Ongoing Improvement Progress Report

Instructions and Report Template

As part of the protocols outlined in Western's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), to facilitate the continuous improvement of academic programs between review cycles, in connection with the Final Assessment Report (FAR) and Implementation Plan, a monitoring process will include an Ongoing Improvement Progress Report. The outcomes of this report will be considered as part of the program's next cyclical review.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the operationalization of the implementation plan following a Cyclical Program Review (or the review of a New Program). This should include a summary of actions taken by the Program and the Dean's Office since the completion of the review (usually about three years), as well as an update on the stage of implementation for all applicable items. These include:

- whether the action item(s) are in progress, complete or no longer applicable (with a brief explanation);
- the timelines of each item and how they are progressing or expected to progress, particularly if they are diverting from original timelines in the FAR and Implementation Plan, and;
- a short description of any other program developments and improvements that have taken place following the review.
- For new programs only, an evaluation of the initial administration and resourcing of the program.

The following report template has been created for the program to report on progress made regarding recommendations presented in the Implementation Plan, and any other relevant program developments and enhancements.

- The program will complete the template and submit it to the faculty Dean's Office for sign-off.
- The program will then submit the completed Ongoing Improvement and Progress Report to the Office of Academic Quality and Enhancement (OAQE). Reports are due by June 21, 2024.
    - The OAQE will present all Ongoing Improvement and Progress Reports to SUPR-U/G. Any follow-up questions or concerns will be communicated to the program and Dean's Office by the OAQE.
    - It should be noted that as per the requirements of the province's Quality Council, progress reports will be posted on the reports page of the OAQE website.

Ongoing Improvement Progress Report

Languages and Cultures / Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Program	Department: Languages and Cultures	**Faculty / Affiliated University College**	Faculty of Arts & Humanities
Approval Dates of the Review	SUPR-U: June 9, 2021 SCAPA: September 8, 2021 Senate: September 17, 2021	**Year of the Next Review**	2028-2029
Link to the Programs Final Assessment Report (FAR)	https://www.uwo.ca/pvp/vpacademic/iqap/academic_programs/iqap_reports/artshumanitiesundergrad/2021%20Languages%20and%20Cultures%20Program%20Review.pdf **The dates for the next cyclical review stated on this Senate approved FAR is 2027-2028; this is incorrect, the next review for this program will take place in 2028-2029 as indicated in Western's program review schedule.*		
If applicable, submission of follow-up report(s)			

	Name	**Signature**	**Date**
Program Chair/Director	Victoria Wolff		June 21, 2024
Dean (or designate)	Jan Plug		27 June 2024

Progress Update on the Implementation Plan

Recommendation #1	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
Place Diversity and Public Humanities at the center of curriculum, intellectual discussions, future academic strategies and possible hirings.	Contribute to the Public Humanities program as resources allow.	Department, Public Humanities program	ongoing

Recommendation Implemented

☐ Yes ☐ No **X** Partially

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? **X** Yes ☐ No

What specific actions have been taken?

The work of the Department of Languages and Cultures has historically broadened perspectives by immersing individuals in different linguistic and societal frameworks, fostering empathy and understanding across diverse communities. By exploring languages and cultures, learners have gained insight into unique worldviews, challenging ethnocentrism, and promoting cross-cultural collaboration. This engagement has nurtured a global mindset, facilitating the appreciation and celebration of humanity's rich diversity.

Our department has moved to further prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion in various ways.

Diverse Curriculum: We have updated our curriculum to include a wide range of perspectives, authors, and works from different cultures and backgrounds. One way in which this has been done is by ensuring some select courses (Digital Humanities and Spanish) can be included in the list of eligible courses for the newer Black Studies modules housed in the Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. The basic criterion is that these courses include at least one third Black content.

Cultural Studies and Critical Theory: We have moved away from traditional literary studies to focus more fully on Cultural Studies and Critical Theory. Incorporating these perspectives into the curriculum provides students with tools to analyze and understand issues related to diversity, power, and representation. One example is the redesigned course Spanish 2213 Exploring Hispanic Culture that introduces students to a wide variety of visual, audio, and written texts and teaches critical textual analysis in Spanish through a cultural studies approach. This shift aims to deepen and enhance students' knowledge of the expression of culture within Latin America, Spain, and U.S.- Canadian Latinx areas. Another example comes from Italian, such as in the course Italian 2244A/B Images, Sounds, and Words, in which Italy is understood to be a place that conjures up a striking variety of images, ideas, as well as stereotypes. Focusing on this complex multiplicity, learners examine the historical role that different forms of artistic and cultural production – art, cinema, literature, music have played in shaping Italy's iconic status and unique appeal. Most of the courses in our department adopt an interdisciplinary and intermedial approach.

