# **Academic Program Assessment Report**

**Assessment** is a term commonly used to encompass the process of gathering and using evidence to guide improvements.

SACSCOC requires that an institution "<u>identifies</u> expected outcomes, <u>assesses</u> the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and <u>provides evidence of seeking improvement</u> based on analysis of the results".

# Be sure to SAVE your progress as you work!

Academic Program Spanish, B.A. Submission Due Date 2024-2025

Assessment Coordinator Name Pedro J. Lopes Enter Assessment Coordinator Email plopes@lander.edu

# **Program Goal**

# Goal

# Goal 1

**Program Goals** are broad and overarching statements about the skills, knowledge, and dispositions students are expected to gain by the end of their course of study (big picture). They support the Institution's Mission/Goals.

# **Program Goal**

To comply with Program Productivity standards as defined by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education.

# **Pillar of Success Supported**

High-Demand, Market-Driven Programs

# Outcomes

# Outcome 1

Outcomes are specific, measurable statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

## Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

What type of Outcome would you like to add? Operational Outcome

### **Enter Outcome**

Major Enrollment.

Timeframe for this Outcome 2023-2024

### Performance Target for "Met"

Using a five-year rolling average, the number of students enrolled in the major (a) for Baccalaureate programs is greater than or equal to 12.5, (b) for Master's/First Professional is greater than or equal to 6.

### Performance Target for "Partially Met"

Not Applicable.

### Performance Target for "Not Met"

Using a five-year rolling average, the number of students enrolled in the major (a) for Baccalaureate programs is less than 12.5 (b) for Master's/First Professional is less than 6.

<b>Assessment Measure Used</b> Enrollment and Graduation data extracted from Banner.	Frequency of Assessment Annually.
Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)	Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)
15.6	3

### **Comments/Narrative**

Enrollment numbers in the Spanish program continue to rise above the slump of the pandemic years, likely a result of our sustained recruitment efforts – we have created posters and postcards advertising the Spanish major, the double major, and even the minor in Spanish among the student population.

The fact that World Languages, and Spanish in particular, is identified as one of the "Critical Need Subject Areas" by the South Carolina Department of Education constitutes a double-edged sword in what producing Spanish graduates is concerned, since some are naturally inclined to pursue the teaching profession in the state: on one hand, it does provide a strong argument for promoting the program on the basis of market demand and employability (teacher salaries are being raised too, to address the shortages); on the other hand, we have witnessed a decline in the level of exposure to, and preparation for foreign language acquisition among high school graduates, which translates into a lack of a predisposition to pursue a degree in Spanish. The outcomes of the proposed Bill 305 in South Carolina (basically allowing the teaching in these critical subject areas without a certificate) are unpredictable in what Spanish is concerned.

Meanwhile, our most current recruiting endeavors have focused on incentivizing double majoring, in line with the streamlining of the major requirements.

The number of Spanish minors is high (over 70% of all the minors in the Department of English & Foreign Languages), indicating that our students acknowledge the importance of learning the language and acquiring the skills that will serve them well in their future professions.

#### **Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results** N/A

## **Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used**

# Outcome 2

Outcomes are specific, measurable statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

### Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

# What type of Outcome would you like to add?

**Operational Outcome** 

## Enter Outcome

Completions (Degrees Awarded).

# Timeframe for this Outcome 2023-2024

## Performance Target for "Met"

Using a five-year rolling average, the number of degrees awarded (a) for Baccalaureate programs is greater than or equal to 8, (b) for Master's/First Professional is greater than or equal to 3.

## Performance Target for "Partially Met"

Not Applicable.

## Performance Target for "Not Met"

Using a five-year rolling average, the number of degrees awarded (a) for Baccalaureate programs is less than 8 (b) for Master's/First Professional is less than 3.

### **Assessment Measure Used**

Enrollment and Graduation data extracted from Banner.

**Frequency of Assessment** Annually.

Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results) 3.4

Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)

## **Comments/Narrative**

We have been intrigued by the discrepancy between the rolling average number of declared majors and that of those who have actually finished the program in the last five years. This has led us to operate profound changes to the program, most of which have not yet had time to produce the results we seek.

