**2015-2016 Annual Program Assessment Report**

College: **Humanities**

Department: **Central American Studies**

Program: **Undergraduate**

Assessment liaison: **Beatriz Cortez**

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

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

**2. Overview of Annual Assessment Project**

During the 2015-2016 Academic Year, the Department of Central American Studies participated in the assessment of our Department's SLO #2 in the CAS 309 Ancient to Pre-Modern History of Central American Peoples.

**Course to be assessed:** CAS 309, Ancient to Pre-modern History of Central American Peoples. This course is an upper-division general education course and is usually taught every Fall semester.

The assignment consisted of an 8-10 page paper of a topic, proposed by the student and approved by the professor, based on the material covered throughout the semester. This is a writing intensive course. Students were required to write about the significance of their chosen topic, to provide bibliographic sources, to conduct a grammatical review (spelling, citations, quotes), and to produce a final draft.

The assessment was conducted based on the following student learning objectives:

**CAS SLO #1:** Students will develop critical thinking, writing, and reading skills.

**CAS SLO #2:** Students will acquire an awareness of the complexity of the historical, social, and cultural developments in Central America as well as an understanding of the diverse Central American cultures, ethnicities, experiences and worldviews.

For SLO #1, the Department of Central American Studies developed a rubric based on the following categories: organization, clarity and use of language, thesis statement, and evidence, including bibliography.

For SLO #2, the Department of Central American Studies developed a rubric based on the content of the paper (complexity of the historical, social, and cultural developments in Central America) and an understanding of the Central American diversity.

**Brief Backgrounds:** The students were given a guideline of the process to follow developing their final essay at the beginning of the semester (by the fourth week).

**Assessment process:** the Assessment Liaison and the instructor evaluated the student essays by focusing on the SLOs and the rubrics emerging from them, examining the process of evaluation (including the meeting of deadlines), and the grammatical assessment.

**Conclusion:** We assessed CAS 309 final papers and found that students met SLO #1 with an average score of 80/100 and that their greatest challenge was the use of the grammar as well as the technical language specific to this course, such as the anthropological terms. We also concluded that due to the diversity of majors in the course, students used different methods of citing, quoting and bibliographical notations. In addition, the evidence shows that students successfully understood SLO #2, that the evaluating process of the final paper properly guided the students in fulfilling the goals in terms of understanding content and diversity. The average score for SLO #2 was 85/100, particularly because 4 students did not complete their essays.

**Connection to the university's commitment to diversity:** CAS 309 diverse academic content clearly facilitates the students' understanding of diversity in every sense (ethnic, worldviews, art, agricultural practices, architecture, mathematics, astronomy and writing).

**3. Preview of planned assessment activities for 2016-2017:** We will be assessing CAS 113 and 114 that are part of our CAS stretch writing Program.