SPANISH MAJOR
ASSESSMENT PLAN

A liberal education, according to the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), is one that prepares students to “live responsible, productive, and creative lives in a dramatically changing world” (AAC&U, 2005). In order to do so, it must provide them with global learning opportunities which challenge them to gain deep knowledge about the world’s people and problems, explore the legacies that have created the dynamics and tensions that shape the world, and struggle with their own place in that world. Global learning must engage students with some of the most pressing questions of our time: What do we need to know about the world today? What does it mean to be a citizen in a global context? And how should we act in the face of large unsolved global problems?

Communicative competency in a second language and culture requires the skills of an analyst who can compare the historical legacies that have created the dynamics and tensions of the world. Our students are critical thinkers possessing intercultural competencies to move across boundaries and unfamiliar territory and see the world from multiple perspectives. They are linguists who can successfully negotiate difficult conversations in the face of highly emotional and perhaps uncongenial differences. They are poised to become global citizens who can understand—and perhaps redefine—democratic principles and practices within a global context.

At the core of the Modern Language major are methods for developing the linguistic and cultural knowledge necessary to create informed, culturally engaged global citizens. As the principle Modern Language department in the Saint Croix Valley, we develop graduates’ ability to communicate with large and important populations in our global marketplace. German is the language of the fourth ranked economy in the world by GDP, and a major player in the European Union and global business. Spanish is spoken by between 322 and 400 million people natively, including 37 million people in the United States. French is spoken by approximately 350 million people around the world, a majority of whom live in Western and Central Africa; it is an official language in 31 countries, all United Nations agencies and a large number of international organizations. (It should be noted as well that the Modern Language Department offers two years of Mandarin Chinese and two years of Japanese, and also coordinates the interdisciplinary Asian Studies minor.)

Mission:

The Mission of the Modern Language Department at UWRF is to expand students’ horizons by teaching them other languages and introducing them to other cultures of the world. Through our program, students develop skills in listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing a second language, which will provide them access to other cultures; awareness and appreciation of the contributions of other cultures to contemporary society through the study of their histories and literatures; cultural sensitivity and respect through engagement with those cultures; and critical thinking skills, through reflecting on the differences and similarities between the target cultures and their own.

The Modern Language Department is, therefore, a key component of a liberal arts education and serves the mission of the university by preparing students to become sensitive, responsive and competitive participants in our increasingly diverse, multi-cultural and global society.
Coursework:

Program emphasis is placed on the following skills outlined by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL): The four communicative skills of *listening, speaking, reading* and *writing* are specifically, explicitly developed in the first three years of language-based coursework, and enhanced in the upper-level content courses of the major. Students are taught to use cultural content to think critically about what it mean to be a citizen in a global context.

Options within the major: French, Spanish, German. Courses in literature, civilization/culture, and business/professional language are offered in all options.
SECTION 1: PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

Language proficiency is generally evaluated by professionals in our field in terms of “the four skills”: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. We have chosen to focus on assessing the active/productive skills of speaking and writing (as proficiency in these skills is in general harder to achieve and require proficiency in the more “passive” skills of listening and reading). In addition, we have developed learning outcomes for cultural knowledge, outcomes which connect to our mission statement.

The learning outcomes of the Modern Language major are intrinsically linked to UWRF’s Strategic Goal of Global Education and Engagement, in that Global learning and comprehensive internationalization is an inextricable aspect of our linguistic and content goals. Development of the ability to communicate with speakers of the target cultures (i.e., speakers from cultures where the target language is spoken) is stressed from the very beginning-level classes, and ability to communicate cross-culturally is an explicit goal in every one of our classes.

Our student learning objectives, therefore, fall into three categories: Speaking, writing, and culture.

The speaking and writing goals explicitly address the ability to communicate effectively with native speakers of the target language/culture. Thus, global learning and comprehensive internationalization are addressed in Modern Language classes linguistically in a way that they are addressed in no other classes/programs at UWRF. We are therefore a key program in the strategic goal of Global Education and Engagement.