The latest revision of the General Education curriculum is predicated upon the added flexibility and lessened requirements for some programs at Lander, which has increased the viability of promoting Spanish as a double major; it also aimed at mitigating some of the hurdles hindering the completion of the program by students who have been forced to abandon Spanish as a second major due to academic load constraints mostly related to their first majors. Positive results from these adjustments are expected to materialize with the closing of the first graduating cycles for the students likely to benefit

### N/A

from the overhauling.

In our exclusive area of intervention, we have found that the study abroad requirement often constitutes an unsurmountable hurdle for many students who end up not completing the program in Spanish – lack of family support being one of the most recurrent reasons. It is with great hesitation that we consider abolishing this requirement, but it will continue to be under our radar until we have more substantial information on the reasons behind our low completion rates. In fact, we decided to look further into this disquieting trend and have started a process of reaching out to former students to inquire about the reasons for their abandonment of the program. For this purpose, we have devised a simple survey to be sent to students who have taken SPAN 305, which is a very popular course among majors and minors. We are also taking this opportunity to probe current students regarding their future prospects and what possible adjustments would be most conducive to their success in the Spanish program.

# **Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results**

N/A

Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used  $\ensuremath{\mathsf{N/A}}$ 

# **Goal Summary**

## **Goal Summary/Comments**

A Spanish major program has a pivotal role in a Liberal Arts context, as it facilitates the exposure to, and understanding of, both concrete and abstract notions that are rather unique and exclusive to the foreign language classroom.

Likewise, proficiency in Spanish is otherwise a significant asset in a region of the country that has witnessed record-breaking growth of its Hispanic population. According to the US Census Bureau, the percentage of Hispanic population in South Carolina grew from less than one percent (0.87%) in 1990 to 6.9% in 2020, In Jasper and Saluda, Hispanics or Latinos constitute 17.6% and 16% of the total population, respectively. The city of Saluda boasts a whopping 49.5%! This trend highlights the relevance of Spanish as an academic career, not only because of the invaluable communicative tools with which we empower our graduates, but also because it fosters an understanding of the cultural background and heritage of a significant portion of an increasingly diverse swath of the population that calls South Carolina home. Presently the largest minority in the country (18.7%), it is estimated that by 2050 Hispanics will constitute 29% of the US population, according to the PEW Research Center.

A solid education based on the knowledge of Hispanic cultures and language such as that made possible by a Spanish program will provide an obvious competitive advantage to an even greater extent in the near future, especially taking into account the geographical proximity of our state with Florida, where the presence of bilingual individuals in the workforce is already widespread.

The role of Lander University is also vital in producing Spanish majors who ultimately pursue careers in secondary education teaching Spanish, a subject which continues to be in shortage both locally and nationwide. Furthermore, a Spanish program is a natural academic partner of Lander's professional schools of business, education, and nursing, for its invaluable role in complementing those programs with the cultural and linguistic tools that are crucial to students in these careers.

For our part, we have maintained the commitment to recruit the most students we can into our ranks, and will continue to do so.

Lastly, Spanish courses are arguably among the best suited to satisfy the World Cultures General Education requirement to graduate with a degree conferred by Lander University.

### **Changes Made/Proposed Related to Goal**

Substantial changes were made to the program during the previous few assessment cycles, all aimed at simplifying, streamlining, and adding flexibility and practicality to the Spanish degree. In addition to strengthening our recruitment endeavors, great focus was directed at increasing the prospects of students enrolled in the program of completing their degree in Spanish. More than a face-lift, the breadth of the overhaul to the major was significant, but it will take time to mature and show results.

This academic year, we have focused on the full implementation of those changes. Looking into the future, further changes are still being considered, including:

1. Creation of a translation course, and/or courses targeting specific professional areas, such as the medical field, education, or law enforcement. These would be marketed to Education, Nursing, and Business students in particular, in the hopes of encouraging students to choose Spanish as a minor or even as a second major. This will also strengthen the content of the program and add pragmatism to its scope.

2. Creation of a Certificate attesting to the language proficiency of students completing a minor or maybe another course combination/requirement for the purpose. This is expected to incentivize a more robust presence of Spanish in many students' academic experience.

3. Creating a yearly faculty-led, short-term study abroad program aimed at freshmen. It would take place immediately before the Fall semester or during the winter break. The intent of the proposal is to facilitate a first-hand contact with language and culture, as to inspire more students to pursue a major in Spanish. In the summer of 2023, a similar program was tested, and four students spent three weeks studying language and culture in Cuba, with the facilitation of a Lander faculty member and professors from the University of Pinar del Río.

