STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
The following is the list of the learning outcomes established for the M.A. in Hispanic Studies in the Department of World Languages and Cultures:

1) write grammatically and lexically accurate Spanish and demonstrate an ability to write spontaneously in Spanish with a fair degree of accuracy and clarity
2) discuss academic topics, read on an advanced level, and write analytically on literary and cultural topics
3) be familiar with basic concepts of Hispanic linguistics
4) be familiar with major literary movements and the history of Spanish or Latin American literature along with the primary author
5) understand the nature and development of the culture of Spain or Latin America
6) learn the process of basic scholarly research
7) acquire broad linguistic, cultural or literary knowledge and acquire substantial knowledge in three sub-areas of Hispanic Studies based on a reading list provided by the department. Students must not only show a broad yet detailed knowledge of their subject on a comprehensive written examination, but also be able to discuss their chosen fields in an oral examination
8) students qualifying and choosing the project option are expected to familiarize themselves with relevant theories and bibliographical material on their chosen topic. They must be able to develop a theme or thesis based on appropriate methodology, sound arguments, and insightful discussion. Finally they need to demonstrate their ability to write correct and polished Spanish and to defend their project in an oral examination.

9) be familiar with the history, theory, and application of translation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSED
During the academic year 2016-2017 six classes were offered in the M.A. of Hispanic Studies Program (SPAN 650, SPAN 720, SPAN 730, SPAN 770, WLC 716 and SPAN 709). In these classes, outcomes one, two, four, five, six and nine are both goals and object of assessment. In general, depending on the three areas of concentration that a student chooses, a combination of outcomes number one, two, three, four, five and nine are assessed.

HOW LEARNING OUTCOMES WERE ASSESSED
Assessment in this courses is made on a continual basis through class discussions, written assignments, examinations, and semester research projects. Through small writing, analytical, and investigative assignments throughout the semester, students prepare themselves to synthesize and analyze a sizable amount of information and a variety of texts or data for their final research project in all graduate seminars. These projects are analytical papers that require students to conduct scholarly research and develop their skills in critical thinking, reasoning, and coherent and cohesive exposition.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES
The following aspects were analyzed: student engagement in research and scholarship, activities requiring critical analysis and expertise, and the development of extensive knowledge in the field under study. From the six courses taught during the evaluation period, two courses taught in the spring 2017 are assessed in this report: Span 720 (requisite) and Span 650 (elective).

SPAN 720, Textual Analysis. The SPAN 720 class of spring 2017 was one of the most successful graduate seminars Dr. Bellver have taught in her many decades of teaching. Although the students differed in their ability to grasp abstract concepts, to explore texts in depth, and to synthesize materials in a succinct manner, they were all highly motivated, eager to advance in their understanding of the mechanisms involved in the construction of texts, and conscientious in their outside preparation and class participation. Each one of them improved markedly over the course of the semester and acquired appreciable skills in textual analysis and scholarly research.

The students achieved these goals through both passive and active learning. They read primary literary texts, works of literary theory, and a wide variety of literary criticism. The instructor provided summaries, commentaries, and commentaries in her lectures. However they also actively participated in extensive class discussions, and they wrote short analytical pieces almost every week. These activities gave them the opportunity to distinguish the underlying characteristics of verbal communication and literary genres and the basic literary structures, techniques, and language of works of literature as well as to practice applying various critical methodologies.
Their comprehension of the subject matter was tested through two major tests, and their ability to create scholarly research was revealed in their final semester project. In the latter they showed they had learned to write a concise abstract, incorporate meaningful bibliography, to establish a unified and focused thesis, and to develop arguments supported by textual evidence. They of course had some areas needing further improvement, namely in organization, the expansion or development of ideas, formatting, and prose style. However, overall the outcomes ranged from very good to excellent.

SPAN 650 Advanced Topics in Hispanic Literature (Don Quijote). This class was a combined upper-division undergraduate and six-hundred-level graduate course. Eight graduate students completed the course. All students closely read and analyzed a two-part canonical novel that, combined, totals some 1200 pages. They also read two scholarly articles per week, so as to gain knowledge of the multiple critical approaches to this important novel. All students took a mid-term exam, although the undergraduate and graduate exams differed in level of difficulty; undergraduates also took a final exam whereas graduate students completed a final research paper of 15-20 pages. All students participated in class discussions regarding the literary, cultural, historic and social themes explored by the author. All course work, both inside and outside of class, was in Spanish.

