

**ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORT  
SPANISH PROGRAM  
WELLS COLLEGE**

**MAY 2015**

**I. Executive Summary**

The Wells College Spanish Program implemented a new curriculum in Fall 2015 that contained courses from the old curriculum with newly designed courses. We have only had the opportunity to impart four courses from the new curriculum, but all four courses were well received. Nevertheless, we are interested in improving our curriculum and, in March-April 2015, a number of students were consulted about the idea of imparting (in the Fall 2015 semester) the course “Hispanic Culture and the Environment”, but students expressed that it sounded ‘boring.’ For this reason, the Spanish Program may explore, in the next year or so, small tweaks to our Spanish curriculum, all in the hopes of attracting more students and of making our courses more relevant and/or exciting.

One of the courses that is part of the new curriculum is our “Afro-Hispanic History, Literature and Culture” course. Upon consulting Jamyra Young and Daleysa Lockart—President and Vice-President of Umoja—in August 2014, it was evident that there is a need among Wells College students for courses that are centered around African-themed topics. While excited for our Spanish course, Jamyra and Daleysa expressed that it would be exciting if the course were offered in English. This suggestion inspired the Spanish Faculty to then contact Dr. CJ Koepp, and through her guidance—and the support of the Curriculum Committee—we were able to offer HUM 285 for non-Spanish majors/minors and SPAN 295/395 for students majoring/minoring in Spanish. It was a challenging course because of the copious directions that the course could have taken. Nevertheless, the course kept the spirit of the title (Afro-Hispanic History, Literature and Culture) and it was a course with a high enrollment (18 students). One of the Spanish minors (Nia Morris) expressed to Dr. Cummings that, if the course had been offered at a different time, we may have seen 30 students wanting to enroll in the course. We will keep her suggestion in mind and will open the course to a higher enrollment the next time it is offered.

Another example of how the Spanish faculty listens to suggestions, is ex-Wells College faculty member Greg Moore suggested we offer basic Spanish courses at different (instead of the same 11AM time). We followed his advice, and saw that one course (the 11AM) consistently held a high number of students and the other a lesser student enrollment. We were planning to revert to teaching courses at 11AM on M/W/F, but due to the Curriculum Committee’s suggestion and long meetings with Nicole Pellegrino, we have decided to keep a SPAN 101 on M/W/F at 11AM and to offer the second 101 course on Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday, all in the hopes of being able to offer Spanish to a number of students who would, otherwise, be unable to enroll in Spanish due to other course commitments

A recently approved change to our Spanish major was the senior thesis which is now follows a two semester model. The Spring 2014 experience with two Spanish majors preparing a senior thesis from scratch—including last minute changes to their topic was one that needed to be avoided and should not be repeated. Hence, the reason why the Spanish faculty proposed SPAN 402 as a two semester experience: SPAN 401 (in the Fall semester) is intended as a course that will allow students to explore a research topic and to actually conduct all the research required while SPAN 402 (in the Spring semester) will give them the opportunity to write their thesis and engage in revisions and discussions with the Spanish faculty. We believe that this model will be conducive to stronger Spanish senior thesis.

In regards to assessment, our Spanish Majors have normally had two final ‘assessments’: a ‘comprehensive exam’ (comprised of the Spanish Faculty sitting down with the student and questioning him on what the most important concepts learned by the student in all the Spanish courses taken at Wells College and questions/problems related to the senior thesis) and a senior thesis (and its subsequent presentation). The Spanish faculty is discussing (and needs to consult Dr. Koepp and the Curriculum Committee) whether it would be wise to implement a third and final assessment: a portfolio where the student will include all the relevant exams, quizzes, writings/journal entries for each class. This, more than anything, is intended as a way for Spanish majors to successfully study for the comprehensive exam. We are sure that certain students may see it as ‘extra work’ but, its primary purpose, is to serve as a way for students to have, in one binder and in an organized manner, all the materials they will need for a successful ‘defense’ of their comprehensive exam. This new way of assessing students came about after our experience with a Spanish major student at a comprehensive examination in which the student was unable to recall important facts, authors, novels, etc. from most courses she had taken at Wells College or during her time studying in Sevilla.