4. We are considering eliminating a semester of study abroad as a requirement. As we study the most beneficial way to maximize completion rates without compromising the integrity of the program, it is guaranteed that we will remain committed to encourage students to spend a semester abroad.

In complement to efforts aimed at revitalizing the program, we have taken important steps in strengthening the consistency and uniformity of our methods of delivery across different sections and instructors, in a context of an increasingly digitalized academic environments. Towards that end, we have standardized the nature and organization of content in several of our courses within our LMS (Blackboard), while assuring compliance with campus-wide recommendations for best practices regarding the structure and design of our online presence. More recently, we have transitioned to the newest version of Blackboard – the Ultra View.

We are also in the process of optimizing the implementation of an internal system of keeping track of our minors and reach out to them with information that may encourage them to convert their minor into a major or double major.

## **Upload Rubrics/Other Files**

# Goal 2

**Program Goals** are broad and overarching statements about the skills, knowledge, and dispositions students are expected to gain by the end of their course of study (big picture). They support the Institution's Mission/Goals.

# **Program Goal**

To communicate orally and in writing in Spanish.

**Pillar of Success Supported** High-Demand, Market-Driven Programs

# Outcomes

# Outcome 1

Outcomes are specific, measurable statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

# What type of Outcome would you like to add?

Student Learning Outcome

# Enter Outcome

Ratio of students who demonstrate oral communication skills based on the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) Advanced level proficiency standards.

## Timeframe for this Outcome

2023-2024

# Performance Target for "Met"

At least 75% of Spanish majors score 75% or higher on oral-intensive 200-level and above rubrics.

# Performance Target for "Partially Met"

Between 65% and 74% of Spanish majors score 75% or higher on oral-intensive 200-level and above rubrics.

### Performance Target for "Not Met"

Less than 65% of the Spanish majors score at least 75% on oral-intensive 200-level and above rubrics.

## **Assessment Measure Used**

Language Proficiency Rubric (oral) [based on the ACTFL proficiency standards]

### **Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)** 38 instances of achievement in 43 attempts (88.4%).

**Frequency of Assessment** SPAN 203; SPAN 204; SPAN 215; SPAN 240; SPAN 305; SPAN 340; SPAN 345; SPAN 490; SPAN 499

### Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1) 3

# Comments/Narrative

Satisfactory oral proficiency targets have been reached within the Spanish major, in line with the results also shown in the previous academic year. The rigorous requirements of the program, which still includes at least one semester of overseas study in a Spanish-speaking country, certainly have a role in this. However, in a future where we may be forced to take the difficult decision to abolish such

requirement, we foresee a possible downward trend in these numbers.

**Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results** N/A

Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used N/A

# Outcome 2

Outcomes are specific, measurable statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

## Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

### What type of Outcome would you like to add?

Student Learning Outcome

### **Enter Outcome**

Ratio of students who demonstrate written communication skills based on the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) Advanced level proficiency standards.

## Timeframe for this Outcome

2023-2024

## Performance Target for "Met"

At least 60% of Spanish majors earn an A or B on Senior Project and on writing-intensive 200-level or higher rubrics.

### Performance Target for "Partially Met"

Between 50% and 59% of Spanish earn an A or B on Senior Project and on writing-intensive 200-level or higher rubrics.

### Performance Target for "Not Met"

Less than 50% of the Spanish majors earn at least a B on Senior Project and on writing-intensive 200-level or higher rubrics.

## **Assessment Measure Used**

Language Proficiency Rubric (written) [based on the ACTFL proficiency standards].

## Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)

36 instances of achievement in 39 attempts (92.3%).

### **Frequency of Assessment**

SPAN 203; SPAN 240; SPAN 305; SPAN 306; SPAN 340; SPAN 499

Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1) 3

### **Comments/Narrative**

Students' success rate in regard to written proficiency among Spanish majors is high, at 92.3%,

fluctuating slightly in comparison to previous years. This is the intended result of a strong focus on writing-intensive courses taught in the department, in which faculty have put significant efforts towards student success. On the other hand, the writing demanded of courses taken abroad prepare students well for the workload they face upon their return to their home university.

