

January 13, 2007

To: Jon Butler, Dean of the Graduate School
From: Aníbal González, DGS, Department of Spanish and Portuguese
Re: Report on the 2-4 Project Review of the Ph.D. program in Spanish and Portuguese

Last Fall, the faculty of Department of Spanish and Portuguese met to review its Ph.D. program following the guidelines of the "2-4 Project" memorandum of April 2006. In addition, the department's DGS met separately with a representative group of the department's graduate students to hear their comments and suggestions for improvement of the Ph.D. program.

At the faculty meeting, the records of our graduate students' progress through our program over the last five years were examined and discussed, along with the two student responses to the on-line survey that were received. Those responses were generally positive, showing a high degree of satisfaction with the program. The one issue that was raised by students in the surveys as well as in the meeting with the DGS, concerned a need for further mentoring on professional and career development.

The faculty concluded that our department had experienced no significant problems in terms of the timely completion of Ph.D. examinations and dissertations. Our department also continues to have an outstanding placement record of our Ph.D.s at major private and public colleges and universities. Due to the small size of our program and to the five years of university support received by all of our students, our students have been able to devote themselves fully to their required two years of coursework, to preparation for the Ph.D. examinations, and later, in conjunction with their teaching appointments, to taking the Qualifying Examination (first semester, third year), preparing the dissertation prospectus (second semester, third year), and working on their dissertation in their fourth and fifth years. Throughout this process, the department has been able to effectively monitor the students' progress and to promptly address their individual needs and concerns as these arise.

The faculty agreed that it should address the students' need for further mentoring on issues of professional development, such as academic publishing, participation in conferences, and techniques for the teaching of literature. While some of these subjects are often dealt with in the context of our graduate seminars, it was agreed that holding a regular yearly workshop on these and other topics of professional development would be a good way to systematically respond to these mentoring needs.

In summary, while our department continues to be aware of the need for dynamism and flexibility in order to maintain its excellence, there is broad agreement among faculty and students that the Department of Spanish and Portuguese is doing an effective job of helping our students move through the sometimes difficult transitions from coursework to examinations, through teaching, dissertation research and writing, and job placement.