

HISPANIC STUDIES STRATEGIC PLAN 2015 - 2020

This Strategic Plan will serve as a guide for departmental decisions and strategies in scholarly activities and output, personnel hiring, student recruitment, resource allocation, and assessment for the next five years.

PART 1: Mission and Vision

Background: Hispanic Studies in the United States

Our department falls under a broad category of departments whose mission is the scholarship and teaching of languages, cultures, and literatures, which the Modern Language Association calls “modern language departments.” Hispanic Studies at Texas A&M covers a field that includes not only Spanish, but also other Romance and non-Romance languages and cultures of the Iberian Peninsula (notably, Portuguese, Galician, Basque, and Catalan), and the languages of indigenous communities that have been in close contact with Spanish in the Americas, Africa, and Asia. Finally, the peoples of Hispanic descent living within the borders of the United States constitute an ever-growing field of research and are included in our purview.

In the United States, departments similar to ours go by a variety of names and include different and increasingly larger language groupings: Hispanic Studies; Spanish and Portuguese; Spanish, Portuguese and Italian; Romance Languages; Modern Languages. Traditionally, language departments have focused on three broad areas: (a) Hispanic linguistics and language pedagogy; (b) literature; and (c) civilization and cultural studies. Literary studies are further segmented into specific *genres*, historical periods, and national or regional divisions. More recently, many of these divisions have started to become blurred.

Texas A&M has a fairly common distribution across research universities, with Hispanic Studies separate from other modern languages due to its larger size and distinct status. A recent study (*Enrollments in Languages Other Than English 2009-2013*, MLA 2015) shows that across the United States, Spanish continues to constitute more than half of all the language courses offered in higher education. Moreover, and unlike most other non-English languages, Spanish has been spoken in the United States for longer than English and continues to be the first language of a sizeable and growing percentage of the population (16% in the 2010 census).

The relevance of our field is underscored by increased interconnectedness in a world where Spanish is the native language of more people than English. It is also obvious in the demographic realities of Texas, where one in every three people is a native speaker of Spanish. Texas' status as a borderlands region since colonial times makes it a laboratory for social changes that will eventually affect the rest of the United States. To guarantee access for all Texans to adequate levels of education, health care, and social services, it is more important than ever to train bilingual and bicultural professionals not only in the narrow field of Spanish instruction, but in other professional specialties.

Mission

The mission of the Department of Hispanic Studies at Texas A&M is:

- To develop excellent scholarship in Spanish language and Hispanic cultures and literatures
- To prepare the next generation of scholars through graduate teaching, mentoring, and training
- To develop full translinguistic and transcultural competency through excellent undergraduate instruction
- To preserve Spanish as one of the most important linguistic and cultural assets of Texas, and to guarantee the linguistic rights of its speakers

Specifically, our lower division aims to develop intermediate levels of language proficiency and cultural awareness. In the upper division our goal is to achieve advanced

levels of competency (as defined by ACFTL). To that effect, most coursework is taught through the target language. At the graduate level, we aim to develop the experts who can be both the teacher-scholars of tomorrow and employable in non-academic jobs that require superior analytical and research skills and high levels of bilingual/bicultural competence. At all levels, we encourage high impact learning practices that help students put in practice what they learn in the classroom in the solution of real-life problems.

Vision

In the next ten years, our department is committed to increasing its output of cutting edge research and innovative teaching, its links with other units in the university, and its outreach to the surrounding community. Our current faculty are leaders in the field, and the next generation of scholars will have an even greater public impact. The department is committed to enhancing its national and international profile through scholarship and through the development of innovative undergraduate and graduate programs.

Our creative work will be nurtured through dialogue between our faculty and students, as well as fruitful exchanges with other scholars in our college and outside our institution. To support this conversation, we will continue to organize forums for academic exchange, including working groups, guest visits, and regional, national, and international conferences.

Additionally, we commit to providing the most enriching educational experience for our students by creating curricula that reflect authentic Spanish use in the United States and abroad in the 21st century and by increasing the offerings of high impact learning practices such as service-learning, undergraduate research, study abroad, and learning communities. We are committed to the creation of curricula that will enhance our students' professional profiles and enrich their personal lives through the appreciation of multilingualism and cultural diversity. In particular, we aim to develop interdisciplinary degree paths that will help our graduates solve new problems in an increasingly complex and interdependent world.

Our doctoral students will continue to find in our department a rigorous course of study and a nurturing environment for their individual interests, as well as the opportunity to develop their teaching skills to be competitive on the job market, both in academia and in alternative fields (business, government, non-profits).

Our outreach to local, state, and national partners will allow our faculty, students, and alumni to see the immediate usefulness of our shared linguistic and cultural expertise. We aim specifically to provide opportunities to network outside the university with institutions of K-12 education, health and social service providers, companies, media broadcasters, and state agencies. We anticipate this will help us not just to increase fundraising but also to foster responsible citizenship in a more participatory and fair nation.

