Highlights

The Center of Latin American Studies (LAS) coordinates interdisciplinary programs that focus on the study of Latin American cultures, societies and nation states at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Global issues and multiculturalism are central to our curriculum. International focus is one of the five key characteristics of the KU education.

- LAS initiated the teaching of the Less Commonly Taught Languages of Kaqchikel Maya and Quichua, and also provided support for Portuguese through the U.S. Dept. of Education Title VI National Resource Center Grants.
- LAS foments interdisciplinary and international studies by partnering with programs such as Global Indigenous Nations Studies and Environmental Studies.
- LAS offers public service in the form of outreach events within KU, to K-12 schools, regional colleges, business, and the community.
- LAS contributes to KU through institutional grants which provide resources to faculty, graduate students, the library system, and to K-12, business, and the community.
- The LAS program also includes characteristics listed in KU’s Initiative 2015: civic engagement, interdisciplinary knowledge, and global awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity.
- LAS faculty have been crucial to the facilitation and continuance of important relationships with universities throughout Latin America.
- LAS offers both a major (B.A.) and a minor at the undergraduate level, an M.A., a joint M.A./M.B.A., and graduate certificates, in Mexican & Central American, and Brazilian Studies at the graduate level.
- The quality of our MA students is demonstrated by the excellent Ph.D. programs they are recruited into and related achievements. Institutions such as Emory, Rutgers and University of Maryland praise the quality of training received by these students at KU and are especially impressed by the theses based on primary research done in the field. Previous alumni are now Professors at Vanderbilt, Rice, Arkansas, Long Beach, Truman State, Johnson County Community College, KU, University of Sao Paulo in Brazil, and the University of Costa Rica. Others have joined the Foreign Service, gone into international business, work for the military, or work in non-instructional positions at universities. Secondary teaching is also a popular choice. Almost without exception the students find positions that utilize their training in LAS.
A. SELF-STUDY PROCESS

The Director of Latin American Studies (Elizabeth Kuznesof) together with the Graduate Director (Peter Herlihy) the Undergraduate Director (Anita Herzfeld), and the Accountant / Office Manager (Judy Farmer) gathered data and generated a rough draft. This draft was read and commented upon by the executive committee and core faculty associated with the program. Meetings were also held with undergraduate majors and with graduate students to comment on their respective programs. Revisions followed. It should be noted that DEMIS does not provide full information for interdisciplinary programs such as Latin American Studies, since much of the pertinent data is aggregated with that of other departments, including history, geography, anthropology, Spanish & Portuguese, environmental studies, and other units.

B. CENTRALITY TO MISSION

1) The program of Latin American Studies in many ways epitomizes the mission of the KU College of Arts & Sciences. The interdisciplinary faculty of CLAS pursues research and teaching opportunities that engage global issues and multiculturalism. Students are offered many opportunities for diverse experiences which allow them to understand differences in the human condition. Faculty, staff, and students in CLAS come from diverse backgrounds throughout the U.S. as well as international backgrounds. CLAS faculty have received many teaching and mentoring awards and have also participated in workshops throughout Kansas and Missouri to stimulate an interest in Latin America among K-16 teachers and classrooms.

Undergraduate and graduate alumni have gone on to make significant contributions of their own as scholars, teachers and government employees. CLAS has developed research clusters to bring together faculty from different departments working on similar problems to apply for grants and to plan field work incorporating graduate students. Service courses and service components to courses in CLAS engage students in the community by giving them the opportunity to assist Latinos in Lawrence and other Kansas communities in issues such as health care, legal issues, income tax, and even how to register a car. CLAS faculty have been crucial to the facilitation and continuance of important relationships with universities throughout Latin America, especially those in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico, Peru, Paraguay, Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, and Chile.

Similarly, the CLAS program includes characteristics listed in KU’s Initiative 2015: civic engagement, interdisciplinary knowledge, and global awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity. International focus is also listed as one of the five key characteristics of the KU education.

2) Integration with other University units. CLAS incorporates courses across a range of social science and humanities disciplines, offering a unique focus on Latin America in terms of ecology, culture, society, and political and economic organization. If viewed from the perspective of courses counted for Latin American Studies degrees (rather than those given in the department), in 2003-05 a total of 540 undergraduates, 180 MA students and 84 PhD students graduated with
15+ non-language CLAS credit hours. CLAS extends across KU, including faculty in the Business and Law Schools, Social Welfare, Education, Journalism and Fine Arts, in addition to the College of Arts and Sciences. The faculty affiliated with CLAS attains high levels of research productivity and participates in an international network of scholars and academicians. Research and teaching are mutually reinforcing, with scholarly inquiry underlying and informing the educational experience at undergraduate and graduate levels. CLAS fosters international scholarship and relationships with Latin American institutions as well as a multicultural environment, cooperating for many purposes with other KU area studies programs, including Russia and East European Studies, African Studies, and East Asian Studies, as well as Women’s Studies, American Studies, Indigenous Nations Studies, and Environmental Studies. CLAS offers two principal courses and two non-Western courses taught in the department. A year-long seminar series for M.A. students (LAA 700 & 701) is required. CLAS serves the entire university through its teaching with 77.1% of student credit hours taken by non-majors.

