



College of Humanities & Social Sciences  
*Department of Foreign Languages & Literatures*

**2020-21 Diversity and Inclusion Report**

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### **Introduction**

The Department of Foreign Languages & Literatures is committed to being a part of the university-wide diversity and inclusion effort focusing on, but not limited to, race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, and other qualities listed in PS-01. This diversity and inclusion report is requested by the College of Humanities & Social Sciences highlighting some of our past accomplishments and proposals to create a more inclusive environment for our faculty, staff, and students. We have also included feedback from the members of our department that we would like the administration to take into consideration.

We believe the following methods are most effective to promote diversity and inclusion:

- Promote, disseminate, and educate our course offerings, programs, and related knowledge to the LSU community and the general public through events, social media, and other forms of communication
- Implement protocols and training for our faculty and staff, encouraging discussions to allow them to gain a deeper understanding of diversity and inclusion

### **Past and Current Programs, Events, and Initiatives**

Below is a select list of programs, events, and initiatives currently ongoing or accomplished in the recent past related to promoting diversity and inclusion:

#### *The Spanish Undergraduate Major and the Hispanic Studies Graduate Program*

Our department offers the Spanish undergraduate major and the Hispanic Studies Graduate Program. The two programs allow students to gain a deeper understanding of the Spanish language and its diverse culture originating from numerous Spanish-speaking countries, regions, and communities around the globe.

#### *Language Offerings*

We offer diverse foreign language courses, including Arabic, Chinese, Latin, Ancient Greek, Hebrew, Italian, German, and Spanish. We are collaborating with the administration to expand our foreign language offerings in the coming years.

#### *Language Minors (including graduate Hispanic Studies minor)*

Our department offers the following minors:

- Arabic studies
- Chinese
- Classical Civilization
- German
- Greek
- Italian

- Latin
- Spanish

The following minors require courses within our department:

- Asian studies
- Chinese Culture and Commerce
- International Studies (Latin America focus)
- Linguistics

### *Spanish Tutoring*

We offer free tutoring to undergraduate students currently enrolled in lower-level Spanish courses (SPAN 1101-2102) hosted by our first-year Hispanic Studies graduate assistants. It helps students who might not be able to afford a private tutor to better understand homework concepts, test preparation, and study strategies.

### *Previous and Current Events*

- **Fall of the Berlin Wall: Commemoration of the 30th Anniversary** – This event included a lecture and panel discussion on the cultural significance and aesthetic representations of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Dr. Stephen Brockmann, Professor of German at Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA, a leading expert in the field of post-wall German literature and film, gave a lecture entitled “The Collapse of East Germany, The Fall of The Berlin Wall, and Why They Matter to Us Today.” In addition, experts and historical eyewitnesses from around the LSU campus and the greater Baton Rouge area presented their impressions of the historic event.
- **Classical Studies Kwirky Klassics Film presents films** – the classical studies section regularly hosted movie nights featuring famous historical classical films.
- **Biennial Louisiana Conference on Hispanic Languages and Literatures** - The 2019 conference was a joint meeting of the Linguistic Association of the Southwest (LASSO) and the Biennial Louisiana Conference on Hispanic Languages and Literatures, hosted by the Hispanic Studies program and the Department of Foreign Languages & Literatures. The conference theme was "Decolonization and Diasporas of the Global South". Hispanic Studies conceived this theme broadly and viewed the conference as a place to reflect on art forms, cultural practices, political and social movements, and linguistic issues that have emerged in the Global South over the past six centuries.
- **Frederick A. de Armas Visits LSU** - Professor Frederick A. De Armas visited our campus on November 17, 2018, and had a writing workshop in Spanish with graduate and undergraduate students in the Spanish Program at the meeting room in Barnes and Noble. The workshop was on his first novel *El Abra del Yumuri*, which addresses the social and racial diversity of La Habana. Students who took part in the workshop could interact with him through commentaries and questions that De Armas generously answered. This novel, which is part of a trilogy, represents De Armas’s effort to research and write on the cultural and literary productions of Cuba before and after the Castro revolution. Frederick A. de Armas is a literary scholar, critic, and novelist whose scholarly work focuses on the literature of the Spanish Golden Age (Cervantes, Calderón, Claramonte, Lope de Vega), often from a comparative perspective. His interests include the politics of astrology, magic and the Hermetic tradition, ekphrasis, the relations between the verbal and the visual particularly between Spanish literature and Italian art, and the interconnections between myth and empire during the rule of the Habsburgs.