Part 2: The State of the Department

Background and Overall Structure. The Department of Hispanic Studies was founded in 2004, when it became administratively independent from the preexisting Department of Modern and Classical Languages. Almost simultaneously, the proposal for a Ph.D. in Hispanic Studies was approved, thus making it a doctoral granting unit. Ours is the only Ph.D. in the college whose innovative structure allows students from a consortium of A&M campuses to attend classes in real time from remote locations.

Apart from its Ph.D., our department serves students across the university through its lower division language program, which teaches first- and second-year Spanish to close to 1,500 students a year. Moreover, its upper division courses are taken by close to 130 Spanish majors (primary, secondary, and double degree), and by approximately 300 minors in two courses of study, namely, the Minor in Spanish and the Minor in Hispanic Studies for Community Engagement. While the emphasis of the former is language development and literary/cultural exposure, the latter is oriented to work in the local Spanish-speaking community, with mandatory long-term service learning involvement.

Faculty composition. Our department has nine full professors and eight associate professors with tenure; it has no assistant professors. Additionally, there are two

instructional assistant professors and one senior lecturer. All three subfields of Hispanic studies are represented in our faculty, namely, literature, cultural studies, and linguistics. The department has a larger number of faculty in literature and culture (15), two fields with some degree of overlap, when compared to linguists (2).

Comparison with other institutions. In terms of the overall number of tenured/tenure-track faculty, our department is slightly above the mean for its Vision 2020 Peer Institution group (17 vs. 15.5). However, a feature that sets it apart from other departments in terms of staffing is the virtual absence of lecturers. In five of our Vision 2020 peer departments, lecturers outnumber T/TT faculty (Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio State, Penn State, Purdue) and in several others non-tenured faculty constitute at least one third of the total teaching staff (UT Austin, Berkeley, UCLA, Florida, Georgia Tech) (average = 18; median = 10) (Table 1). In other words, most of the institutions in the comparison group rely heavily on non-tenured faculty to fulfill their teaching mission.

Meanwhile, the low presence of social scientists (linguists) and the absolute lack of researchers in second language acquisition (SLA) among our faculty is a feature common to very selective institutions (Ivies such as Brown, Yale, Columbia, as well as Stanford, Berkeley, Vanderbilt), which tend to have separate linguistics departments; however, in large land grant institutions this almost exclusive humanities orientation is unusual. Again turning to its Vision 2020 comparison group, the average number of linguists in those institutions is 28% (range 56%-8%), while for our department it is 10% (Table 1). This feature also sets our department apart from comparable units in Texas, where linguists constitute between 20% and 43% of the T/TT faculty (Table 2).

Table 1. Breakdown of faculty composition by field and tenure/tenure-track status in Vision 2020 institutions. N.B.: In departments of Romance or Modern Languages, only the Spanish and Portuguese faculty have been considered (data from 2014).

Institution	Ling./Transl. TT/T (%)	Lit./Cult. TTT (%)	Total T/TT	Non T/TT
UT-Austin (Dept. of Spanish & Portuguese)	5 (24)	16 (76)	20	12
UC-Berkeley (Dept. of Spanish & Portuguese)	1 (8)	12 (92)	13	10
Michigan (Romance Languages and Literatures)	3 (16)	16 (84)	19	40
North Carolina (Dept. of Romance Studies)	4 (31)	9 (69)	13	31
UCLA (Dept. of Spanish & Portuguese)	2 (12)	15 (88)	15	7
UC San Diego (Center for Iberian & Latin American Studies)	3 (20)	12 (80)	15	2
Wisconsin-Madison (Dept. of Spanish & Portuguese)	6 (27)	16 (73)	22	3
Florida (Dept. of Spanish & Portuguese)	5 (45)	6 (55)	11	8
Georgia Tech (School of Modern Languages)	2 (29)	5 (71)	7	3
Illinois (Dept. of Spanish & Portuguese)	9 (56)	7 (44)	16	2
Minnesota (Dept. of Spanish & Portuguese)	4 (33)	8 (67)	12	3
Ohio St. (Dept. of Spanish & Portuguese)	9 (32)	19 (68)	28	35
Penn. St. (Dept. of Spanish, Italian & Portuguese)	6 (43)	8(57)	14	42
Purdue (School of Languages & Cultures)	4 (31)	9 (69)	13	17
UC Davis (Dept. of Spanish & Portuguese)	3 (21)	11 (79)	14	3

Table 2. Breakdown of faculty composition by field and tenure/tenure-track status in Texas universities and colleges. N.B.: In departments of Romance or Modern Languages, only the Spanish and Portuguese faculty have been considered (data from 2014).