Since the return to normal department operation after the Covid-19 pandemic, we are regularly hosting guest speakers, workshops, and events that focus on diversity-related topics that engage students and faculty in meaningful discussions. Some examples are the biweekly guest speakers invited to the Hispanic Studies Interdisciplinary Colloquium Series; March 2020: Italian Canadian Stories: An Evening with Writer Nino Ricci; March 2023: Journeys to the New World. A Round Table with Members of the Italian Canadian Community of London; 2021 and 2022: Interviews with G. Pirazzoli (Architecture, University of Florence), F. Batini (Education, University of Perugia), and C. Zaccagnino and F. Colivicchi (Archeology, Queens University (in the context of the course "Made in Italy," now posted on the Faculty YouTube Channel), etc.

Research and Scholarship: We are not only encouraging but also fostering research and scholarship on topics related to diversity and inclusion to contribute to academic understanding and dialogue. Partial examples of this activities include Dr. Burucua's research on film festivals, which is inherently cross-cultural and addressing questions of diversity. Drs. Pirani and Caracchini's ongoing collaboration with the Italian-Canadian Archive Projects (ICAP) organization; Dr. Rafat's Second Language Acquisition and Multilingualism lab, where together with students, they engage with the issues of diversity and EDIA by conducting interdisciplinary research on language change across minority bilingual and multilingual communities in Canada; Dr. Adamson's expertise in medieval cookery and dietetics, with a focus on the cultural connections between the Arab World and Europe from the Middle Ages to the advent of printing, Dr. Caracchini's exhibit (installation by Prof. G. Pirazzoli, Architecture, University of Florence) devoted to the schools for peasants founded by philanthropist Alice Hallgarten Franchetti (a Jewish woman, of German and Canadian descent, US-born operating within the Italian Catholic context) realized in partnership with the Foundation Hallgarten-Franchetti (which provided labs attended by more than 1000 school children), and an international interdisciplinary colloquium. See response to Recommendation #7 Engage Undergraduate Students in Research for full details.

Inclusive Pedagogy: Faculty members are learning to adopt inclusive teaching practices that accommodate diverse learning styles and backgrounds. Essential to our professional development have been workshops facilitated by the Center for Teaching and Learning at Western, such as the Hidden Curriculum Workshop Series, Sharing Our Gifts: An Indigenous-led Curriculum Response at Western University, Thriving in the Classroom eLearning Modules, Indigenous Teaching and Learning Series, among others. Also, faculty may pursue (or include as part of their courses) online learning modules from Western's Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, for example Unconscious Bias: An Introduction and Human Rights and the Duty to Accommodate, among others.

Partnerships: Our partnerships locally and globally were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, since the return to normal department operations, we have reestablished our local community connections, particularly in courses such as the cross-listed Intercultural Communication Course 2500F/G Bridging Classroom and Community: Languages and Cultures in Action, and Italian 2100 A/B Italian Canadian Stories. Cultural exchange and engagement beyond the university is accomplished through our popular Study Abroad Courses. See response to Recommendation #2 Promote Study Abroad for further information.

Student Engagement: We have involved students, fostering a sense of ownership and agency, in shaping the curriculum. Department events and discussions are founded in the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Some examples of events that center on student engagement in relation to the Spanish Program are Day of the Dead (Fall) and Noche Heretica (Winter). The Italian study abroad courses in Rondine have a community service component; students collaborate with the CARITAS kitchens and dining rooms to serve meals to people in need in Arezzo (including migrants and refugees in that area of Italy), and the course Stories of Italian Canadians requires students to record stories of migration to contribute to the work of ICAP (see above).

The Principles of the Public Humanities (commitment to the promotion of innovative forms of publicly engaged knowledge creation, experiential learning, and campus-community collaboration) have always been and will continue to be central to our work in the Department of Languages and Cultures. The Public Humanities Program at Western is an initiative that takes place at the faculty level (Faculty of Arts and Humanities).