In conversations with native speakers of the target language/culture, a graduate with an undergraduate degree in Modern Language (French, Spanish or German) will be able to do:

**Speaking**
- explain subjects in their field of personal and/or professional interest and respond to audience questions.
- accurately narrate and describe in the past, present, and future time frames.
- speculate about causes, consequences, and hypothetical situations with some accuracy.

**Writing**
- write reports and papers with significant precision and good control of most essential language structures.

The Culture goals address explicitly the goals of global learning and internationalization. These three goals address explicitly the understanding that it is essential, and imperative, to demonstrate awareness of both the target culture’s history, beliefs, attitudes, and values in order to interact with respect and cultural sensitivity – in other words, to be a globally-aware citizen, to be globally educated and engaged, one must necessarily have an understanding of these beliefs, attitudes, and values.
A graduate with an undergraduate degree in Modern Language (French, Spanish or German) will be able to do:

**Culture**

- interact with respect and cultural sensitivity in a variety of informal and formal situations.

- demonstrate a broad and deep knowledge of historical and philosophical backgrounds that explain patterns of behavior and interaction in the target culture.

- discuss and compare beliefs, attitudes, patterns of behavior and interaction between the target culture(s) and their own.

It is worth adding, as well, that the **Foundational Element of Inclusiveness** is well-served by these learning outcomes, as the cultural and behavioral attitudes, as well as the ability to communicate with members of a non-English linguistic community in their own language, promotes an attitude of inclusiveness on our campus and in our student body and graduates.

**Learning Outcomes and External Stakeholders:** The learning outcomes adopted by the Modern Language program reflect the professional expectations established by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).  www.actfl.org

**Mission Statement of ACTFL:** Providing vision, leadership and support for quality teaching and learning of languages.

**Vision Statement of ACTFL:** Believing that language and communication are at the heart of the human experience, that the U.S. must nurture and develop indigenous, immigrant, and world language resources, and that the U.S. must educate students to be linguistically and culturally prepared to function as world citizens, ACTFL is uniquely positioned to lead this endeavor by

- Meeting the needs of language professionals
- Ensuring a dynamic and responsive organization
- Working proactively through advocacy and outreach
- Working to ensure that the language-teaching profession reflects the racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity of U.S. society
- Promoting research that impacts the development of professional programs and enhances the quality of language teaching and learning.

**Learning Outcomes and UWRF Strategic Goals:** The ability of our students and graduates to demonstrate mastery of the program’s learning outcomes supports the UWRF Strategic Goals.

- **Distinctive Academic Excellence:** Students who major in modern languages have minors (or second majors) in almost every field at the University, not simply in humanities. Their presence in diverse academic programs, to which they bring their international point of view, helps to globalize the study of any academic discipline in which they are involved.
• **Global Education and Engagement**: The broad goal of the Modern Language major is to prepare cross-culturally literate students for careers in business, agriculture, industry, education, service professions, and government. Our focus is on both international careers and careers that contribute to the development of a diverse, globally-aware American society. The specific linguistic goal of the program is to teach students to read, write, speak, and comprehend their language of study. Since language classes alone are not sufficient to develop a full range of content-based language skills, and since intercultural communication relies heavily on cultural context, literature and civilization courses are a key element in the curriculum.

Our students participate in learning abroad in some of the highest numbers on campus, and many of our students go on two or more learning abroad programs during their time at UWRF. Our students are among the most globally engaged on campus, participating in a wide variety of activities and clubs where global engagement is a key component.