Institution	Ling./Transl. TT/T (%)	Lit./Cult. TTT (%)	Total T/TT	Non T/TT
UT-Austin (Dept. of Spanish & Portuguese)	5 (24)	16 (76)	21	12
TAMU (Dept. of Hispanic Studies)	2 (12)	15 (88)	17	3
UT El Paso (Dept. of Languages and Linguistics)	5 (39)	8 (61)	13	14
UT San Antonio (Dept. of Modern Languages and Literatures)	3 (43)	4 (57)	7	10
UT Pan American (Dept. of Modern Languages)	3 (21)	11 (78)	14	4
Texas State (Dept. of Modern Languages)	3 (20)	12 (80)	15	13
U of Houston – Main (Dept. of Hispanic Studies)	4 (25)	12 (75)	16	21
Texas Tech (Classical and Modern Languages – Spanish Studies)	3 (24)	10 (76)	13	7

Comparative Strengths

At the beginning of the 21st century, our department is faced with increased competition for the best graduate students and faculty, at the same time as state funding is decreasing. This forces us to take a close look at our current strengths and at creative ways to overcome our weak spots. This section presents a candid assessment of our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis), as ascertained by reflection at all levels, including surveys of undergraduate students, conversations with graduate students, and retreats and discussions with faculty, staff, and administrators. The faculty of the department were provided with opportunities to comment on early drafts of this document.

Programmatic strengths

- 1. Diversity in composition.** The Department of Hispanic Studies is very ethnically and linguistically diverse. Our faculty are among the most ethnically diverse in the college, with ten Hispanics (eight tenured), six Anglo Americans (five tenured), and one Black faculty (tenured); the breakdown by gender is nine male (eight tenured) and eight female faculty (six tenured). Our graduate students come from the US, Mexico, Central and South America, as well as Europe and Asia, and speak a variety of native languages, including Spanish, Galician, Catalan, English, Italian, and Bengali. At the undergraduate level, we have a high percentage of Hispanic majors (48% vs. 44% White, 3% Blacks and 3% other minorities).
- 2. Internationalization.** Our department has been a pioneer and constant presence in study abroad initiatives for over 30 years. We expect all our majors to participate in a study abroad experience of at least 10 weeks, and the vast majority of our graduating seniors (over 70%) have participated in programs in Spanish-speaking locations, the exception typically being students whose immigration status prevents them from leaving the country. The department itself has offered faculty-led programs for intermediate and advanced students in Spain (Toledo and Barcelona), as well as Mexico, Costa Rica, and Ecuador. Moreover, we are central to the study abroad mission of the entire university: in 2013, HISP processed almost 10% of the total study abroad credit transfers into Texas A&M, a quantity completely out of proportion to its relative size. Finally, several other units receive curricular oversight and assistance from us when they include a Spanish-language component in their international offerings (e.g., in 2014 alone, PERF Study Abroad to Buenos Aires, BIMS Study Abroad to Barcelona).
- 3. Interdisciplinarity.** One of the hallmarks of our excellence is the degree to which our faculty and students have interdisciplinary profiles. This is true for our majors, more than half of whom are doing Spanish together with other majors (63/124 in 2014). These fifteen majors include several offered by other departments in our college (INTS, ENGL, POLS, PSYC, COMM, HIST) as well as from other colleges, including Science, Business, Biomedical Sciences, and Education. No other

department in the college has so many double majors or double degrees (in both absolute and relative terms) and none has such cross-disciplinary appeal, evidence of the versatility of the Spanish major. Interdisciplinarity is also a hallmark of our graduate students, many of whom complete graduate certificates in Women's and Gender Studies, Africana Studies, Film Studies, and Digital Humanities (9 out of our current enrolled students, or 35%). Our graduate students are also offered teaching positions in a number of units (Film, English, International Studies, English Language Institute), which helps to round out their excellent preparation and increases their marketability. Finally, our faculty are affiliated with units such as the Glasscock Center, Africana Studies, Digital Humanities, Religious Studies, and English, and organize several interdisciplinary research groups (e.g., Texas Research Group on Luso-Hispanic, Caribbean, and Latino Thought).

4. **Collaborative Ph.D.** The unique structure of our graduate program makes it possible for students outside of the College Station area to complete their degrees from consortium campuses in Laredo, Corpus Christi, and Kingsville. Currently, 19% (8 out of 43) of our graduates are in fact from those campuses, as are over one fourth of our Ph.D. graduates (5 out of 19). Thus, our Ph.D. offers opportunities to many students of non-traditional age working full time who would otherwise be unable to advance in their careers. Of our graduates, 95% (18/19) are currently employed, and of those, 44.5% (8) are in tenure-track or permanent academic administration positions, while 11% (2) are pursuing post-doctoral positions, and 44.5% (8) are in non-tenure lecturer jobs in higher education or in alternative professions (web development, cultural entrepreneurship).
5. **Cultural and scholarly activities.** Our department provides the campus community with popular activities that enhance language instruction and cultural awareness (e.g., the annual film series, attended by hundreds of students every year), as well as numerous scholarly activities such as our regular colloquium (*Charlas de Café*), which showcases our faculty and graduate students' work, and lectures by **DISTINGUISHED** guest speakers. Our large-scale conferences bring together national and international scholars on a regular basis. Most notable are our graduate student conference (now in its fifth year), and an annual faculty conference, on topics