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

We continue to improve our intercultural communication modules (new Certificate and Minor in process), one of our objectives will be both to decolonize and indigenize the curriculum. These actions help learners gain a more comprehensive understanding of the world and its various cultures.

Additional Comments

If applicable

Faculty Expertise: Due to budget constraints beyond our control at the departmental or even the faculty level, we have been unable to hire faculty members with diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise that could enrich the department's offerings and perspectives. Our last tenure track hire was in the year 2012. In the 2016-2017 academic year our department had 18 tenured or tenure-track faculty, 2 limited-term faculty, and 12 limited duties faculty (total = 32 faculty); in the year 2023-2024 year, we have had 9 tenured faculty,1 tenure track faculty, 4 limited-term faculty, and 6 limited duties faculty (total = 20). In the year 2024-2025 we will have 7 tenured faculty, 1 tenure track faculty, 4 limited-term faculty, and 5 limited duties faculty (total = 17). Of note is that the limited duties faculty have seen a drastic reduction in teaching load and are hired to teach fewer courses than they are entitled to as per their Standing Appointments. We eagerly await the opportunity to hire diverse faculty with innovative perspectives.

Recommendation #2	**Proposed Action and Follow-up**	**Responsibility**	**Timeline**
Promote study abroad more aggressively to enrich the experience of undergraduate students	Promote the importance of study abroad in the classroom and on the departmental website.	Department	Spring 2022

Recommendation Implemented

Yes ☐ No **X** Partially

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? **X** Yes ☐ No

Progress

What specific actions have been taken?

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted study abroad experiences, causing unprecedented disruptions to international education programs. With travel restrictions, border closures, and health concerns, many students had to postpone or cancel their plans to study abroad. Despite these challenges, the Department of Languages and Cultures has done an excellent job of promoting study abroad and enriching the experience of undergraduate students. Once normal travel resumed, we have run the following programs with great and increasing success:

Language Program	**Study Abroad Site**	**Year**	**Undergraduate Enrollment**
Italian	Rondine Citadel of Peace, Italy	May 2022	54 students
Italian	Rondine Citadel of Peace, Italy	May 2023	73 students
	Rondine, Citadel of Peace	May 2024	87 students

Total Number of Undergraduate Study Abroad Enrollments in Italian: 214

Language Program	**Study Abroad Site**	**Year**	**Undergraduate Enrollment**
Spanish	Holguin, Cuba	May 2022	Did not run
		Winter Reading Week February 2023	29 students
		May 2023	18 students
		Winter Reading Week February 2024	28 students

		May 2024	9 students
	Seville, Spain	May 2022	15 students
		May 2023	10 students
	San Luis Potosi, Mexico	May 2024	16 students

Total Number of Undergraduate Study Abroad Enrollments in Spanish: 125

The programs have been promoted in the classroom, through word of mouth, emails, posters, and information sessions. When possible, we have promoted our study abroad experiences on the departmental website, however we suffered a staffing shortage for a period of approximately six months, plus 2 months around the beginning of the 2023 Fall term, which made it challenging to keep our website up to date. Nonetheless, through the Outreach Coordinator, we were able to promote our programs on the Department's Instagram account. Furthermore, the study abroad experiences are also searchable through Western International -> Go Abroad -> Choosing an International Program -> Search Programs Now -> ATLAS (Western's International Experience Portal).

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

For the future, in addition to maintaining and building upon our successes in Rondine Citadel of Peace, Holguin, Seville and San Luis Potosi, we are looking to revive our exchange experiences in Havana, Cuba and Barcelona, Spain for the Spanish Program.

We have also made a connection through an alumna (now professor) at the German University Europa-Universität in Flensburg and are working towards an exchange agreement for our German Program.

As for Italian, all the students that took part in the Rondine Study Abroad had the opportunity to spend a day in the same classes as their peers at the University of Siena, Arezzo Campus, and this is a project and a partnership that we intend to broaden in the years to come

Additional Comments

If applicable

Recommendation #3	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
Reimagine the teaching of Language and the Humanities in the 21st century rather than continuing a 20th-century model based on mutually exclusive national traditions.	Consider ways to gain efficiencies by offering some courses that serve multiple Majors.	Department	Spring 2022

Recommendation Implemented

☐ Yes ☐ No **X** Partially

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? **X** Yes ☐ No

Progress

What specific actions have been taken?