All students choose a specific topic from a list circulated the first day of class, and each was tasked with paying special attention to the development of that topic throughout the novel. Those topics, along with others, became the focus of some individual class sessions. At times, students responded singly in class to prompts regarding their opinion of the sections read for that day in relation to their topic. At other times, students divided into groups of those with same topic, to discuss jointly, then report to the full class. Both of these methods functioned well. In addition to the chosen topics, many more are featured in the novel, and all were part of the class discussion throughout the semester.

Of particular concern to the development of critical thinking regarding a work of literature was the need to separate basic reader reactions to characters and their behavior from broader questions of artistic creativity, structures, and message. This point was stressed in every class session, by moving students from discussion of the basic “what happened?” questions to the more pertinent “why does it matter?” and “what does the author say through this portrayal/event, etc.?” That focus on a deeper message is part of what will lead a student to more critically assess not only the creative work studied, but all of life: i.e., it stimulates and encourages the development of life-long critical thought processes.

UULOS/GRADUATE COMPONENT
In the classes offered in our M.A. in Hispanic Studies program the students engage in research and scholarship. Each of the six classes offered in the academic year 2015-2016 involved either a literature review and/or a written project. Students are assessed in their ability to produce research papers. They acquire the ability to explain complex matters, and to communicate and support opinions by developing cogent arguments and hypotheses. Students are required to organize and prioritize ideas to convey to the reader what is significant. The relationship among ideas is consistently clear, due to organizational and developmental principles (e.g., cause and
effect, comparison, chronology). All these skills foster intellectual breadth and are essential to critical thinking and communication.

Students develop knowledge of global and multicultural societies. In literature, culture and translation classes students not only gain ability to decipher underlying structures, meanings, and perspectives in literary an non-literary texts; but also understanding on the deep interconnections between their lives in the US and those of people in Latin America and Europe (Spain), reflecting on notions such as social classes, nationalism, colonialism and the constructions of gender and sexual identity.

All three major areas of concentration in the MA in Hispanic Studies subscribe to these outcomes in varying degrees, but they all are taught with equal rigor and adherence to the best pedagogical practices of the profession. Final results, of course, vary from year to year. While best results are desirable and even expected from all students, year to year performances derive from individuals’ capacities and effort. Most of our students persevere in their progress toward a degree.

RESULTS
Students are assessed not only on the depth of their knowledge, but also on their ability to write accurate Spanish in a focused and coherent manner. The instructors report that all the students progressed in the exposition of their ideas, improved their grammar and vocabulary, and learned the mechanics of conducting research in the humanities with the aid of the technology available today in this field. Some students struggled in their analytical papers to combine the findings of their research and their own ideas, but all in all students acquired a clear understanding of the mechanics of writing an analytical research paper.

• **SPAN 720**: The high quality of their final papers is borne out by the fact that three students presented their paper in a panel at the *Interdisciplinary Conference on the Humanities* held at Sacramento State University, at whose conclusion they were invited to collaborate in a soon to be published volume of essays dedicated to new research on the author of their presentations.

• **SPAN 650**: The final papers were independent projects. Only two of the eight received an A grade, whereas the other six received grades of B. This was disappointing for the instructor. Having read a large number of critical articles assigned throughout the semester, and having had ample opportunity in weekly extra class sessions dedicated specifically to their concerns, six students floundered at the moment of crafting a focused final paper dedicated to one aspect of the work.

Overall, the students have probed textual characteristics, and literary or cultural phenomena. Although not all students have written with the same depth and insight, they all have mastered the basic process of scholarly research, and the majority achieved an advanced level of theoretic application, interpretative capability, and critical thinking.

RESPONSE TO WHAT WAS LEARNED
In three courses no major changes were recommended because the students performed very well through the semester. Regarding one of the Span 650, the instructor learned that she will have to demand, next time, step-by-step submissions throughout the semester, to teach the graduate students how to more successfully handle this type of exercise.