such as poetics, Latino identity, and democracy in Latin America. Finally, our department houses two international journals (*Hispanic Poetry Review* and *Cine y...*), and our faculty edit several other journals and book collections (*Anuario de Estudios Cervantinos*, *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*, *Latin American Theater Review Book Series*, *Política Común*, *Res Publica*, *Romance Bibliographies*, *S/N: NewWorldPoetics*) and have overseen the production of major reference works (*University of Chicago Spanish Dictionary*, *A New Companion to Hispanic Mysticism*).

Disciplinary Strengths

1. **Hispanic Literature:** We cover very thoroughly the literatures of most important periods and geographical areas. These include Peninsular literature (Medieval, Golden Age, 19th Century, and Contemporary), Latin American literature (Colonial and Contemporary), and US Latino literature. Our department also covers quite well the various *genres*, including not just drama, poetry, prose narrative, and essay, but also more marginal literatures such as travel literature, and journalistic prose.
2. **Cultural Studies:** Our department has strengths in several areas of Hispanic culture, including folklore and popular culture (e.g., popular icons, sports, binge drinking, flamenco), religious beliefs and practices (ghosts, exorcism, piety, sins and virtues), film and photography, sports and nation building, aesthetics, and political and philosophical thought. We also have area concentrations in border studies and Afro-Hispanics.
3. **Language Change and Variation:** In the field of linguistics, our strengths are more limited in breadth, but we have faculty expertise in language change and variation, especially Spanish in the United States from colonial times to the present.

Areas of Excellence

Our department's disciplinary and interdisciplinary strengths can be grouped into four general areas where a critical mass of experts makes strategic development possible and

desirable. These strategic areas are well defined and aligned with several of the college and university areas of excellence, but most especially, strengthening democracy.

1. History of Ideas in the Hispanic World. Many of our faculty produce seminal work in this interdisciplinary field which encompasses philosophy, religion, literature, and the arts, as well as political thought. These include Alberto Moreiras (*The Exhaustion of Difference*, 2001; *Línea de sombra*, 2007), Teresa Vilarós (*El mono del desencanto*, 1998), Eduardo Espina (*La condición Milli Vanilli*, 2003; *La vida hasta el día de hoy*, 2013), Tim Mitchell (*Violence and Piety in Spanish Folklore*, 1988; *Passional Culture: Emotion, Religion, and Society in Southern Spain*, 1990; *Betrayal of the Innocents: Desire, Power, and the Catholic Church in Spain*, 1998), and Hilaire Kallendorf (*Exorcism and Its Texts*, 2003; *Conscience on Stage*, 2007; *Sins of the Fathers*, 2013). Their collaborations have resulted in team-taught courses or conferences (e.g., Espina and Kallendorf on the Baroque and Neo-Baroque; Moreiras and Vilarós' Infrapolitical Deconstruction Project). Other collaborations are the Psychoanalysis and Culture Working Group, the Open Seminar on Political Thought, and the Working Group on Hegel and Critical Theory. Graduate offerings include seminars on the political turn in postcolonial studies, *indigenismo*, infrapolitics and deconstruction, and the cultural logic of *marrano* discourse; and recent dissertations focus on Latin American intellectuals such as Fernando González (Palacios 2014), on mourning and memory (Rolnick 2015), and on emergent indigeneity (Baker 2015).

2. Cultural and linguistic contacts in the Hispanic world. This area includes scholars working on cultural contacts in the Peninsula, as well as among Europeans, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendants in the Americas, and between Hispanic- and Anglo-Europeans in the territory of the United States. Some examples include Alessandra Luiselli (*La instrucción del Inca Titu Cusi Yupanqui*, 2001), Juan Carlos Galdo (*Alegoría y nación en la novela peruana del siglo XX*, 2008), Alain Lawo Sukam (*Hacia una poética afro-colombiana: El caso del Pacífico*, 2010), Esther Quintana (*Madres e hijas melancólicas en las novelas de crecimiento de autoras latinas*, 2014), and Sarah Misemer (*Moving Forward, Looking Back: Trains, Literature, and the Arts in the River Plate*, 2010), all of whom explore the literary consequences of cultural