Since the review, our department has undertaken a systematic evaluation of its programs (certificates) and modules (minors, majors). We have looked at enrollment numbers over the most recent five-year period, as well as faculty cohort supporting these options, and eliminated most of what is not sustainable. For example, the Major in German was discontinued whereas we finally decided to keep the Minor in Comparative Literature and Culture and revitalize it, as it corresponds to the recommendation to privilege models not based on mutually exclusive national traditions. Since we have healthy Certificates in German, Italian, and Spanish, we eliminated the Certificates in Intercultural Communication for German, Intercultural Communication for Italian, and Intercultural Communication for Spanish.

To build on an area for potential growth, we are in the final stages of the process of approving an updated Certificate in Intercultural Communication and Minor in Intercultural Communication. The visual below illustrates these changes:

Previously	**Currently:**	***Proposals in final stages of approval:***
Certificate in Intercultural Communication (Arabic)	Certificate in Intercultural Communication (Arabic)	**Certificate in Intercultural Communication**
Certificate in Intercultural Communication (German)		**Minor in Intercultural Communication**
Certificate in Intercultural Communication (Italian)		
Certificate in Intercultural Communication (Japanese)	Certificate in Intercultural Communication (Japanese)	
Certificate in Intercultural Communication (Spanish)		
Minor in Intercultural Communication (Arabic)	Minor in Intercultural Communication (Arabic)	
Minor in Intercultural Communication (Japanese)	Minor in Intercultural Communication (Japanese)	

The program and minor module in Intercultural Communication is the area of concentration through which all our department faculty members from Digital Humanities, German, Italian, and Spanish may contribute as a collective and where students from varied academic orientations can collaborate. We have facilitated the program and module admissions requirements to offer more options for students to enter Intercultural Communication, as follows:

Completion of first-year requirements. A full-year beginner language course (see list below) or ICC 1030 Intercultural Communication and Global Awareness – which will be offered for the first time in 2024-2025 - is recommended.

List of first year languages courses in the academic calendar:

- Arabic 1030 (or Arabic 1035)
- German 1030
- Italian 1030 (or Italian 1045A/B and Italian 1046A/B)
- Japanese 1036
- Korean 1030 (or Korean 1035)

- Persian 1030 (or Persian 1035)
- Portuguese 1030
- Russian 1030
- Spanish 1030

To summarize, with the changes we have made, we endeavour to offer the highest quality experience for students enrolled in the well-established programs and modules in German, Italian, and Spanish. Through the recommended and implemented changes, we will now be able to offer a much more cohesive, efficient, and reimagined experience for learners through our refreshed certificate program and minor module in Intercultural Communication. We have been successful in cross-listing select courses to appeal to a greater number of students. We continue to offer well-subscribed course in Arabic, and we will return to offering Persian in the 2024-2025 academic year, whereas, for the time being, we are discontinuing Japanese (due to professor leaving the country).

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

As indicated above, we are still going through all the necessary steps for the final approval of the Minor and the Certificate in Intercultural Communications.

An untapped area for innovation and further growth is our Minor module in Digital Humanities. We have started to work on its potentialities (2023-2024).

Additional Comments

If applicable

Recommendation #4	**Proposed Action and Follow-up**	**Responsibility**	**Timeline**

Prioritize programs with the potential to attract greater numbers of students.	Seek ways to prioritize modules such as Intercultural Communications and Digital Humanities through Faculty-wide collaboration.	Department, Faculty	Spring 2023

Recommendation Implemented

☐ Yes ☐ No **X** Partially

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? **X** Yes ☐ No

Progress

What specific actions have been taken?

Intercultural Communication coursework at the University level is essential to enhancing and building upon language skills, as well as understanding and celebrating cultural diversity. There are many practical professional and personal reasons to study Intercultural Communication, such as

- engaging in creative multicultural and plurilingual problem solving.
- deepening cultural self-awareness and other awareness.
- enhancing intercultural relationships locally and globally.
- adapting to domestic workforce diversity and adjusting to global workplace heterogeneity.
- comprehending the role of technology in global communication.

There are cultural and language communication imperatives to pursuing programs and modules in Intercultural Communication that align, now more than ever, with Western's Strategic Plan (particularly in relation to the two overarching themes of People, Community, and Culture and Western's Place in the World). The Department of Languages and Cultures has offered minor modules and certificate programs in Intercultural Communication since 2015 and 2016, respectively.