**Innovation and Partnerships**: Internships are a high departmental priority, and development of future internships, both domestic and overseas (particularly in cooperation with the Semester Abroad program and other international programs) is a goal reflected in our current strategic plan. In addition, recognizing the need by corporations and institutions, regionally, nationwide and internationally for workers with the skills set provided by a modern language major, we have in the last four years created new courses in business and professional language, including translation, so that our students are better prepared to join the global workforce upon graduation. We place our students in internships both regionally and internationally to allow them to expand their skills in real-world settings, and our faculty continue to develop partnerships with local and international businesses to provide these opportunities for our students. The list of partners who have had our students intern for them includes Family Means in Stillwater, MN; St. Bridget’s Catholic School; WIC Women, Infants and Children Nutrition Program for Hispanic families; LEAD Adventures [http://www.lead-adventures.com](http://www.lead-adventures.com); Volunteer in Ecuador [http://volunteerhq.org/IVHQ-Ecuador-volunteer-program.html](http://volunteerhq.org/IVHQ-Ecuador-volunteer-program.html); and International Volunteer HQ, Web page: [www.volunteerhq.org](http://www.volunteerhq.org)
SECTION 2: PROFILE OF WHERE LEARNING OUTCOMES ARE BEING ACHIEVED

Course Work:

Appendix A contains the course map showing the relationship between learning outcomes, courses, and assessment artifacts.

International Experience:

Though the program does not require an international immersion experience of all its majors (except in the case of Education students, who are required by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction to have a language immersion experience in order to obtain licensure to teach), our students are strongly encouraged to engage in a period of study abroad/international experience in an immersion environment. Students in French, Spanish, and German have a variety of options of programs offered through UWRF, the UW System, and programs offered by accredited institutions. Students are able to earn academic credit toward their language major through these programs.

The international experiences our students engage in – from Semester Abroad: Europe to a variety of study abroad and internships abroad – significantly impact all of our learning outcomes. Those students who engage in an international experience improve their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills significantly. In addition, it is clear that student who engage in international experiences realize significant gains in cultural learning outcomes (listed again here for reference):

**Culture**

- interact with respect and cultural sensitivity in a variety of informal and formal situations.

- demonstrate a broad and deep knowledge of historical and philosophical backgrounds that explain patterns of behavior and interaction in the target culture.

- discuss and compare beliefs, attitudes, patterns of behavior and interaction between the target culture(s) and their own.

Because our student engage in such a wide variety of study abroad/international experiences, assessing the *specific degree* to which those experiences affect learning outcomes is difficult. However, as a department, we are looking into ways to do such assessment in the future. One such way might be some sort of survey administered to all students returning from an international experience. This idea is in development and we hope to implement a survey to be put into place by the end of the 2014-2015 academic year.

Internships:

Internships are becoming more popular as our program, particularly the Spanish option, has developed strong relationships with regional and international organizations, giving students a variety of options to gain professional experience.
Internships are a key way in which our students engage with one of our key external stakeholders: the regional business community. The success of our internships – the degree to which our student successfully complete them to the satisfaction of the businesses and organizations they work with – is high, judging from the feedback our internship coordinators in French, Spanish, and German receive from them. **Our department will be developing a survey to get feedback from employers who supervise our interns, asking them to evaluate how satisfactorily the intern met expectations.**
SECTION 3: VENUES FOR ASSESSING LEARNING OUTCOMES

DIRECT ASSESSMENT

All of our program’s outcomes are addressed in all of our courses in one way or another. Since linguistic and cultural fluency is a cumulative process, we presume that every one of our courses strives to move students toward achieving all of these learning outcomes, and that by the time the students have completed the 400-level courses in the program, they will have achieved the outcomes. Therefore, we assess all three categories in the 400-level classes -- in other words, at the end of the students’ program. No matter which electives the students take at the 300-level, all majors are required to take 401 and a 400-level literature class, making these the most appropriate courses in which to formally assess their achievement at the end of the program. The speaking outcomes listed are formally assessed in the 401 Advanced Communication classes. The writing outcomes are assessed in the 400-level literature classes. The culture outcomes are assessed in 401 and in the 400-level literature classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOME</th>
<th>WHERE ASSESSED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaking:</strong> Explain subjects in their field of personal and/or professional interest and respond to audience questions</td>
<td>401 – Advanced Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaking:</strong> Accurately narrate and describe in the past, present, and future time frames</td>
<td>401 – Advanced Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaking:</strong> Speculate about causes, consequences, and hypothetical situations with some grammatical accuracy</td>
<td>401 – Advanced Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing:</strong> Write reports and papers with significant precision and good control of most essential language structures</td>
<td>400-level literature course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Culture:</strong> Interact with respect and cultural sensitivity in a variety of informal and formal situations</td>
<td>401 – Advanced Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Culture:</strong> Demonstrate a broad and deep knowledge of historical and philosophical backgrounds that explain patterns of behavior and interaction in the target culture</td>
<td>400-level literature course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Culture:</strong> Discuss and compare beliefs, attitudes, patterns of behavior and interaction between target culture(s) and their own</td>
<td>400-level literature course</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our program has three direct measures:

- a paper assignment in a 400-level literature course designed to evaluate writing and culture
• an oral interview or role play in the 401 Advanced Communication course designed to evaluate speaking and culture

• an oral presentation in the 401 Advanced Communication course designed to evaluate speaking and culture

Sample assignments and assessment rubrics can be found in Appendix C.

Indirect Assessment

Our indirect assessment tool is in the form of an Exit Survey for graduating seniors. This survey asks students to comment on their knowledge of grammar; ability to narrate in three tenses; use of language involving an unpredictable event; ability to converse on concrete and current events. Furthermore, students are asked about their knowledge of culture, culture awareness, and their personal role in the world. As stated above, we will continue to use this survey instrument, as we feel it is a good measure of students’ assessment of our program and their progress in it.

A copy of this survey can be found in Appendix B.

Alumni

The Modern Language Department is in the process of developing an indirect assessment tools to address our alumni and our external stakeholders. A survey instrument, currently in development, will be sent out periodically to all Modern Language alumni asking them to comment on how their Modern Language major prepared them for future employment possibilities. We hope to implement this survey by the end of the 2014-2015 academic year.
SECTION 4: PROCESS FOR ASSESSMENT

1. The Modern Language major does not have professional accreditation.

2. The primary stakeholders for the Modern Language program are: students enrolled in the program, Department faculty, and the College of Arts and Sciences. Secondary stakeholders for the Modern Language program are: the companies who employ our graduates, the regional community, UWRF, and the various professions to which our graduates will belong.

3. The program uses a four-year assessment cycle. The term “year” equates with the academic calendar. Assessment plans are submitted to the UWRF assessment committee as part of its four-year cycle of review.

As our 400-level courses in French and German are offered every other year, it makes sense to time the cycle of assessment according to the two-year period in which most students will take both a 401 course and a 400-level advanced literature course. Therefore, we review our assessment results every two years. This cycle has numerous advantages:

   a. It corresponds to two two-year cycles of the 400-level courses we offer every other year;

   b. It corresponds to an ideal four-year program of undergraduate study;

   c. The indirect assessment measure will also be evaluated on this cycle, for ease and coherence of the assessment plan.

4. The program includes assessment on its web page, http://www.uwrf.edu/MODL/Index.cfm. This information is available to all stakeholders. Under the assessment tab, the program posts:

   a. The complete assessment plan

   b. a summary of key assessment result findings and actions taken

5. All faculty of the Modern Language Department are involved in the process of interpretation, presentation, and discussion of the data. The department chair is responsible for maintaining performance feedback from stakeholders, generating aggregate reports, being the contact person for electronic support personnel, assessment training, ensuring that the program’s assessment web page is up to date, and screening of requests for information about our assessment process and outcomes.

Requests for information not posted to our web page are handled on a case-by-case basis. How to make these requests, along with contact information, is posted on our web page.

6. The faculty member teaching a course that is part of the assessment process will prepare an assessment report each semester the course is offered. The report will summarize the artifact(s) used to measure the major’s learning outcomes, present findings, and make recommendations for enhancing student performance and/or the assessment process. Annual faculty reports are submitted electronically to the program chair no later than June 1st. Reports are housed in a folder on Falcon Files.
7. In the fall of the following academic year, the Chair/Assessment Coordinator will prepare an aggregate report of performance based on the common rubrics and schedule a meeting with the program faculty to discuss the findings and recommendations. That meeting will result, if applicable, in a list of action items to be implemented as needed throughout the program in order to improve student learning outcomes. The minutes of that meeting will be housed in the program’s Assessment folder in Falcon Files. Table 1 presents a sample Action Plan Summary Table.