contacts. For their part, Brian Imhoff (*The Diary of Juan Domínguez de Mendoza's Expedition into Texas*, 2002), and Irene Moyna (*Recovering the US Hispanic Linguistic Heritage*, 2008, with Alejandra Balestra and Glenn Martínez), consider the effects of cultural contact on language. A recent example of collaboration is the conference and later co-edited book by Villalobos and Miller (*Rolando Hinojosa's Klail City Death Trip: A Retrospective, New Directions*, 2013). Another conference in this area (*Past, and Future Constructions of Latin@s: Shifting Times, shifting identities*) was held in 2014. Graduate offerings include paleography, Spanish in the United States, bilingualism, women's literature, US Hispanic literature, cultural encounters and borders, and the Afro-Hispanic experience. Recent dissertations focus on bilingual and bi-dialectal populations from social, cognitive and pedagogical perspectives (Sorenson 2010, Flores 2011, González 2014) and paleographic research on Texas colonial documents (Norris 2010, Cunningham 2010).

3. Artistic representations of Hispanic culture on stage and screen. Our department is very strong in this area, which captures the intersecting strands of research that focus on representation, be it in drama, film, photography and iconography, or digital archives. For example, the Cervantes Project, initiated and directed by Eduardo Urbina, is an internationally renowned free-access website for the study of the life and works of Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, including its texts and illustrations, which has been supported by NSF, NEH, the Cátedra Cervantes (Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha), and private donations. It has led to edited work such *Don Quixote Illustrated* (2005), *Electronic Variorum Edition of Don Quixote* (2005-2009), and *Textual Iconography of the Quixote Archive* (2003-2013) and has resulted in one of the world's largest academic collections of Quixote texts at our Cushing Library. Other representative scholars include two devoted to *comedia*, namely, Víctor Arizpe (*The "Teatro Antiguo Español" Collection at Smith College*, 1996; *The Spanish Drama Collection at the Ohio State University*, 1990), and Hilaire Kallendorf (*A Companion to Early Modern Hispanic Theater*, 2014) Tim Mitchell's work on various aspects of dance, sport, and identity (*Blood Sport: A Social History of Spanish Bullfighting*, 1991; *Flamenco Deep Song*, 1994; *Intoxicated Identities: Alcohol's Power in Mexican History and Culture*, 2004); Steve Miller's extensive documentation of Galdós'

iconography (*Galdós gráfico (1861-1907)*, 2001); Rick Curry's exploration of Spanish film (*En torno a la censura franquista*, 2006); Sarah Misemer's work on Latin American performance (*Secular Saints: Performing Frida Kahlo, Carlos Gardel, Eva Perón, and Selena*, 2008). Relevant graduate offerings include film and performance, and representative dissertations focus on modernity in Spanish film (Zárate 2011) and Don Quixote as icon (McGraw 2013).

- 4. Poetics.** The department boasts several creative writers in a variety of *genres*, including novel, short story, poetry, essay, and memoir. These include Eduardo Espina, a Guggenheim Fellowship recipient (2011) and a prolific poet and essayist (*Quiero escribir, pero me sale Espina*, 2014; *Decírselo a sí mismo*, 2012; *El cutis patrio*, 2006). The novelist Juan Carlos Galdo is the author of *Estación Cuzco* (2008) and *Caminos de Agua y de piedra* (2014) and Alessandra Luiselli wrote the novel *Reina de Corazones* (1986). Alain Lawo-Sukam recently published a book of poetry (*Rêve d'Afrique*, 2013), and Hilaire Kallendorf co-authored a memoir (*Acing Depression*, 2010). This faculty expertise could be leveraged into the development of a creative writing component at the undergraduate and/or graduate level. A notable feature of our department is the high number of graduate students and recent Ph.D. recipients who are also creative writers, including the poets Pablo de Cuba (*Rizomas* (2010; *Inestable* 2011), Murat Rodríguez (*El nombre del mar*, 2014); Julio César Aguilar (*La consigna y el milagro* 2008; *Alucinamiento*, 2009), Michael Miranda (*En país extraño*, 2014), René Rubí (*El cuerno de caoba*, 2014) and Yoandy Cabrera (*Adán en el estanque*, 2014). Novels have also been authored by Carlos Rodríguez (*A la izquierda del dial*, 2012), and José Palacios (*El corazón del escorpión*, Medellin Chamber of Commerce prize, 2009). Hugo Montero's selection of short stories *Perros* received the Jorge Gaitán Durán award (2014). To that should be added literary translations by Hilaire Kallendorf (the first complete English rendering of Quevedo's *Silvas*, 2014) and by Patricia Timmons (*Gonzalo de Berceo and the Latin Miracles of the Virgin*, 2012), as well as Alessandra Luiselli's work as translator of children's literature for Sharp Literacy. Our department has held international poetry conferences in 2007 and 2013, with close to 100 presenters and readers from the United States, Europe, and Latin America. The department's Poetry Translation

Working Group was responsible for two volumes of literary translation commissioned by the Corda Foundation. This area includes dissertations on lyrical song in Central America (Ureña 2008), Neo-baroque poetry (Aregullín 2010, de Cuba 2013), and marginal *genres* such as memoirs, diaries, and travel journals (Ayarza 2013).

