

Executive Summary

Truman State University's Spanish faculty are dedicated and well prepared professionals whose devotion to their students is clear. The energy and care they bring to their work is amply reflected in the accomplishments of their concentrators. The role of the instructional staff in the University's goal of becoming a nationally recognized liberal arts and sciences university will be greatly facilitated by directing strategic resources to

1. emphasize the place of foreign languages and cultures at the heart of the liberal arts curriculum
2. encourage wider professional exposure for faculty through hosting events on campus and instructor exchanges with other institutions
3. free the faculty from their present excessive teaching load and encouraging creative research and professional engagement in its many forms
4. enrich the curriculum through expanded upper-level course offerings and student opportunities for cultural experiences
5. offer more "one year of language in one semester" (163 and 263) courses to accelerate students' passage through requirement and into higher offerings
6. cultivate pre-professional experiences for students, like the peer tutoring program and undergraduate research
7. expand on the strong peer tutor program with enhanced faculty mediation, moderation and mentoring
8. enhance the prestige and self-identity of students of Spanish by granting them space in the residence halls for a "Spanish House" and greater self-determination in curriculum offerings
9. expand on present strengths in technology to link faculty and students to dialogue with a wider world
10. target high school students with proven skills in Spanish to encourage their application to Truman State

On-Campus Visit

My on-campus visit was conducted on February 2-3, 1998 at the invitation of Heinz Woehlk, Head of the Division of Language and Literature, and Thomas Capuano, Associate Professor of Spanish. The level of cooperation and warmth shown was exemplary in all regards. I talked with faculty administrators and students almost continuously over two days, and my only regrets were perhaps not discussing foreign language collection development with the director of the university library, development opportunities for Spanish with university advancement, and anticipated shifts in student profile with the director of admissions. I trust that the Spanish faculty will pursue those areas as they see fit.

I realize that the suggestions and brainstorming contained in this report are based on incomplete knowledge of available resources and an imperfect appreciation for the institution's short- and long-term goals. Again, the Spanish faculty of Truman State are the professionals best able to refine and prioritize the changes they may wish to make in their program.

Comparison of Truman State with the College of William & Mary

I initially thought that my own experience at William & Mary, a small public research university, and visiting professorships at graduate programs at three other universities made me a less than ideal candidate for this assignment. William and Mary is, admittedly, in a privileged position historically, being the second oldest college in America, the first to become a university, and currently able to boast a fairly elite student body, some 70% of which comes from the Washington, D.C. area. Besides being one of the most selective colleges in the country, many of our students are already “internationalists” with rich personal experiences from having traveled or lived abroad. One recent poll ranked William & Mary the sixth best public institution of higher education after Univ. of Virginia, UC-Berkeley, Univ. of Michigan-Ann Arbor, UNC-Chapel Hill and UCLA.¹

Visiting and researching Truman State, however, showed me how close our institutions are. We are both clearly driven by a mission to liberal arts education for undergraduates, and we avoid graduate programs that cannot be distinguished (e.g., a few years ago William & Mary axed five terminal master's programs). We are the nearly same size and

¹ Ranking from the Top 25 National Public Universities in *US News & World Report*, Sept. 1997; the same publication ranked William & Mary 32nd on their over-all national list which includes private institutions. We're flattered, especially by the number six ranking among public universities, but given the disparity in endowments and enrollments — all the other schools in the top tier have 20,000 to 40,000 students — our reputational index has to be somewhat inflated in their eyes.

same demographic and racial composition, and seek to project ourselves to our General Assemblies as pre-eminent institutions of learning with faculties distinguished for their devotion to teaching.

The size of our foreign language programs (enrollments and faculty appointments) is roughly comparable as well, although we teach a few more modern foreign languages (a total of nine) and our enrollments are much more weighted to the advanced levels. We also service strong programs in International Studies which require upper-level course work in foreign languages, although few students find the flexibility to double major in both International Studies and French, German or Spanish. We also employ undergraduates to assist in language instruction.

