Latin American and Caribbean Studies Minor

Assessment

As the major educational accrediting bodies have become more interested in the issue of assessment, so has the college. This college-wide initiative to formulate assessment plans has included the minor concentrations as well. Latin American and Caribbean Studies continued to work on its assessment plan this year, revising the original goals from last year’s plan to include the following:

C. Objectives

C.1. Program Objectives

The following is a list of program objectives for Latin American and Caribbean Studies.

1. Latin American and Caribbean Studies minors should be able to choose from an array of appropriate courses, offered with sufficient frequency during the fall and spring semesters, to enable them to complete the minor within a four year time-frame.

C.2. Student Learning Objectives

The following is a list of learning objectives for students graduating with a minor in Latin and Caribbean Studies.

1. Students should demonstrate a broad understanding of the interconnections between the history and the art and modern cultures of Latin America and the Caribbean.
2. Students should be able to demonstrate written proficiency in Spanish or other language relevant to the minor such as French or Portuguese.
3. Students should demonstrate an ability to apply their knowledge of the languages, people and culture of Latin America and the Caribbean to real world situations outside of the campus environment.
4. Students should be able to describe the diversity of races and ethnicities that make up the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Answer one question: What is a Latino or a Hispanic and how do these terms differ? Is Hispanic a race, ethnicity or neither?

D. Communication of Objectives

Program objectives and learning outcomes will be communicated to students in the following manner:
- Meeting with minors in the program once per semester during preceptorial advising days and other times throughout the year when appropriate
- Listing them in the program's website and blog page
- Sponsoring and supporting co-curricular activities such as student club activities, campus presentations, discussions and field trips
- Making known our goals through the syllabi of our courses

Program objectives and learning outcomes will be communicated to faculty in the following manner:
- Regularly scheduled faculty meetings (2 per year)
- Guest presentations in courses outside of the minor
- Listing them in the program's website and blog page

Through all of these venues the program will strive to communicate its objectives and learning outcomes to the students and faculty.

D. Assessment

D.1. Assessment of Program Objectives

Program objectives will be assessed in the following manner.

Program Objective 1: Latin American and Caribbean Studies minors should be able to choose from an array of appropriate courses, offered with sufficient frequency during the fall and spring semesters, to enable them to complete the minor within a four year time-frame.

Assessment Measures:
Each year following will be collected and documented on a sheet that is to be kept by the current program coordinator:
- Number and types (historical process, language and the arts, or modern cultural experience) of courses within the minor listed in the schedule of classes each semester
• Number of students enrolled in minor courses each semester as listed in the
  Banner registration system who are currently seeking a minor in Latin American
  and Caribbean Studies
• Number of students graduating each semester who have declared the minor but
  have not completed the minor
• Number of students required to do an independent study that year in order to
  complete the minor by the time that they graduate.
• Survey of students taking LACS courses to be administered in a sample of LACS
  courses each year. For a sample survey, please see the appendix.

Program Objective 2: The program should organize or support campus and off-campus
programming events, such as guest speakers, panel discussions and theatrical
productions, to enrich students’ coursework and to provide opportunities for the
public to learn about Latin America and the Caribbean.

Assessment Measures:
Each year the following will be collected and documented on a sheet that is to be kept
by the current program coordinator:

• Number and types of campus programming events sponsored or organized by
  LACS each year as listed in the campus activities announcements
• Number and types of off-campus programming events sponsored or organized
  by LACS each year as listed in the campus activities announcements
• Number and types of student club co-sponsored events dealing specifically with
  Latin America and the Caribbean

D.2. Assessment of Student Learning Objectives

Learning Objective 1: Students should demonstrate a broad understanding of the
interconnections between the history and the arts and modern cultures of Latin America
and the Caribbean.

Assessment of Objective 1:
This goal will be indirectly assessed in the following manner.
• Enrollment and successful completion of courses in the minor on the history, arts
  and modern cultures of Latin America and the Caribbean as documented in the
  Banner system and student transcripts. Successful completion will be defined as
  a minimum grade of "C+" in all courses for the minor.
  o This information will be collected and documented by the program
    coordinator when the coordinator signs off the graduation certificate for
    each graduating student in the minor.

Learning Objective 2: Students should be able to demonstrate written proficiency in
Spanish or other language relevant to the minor such as French or Portuguese.

This goal will be indirectly assessed in the following manner:
• Enrollment and successful completion of courses in Spanish, French or other relevant language as documented in the Banner system and student transcripts. Successful completion will be defined as a minimum grade of "C+" in all language courses for the minor.
  o This information will be collected and documented by the program coordinator when the coordinator signs off the graduation certificate for each graduating student in the minor.
  o If the student tests out of the language requirement, documentation of a score of "proficient" on the relevant exam will be documented by the program coordinator when the coordinator signs off the graduation certificate for each graduating student in the minor.