Opportunities

Apart from the areas of excellence above, our department has identified others where development would be fruitful and needed, but for which new resources would have to be secured for success.

- 1. Spanish for Professional Contexts.** The department recognizes that the needs of our student population are moving beyond the traditional fields of literature and culture, and include the development of high levels of Spanish competency in health care, law, business, teaching, and social services. Nowhere is the need clearer than in Texas, and no other university is in a better position than ours to serve those needs by leveraging interdisciplinary synergies. For example, medical communication and media broadcasting in Spanish could take advantage of expertise in the Department of Communication; Spanish-English translation could combine with coursework in the Departments of English or International Studies.
- 2. Luso-Brazilian Studies.** The study of Luso-Brazilian culture is of intrinsic interest to Texas, given our state's strong economic ties with Brazil and similar economic profiles based on extractive industries, energy, and agriculture. It is also of importance to Hispanic Studies from an academic perspective, given the very close (and at times conflictive) relationship between Portugal and Spain and their American colonies. Portuguese and Brazilian studies follow naturally from our emphasis on cultural contacts.

Weaknesses (internal)

The following have been identified as internal challenges that the department can and should address in order to fulfill its mission to the best of its abilities.

- 1. Emergent program far from full potential.** Our program in Hispanic Studies is the newest in Texas among research institutions (the others being UT Austin, U of Houston, and Texas Tech). As such, it continues to lag behind others in several measures, most significantly in terms of NRC rankings. In order to improve, a concerted effort is needed in certain aspects, such as the number of books and articles published per faculty member, and the impact of our work.
- 2. Undergraduate curriculum.** Our current curriculum, heavily based on literature and culture, has not been responsive to the interests of an increasingly diverse group of students (as evinced by double degrees, double majors, and minors). We need to add offerings that combine high levels of linguistic proficiency with real life professional applications. Some positive steps have been taken with the intermediate Medical Spanish courses, which have been an immediate success. The curricular experience of our students should also be improved through the incorporation of more and varied high impact learning practices. Although we have made good progress with service learning we should do more to encourage undergraduate research.
- 3. Limited grantsmanship.** Our department's comparative success in external and internal grants and awards is reliant on a few isolated cases of highly successful faculty. Wider participation in grantsmanship is needed with more faculty applying to new sources of funding. For example, HISP has never applied for Department of Defense grants, which constitute the largest share of funding for some our peer institutions.

Threats (external)

The following have been identified as external challenges that need to be tackled with the collaboration of the dean's office, so that we can come in line with our aspirant peers in terms of resources and profile.

- 1. Working conditions of our tenured faculty.** One of the largest obstacles to increasing research productivity is unquestionably the current course load of the majority of our tenured faculty, which exceeds 4 courses a year. This course load, instituted in 2010 at a time of financial strictures, needs to be brought in line with that

of Research 1 institutions across the nation as a precondition to any plan to elevate the research profile of the department, and to contribute meaningfully to the research mission of the college and the university.

- 2. Size and quality of the graduate program.** Although our graduate program has made clear strides since its inception, and it recently underwent a complete programmatic overhaul, it is still not where it needs to be in terms of size and quality. The small number of students in our graduate cohorts, combined with the requirement that graduate sections meet or exceed an enrollment of five students, makes it very difficult to offer an adequate slate of courses every semester, one that contemplates the required courses and various specialties in the program. Our graduate program needs to step up its recruitment efforts both at the state and national level so as to have a large pool of excellent candidates, increase our budget so as to be in a position to pay competitive stipends to at least 25 graduate students, and increase our effectiveness in terms of timely graduation and placement.
- 3. Unmet teaching demand.** The loss of lecturers over the years and the low numbers of graduate students have hampered our mission by decreasing the number of seats offered at all levels, but especially in lower division. At a time when the funding formula has been tied to enrollments, our loss of seats has had a negative impact beyond language instruction. The department needs to increase the number of teaching faculty (lecturers and instructional assistant professors), to reflect the optimal balance that has been achieved in other research intensive institutions, where instructional faculty help teach the many sections of lower division language, while freeing up the T/TT faculty to do their research. The department also needs to advocate for better classrooms for language instruction, in terms of capacity, configuration, and effective and reliable instructional technology.
- 4. Unbalanced graduate offerings.** Our current staffing gives preeminence to the humanities (represented by literature and culture), a trend that is common to highly selective institutions, but not well suited to our land grant mission. A better balance of fields would incorporate more offerings in the social science side of our field, namely, linguistics and language pedagogy, which offers a clear path to a wide range of tenure-track jobs upon graduation.

