

# Eastern Wyoming College

## **Instructional Program Review 2014 - 2015**

**Program:**

**Languages**

**Prepared by:**

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## EASTERN WYOMING COLLEGE Instructional Program Review

**Program Name:**

**Part I: Statistical Data from the past three years:**

|                           | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 * | 2013-2014 * | 5-Year Average |
|---------------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| Annualized FTE Enrollment | 17.3      | 15.9        | 25.3        | 18.5           |
| Annualized FTE Faculty    | 1.9       | 1.9         | 2.7         | 2.1            |
| # Students                | 0         | 0           | 0           | 0              |
| # Graduated               | 0         | 0           | 0           | 0              |

FTE = Full-time equivalent      Notes:

Modes of Delivery:

online     
  compressed video     
  face-to-face

Revisions in Curriculum Since Last Review:

**Part II Narrative Analysis**

**Description of Community Need:**

Current Community Need/Growth of Industry:

**Foreign language instruction fulfills a need for program requirements, particularly for academic transfer students who plan to seek a four-year degree. Recently in this category, the Spanish courses (the only foreign language courses offered on campus) have had students majoring in Criminal Justice, English, History, Political Science, Social Sciences, Communication, and Psychology.**

**Foreign language instruction also meets a need for people in our community who would like to learn a language (usually Spanish) for purposes of travel or on-the-job application. The most recent students in this category have been working at St. Joseph’s Children’s Home, in nursing, and in law enforcement.**

**Our community has a significant number of Hispanic people who would like to learn Spanish or to improve the little Spanish that they know, not necessarily for travel or work but for recovery of heritage and traditions.**

**As an additional note, one could observe that the FTE figures cited above include concurrent enrollment, while the numbers of students (majors) and graduates reflect the on-campus population.**

## **Activities in Support of Student Recruitment and Retention (if applicable)**

Although there has been some attempt to attract more Hispanic students, there has not been a visible attempt to attract more students in traditional academic areas in which students take language courses.

**Assessment of Student Learning:** Analysis of Student Learning. What has been learned?

The main method of assessment has been in-course evaluations of student performance in on-campus courses; these evaluations are based on student participation in class (oral proficiency), sentence composition exercises as homework, and tests and quizzes. In recent years the only Spanish courses we have offered have been the first-year (two-semester) sequence, in which students are simply unable to continue when they can no longer maintain proficiency with the rest of the class. They can see, on the basis of class participation and test scores, when their proficiency is no longer up to par. Thus, there is attrition during the first semester and between the first semester and the second. Students who can complete the course simply must have the necessary proficiency, and those who do complete the first semester usually complete the second semester.

## **Strengths of the Program and Faculty:**

The college has a qualified instructor, John Nesbitt, on campus. He is a full-time instructor with 4/5 of his course assignments in English and 1/5 in Spanish. The college has been able to rely on him in this area for 26 years, during which time he has continued to pursue professional development in the language and culture and during which time he has regularly visited Spanish-speaking environments (mostly Mexico) and has spoken Spanish in the home. He has also taken training and has been approved on the state level for translating in the courts.

From time to time, though not every year, the Spanish courses have benefited from the presence of a tutor from the Hispanic community. These tutors, interviewed and selected by the instructor, are typically native speakers who have good reading and writing proficiency.

## **Part III Recommendations**

### **Faculty Recommendations:**

(Again, these observations are based on the on-campus courses.)

We continue to need more enrollment in traditional academic areas so that we will have enough students to support not only the first-year sequence but also a second-year (third-semester) course. In recent years, our first-semester enrollment has declined at the beginning of the semester from 18 or 20 to 10, and the enrollment of the second-semester course has declined from 5, 6, or 7 to 2. In order to have a third-semester course, we need to carry 8 or more students through the second semester, so that at least 5 or 6 will be

around for the third semester. Some students would like to have the third semester course for degree requirements, for further knowledge, for employment, and for travel, and we are not attracting enough students to have a sufficient base for the first two semesters.

We also need to serve the Hispanic community better, and we need to promote more awareness of Hispanic culture. We could do this, first, by recruiting more Hispanic students and by hiring more Hispanic employees at various levels in the institution. We could also form an activity club devoted to interest in Hispanic culture. This is an area that the program reviewer has cited in past reviews and is an ongoing effort recently supported by the diversity initiative at the college.

The college could also make an effort to attract more international students from Spanish-speaking countries. In northern Mexico alone, the reviewer has met many, many people who would like to come to this country to learn English and to study such subjects as computer systems, business, and music as well as English. A diversity sub-committee has worked on one plan to attract students from Mexico, but that plan has been slow and uncertain.

These needs, the first two of which have been emphasized in past program reviews and strategic plans, prevail because the college for many years became mired in trying to attract mainly traditional-aged, white, activity-oriented students with moderate to very poor educational background. This mono-cultural approach resulted not only in a continual decline in enrollment but also in a low level of diversity in age, ethnic background, and academic ability. To improve in this area, the college has tried to change its recruitment strategy, but more effort is necessary.

**Advisory Committee Recommendations:** NA

**Division Chair Recommendations:**

Foreign language courses at EWC, specifically Spanish, formerly were a desirable and sequential group of classes to take. However today enrollment in Spanish classes at EWC's main campus is uneven or there are simply no students.

Yet judging by recent concurrent enrollment numbers, students are still taking such classes in their high schools. So whether those students are in class to fulfill a graduation requirement for their diploma or working towards an advanced degree or to become technically competent or more proficient in a language they already possess or simply to be a top achiever, there appears to be a market in our service area to be knowledgeable in a foreign language among that age group. And more importantly these students are completing those classes successfully.

Foreign language classes are also still required for certain undergraduate and graduate degree programs at some transfer institutions. For example the UW History program requires a foreign language. However there are no requirements for a foreign language class at EWC.

Other than to say there are likely many and various reasons for the low enrollment at Eastern I have two suggestions for the way forward. The first is to better identify the potential traditional

student or non-traditional individual who will need this class in their portfolio or on their transcript when they transfer and recruit them personally. The second is to identify the potential successful student and through the advising process encourage enrollment in the classes.

With enrollment in these classes now so low it's hard to see how traditional marketing to particular groups or developing programs by itself will change the status quo. We might be better off if in addition to those things we meet people one on one and make the case and build an enrollment. To use a baseball analogy, to try and hit a couple of singles rather than extra base hits or home runs.

### **Vice President's Recommendations:**

We have a talented and dedicated full-time Spanish instructor in Dr. Nesbitt. I understand his frustrations in the low numbers in the classes for the last several years. We have had numerous conversations. I also agree with the Division Chair who provides a couple of suggestions on how we might recruit for students for the Spanish classes. I would add the following recommendations:

- Research and consider offering Spanish via distance learning. We did this years ago with a telecourse approach using Destinos. I think we would want to look at an online approach this time. We do seem to have students in our service area who are pursuing transfer degrees. If these students could access a foreign language requirement at the community college level, I think it would be to their advantage. If these courses can be developed for distance, then the coinciding marketing would also need to occur not only to our service area but to the state utilizing the WYclass portal.
- Continue to meet and mentor the concurrent and other adjunct instructors who are teaching Spanish at our service area high schools. We want to continue to ensure the quality of these courses and these collaborative meetings help with that goal