Every institution has at least five peer groups:

- 1) the officially designated peer group, used for institutional assessment and benchmarking salaries
- 2) the peer group assembled by national polls and independent rankings
- 3) the applicant defined peer group of institutions, which high school students apply to besides one's own
- 4) the narrower peer group of institutions to which we lose applicants we admit²
- 5) the ideal or "dream" peer group we see ourselves eventually joining

I read in your self-study the invocation of highly selective colleges such as Carleton (MN), Grinnell, Oberlin, Kenyon and Macalester, all private rather than public.³ Although the bulk of my institutional comparisons in this document are with William &

² Applicants to William & Mary also apply to and may chose to attend the Univ. of Virginia (our biggest cross-over school because it's the "other" state school, although rather dissimilar in profile), Duke, Brown, Cornell, Johns Hopkins, and other mid-Atlantic colleges plus a few further north, and recently the Univ. of Georgia (because of a newly expanded merit scholarship program). We also compete with several solid regional universities in Virginia (Old Dominion, Virginia Commonwealth, James Madison, Mary Washington, George Mason, Virginia Tech) and some fine private schools (Univ. of Richmond, Radford, Randolph Macon Women's College, Mary Baldwin, Washington and Lee, Hampden-Sydney, Virginia Military Institute) because of proximity to students' homes or other personal factors.

³ For the record, William & Mary's official peer group, as approved in 1997 by the State Council on Higher Education, includes Duke, Notre Dame, Boston College, Boston Univ., Brown, Dartmouth, Emory, Georgetown, SONY-Albany, SONY-Binghamton, Tulane, UNC-Chapel Hill, Univ. of California-Riverside, Univ. of Tennessee-Knoxville, Univ. of Connecticut, Univ. of Delaware, Univ. of New Hampshire, Vanderbilt and Wake Forest.

Mary, faculty and administrators will want to assemble data from the institutions that best match your own vision of who you are and who you wish to become.

Truman State looks very much like what William & Mary was 15 years ago. It seems reasonable to assume that Truman will find itself gravitating toward the profile of a peer group that includes my institution, and will need to anticipate impending changes in the profile and needs of its student body and faculty.

Here are some current contrasts between our institutions:

	Truman State	William & Mary
Undergraduate enrollment	6,000	5,600
Total enrollment	6,300	7,700 ⁴
SATs	1,192	1,295
Acceptance	72%	49%
Yield	32%	41%
Return for 2 nd year	84%	92%
Graduating in 4 years	36%	81%
In 5 years	22%	88%
In 6 years ⁵	60%	89%
Student/Faculty ration	16/1	10/1
Public access computers	950	300 ⁶
Research spending	\$625,000	\$10,200,000
Endowment	\$11,000,000	\$130,000,000
Library	370,000 vols	1,300,000 vols
In-state tuition, room & board	\$7,000	\$9,500
Out-of state tuition, room & board	\$9,300	\$19,500

⁴ William & Mary has four substantial graduate colleges--Business, Law, Education and VIMS (Virginia Institute of Marine Science)--while Arts & Sciences embraces large PhD programs in Anthropology, Applied Science, Computer Science, History, Physics and Psychology, plus a scattering of master's programs.

⁵ William & Mary has a "ten-semesters-and-out" rule: undergraduates may be enrolled as full-time students for only ten semesters and must earn their diplomas within that time. Few students "stop the clock" by taking a semester off (for medical or financial reasons) or by studying part-time for a while.

⁶ Both the Truman and William & Mary figures are taken from national reference guides to colleges. At W&M there are about 300 computers in various labs but about 100 of them are not fully public because they are dedicated for students in Computer Science, Modern Languages, Business, etc. Some 2600 private units are connected to the campus fiber optic backbone in dorm rooms and perhaps another 10% belong to students who have not subscribed for the on-campus internet access.

Projections on Future Evolution of Truman and its Faculty

If Truman succeeds in its goals of becoming a distinguished liberal arts institution, it needs to be a player on the national stage. Prospective applicants, especially those from out-of-state, should feel that Truman can offer an education on a par with that at prestigious public and private institutions of the same size both in the Midwest and on either coast.

At the moment, the total costs for attending your institution seem implausibly low and are only a fraction of the going rate at your anticipated peers, and perhaps even below your current peers outside of Missouri. Without well-heeled alumni socialized into lending financial support, or a large scale research operation that might generate grant income from overhead, or the support of thriving local industries with historic ties to the institution, or a massive endowment, or a reliable revenue engine within the state bureaucracy, Truman needs tuition dollars to sustain competitive facilities and programming, especially to compensate for its relative isolation.

