdue the Contras

c) The U.S. government aided the Contras

d) The U.S. was absolutely indifferent to the Contras

4. Pick the right answer: “During the decades-long dictatorship, Nicaragua saw an

increase in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

a) Political transparency

b) Freedom of press

c) Agricultural production

d) Corruption

5. Why did the Reagan administration oppose the Sandinistas?

a) Because it viewed the Sandinistas as a threat to the Capitalist order and U.S. interest in the Nicaraguan market

b) Because it viewed the Sandinistas as a threat to the Socialist order

c) Because the Sandinistas were committing human rights abuses

d) Because the Sandinistas were persecuting Christians

6. Why has the U.S. intervened in many (if not most) Central American (and Latin

American, more broadly) countries through much of the 20th century?

a) To protect both its political interest in the Cold War and American

corporate interests in Central American markets

b) To monopolize the oil production in Central America

c) To aid Central American governments’ war against terrorists

d) To help Central Americans build a more democratic and transparent social-

political system