Considering the IQAP review and recommendations, we are in the final steps if the process to revise the certificate programs and minor modules in Intercultural Communication.

The Department of Languages and Cultures will bring to completion the introduction of a New Certificate in Intercultural Communication and a New Minor in Intercultural Communication. These will effectively replace our Certificates in Intercultural Communication for Arabic and Intercultural Communication for Japanese, as well as our Minors in Intercultural Communication for Arabic and Intercultural Communication for Japanese; previous submissions since the review and recommendations have already been approved to remove the Certificates in Intercultural Communication for German, Italian, and Spanish. Recommendation #3 (above) provides the details.

The study of Digital Humanities is crucial as it bridges traditional humanities disciplines with cutting- edge technology, enabling new modes of research, analysis, and interpretation of cultural artifacts. By harnessing computational tools and methods, scholars can process vast amounts of data to uncover hidden patterns, trends, and insights that might otherwise remain undiscovered. This interdisciplinary approach fosters a deeper understanding of human culture in the digital age, enriching our perspectives and reshaping how we engage with the past and present.

Digital Humanities has attracted many non-modular students through the following courses: DH 2120F Digital Creativity and DH 2127B Creativity Studio. The program and the department will benefit from the recent (2023) successful Postdoctoral Application of a Digital Humanities Researcher. Through this hire, we have been able to revive the popular course DH 1011A Programming My Digital Life. Combined, these three courses have around 376 students enrolled for the 2023-2024 year.

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

Although our Digital Humanities courses are well-subscribed, it is still a challenge to generate interest in our Digital Humanities Module. Since we currently only offer a Minor in Digital Humanities (4.0 courses), it might be beneficial to consider introducing a Certificate Program in Digital Humanities (3.0 courses) to keep students progressing through our course offerings. Another proposal that has been suggested is to offer a Major in Digital Humanities, as students may select more based on the idea of specializing rather than taking a few courses in the area.

Additional Comments

If applicable

Recommendation #5	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
Establish a committee on Teaching Practice to develop best practices and improve consistency across programs	Form committee with representation from each language stream.	Department	Fall 2021

Recommendation Implemented

☐ Yes ☐ No **X** Partially

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? **X** Yes ☐ No

Progress

What specific actions have been taken?

The Undergraduate Committee has representation from all department programs and modules. This committee has shifted from sporadic to regular meetings and taken the lead in improving consistency and efficiency of programs (this is exemplified in the responses to Recommendations 3 and 4 above).

Of note is the work that the Undergraduate Committee did to formulate Learning Outcomes (LOs) for the Department as a collective. They are as follows:

Upon successful completion of a program or module in the Department of Languages and Cultures at Western, learners will be able to:

- Access information from a variety of sources and evaluate diverse perspectives to build, reinforce, and expand knowledge.

- Approach learning from an interdisciplinary standpoint and develop critical thinking to solve problems creatively.
- Apply acquired tools to learn language and cultural skills, capitalizing on any previous understanding.
- Utilize language beyond the classroom to interact and collaborate in their community and the globalized world.
- Establish, measure, and evaluate goals within a lifelong language acquisition process.
- Communicate information to disseminate ideas and persuade using appropriate media and adapting to diverse audiences.
- Embody the values of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, and incorporate those principles in professional and personal endeavors.
- Investigate and reflect on the nature of language and the concept of culture as an inherent value of global citizenship.

The department has developed these LOs in line with Western's Strategic Plan, The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Guidelines, and the Common European Framework of References for Languages.

The Department LOs structure the more specific LOs for each program and module, as well as for each course we teach. Instructors can now refer to and implement them as they prepare syllabi and teach class sessions.

The Undergraduate Committee has also discussed forms of evaluation and grading to improve consistency across programs and suggested that each language create a visual syllabus together with a regular one, to cater to different kinds of attention.

During the academic year 2023-24, due to financial limitations, the department also shifted from having one Outreach Coordinator, to having an Ad- hoc Outreach Committee mainly formed of members of the Undergraduate Committee. The Ad-hoc Outreach Committee has been responsible for developing and implementing initiatives that enhance the department's language and cultural offerings. This includes organizing events such as workshops, lectures, and cultural activities aimed at creating opportunities for students, faculty, and the public to interact and learn. Starting from the academic year 2024-25, those functions will be completely absorbed by the Undergraduate Committee.