The current profile of both students and faculty will necessarily change in the coming years as Truman assumes its place among the more distinguished liberal arts colleges of America.

Students in foreign languages will want a nationally recognized faculty with lively personal links to other countries and cultures. Technological resources are a tremendous plus in this area, offering gratifying compensations for geographical distance and the lack of a local resident population of native speakers/cultural witnesses. Somehow, direct cultural contact has to be emulated on campus.

The faculty profile at Truman State is a more urgent question. Internal documents boast that 40% of faculty have been hired within the past five years and 60% within the last ten. That makes for a young and energetic corps of educators. The danger is that Truman will be “tenured-in” with professors who are not equipped or socialized to assume their place on the national scene — or at least to be participants in the national conversation. This is not the same as merely raising the bar for tenure review, demanding more publications

and the like. Excellence is achieved and sustained by fostering a sense that things can be changed, and will be changed fairly often. Faculty need to be nurtured in diverse forms of professional engagement that keep them alert to national trends and contributors to the evolution of those trends.

For the teaching staff in Spanish, this socialization should include enhanced opportunities to study, travel and attend conferences abroad, and take students on short or extended trips to other countries. It will entail special forms of technological training to stay in touch with emerging cultural phenomena and graft them into their teaching.

Faculty Development

Truman's current Spanish faculty are, indisputably, dedicated and well trained professionals. The bond they share with their students is a tribute to the sense of community they have developed. Some of the faculty have achieved national recognition for their research and professional service.

There may be institutional and political reasons for shying away from an emphasis on faculty research, but unless there is true research going on there is far less chance that faculty will feel comfortable participating in national (or even state wide) initiatives, and no chance that they will give their students experience in undergraduate research. Such research (thinking through new problems or original thinking about old ones) is a crucial factor in preparing students for graduate study and offering them the pre-professional exposure they need to assume leadership roles in the future. Institutional and collegial recognition for research is one of the most potent factors in long-term faculty vitality and job satisfaction, and provides a powerful incentive for faculty retention — even more so than salary.

This research can still mesh with the announced mission of Truman State to give an affordable and criteria-based (value-added), teaching-centered liberal arts education to a selective student body. The key lays in identifying the standards and types of research as defined by local faculty, and evaluation norms that make sense within your context. "Research / Professional Engagement" for individual faculty at your institution might include:

- publication of books, articles and book reviews on literary, cultural and pedagogical aspects of Hispanic culture and language⁷

⁷ James Axtell, "Twenty-Five Reasons to Publish," *Scholarly Publishing* 29.1 (October, 1997): 3-20.

- editions of literary texts, especially annotated editions designed for classroom use
- translations, especially those elaborated for a student audience
- anthologies and course packs of critical readings, either for student use or for faculty discussion groups
- participation in national programs, such the Educational Testing Service's national AP Readings
- hosting conferences and designing learning experiences for colleagues in areas of shared research or in foreign language pedagogy
- helping build repositories of Spanish reference materials (software, Hispanic films on tape or laser disk, test banks, slide collections, audio materials, etc.) for use by educators throughout Missouri

The Spanish faculty at Truman should refine, recast and amplify this meager list to reflect their talents and aspirations.

Program Assessment

Truman has admirable goals for defining the outcomes of its global curriculum,⁸ but national assessment instruments for foreign language instruction *in a liberal arts curriculum* are just not out there. Both the locally developed test and the MLA test (last revised in 1966) required of all graduating concentrators are badly out of date and hardly reflect the complex and ambitious education the Spanish faculty tries to offer. Truman's faculty would be better off canvassing current and anticipated peer institutions for their assessment procedures or program articulation to see how Truman's program compares to their curriculum design. Even when their specific programs are relatively undistinguished, they have been subtly molded by their academic environment and culture and can provide instructive points of departure.