Direct assessment of Objectives 1 and 2:

Direct assessment of Objectives 1 and 2 will be conducted via the use of a written essays to be administered as part of the senior capstone course. Performance will be embedded within the course. How performance is weighted toward the final grade is at the discretion of the instructor. Essays will be graded by a committee of made up of two members of the LACS faculty.

The first essay will ask the student to explain how historical events in the Latin American or Caribbean nation of their choice have influenced either the arts or some other aspect of the modern culture in that nation.

The other faculty member will grade the essay based on the following rubric:

1. Exceptional:
   • Student clearly identifies 2 or more historical events in that nation's past
   • Student clearly identifies 2 or more modern cultural characteristics specific to that nation
   • Student clearly identifies 2 or more interconnections between these historical events and modern culture in that nation

2. Acceptable:
   • Student clearly identifies 1 historical event in that nation's past
   • Student clearly identifies 1 modern cultural characteristic specific to that nation
   • Student clearly identifies 1 interconnection between this historical event and modern culture in that nation

3. Unacceptable:
   • Student fails to clearly identify 1 historical event in that nation's past
   Or
   • Student fails to clearly identify 1 modern cultural characteristic specific to that nation
   and
• Student fails to clearly identify 1 interconnection between a historical event and modern culture in that nation

The second essay will be 1 page in length. Students will be required to write a essay in the language in which they claim proficiency. The actual essay topic will be chosen by the instructor.

One LACS faculty member will grade the essay as “proficient” or “not proficient” in the language requirement using the following rubric:
• Proficient: correct use of grammar and vocabulary (70% or more correct usage)
• Not proficient: correct use of grammar and vocabulary (less than 70% correct usage)

Learning Objective 3: Students should demonstrate an ability to apply their knowledge of the peoples and cultures of Latin America and the Caribbean to real world situations outside of the campus environment.

Assessment of Objective 3:
This objective will be assessed directly through the administration of a survey every 5 years of graduates with LACS minors. The survey will ask the graduates the following questions:

1. During your time at Stockton, did you ever use the language skills acquired through your minor outside of the classroom? Yes No

1a. If yes, where did you use these skills? (Mark all that apply)
   ___ paid job ___ service learning project ___ volunteer work ___ internship
   ___ Other ___________ (please describe)

2. During your time at Stockton, did you ever use cultural or other non-linguistic knowledge learned through your minor outside of the classroom? Yes No

2a. If yes, where did you use these skills? (Mark all that apply)
   ___ paid job ___ service learning project ___ volunteer work ___ internship
   ___ Other ___________ (please describe)

3. After graduating from Stockton, have you ever used the language skills acquired through your minor? Yes No

3a. If yes, where have you used these skills? (Mark all that apply)
   ___ paid job ___ service learning project ___ volunteer work ___ internship
   ___ Other ___________ (please describe)
4. After graduating from Stockton, did you ever use cultural or other non-linguistic knowledge learned through your minor?  Yes  No

4.a. If yes, where did you use these skills? (Mark all that apply)
   ___ paid job    ___ service learning project    ___ volunteer work    ___ internship
   ___ Other __________________ (please describe)

Beyond the assessment plan itself, there are several issues that must be addressed when considering assessment of the minor. Foremost among these is the lack of consistent availability of the required courses for the minor. Currently, there are three courses that may be used as introductory courses: GEN 1030 (Freshman Seminar) Introduction to Latin America/Caribbean, GEN 1302: Introduction to Latin America and the Caribbean, and LANG 3252: Latin American Culture and Civilization. There is only one course, GIS 3730: Senior Seminar: Issues in Immigration, which serves as our capstone course.

The first of these, GEN 1030 (Freshman Seminar) Introduction to Latin America/Caribbean, has not been offered for some time. For this reason, we added LANG 3252: Latin American Culture and Civilization as an alternative introductory course in 2005. Both courses could only be offered in the fall semester. Because GEN 1301 is taught by an adjunct faculty member, it is always offered in the evening. It has been suggested in the past that this course could generate more interest in the minor if it could be offered earlier in the day and offered as a freshman/transfer seminar. LANG 3252 is offered at an earlier time slot in the day, but is usually offered the same semester and has several prerequisites as a 3000 level course. Both of these courses are currently meeting our needs as introductory courses, but could be better utilized in the future to attract more minors if we were to be able to make some changes to the way in which they can be offered.

GIS 3730: Senior Seminar: Issues in Immigration can also be problematic, not because of the content or the way in which it is taught, but when it is offered. The course often has to be taught as an independent study or tutorial, depending upon the enrollment and teaching load of the faculty member who teaches the course. In past years, the course has had to be offered only on the summer months because of faculty teaching loads.

This past fall semester, LACS faculty met to discuss this and other LACS related matters. It was agreed that we should work on trying to come up with yet another GIS course that could be taught by a wide range of faculty or make it clear to more LACS faculty that the current course could be taught in a variety of ways by more than just a few of the LACS faculty in order to ease the burden on the current faculty member who teaches the course and make the course more accessible to a variety of students who may wish to take the course in the spring semester.