Best teaching practices at Western are supported by the Center for Teaching and Learning and our department members participate regularly in their workshops and support services. In the Fall of 2022, the department participated in a SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results) Retreat.

The outcomes of this retreat were:

- The identification of strengths and the exploration of opportunities for future growth and improvement.
- The articulation of aspirations for our department.

- The generation (with prioritization) of a list of suggestions that will contribute to future strategic planning.
- Discussion of what success in implementing elements of our aspirations might look like.

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

Improving consistency among programs is an ongoing task. We will continue to address these issues in the upcoming year.

Additional Comments

If applicable

Recommendation #6	**Proposed Action and Follow-up**	**Responsibility**	**Timeline**
Increase visibility by promoting diversity.	Plan events for International Week.	Department	Fall 2021

Recommendation Implemented

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Progress

What specific actions have been taken?

International Week activities and events were greatly impacted during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, since the return to normal operations, we have used International Week as a re-launching point for our Annual Photo Contest.

The department has hosted an annual photo contest for over a decade, inviting Western to contribute their unique perspectives on exchange, study abroad, and travel through captivating thematic photographs.

The first contest took place in 2013 as part of International Week, and the images were showcased online through the event's website. In 2014 and 2015, the photos were displayed in Weldon Library. Once the renovation of University College was complete, the photo contest found a home in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities central space for the enjoyment of students, faculty, and staff year- round. Both winning and shortlisted images are exhibited.

Post-pandemic, the Department of Languages and Cultures collaborated with the Department of Visual Arts to work with one of their graduate student specialists in Curatorial Studies to properly conceptualize and mount the display. Designed with a sustainable approach, the most recent installation incorporates materials sourced from previous photo contest exhibits; reclaimed foamboard, photographic tests, and repurposed paper find new life in this display. Inspired by the principles outlined in the manual *Using the Resources at Hand* by the Centre for Sustainable Curating based in the Department of Visual Arts, the design draws upon strategies for environmentally responsible installation. This guide, which advocates for low-carbon design, provides insights into local resources within Southwestern Ontario (with a focus on London) and offers guidance on accessing shared materials and assets at Western University and beyond.

We reopened the photo contest in the year 2023-24 and received submissions portraying subjects from a variety of countries and cultures.

In addition to the photo contest, during the 2022-2023 year, the Department launched an AI Creativity Contest, through which prizes were awarded for best Graphic Novel, Academic Essay, and Short Story with the assistance of ChatGPT and / or Dall-e2.

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

We would like to promote our department's offerings through connecting more directly with Western's Global and Intercultural

Engagement Honor. This program encourages students to take more of courses in languages and cultures (to fulfill academic coursework, global or intercultural engagement and training, and language proficiency requirements) and/or to participate in our study abroad opportunities (to meet the global experience at home or study abroad requirement).
Additional Comments *If applicable* Growing scarcity of human resources risks having an impact on our future ability to increase visibility by such means as those described above.

Recommendation #7	**Proposed Action and Follow-up**	**Responsibility**	**Timeline**
Engage undergraduate students in research.	Promote integration of the CulturePlex Lab in programs.	Department, Faculty	Fall 2022
Recommendation Implemented **X** Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? ☐ Yes ☐ No			
Progress *What specific actions have been taken?* **The CulturePlex Lab** is an interdisciplinary research lab housed in the Department of Languages and Cultures and directed by			

Professor Juan Luis Suarez. It focuses on exploring and understanding the complexity of culture through the lens of digital humanities and computational methods. The lab brings together researchers from various fields worldwide. Historically, the CulturePlex has trained primarily graduate students. However, with the growth of its internships, the lab has been able to engage undergraduate students in its research. For the 2022-2023 academic year, the CulturePlex hosted six Digital Humanities Internships.

The Department has also worked to engage undergraduate students in research in other ways. Here are a few examples:

The Library, Research, and the WLURAs: The Department has been working closely with Jason Dyck, a Teaching and Learning Librarian who supports faculty to provide instruction on the research process, design instructional materials, and create tailored assignments related to the library and research skills. He has provided workshops, presentations, and assistance for numerous undergraduate classes in our department.

One way in which we have tailored some of our classes to relate to the research process is to develop assignments and evaluations geared towards research outcomes that could be used to apply for the Western Library Undergraduate Research Awards (WLURAs).