⁸ Missouri's historical commitment to "value added" education has exercised real influence in higher education in America since the time when Governor John Ashcroft chaired the National Governors' Association Task Force on College Quality:

The public has a right to know and understand the quality of undergraduate education that young people receive from publicly funded colleges.... They have a right to know that their resources are being wisely invested and committed.... We need not just more money for education but more education for the money. (statement made in 1986; qtd. in Pat Hutchings and Ted Marchese, "Watching Assessment: Questions, Stories, Prospects," *Change* [Sept.-Oct., 1990]: 12-38)

See also "Report of the ADE Ad Hoc Committee on Assessment," *Profession* 1997 (NY: MLA): 251-74.

Student Suggestions

My time brainstorming with Truman's undergraduate students of Spanish was especially helpful. They are bright and able — and willing to speak up to float new perspectives and point out pitfalls in otherwise bright ideas. Along with their praise and admiration for their teachers they voiced the following concerns and suggestions:

- They miss the opportunity for faculty to teach their special areas of expertise and interest. The Masterpieces offerings are too few and far between.
- They are open to late afternoon and evening scheduling if that will increase course offerings.
- They liked the notion of visiting professors coming in from another university to teach special courses. These could be once-a-week seminars and one- or two-credit offerings instead of a regular three-credit, semester-long course.
- They would like to get a taste of what graduate study in Spanish is all about, and are intrigued by the possibility of taking a “graduate course” as a special offering either from a visitor or from a local faculty member. Again, this could be an evening seminar for fewer credit hours, but with the understanding that it would be run as much as like a graduate seminar as possible.
- They want greater library resources: books, journals, and video tapes/laser disks. They complain that almost all of their research for advanced courses has to be done through interlibrary loan.
- They are somewhat wary of the Spanish House proposal (described below), but mostly for fear that they would be socially or physically isolated from their peers or be required to maintain the operation by themselves.

Spanish Curriculum

There are various sorts of usefulness for foreign language/culture study in college.⁹ The first sort justifies the place of foreign languages in a liberal arts curriculum, experiencing first hand that essential cognitive shift which happens only when we begin to think in a foreign tongue and imagine others doing the same for their whole lives. Truman State already understands that value and honors it through its language requirement. A second sort of usefulness emerges when continued study of a foreign tongue and culture becomes a “life skill” — a resource that helps one understand the rocky integration of Spain into a European Community that includes France and Italy, the social symbolism of bullfighting,

⁹ The national trend in higher education is toward appreciation of the cultural matrix that language anchors and expresses: cf. Russell A. Berman, “Reform and Continuity: Graduate Education toward a Foreign Cultural Literacy,” *Profession*, 1997 (NY: MLA, 1997): 61-74; rpt. from *ADFL Bulletin* (Spring, 1996).

or the political mechanisms that underlie the Shining Path movement in Peru. This sort of life skill is reinforced by maintaining oral proficiency, but can exist apart from it (e.g., Madelaine Albright, our current Secretary of State, whose foreign language skills are more latent than active). Finally one can make their foreign language work a true professional skill, such as in health care, relief or social work, pastoral ministry or education.

Although the Spanish faculty try to impart instruction to serve these three levels, their teaching load section is presently too burdensome to do it effectively. More importantly the focus of instruction will eventually have to shift to accommodate a higher ratio of upper-level offerings as the selectivity of the student body generates more advanced language learners. Currently our two institutions offer the following comparisons in enrollment patterns:

	<u>Truman State</u>		<u>William & Mary</u>	
	<i>Fall '97</i>	<i>Spring '98</i>	<i>Fall '97</i>	<i>Spring '98</i>
First-year language	228	261	103	96
Second-year language	348	303	165	128
Upper intermediate ¹⁰	148	95	140	116
Advanced courses	57	63	182	176
Total enrollment	781	734	582	531
Upper intermediate course enrollments as % of total	19%	13%	24%	22%
Advanced course enrollments as % of total	7%	9%	31%	33%
Average class size in advanced courses	8.1	10.5	18.2	17.6

Truman teaches significantly more students but mostly at the lower levels, whereas William & Mary faculty teach predominately post-requirement language courses.¹¹ You may anticipate, and should start moving toward, more attractive advanced intermediate and upper-level offerings which will be essential for future student recruitment and for the

¹⁰ For Truman: Spanish 340, 350, 353; for William & Mary Spanish 206, 207, 208.