The following paragraphs explain our record of Spanish graduates for 2015-2017 (and beyond):

### **2015**

At the May 2015 commencement, no Spanish majors graduated but four Spanish minors did: Regina Agourah, Mikayla Kravetz, Clemencia Moreno, and Lindsey Guziewicz. Two minors that were scheduled to graduate in last year’s Spanish Program assessment (Israel García, Negaysha Walcott) either withdrew from the Spanish minor (Mr. García) or were unable to graduate due lacking GPA in their major (Ms. Walcott).

### **2016**

In May 2016, two Spanish majors (Saige Hernandez and Morgan Holtsclaw) and three Spanish minors (Courtney Danise, Stephen Domfeh and Nia Morris) will graduate.

### **2017 and Beyond**

In 2017, two Spanish majors are scheduled to graduate: Erin Vallely and Nadine Pershyn. In 2018, three Spanish majors are scheduled to graduate: Noa Tia, Erika Rivera and Emely Morban. There will also be a number of minors graduating.

Lastly, the Spanish Faculty, during the 2014-2015 academic year, offered students feedback on their progress in each of the Spanish classes in two ways: 1) Spanish faculty asked students to come to our office to meet, one on one, and two discuss their thoughts on the course they were currently taken and, while in our office, we provided a preliminary idea of their current grade; and 2) if requested, faculty was able to input certain numbers of yet to be completed assignments or final exam and inform students of a (very preliminary) possible final grade. A number of students expressed their appreciation about knowing how they were progressing in their Spanish course or of knowing what they had to do to get X, Y or Z grade in the class.

## **II. The Spanish faculty has identified the following four goals as ones to pursue in 2015-2016.**

1. Attract more Spanish majors/minors. We have realized that there are Wells College students who declare two majors or two minors. We will try to tap into this pool of potential students.
2. Work closely, in an interdisciplinary manner, with faculty from other departments and majors to integrate the Spanish language (and/or culture) into their courses. There are preliminary discussions with Kevin Miles about including a Spanish Business course into the business curriculum. Moreover, Dr. Ernie Olson invited Dr. Cummings to present Hispanic objects as part of his museum course.
3. Review the new Spanish curriculum and pursue any required updates. As explained in the Executive Summary, we will analyze our curriculum and listen to suggestions from students on courses that will be interesting to them or will make them enroll in them.
4. Engage with Spanish majors/minors and show them what they can do with Spanish. We intend to invite experts or common folk who use Spanish in their day to day work life in order to explain to students why it's important to know and/or use a foreign language. This was evident to the Spanish faculty on a recent trip to the Home Depot in Auburn, NY where there is a display with pictures of employees that speak various foreign languages, among them: French, Tagalog, German and Spanish. We believe our students, with the appropriate 'nudge' will see the importance of Spanish which will allow them to confirm they made the right decision in majoring/minoring in our language.

### **III. Plan of focus for the upcoming year.**

Besides the four goals expressed above, we plan on focusing on engaging with students by attending professional conferences around the region. We were able to attract two students (Erin Vallely and Andrew Eiffert) to attend the MACLAS conference held in Ithaca College in April 2015, and we believe that more opportunities like this will allow students to understand how useful their knowledge of the Spanish language and the Hispanic culture can be.

We also plan to continue attracting students to research projects. Our 2015 Wells College Summer Grant is an incredible opportunity because it is allowing us to get a better sense of the capabilities of students to conduct research. Our discussions with them have also made the Spanish faculty comprehend that they understand why it is interesting or vital to conduct research on X, Y or Z topic. We believe this project will be a gateway for future projects that our students will want to conduct with us.

Besides all the work we plan to conduct with students, the Spanish Program will also conduct 'inside' work that will allow us to expand our 'brand.' Namely, we are thinking about working with David Foote to have a true presence on the Wells College web page. Dr. Cummings was able to, last Summer, get his own 'page' with information (courses taught, publication, etc.) but we don't have a full-fledged nor complete page that features our current and/or past students. We believe this is tremendously important to explore. Moreover, we also believe that offering a Spanish Program newsletter will allow us to grow our brand and to let people know what we have accomplished or will be offering in the future.