

MEMORANDUM

DECEMBER 9, 2020

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FROM: SERI JUANGPAINITH, ACREDITATION LIAISON OFFICER
Seri Juangpainith

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF THE 2020-2021 LANGUAGES PROGRAM SELF STUDY

CC: ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE

This memorandum constitutes the evaluation of the document submitted April 20, 2020 as evidence of program rigor, integrity, and quality of instruction and operations in the Languages Department, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Hawai'i at Hilo. Because the ALO served as the author of the self-study, many specific recommendations were actually made in that document. This memo is to simply summarize the WSCUC compliance issues, namely assessment and continual improvement.

I. Assessment

Assessment in Languages has mainly been undertaken per one faculty member who provided the assessment committee access to student artifacts for evaluation for Written Communication and Information Literacy; students from this individual's classes were also assessed for quantitative reasoning and oral communication. Because all of these courses constituted upper division ([300- and 400-level courses in the Japanese major](#)), these core competencies are arguably proof that the Japanese baccalaureate degree maintains rigor and quality.

However, one faculty member is not enough to guarantee academic standards for all of the languages embedded in the department. But the faculty are slowly beginning to make some progress. In this past academic year, the collective group finally developed [universal SLOs for all of the languages](#) which will enable them to do more meaningful assessment and quality control. The ALO managed to work with the new chair this past year to develop community engagement assessment of student service projects that will help the department to demonstrate that such activities are of high-quality educational value; the data for this became a crucial element in one of our reports to WSCUC for reaccreditation. Going forward, the department should carry on this momentum. The following are recommendations by the ALO to help with this endeavor.

II. Recommendations

Based on the observations above, the ALO offers the following recommendations:

A. “Use what’s already in use”

One of the easiest ways to maintain assessments is to use what’s already used by teachers to “assess” student skill. For the languages, especially at the 100- and 200-level language classes, tests on vocabulary and grammar can easily provide data for the following:

Course	Program Learning Outcome 1: Use the appropriate vocabulary and grammar (sentence patterns) for various contexts (i.e. informal conversation, business environments, academia, professional settings)			
	Students can correctly identify the proper words for English equivalents (vocabulary)	Students can identify the proper verbs and their forms (past, present, future tense) to complete sentences correctly (grammar)	Students demonstrate proper usage of informal or formal language per appropriate context	Student demonstrate understanding of writing systems (social context of language)
CHNS 101				
FIL 101			I, D	NA
SPAN 101				
JPN 101				

And per results on tests, faculty can easily see how students in all four languages are doing in these categories. This will make “closing the loop” or developing strategies of helping students do better—activities which faculty already do—quantifiable and usable for future self-studies.

B. Coming together for the collective good

It should not fall to just any one faculty member to sustain assessment; one of the hopes is that collective assessment can become a foundation for collective work among the faculty. This actually may prove to be the more difficult task at hand. Each language has its own faculty and there is little interaction among them—these are the disciplinary silos that hopefully can be overcome now that the department has universal SLOs.

C. Finally, the ALO requests that further quantitative data apart from what is currently posted by the UH Hilo IRO be made available for all future Program Reviews.¹ It is surprising to find that regular time-to-completion rates are only calculated for the institutional levels by System IRO—unless Departments are analyzed, intervention and resource allocation along with any attempts to evaluate efficacy of such initiatives are muddled at best.² Currently the IRO site for [Appendix C: Quantitative Data](#) has still not been updated past 2018—which makes effective and meaningful data collection and analysis impossible. Faculty have also

¹ UH Hilo Institutional Research Office, Program Review: Appendix C Quantitative Data, accessed April 27, 2020, <https://hilo.hawaii.edu/uhh/iro/UHHiloProgramReview.php>.

² Institutional Research and Analysis Office, Graduation and Retention Rate Summary, accessed April 27, 2020, https://www.hawaii.edu/institutionalresearch/gradRatesSummaryReport.action?IRO_INSTITUTION=HIL&drillThruLevel=&aggllevel=null&reportId=SDSTT01&campusContext=null&drillId=null&VALUE=null&exportType=&drillValue=null&drillTarget=null

reported inconsistencies in the number of certificate completers and majors—more data support can hopefully be provided to this department.