¹¹ Adjuncts and instructors teach almost all of William & Mary's elementary and intermediate courses; tenured and tenure-eligible faculty teach at the upper intermediate and advanced levels almost exclusively.

impending needs of your evolving student profile.

Some specific suggestions:

- Expand the 163 and 263 courses to target more students and move them more quickly through the system, both to lighten the carrying load of the Spanish Section and to allow students to advance to higher courses during their college career. The current six-credit load of 163 and 263 may actually discourage students from committing that much of their semester's total to a single course. Conversely, a four-credit designation may better reflect the investment needed for the next generation of already accomplished freshmen to succeed in 161/162 and 261/262.
- Enforce an enrollment cap of 22 students per section on lower-level language courses so as not to dilute the teacher/student contact essential for foreign language instruction.
- Expand the peer-tutoring program. Its present configuration with a large pool of undergraduates tutoring other students at all course levels is an excellent start, and even as is would be the envy of many other institutions. The next level would be to add further rigor to the experience and let it become a true pre-professional apprenticeship with faculty guidance on second language acquisition process and lesson planning. A component of co-teaching with faculty could lead to more and better trained secondary school certified teachers emerging from Truman, and a substantially richer learning environment on campus. This seems to be one of the finest initiatives Truman has produced and it deserves to be expanded and turned into a model for other departments and institutions.
- High school AP Spanish students are a valuable pool of potential applicants for Truman, especially if given the chance to have their AP skills extended and recognized after matriculation. Since 49% of your current freshmen have taken AP courses and 39% received college credit at Truman for their AP work, this population is a prime target for program development in Spanish.
- The Spanish faculty should be encouraged to participate in ETS's Advanced Placement Readings so they become familiar with a large-scale national exam and benefit from the informal professional exchange that takes place there. One also learns how to appreciate, evaluate and extend AP students' skills after they arrive at college.
- Encourage topics courses in Hispanic Studies that allow for maximum experimentation with curricular innovation and for faculty to share evolving research interests.
- Organize interdisciplinary faculty reading groups to explore links across

methodologies and cultural frontiers.

- Promote short courses of one and two credits to take advantage of timely themes (“Apocalypse and Millennialism, Medieval & Modern”, “Women & Mysticism: Teresa of Avila”, “The Politics of Latin American Film”, “The Ethics of Conquest and War”) and allow for development of full-semester offerings. These can be in both English and the target language.
- Additional short courses could embrace discipline specific themes and perhaps be team-taught with faculty outside the language division (e.g., Spanish for medical personnel, Spanish for business, Spanish for information technology, etc.).
- Abandon the current assessment instruments for the major, instruments whose utility has probably expired, and consider a global instrument that could serve as a pre-test and post-test of language skill.
- Expand the assessment options by clustering several yardsticks a student can select to have their strengths measured. These could include the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview, a reading comprehension test, demonstrating mastery of specific types of foreign language software, an extended writing project showing control of diverse genres and registers, public service application of foreign language skills (volunteer work in Hispanic migrant camps; preparation of AIDS or women’s assault prevention brochures in Spanish for the Missouri Red Cross, etc.), and so on. A more integrated option would be the guided assembly of a senior portfolio of projects completed for a number of upper-level courses. The materials and assignments could be evaluated by Spanish professors at a cooperating institution according to criteria designed by Truman faculty (which is also a good exercise in definition of program goals).
- Compile a comprehensive profile of all faculty and courses offered in Spanish to publish an in-house booklet for prospective majors. In addition to the hard copy, the information could go on the University’s website for the Division of Language & Literature
- Consider the option of hiring a cadre of instructors or adjuncts who assume the bulk of lower level language instruction. This builds a professional team trained in the specific methodologies of our profession and frees up faculty with specialized education to develop and teach advanced offerings.