The WLURAs recognize the outstanding research that undergraduates perform during their course work at Western University. These awards are given to students who demonstrate an impressive use of library/archives sources, a thoughtful reflection on their research process, and proper citation practices. There are only five awards given to undergraduate students in all faculties of the University.

Undergraduate Students from our department submitted six applications (five from Spanish courses and one from World Literature). All the submissions from the 2022-2023 academic year can be seen in the table below

Anthropology	2
Art History	1
Biochemistry	4
Biology	5
Chemistry	1
Child and Youth Studies	1
Computer Science	2
Data Science	1
Earth Sciences	2

Economics	1
Environmental Science	4
Film Studies	1
Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies	4
Geography	6
Health Sciences	9
History	10
Kinesiology	3
Linguistics	5
Management and Organizational Studies	1
Math	1
Media, Information, and Technoculture	6
Medical Biophysics	2
Medical Sciences	2
Museum and Curatorial Studies	2

Two Spanish applications made it to the second round for further consideration.

One of those two Spanish finalists was ultimately awarded one of the five final awards of $1000. This is an important accomplishment for undergraduate research in our department. News about the winners was shared with the Western community in a variety of ways in September. Also, the library held a ceremony in the Fall 2023 semester.

German Studies Association Undergraduate Research Panel: Our department has nominated and is supporting an undergraduate student from the German Program to present on a Special Panel for Undergraduate Research at the upcoming German Studies Association Conference (Montreal in October 5-8, 2023).

Global Undergraduate Awards: This world-leading program recognizes top undergraduate work, shares this work with a global audience, and connects students across cultures and disciplines. Two Italian students were mentored to submit their essays for this competition. The essays had an important research component.

Undergraduate Research Assistants: Faculty in Digital Humanities, Italian, and Spanish are making a conscious effort to hire undergraduate students (alongside graduate students) as research project assistants and students greatly benefit from these multiple experiences and one to one relationship with their professors.

Next Steps (if applicable) *What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?*
Additional Comments *If applicable*

Recommendation #8	**Proposed Action and Follow-up**	**Responsibility**	**Timeline**
Improve student mentoring.	Involve more faculty in formal mentoring.	Department	Spring 2022
Recommendation Implemented **X** Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? ☐ Yes ☐ No			
Progress *What specific actions have been taken?* Languages and Cultures plays a pivotal role in mentoring learners first and foremost by fostering a comprehensive and enriching educational experience. Through a combination of personalized guidance and diverse cultural immersion, our educational mission is to cultivate a deep understanding of language, culture, and societal dynamics. Mentoring involves close interaction between faculty			

members and students, where advisors provide academic support, career guidance, and help students chart their educational journey. Our students have been mentored to apply for awards, such as the Western Library Undergraduate Research Awards and the Global Undergraduate Awards, among others. Every year, select students pursuing the Honor's Specialization in Spanish write an Honors Thesis under the guidance of a supervisor. We advise undergraduate students to enroll in the Combined HBA degree and promote this opportunity in our first-year courses (https://www.uwo.ca/arts/future_students/hba.html).

We organize language tutoring opportunities and conversation groups to enhance language proficiency, and facilitate immersive experiences through our study abroad programs, cultural events, and community engagement. We mentor through increasingly popular academic internships in the areas of Digital Humanities, German, Intercultural Communication, Italian, and Spanish. As indicated in the previous answer, we also mentor by hiring students as research assistants. Our professors support leaners in their next steps by writing letters of recommendation for Graduate and Professional Schools, as well as for employment. For example, two Spanish Double Majors with Health Sciences (women from marginalized racial and ethnic groups) recently applied to, were accepted, and will attend two of the best graduate programs in Public Health in the United States (Johns Hopkins University and NYU) with the support of letters of recommendation from professors in our department. By creating an environment that values individual growth and cross-cultural awareness, our department effectively mentors students to become not only proficient linguistically in a new language but also global citizens equipped with a profound appreciation for the world's diverse linguistic and cultural tapestry.

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

Additional Comments

If applicable

Note: The total number of expandable text boxes will be dependent on the number of prioritized recommendations appearing in the program's most recent Final Assessment Report (FAR).

Continuous Program Enhancement
What additional initiatives or changes has the program been working on in relation to continuous program improvement?