- **Hispanic Heritage Month** – faculty in our department has collaborated with the Office of Multicultural Affairs with the organization of relevant activities.
- **Photography in Times of a Pandemic: Latin American Writers in Quarantine** - As part of the Spanish lecture series (2020-2021) on the diversity of the Latin American region, the Undergraduate Studies Committee organized a virtual talk by Prof. Alejandro Meter (University of San Diego, CA) entitled “Photography in Times of a Pandemic: Latin American Writers in Quarantine.” Prof. Meter’s specializations include the Jewish experience in Latin-America, immigration, and the politics of memory. He is also a freelance photographer, who specializes in portrait photography. His recent work has been photographing Latin American writers in times of Covid-19, offering us a unique view into the lives of writers during quarantine. This event was supported by the HSS Strategic Excellence Funding, the Department of FL&L, and the English Department. The Jewish Studies Program also supported this event since many of the writers in the presentation were Jewish.
- **Spanish Conversation table** - The Spanish Conversation Table was a weekly event in 2019-20 hosted by veteran instructor Isabel Matus. The table allows students who have some knowledge of Spanish to practice and improve their language skills. This program has continued in Fall 2020 as a series of weekly virtual conversation tables hosted by a number of Spanish faculty members and graduate students.

#### *Organizations*

Since 2014, the Spanish Cine Club has been showcasing films produced in different Spanish-speaking countries, such as Argentina, Colombia, Chile, España, Perú, etc. The Spanish Cine Club theme changes from year to year. During all this time, the goal has been to offer students the opportunity to reflect on visual representations of arts and cultural practices. The films also provide students with the opportunity to learn about political and social problems affecting the region.

#### *Diverse Faculty and Staff*

Foreign Languages has linguistically and internationally diverse faculty and staff from Italy, Spain, Costa Rica, Colombia, Peru, Argentina, Mexico, Venezuela, Chile, Germany, China, and Morocco, and Hong Kong.

#### *Renaming our Department*

An ad-hoc committee was formed to consider changing the name of our department. We believe the word *Foreign* implies that languages other than English are not a part of the American culture and do not present the ideals of America as a multicultural society.

#### *Others*

Many courses in our department addressed diversity and inclusion in specific ways dealing with race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, immigration, religion, and other issues. For example, SPAN 4147 Latin American Literature: 1960-Present, taught by Dr. Andrea Morris, focused on Afro-Hispanic cultures and resulted in the creation of web resources for high school and middle school advanced Spanish and immersion/heritage students.

#### **Initiatives and Recommendations**

##### *Create Diversity and Inclusion Workshops for Our Faculty and Staff*

Our committee will collaborate with LSU departments to provide workshops for the department faculty and staff. They will prepare our faculty and staff to work with students from diverse backgrounds and allow them to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying issues among diversity and inclusion. We

will contact the Office of Diversity, Office of Multicultural Affairs, applicable faculty senate caucuses, and other units, organizations, and offices at LSU to initiate the effort.

We also recommend adding a diversity and inclusion resources page to our department's website. This page will assist faculty and staff so they will better understand and embrace diversity and inclusion.

#### *Events and Social Media Outreach to Members of LSU Community*

Stereotyping against certain ethnic groups remains a problem at LSU. Our committee recommends promoting our language offerings and disseminating positive knowledge about ethnic groups through cultural events and social media.