Objectives

In order to reach our five-year goals, we need to accomplish several shorter-term objectives, outlined in what follows.

1. **Faculty hiring.** Before our more senior faculty complete the arc of their careers, we must plan future hires, with a view not simply to replace but to expand and redirect the program based on changes in our field and our student population. As stated earlier, Hispanic linguistics (both theoretical and applied) needs reinforcement on two counts. Firstly, since the departure of the language program director in 2011, we have lacked the specialized personnel required to oversee and coordinate the lower division operation and testing, develop online and blended instruction, offer the teaching methods class, and mentor graduate students in the classroom. Secondly, a linguistics profile is optimal to develop coursework in Spanish for the Professions, translation, and heritage language instruction, all areas identified as of interest. Another area that needs reinforcement with a new hire is Digital Humanities, given the recent retirement of the Department's expert in the field (Eduardo Urbina), in order to continue to participate in one of the university's flagship initiatives. Finally, new hires will be needed if we are to expand into Luso-Brazilian studies; these could be in combination with the above or as independent lines.

Strategy: Hire four T/TT positions in the next four years, including: 1. Hire in applied linguistics/second language acquisition/online instruction, Spanish for the Professions (August 2016); 2. Hire in digital humanities, field open (August 2017); 3. At least one Luso-Brazilian at the instructional rank (August 2018).

2. **Increase quantity and quality of undergraduate instruction.** In addition to the hires at the tenured/tenure-track level, expansion of lower division instruction to meet growing demand will require hiring at least one permanent instructional assistant professor to teach intermediate level classes and supervise service learning, internship placements, the living and learning community (Spanish house), and other high impact learning experiences. Only then will it be realistic to offer all our majors

consistent high-quality HIPs. This hire would also allow us to lower the teaching load of research faculty while expanding sections.

Strategies: 1. Institute a regular discussion of teaching in the department, in our own department colloquium or other forums. 2. Start learning communities focused on teaching, with individual mentoring of graduate students, and a plan for regular class visits. 3. Support collaborative teaching. 4. Hire a full-time instructional assistant professor (Aug 2016).

- 3. Increase faculty productivity.** The majority of our faculty are research active, but average number of publications is low, especially when it comes to books. One of the causes of this issue is the high teaching load, and lack of support for long-term projects. Apart from the reduction in teaching load, faculty need to be encouraged to write more grants, awards, and leave requests that will increase their chances of completing book manuscripts. They also need mentoring and guidance to reach promotion.

Strategies: 1. Reduce teaching load of research active faculty to the standard 2-2 as quickly as possible. 2. Foster writing through writing circles, mini-retreats, peer mentoring, and other options. 3. Maintain a database of grant resources for faculty and graduate students; 4. Schedule group presentations and individual meetings with the college's grant specialist.

- 4. Reform the undergraduate major.** Our undergraduate major curriculum has undergone some welcome changes in the last few years, including the liberalization of requirements, the elimination of the obligatory minor, and a rotation that ensures that all courses are offered regularly. However, we have still to complete a deep revision of our coursework, including merging courses that have overlapping content and modest enrollment, title changes to make course content clearer and more appealing, and new courses. This must accompany a rationalization of prerequisites and a thorough revision of undergraduate HISP courses.

Strategies: 1. Go over the undergraduate curriculum to rationalize and update course numbering, prerequisites, and descriptions. 2. Evaluate courses with frequent low

enrollment and modify them to suit student demand. 3. Create a workable, predictable rotation. 4. Increase opportunities for high impact learning (service learning, capstone, research). 4. Submit revised major to department by February 2016, and to the UIC by March/April 2016.

- 5. Develop certificates.** Along with the reform of the major, we need to provide students with incentives to take courses beyond the lower division requirement. One way to encourage this is by offering certificates, i.e., a number of courses with a common theme and with appeal for students with a given profile. Based on our enrollment data, we have identified the following as certificates likely to succeed, and for which most of the coursework already exists: Advanced Certificate in Spanish for the Professions, Advanced Certificate in Spanish for Health, and Advanced Certificate in Spanish for Media and Marketing. Future offerings could include an Advanced Certificate in Spanish for Teachers. Additionally, an interdisciplinary Graduate Certificate in Linguistics could be created with HISP and several other units (Psychology, English, Teaching Learning and Culture).

Strategies: 1. Submit undergraduate certificate proposals by January 2016. 2. Submit graduate certificate proposal(s) by May 2016.

- 6. Develop expertise in the pedagogy of professional Spanish.** Across the United States, Spanish departments are moving away from the assumption that they are preparing majors to teach high school and middle school Spanish. In the process, they have increased the need for faculty who can satisfy a growing demand for Professional Spanish at the college level. However, only a few institutions offer pedagogical preparation in this field at the Ph.D. level, and none in Texas. The development of this type of expertise would give our graduates a unique and much sought-after profile and our department an opportunity to do cutting edge research with high probability of external funding.