Administrative Initiatives

I perceived a warm sense of support and cooperation between administration and faculty, more than the usual polite deference to turf boundaries or desire to look harmonious to an outsider. There seems to be a fairly high level of trust built on frequent dialogue. The senior administration also demonstrated a sincere desire to promote foreign language study and give it a fair share of institutional resources.¹²

Specific suggestions:

- A “lean administrative structure” is one of Truman’s sources of pride, something that undeniably sells well both with teaching faculty and state legislators. Truman’s current situation seems excessively lean, however, and almost anemic. Even a highly gifted administrative coordinator cannot be asked to serve over a hundred faculty. He cannot give each person attentive feedback and support to foster a professional environment, show appreciation for personal efforts or know enough about performance to adjudicate measures of accountability. I would encourage creation of separate academic departments. This would allow greater cohesiveness within units, swifter change and seem like a better match with one’s intended peer institutions. (It’s not just “If Harvard does it...”: a large amorphous unit just looks more like the ragtag divisions in a community college.) This may be a good moment to create a Department of Hispanic Studies, a move that would urge faculty to rethink the whole curriculum and not merely emulate what they had in grad school.
- Confirm—or better publicize—institutional willingness to “top off” external grants to the same funding levels as internal ones. Research and curriculum development funds at Truman State are at parity with institutions with comparable missions nation-wide. Offering to

¹² During my visit I heard some discussion of problems beyond the concerns of Spanish alone. One such problem is generated by students withdrawing from courses late in the term. At William & Mary students may drop a course only within the first eight class days, and add a course only within the first ten. Course enrollment policy should perhaps be revisited.

Other global considerations in the undergraduate curriculum might include putting a credit-hour cap on all majors to level the intradepartmental playing field, preventing some majors from depleting others by making double majoring practically impossible.

Geographically disadvantaged small and mid-size universities may need to take special steps to keep their faculty in touch with wider trends. This may be especially true where research is not stressed and faculty do not acquire the fame to win them invitations to teach elsewhere. Deliberately sponsoring faculty exchanges with other institutions (assuring continuance of salary and benefits, assisting with dislocation expenses, etc.) would refresh personal perspectives and help everyone let go of their inadvertent myopia and accumulated grudges.

supplement external awards would encourage faculty to apply for them, make recipients feel recognized for their efforts and competitive strength and probably save the institution money.

- Establish a Spanish House or similar residence to create a physical center where the language can be spoken and reinforced through social and educational events. This could be a real house on the edge of campus or just a hall in an existing dorm with a dedicated kitchen and lounge for gatherings. The four most important factors in keeping a language house going seem to be
 - 1) ownership of physical space: it's hard to ask fellow students to surrender shared facilities for periodic events, or for non-participants to tolerate a foreign language which shuts them out; it's also important for students to be able to outfit their area with cultural artifacts which enhance and proclaim their pride and ownership of the activities that go on there
 - 2) native "tutor"/resident director: He or she serves as the prime cultural informant and language model, and with the residents organizes special events such as lectures and film series, study breaks, parties and weekend brunches in the target language, and conversation hours open to any student of Spanish. In return they are typically provided with a round trip ticket from their country of origin, free room and board (many prefer to take the campus meal plan in their first semester and then cash equivalency in the second to purchase and prepare their own food), a small monthly stipend for spending money, the right to take one course per term tuition-free, and access to the student health center plus a basic major medical health policy.
 - 3) faculty moderator to promote a sense of recognition and seamlessness with the academic program

Some documents from William & Mary's language houses (we have six) are appended in the copy of this report being forward to the Spanish Section

- Turn the eyes of the entire faculty toward global education and competence in foreign languages as a life skill.

One possibility is a joint Visiting Professorship between Spanish and another academic department. The guest faculty member could teach one literature or culture course in the target language (say, "Landscape as Protagonist in Latin American Literature" or "Ecology and Social Change in Central America") and another in English in a collaborating unit ("The

Politics of Ecology in Developing Nations”, “The Legacy of Liberation Theology” or “Magical Realism in American Fiction”). The Visiting Professor could also conduct a campus-wide faculty seminar on an interdisciplinary topic with readings available in both English and the target language. Once the area of discussion is explored in their native tongue, even faculty who are somewhat rusty may at least peruse the target language resources and size up the nature and quality of the debate among native speakers.

This program could also be configured for a bilingual artist- journalist-writer-in-residence.

Truman State University is a fine institution poised to join the ranks of the most selective liberal arts colleges in America. This consultant admires Truman State's efforts and the dedicated Spanish teachers who will help it reach that goal.

March 7, 1998