# **Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results** N/A

Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used  $\ensuremath{\mathsf{N/A}}$ 

# **Goal Summary**

# **Goal Summary/Comments**

Goal 2 of our program assessment focuses on inherently production-based student performance, thus implying a level of student-instructor interaction that is feasible in smaller, higher-level classes – especially in what orality is concerned. The frequency and scope of assessment tools have been redefined in the context of recent changes to the major, which included the addition of several new courses in a recent past. The results of the assessment indicate we are on the right track to fully reach our goals of producing highly qualified graduates. The results of the assessment have fluctuated slightly in comparison to previous years, but without displaying any significant trend-setting discrepancies.

# Changes Made/Proposed Related to Goal

The addition of several theme-based topics courses in line with the interests and expertise of the faculty, offered under the general designation "Topics", is still quite recent, and thus more substantial results from these improvements are expected to come to fruition in the future.

# **Upload Rubrics/Other Files**

# Goal 3

**Program Goals** are broad and overarching statements about the skills, knowledge, and dispositions students are expected to gain by the end of their course of study (big picture). They support the Institution's Mission/Goals.

# **Program Goal**

To demonstrate knowledge and understanding of Hispanic cultures.

# Pillar of Success Supported

High-Demand, Market-Driven Programs

# Outcomes

# Outcome 1

Outcomes are specific, measurable statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention,

employment data).

### Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

### What type of Outcome would you like to add?

Student Learning Outcome

### **Enter Outcome**

Ratio of students who compare and contrast at the advanced level cultural differences between their own culture and that of the Hispanic world.

# Timeframe for this Outcome

2023-2024

## Performance Target for "Met"

At least 75% of Spanish majors perform at an advanced level based on the Language Proficiency Rubric (oral/written).

### Performance Target for "Partially Met"

Between 65% and 74% of Spanish majors perform at an advanced level based on the Language Proficiency Rubric (oral/written).

### Performance Target for "Not Met"

Less than 65% of the Spanish majors perform at an advanced level based on the Language Proficiency Rubric (oral/written).

### Assessment Measure Used

Language Proficiency Rubric (oral/written). Study-abroad Journal. Senior Project Rubric.

### Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)

27 instances of achievement in 29 attempts (93.1%).

**Frequency of Assessment** 

SPAN 204; SPAN 240; SPAN 280; SPAN 320; SPAN 330; SPAN 340; SPAN 355; SPAN 380; SPAN 480; SPAN 490; SPAN 499

Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1) 3

### **Comments/Narrative**

High levels of achievement in this goal/outcome reflect the increased weight of the cultural compareand-contrast approach dimension of our Spanish program in recent years. We are now considering raising the bar by tweaking the percentage of students we consider as the threshold for meeting the goal, and challenging ourselves to maintain or even increase the achievement ratios.

#### **Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results** N/A

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Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used N/A

# Outcome 2

Outcomes are specific, measurable statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop Student Learning Outcomes, which describe knowledge,

skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

### Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

#### What type of Outcome would you like to add?

Student Learning Outcome

### **Enter Outcome**

Ratio of students who demonstrate an advanced understanding of the relationship between the practices, products, and perspectives of different cultures within the Hispanic world.

### Timeframe for this Outcome

2023-2024

### Performance Target for "Met"

At least 75% of Spanish majors perform at an advanced level based on Language Proficiency Rubrics.

#### Performance Target for "Partially Met"

Between 65% and 74% of Spanish majors perform at an advanced level based on Language Proficiency Rubrics.

#### Performance Target for "Not Met"

Less than 65% of the Spanish majors perform at an advanced level based on Language Proficiency Rubrics.

#### **Assessment Measure Used**

Language Proficiency Rubric (oral/written).

### Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)

21 instances of achievement in 23 attempts (91.3%).

### SPAN 355; SPAN 360; SPAN 380: SPAN 480

Frequency of Assessment

Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)

SPAN 204; SPAN 280; SPAN 320; SPAN 350;

#### **Comments/Narrative**

Results are evidence of our students' high degree of cultural proficiency, due to the increased focus on the diversity of Hispanic cultures embodied in the redefinition of the program carried out recently. This renewed approach spurs an appreciation for the wide range of cultural manifestations within the Hispanic world via comparative cultural perspectives both in and outside the classroom.

# Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results

N/A

Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used N/A

# **Goal Summary**

**Goal Summary/Comments** 

Recent changes to the program focused heavily on substantially increase the presence of culture-related matters in existing courses, as well as on the designing of new ones with similar purview. As a consequence, results show that students' knowledge in cultural matters has increased considerably when compared to academic years prior to the adoption of this approach. Simultaneously, opportunities for long and short-term study abroad in Spanish-speaking countries are made available with increased frequency, such as the 3-week program in Cuba rolled out in the summer of 2023 - which is expected to attract higher numbers of students as its success becomes more publicized.

# **Changes Made/Proposed Related to Goal**

No further changes were made nor proposed during the 2022-23 academic year related to this outcome.

# **Upload Rubrics/Other Files**

# Goal 4

**Program Goals** are broad and overarching statements about the skills, knowledge, and dispositions students are expected to gain by the end of their course of study (big picture). They support the Institution's Mission/Goals.

# **Program Goal**

To understand the nature of language and how it works.

# Pillar of Success Supported

High-Demand, Market-Driven Programs

# Outcomes

# Outcome 1

Outcomes are specific, measurable statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

## Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

What type of Outcome would you like to add? Student Learning Outcome

**Enter Outcome** Ratio of students who demonstrate an understanding of the nature of language.

**Timeframe for this Outcome** 2023-2024

## Performance Target for "Met"

At least 75% of Spanish majors demonstrate proficiency at an advanced level based on Language Proficiency Rubrics.

## Performance Target for "Partially Met"

Between 65% and 74% of Spanish majors demonstrate proficiency at an advanced level based on Language Proficiency Rubrics.

### Performance Target for "Not Met"

Less than 65% of Spanish majors demonstrate proficiency at an advanced level based on Language Proficiency Rubrics.

Assessment Measure Used Language Proficiency Rubrics (oral/written). Frequency of Assessment SPAN 305; SPAN 306; SPAN 345; SPAN 360;

SPAN 305; SPAN 306; SPAN 345; SPAN 360; SPAN 365

**Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)** 28 instances of achievement in 31 attempts (90.3%). Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1) 3

## **Comments/Narrative**

Outcome 1 relates to a skill set that is more abstract in nature and writing-intensive in form, which makes the competencies addressed particularly challenging. Achievement ratios are within desired levels, in line with previous assessment cycles.

#### **Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results** N/A

Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used N/A

# Outcome 2

Outcomes are specific, measurable statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

## Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

What type of Outcome would you like to add? Student Learning Outcome

## Enter Outcome

Ratio of students who demonstrate an understanding of how language works through the comparison of Spanish and English.

Timeframe for this Outcome 2023-2024

### Performance Target for "Met"

At least 75% of Spanish majors demonstrate cross-language proficiency at an advanced level based on Language Proficiency Rubrics.

### Performance Target for "Partially Met"

Between 65% and 74% of Spanish majors demonstrate cross-language proficiency at an advanced level based on Language Proficiency Rubrics.

### Performance Target for "Not Met"

Less than 65% of Spanish majors demonstrate cross-language proficiency at an advanced level based on Language Proficiency Rubrics.

Assessment Measure Used Language Proficiency Rubric (oral/written). Frequency of Assessment SPAN 305; SPAN 306; SPAN 345

## Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)

:

13 instances of achievement in 16 attempts (81.3%).

Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)

### **Comments/Narrative**

Both Outcome 1 and Outcome 2 relate to competencies that are inherently more abstract and demand writing-intensive student performance. This demanding skill set is all the more challenging due to the inherent theoretical connections students are asked to establish with the English language. Even so, achievement ratios are within the desired levels, irrespective of the somewhat narrow statistical universe.

**Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results** 

N/A

Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used  $\ensuremath{\mathsf{N/A}}$ 

# **Goal Summary**

## **Goal Summary/Comments**

Program Goal 4 is by design geared towards preparing prospective graduates students to the exigencies of advanced studies in Spanish, which explains both the lower number of students subjected to this kind of evaluation and the range and frequency of the tools used to assess their performance. In spite of these caveats, results suggest that our graduates are generally well-trained for academic endeavors beyond their undergraduate Spanish degree at Lander University. Results are consistent with those in previous assessment cycles.

## Changes Made/Proposed Related to Goal

No changes were made nor proposed during the 2022-23 academic year in regard to this outcome.

**Upload Rubrics/Other Files** 

Dean's Email Address smcmillan@lander.edu

Approved by Dean?

Signature of Dean

**Comments from Dean's Review**