SYNOPSIS OF A PROPOSAL FOR THE INITIATION OF A NEW INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM LEADING TO THE MAJOR

IN LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

University of Oregon
College of Arts and Sciences
Anthropology, History, Romance Languages, Political Science, International Studies, Geography, Environmental Studies, Ethnic Studies, Sociology, Educational Leadership Technology and Administration
[CIP Designation]

1. Program Purpose

a. What are the objectives of the proposed program?
The main objective of the major in LAS is to provide students with a general and concentrated knowledge of Latin America from a multidisciplinary perspective. It also seeks to create an institutional reference that would facilitate the exchange of knowledge on Latin American issues with other Universities in the country and abroad. It will also add some visibility to the University of Oregon in a field that traditionally has not been distinctively supported by any academic institution in Oregon.

b. What are the numbers and characteristics of students to be served?
The LAS major would primarily serve students with a strong interest in Latin American issues and that currently have no way of fulfilling their goal of graduating with a degree that reflects that interest. Many of them will probably double-major (Spanish, History, Ethnic Studies, and International Studies majors are likely candidates to choose this option). The LAS major would also attract and serve the growing numbers of Latino/a students at the UO. We anticipate that the number of LAS majors would easily reach 50 or more during the first year and would likely increase over time. (The LAS minor has been quite successful. By the end of the 2006-07 academic year, we had 57 LAS minors; 18 graduated in the spring and 1 in the summer).

c. How does the program meet the needs of Oregon and enhance the state’s capacity correspond effectively to social, economic, and environmental challenges and opportunities?
The LAS major will highly enhance the capacity of the state to respond to the challenges presented by the presence of a growing population of Latino origin in Oregon, and increasing interconnection between Latin American countries and the United States’ society and economy. The population of Latino origin constitutes now the first ethnic minority among the US population. The flow of people, commodities, and information between Latin America and the US has dramatically increased in the last decade. There is a clear need in Oregon for more graduates with a thorough knowledge of Latin American and Latino cultures, peoples, languages, and societies, so that they could work with (and for) the increasing number of Latinos in the state and the increasing number of businesses that have connections with Latin America. Graduates with an expertise in LAS are essential for the integration of Latinos in the state, and
therefore to support the social well-being of the community. Moreover, within a more globalized modern world, knowledge of Latin America is a necessary competence in order to successfully develop relationships with countries south of the US border.

2. Relationship to Strategic Direction

a. How does the proposed program further the mission and strategic directions of the University of Oregon?

The LAS major supports two of the basic statements of the University of Oregon mission. One, its commitment to “international awareness and understanding and to the development of a faculty and student body that are capable of participating effectively in a global society”; and two, the “acceptance of the challenge of an evolving social, political, and technological environment by inviting and guiding change rather than reacting to it.” In addition to that, the LAS major will greatly contribute to realize the goal of bringing more diversity to the University of Oregon and to have that reflected in its program and course offerings.

b. How does the proposed program maximize student access, academic productivity, and institutional quality?

This new program makes use of an already existing number of faculty members in various departments (see Appendix 2 for a list of affiliated faculty). For them, the creation of an interdisciplinary program focused on Latin America will represent a point of encounter and interaction that, otherwise, would be very difficult to accomplish. Our students will benefit from being exposed to a variety of instructors, disciplinary perspectives, and areas of expertise. All of these will clearly improve the UO’s visibility and strength in an area of academic training that, for reasons outlined above, will become more and more pressing in the future.

3. Resources

a. What resources are needed to support this program?

There is no immediate need to hire new faculty to initiate and maintain the major in LAS, although in the future, it would be desirable to hire at least one full-time faculty member. In the immediate future, some faculty resources will be needed. The program will include three new, required courses in LAS that will be taught on a rotary basis by participating faculty. These three courses will need to be bought out of the course load of the corresponding faculty members. In addition, the Latin American Studies Director will see his/her duties increased and, thus, one course release will be expected for the person in charge of the program. In administrative terms, the program will operate with staff and logistical support from OCIAS, but we estimate that 4 additional hours per week will be needed from the undergraduate secretary to fulfill all the obligations related to the major. In addition, a yearly allocation of at least $3,000 is desirable in order to insure the organization of, and support to, various activities related to Latin American Studies in general, and the LAS major in particular. In sum, all we would need is four course buyouts, a small budget for additional secretarial support, and $3000 per year for various expenses.

b. Does the program represent a collaboration of two or more UO academic unites? What other existing programs complement this proposed program?
This will be an interdisciplinary program. It represents a collaboration of several departments (Romance Languages, History, Anthropology, Geography, Political Science, and Environmental Studies). Other existing inter-disciplinary programs will also participate (Ethnic Studies, Women’s Studies, International Studies).

4. Student Outcomes

**What are the proposed outcomes for students graduating from this program, including their employment opportunities?**

Employers at the local, regional, and national levels are growing more appreciative not only of the knowledge of Spanish, but also of a demonstrated expertise in the history, culture, political developments, and economic realities of the countries of Latin America. Oregon is feeling mounting pressures to compete more effectively with other Western states in this international arena and to educate its university students to rise to this challenge. On the other hand, standard job requirements in our service area increasingly include the ability to work effectively within a multi-cultural workplace, and the state of Oregon has a steadily diversifying population. Hispanics constitute more than 11 percent of the total population of the state, and there are no indications that the pace of growth of the Latino population will decline. UO graduates with a Latin American Studies major should be better equipped to meet the needs of both employers of Hispanics and Latino consumers and clients inside and outside the state.

5. **Indicate the timeframe for submitting a complete proposal to the Office of Academic Affairs**

We are submitting a complete proposal concurrently with this synopsis.
Affiliated Faculty

Michael Aguilera, Sociology
Carlos Aguirre, History
Monique Balbuena, Honors College
Cecilia Enjuto Rangel, Romance Languages
Juan A. Epple, Romance Languages
Linda O. Fuller, Sociology
Pedro García-Caro, Romance Languages
Leonardo García-Pabón, Romance Languages
Amalia Gladhart, Romance Languages
Anna Gruben, Political Science
Michael Hames-Garcia, English and Ethnic Studies
Robert S. Haskett, History
James Harper, Art History
Derrick Hindery, International Studies Program
Linda Kintz, English
Kathryn A. Lynch, Environmental Studies
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Gabriela Martínez, School of Journalism and Communication
Michelle McKinley, Law School
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Priscilla Ovalle, English
Amanda Powell, Romance Languages
Irmary Reyes-Santos, Ethnic Studies
Philip Scher, Anthropology
Lynn Stephen, Anthropology
Analisa Taylor, Romance Languages
Tania Triana, Romance Languages
David J. Vázquez, English
Stephanie Wood, Wired Humanities Project and CSWS
Philip D. Young, Anthropology