#### *Seeking Feedback from Faculty, Staff, and Students*

Our committee recommends implementing a semi-annual department enrolled student climate survey to collect information concerning diversity and inclusion. The survey will allow them to input comments and concerns that might otherwise be unknown to our department. A similar climate survey can also be sent to our graduate assistants, faculty, and staff.

#### **Suggestions to University Administration**

Below is a list of recommendations approved by the department diversity committee. We believe these suggestions will contribute to making the university more inclusive for everyone:

#### *Raise Instructional Faculty's Pay to Retain Diverse Talent*

Our committee recommends increasing the starting salary of instructional faculty to retain talent and to allow LSU to compete with other major US universities. Below is a list of faculty salaries at other regional state universities. The salary information is randomly selected based on information available on the respective department's websites. The salary information likely does not include bonuses, premium pay, and/or additional compensation. Salary information from other Louisiana state universities is unavailable.

The University of Texas at San Antonio  
Department of Modern Languages and Literatures  
Salary information from 2018

- Lilian Cano, MA – Lecturer III, Spanish, \$39,274
- Makiko Fukuda, Ph.D., Senior Lecturer, Japanese, \$58,622
- Marcela Lopez, MA, Lecturer II, Spanish, \$38,910
- Molly Zaldivar, MA, Senior Lecturer, Italian, \$58,622

University of Nebraska Omaha  
Department of Foreign Languages & Literature  
Salary information from 2020. Numbers do not include additional compensation.

- Arturo Miranda, Instructor, Spanish, \$49,055
- Tara Toscano, Instructor, Spanish, \$45,328

University of Houston – University Park  
Department of Hispanic Studies  
Salary information from 2018

- Paola Arboleda, Assistant Instructional Professor, \$58,155
- Alejandra Bealesta, Assistant Instructional Professor, \$71,405

The University of Texas at Austin  
Department of Spanish & Portuguese  
Salary information from 2018

- Maria Luisa Echavarria, Lecturer, Spanish, \$42,439
- Vivian Flanzer, Senior Lecturer, Spanish, \$48,125
- Sean Manning, Lecturer, Spanish, \$43,477

#### *Address the Issues with Racial Markup of the University*

The university can always develop plans to bring more students of color to the LSU community. Possible reasons that may deter a person of color from enrolling, include isolated incidents against students of color and perceived impression of the university among people of color within the state. The administration may want to examine the reason people of color may prefer to attend historically black colleges and universities instead of predominantly white institutions such as LSU.

#### **Other Comments and Feedback from Our Faculty and Staff**

##### *Questions Regarding Gender in University Applications and Surveys*

One of our faculty and staff recommends that LSU applications and surveys include more gender identification options for members of genderqueer and non-binary individuals. For example, LSU graduate school applications still require the applicant's gender as either male or female. We understand that it is a state or a federal mandate, but the LSU administration and the federal or state government can collaborate to include more identification choices.

##### *Ensuring Campus Paths are Accessible*

One of our faculty and staff pointed out that a portion of the sidewalk path behind Lockett Hall is not accessible to wheelchair-bound people. The sidewalk portion in question is elevated on the grass median with no ramps. For individuals in wheelchairs to travel from the back of Lockett Hall to the quad, they have to go around Allen Hall or go all the way to the Design College to enter the quad. A person without the need of a wheelchair can walk from the back of Lockett to the quad in a straight line.

##### *Ensure that Foreign Language Courses are Included in as Many Majors and Minors as Possible*

Another of our faculty and staff recommends working with other departments, colleges, and administration to ensure that as many curricula as possible include courses taught by our department. The cultural and language courses we offer would allow students who would otherwise not be exposed to a different culture to understand and appreciate a different cultural perspective.

#### **List of Contacts in the Department of Foreign Languages & Literatures**

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