Table 1. Action Plan Summary Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action to be taken</th>
<th>Courses in which action is to be implemented</th>
<th>Due date for completion</th>
<th>Review/follow up indications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. As needed, assessment discussion will be included as part of the regular meetings of the Modern Language Program. This will be documented in the program meeting minutes. Minutes will be maintained by the program chair and posted to the program’s meeting section on Falcon Files.

Data will be maintained in hard copy form (when applicable) in the main department office.
### APPENDIX A: Course map showing the relationship between learning outcomes, courses, and assessment artifacts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>LO1: Speaking</th>
<th>LO2: Speaking</th>
<th>LO3: Speaking</th>
<th>LO4: Writing</th>
<th>LO5: Culture</th>
<th>LO6: Culture</th>
<th>LO7: Culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explain subjects in their field of personal and/or professional interest and respond to audience questions</td>
<td>Accurately narrate and describe in the past, present and future time frames</td>
<td>Speculate about causes, consequences, and hypothetical situations with some grammatical accuracy</td>
<td>Write reports and papers with significant precision and good control of most essential language structures</td>
<td>Interact with respect and cultural sensitivity in a variety of informal and formal situations</td>
<td>Demonstrate a broad and deep knowledge of historical and philosophical backgrounds that explain patterns of behavior and interaction in the target culture</td>
<td>Discuss and compare beliefs, attitudes, patterns of behavior and interaction between target culture(s) and their own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-level language courses</td>
<td>Introduced</td>
<td>Introduced</td>
<td></td>
<td>Introduced</td>
<td></td>
<td>Introduced</td>
<td>Introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200-level language courses</td>
<td>Reinforced</td>
<td>Reinforced</td>
<td>Introduced</td>
<td>Introduced</td>
<td>Reinforced</td>
<td>Introduced</td>
<td>Reinforced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300-level language courses</td>
<td>Reinforced</td>
<td>Reinforced</td>
<td>Reinforced</td>
<td>Reinforced</td>
<td>Reinforced</td>
<td>Reinforced</td>
<td>Reinforced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300-level civilization courses</td>
<td></td>
<td>Enhanced</td>
<td>Reinforced</td>
<td>Enhanced</td>
<td>Enhanced</td>
<td>Reinforced</td>
<td>Enhanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300-level literature and/or business-professional courses</td>
<td>Enhanced</td>
<td>Enhanced</td>
<td>Reinforced</td>
<td>Enhanced</td>
<td>Enhanced</td>
<td>Enhanced</td>
<td>Enhanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400-level literature courses</td>
<td>Enhanced</td>
<td>Enhanced</td>
<td>Enhanced</td>
<td>Enhanced</td>
<td>Enhanced</td>
<td>Enhanced</td>
<td>Enhanced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B: UW-River Falls Modern Language Department Senior Survey

Please reflect on your experience as a student in the Modern Language Department by answering the following questions. Keep in mind that this is a survey of the department and program; therefore, we ask that you not mention specific teachers. Please comment on the classes offered and the program in general, rather than on a specific faculty member’s teaching style, etc.

How well did you achieve each of the following learning goals?

Know the grammatical structure and accurate pronunciation of the language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Have knowledge of past and present literary and cultural endeavor of the target culture/s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Can survive a situation with a complication (cope with an unpredictable event) in the target language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Can narrate and understand in past, present, and future time in the target language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Can participate actively in conversations about concrete topics and current events in the target language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Gained awareness and appreciation of target culture/s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Gained a better appreciation of yourself as a citizen of the world.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Comments:
What aspects of the program helped you with your learning? Why were they helpful?

What suggestions do you have for what the department could do differently that would help you learn more effectively, and why would these actions help?