Strategies: 1. Develop a sequence of graduate courses in language pedagogy with a focus on professional Spanish (including several already on the books, such as Spanish in the US, methods of linguistic analysis, dialectology, and some new ones

such as service learning pedagogy, discourse analysis, and online instruction. 2. Modify the graduate program to incorporate these new courses (by January 2018).

- 7. Develop a Masters in Professional Spanish.** Although our department discontinued admissions into the general MA in Spanish, we believe there is a potential market for an accelerated master's program in Professional Spanish (three full-time semesters, and a 3-credit summer internship), or alternatively, a five-year BA/MA program. Whereas the overall objective of the undergraduate major is to help students achieve advanced competency, the MA aims for even higher levels, defined as superior/distinguished in the ACTFL guidelines. This master's degree may include different concentrations, such as Medical Communication in Spanish, and Translation and Interpretation, for which it can parlay the expertise of other departments (e.g., English, Communication, Psychology, Sociology, Public Health, Political Science, etc.). As a program with a heavy professional component, it will involve clinical work.

Strategies: 1. Investigate the comparative advantages of a five-year BA/MA vs. an independent MA. 2. Survey graduate courses from other departments that could be included. 3. Develop syllabi for graduate courses in Medical Communication in Spanish, Medical Translation, Legal Translation, Commercial Translation, and Literary Translation, Consecutive Interpretation, and/or Simultaneous Interpretation (all of which presupposes the approval of the hires in point 1). 4. Submit proposal to GIC by July 2018.

- 8. Develop distance education.** Our current relationship with our consortium campuses is based on a solid common interest, but on very weak technological support. TTVN, as it was originally conceived and implemented, has been superseded by more reliable and convenient remote delivery services (e.g., *Blue Jeans*, currently being piloted in our graduate classes). The better performance of those systems means that our students no longer need to be bound to a home campus. It is time to explore formats of course delivery that will allow some student to opt for a 100% long distance education at the graduate level. This could be accomplished first in the

existing Ph.D., and later in the MA (assuming it is approved). Eventually, we may be in a position to employ the same techniques to serve students at the undergraduate level. By relying on synchronous face-to-face communication, the system would be infinitely more immersive and inclusive than online instruction.

Strategy: 1. Install robust hardware in all ACAD classrooms (Spring of 2016). 2. Adopt a college-supported remote delivery system (by May 2016). 3. Refurbish ACAD 206, 211, and 224 for effective remote delivery (by August 2016). 4. Propose distance Ph.D. to GIC (by August 2017). 5. Propose distance MA to GIC (simultaneous with MA proposal in August 2018).

9. Increase quality of graduate program. In its short ten years, our innovative Ph.D. has accomplished much in terms of both quantity of Ph.D. degrees awarded and success of those students on the market. However, we know we can do even better by our graduate students. In order to accomplish that, we must recruit more actively and more vigorously, to have a larger pool of high quality applicants. Additionally, we must continue to monitor our students' progress towards their degree, through both collective annual exercises and individualized targeted mentoring. Part of our grant-writing efforts should be directed towards the types of awards that include graduate funding. Students themselves should be made more aware of grants and encouraged to compete for funding, both internal (Glasscock, OGAPS, College of Liberal Arts) and external (Ford Foundation, NSF, NEA).

Strategies: 1. Increase efforts to recruit nationally, both in Texas and out of state. 2. Update the graduate program flier. 3. Establish connections with graduate directors of programs in Texas and beyond. 4. Enhance and streamline current process of graduate student evaluation. 5. Tie annual evaluation of graduate students to awards. 6. Establish stronger mentoring within the department, both among peers and with faculty. 7. Incorporate discussion of internal and external funding sources into graduate student workshops. 8. Incorporate grant writing to pro-seminar (HISP 600).

10. Improve communications with the public. Although our current website has gone a long way to communicate our basic message to the public, and inform current and

prospective students about our program, we need to gain control of its content and format (now dependent on the college), update it regularly, and make it attractive and interactive. We also need to work harder at connecting with our former students, both because this will give us a chance to tell a clearer story of the job options available upon completion of our degree, and because it will help with fundraising later.

Strategies: 1. Gain control of the content of our website so that it can be modified in-house. 2. Designate a communication team of faculty, graduate and undergraduate students, and staff. 3. Create a process to request modifications to the website. 4. Train faculty to modify and create their own personal pages. 5. Link the website to our Facebook page, our Twitter account, and Pinterest. 6. On our website, include a page for former students to send updates. 7. Write regularly to donors (thank you notes, updates). 8. Create an annual or biannual newsletter. 9. Identify community organizations that would welcome visits from our students and our faculty (local schools, community organizations, etc.) for presentations, volunteering, and service learning opportunities.