C. FACULTY STRENGTHS, PRODUCTIVITY, & QUALIFICATIONS

1) Contributions. In addition to the director, the only budgeted CLAS faculty member is Anita Herzfeld, promoted to Full Professor in 2003. She has received teaching awards from the Center for Teaching Excellence in 2001 and 2002 and the Michael J. Young Advisor's Award in 2001. Her position as Undergraduate Advisor for Latin American Studies resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of undergraduate majors, from about 10 in 1995 (when she started), to 47 in 2004 and 53 in 2007. Although her appointment in Latin American Studies has not allowed her to chair graduate committees in Linguistics, she has served on a number of dissertation committees in Linguistics and other departments. She has been on phased retirement since 2008. (see attached statement and CV, Appendix A). Other CLAS faculty (lecturers) include Laura Herlihy (KU Ph.D. in Anthropology), who teaches LAA 100, LAA 332, LAA 503, and courses in International Studies, and Robert Rodriguez (KU Ph.D. in Political Science), who has taught a variety of Political Science courses under the KU Language Across the Curriculum rubric. The courses provided by L. Herlihy and R. Rodriguez have been very important for both undergraduate and graduate programming in Latin American Studies. Laura Herlihy has also served on thesis committees for graduate students, on the undergraduate committee in CLAS, and is organizing a Study Abroad course in Nicaragua for next summer. She has been awarded several prestigious grants and has published important work on the topic of indigenous feminism (see attached statement and C.V., Appendix A). Robert Rodriguez (born in Argentina) has served on thesis committees for graduate students and has also assisted with outreach workshops to K-12 teachers. He has one published book and another under contract (see attached statement and C.V., Appendix A).

The enormous strength of our program combines: 1) very strong and unique library collections on Latin America; 2) our very highly ranked Spanish & Portuguese depart-ment plus indigenous languages and linguistics; 3) with breadth across disciplines and professional schools related to Latin America. These strengths are especially notable with respect to Central America and Brazil, and we have an increasing focus on the Andean area. Within disciplines, our strongest areas are History, Anthropology, Geography, Political Science, Environmental Studies, and tropical Biology. The existence of a Title VI-funded Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER) in the Business School also lends strength.
The 101 faculty affiliated with our program span 8 schools and 22 departments. Some of the honors received by affiliated faculty during the past five years includes: Provost’s Award for Leadership in International Education (2 faculty), Michael J. Young Advising Award (1), Center for Teaching Excellence award (5), John C. Wright Graduate Mentoring Award (1), Byron A. Alexander Graduate Mentoring Award (1), KU Mortar Board Outstanding Educator Award (1), Ned Fleming Family Trust Award for Teaching Excellence (1), Cramer Award (2), Mary McCorison Rosenbloom Teaching Award (1), Higuchi Award for Research Excellence (1), KU Outreach Partnership Grant (1), Hall Center for the Humanities Research Award (6), Kemper Teaching Awards (3), Fulbright Teaching and Research Awards (10), Univ. of Costa Rica-KU Collaboration Fund Research Grant (2), Kimbell Faculty Enrichment Grant (1), Wenner-Gren Foundation Research Grant (1), Junior Scholars of Democracy in Latin America Research Grant (Woodrow Wilson School), as well as National Endowment for the Humanities Research Awards, National Humanities Center Grants, and National Science Foundation grants.

Since 2004 LAS has lost a total of 29 affiliated faculty: Anthropology (1), Ecology & Evolutionary Biology (3), Economics (1), Business (2), History (2), Art History (1), Music History (3), Women’s Studies (2), Political Science (3), Theater and Film (2), Sociology (2), Spanish & Portuguese (5), Public Administration (1), and Law (1). Of those 29 lost, 17 were core faculty, conducting Latin America-related research and teaching approved courses for the program. Since 2004, 12 CLAS-affiliated Faculty have been added: American Studies (3), Anthropology (1), Ecology & Evolutionary Biology (1), Geography (1), History (2), Music History (1), Sociology (1), Spanish & Portuguese (3), and Political Science (1). Of these 12, nine are core faculty. Several recent hires focus on issues of Latino migration, transnationalism, and relations with the U.S., rather than Latin America as such. The CLAS-affiliated members includes faculty at every level, including two distinguished professors. Many have international reputations and have had significant positions in national and international organizations. CLAS affiliates form significant “Latin Americanist research clusters” that combine research in Latin America with graduate and undergraduate student mentoring. Some well-established clusters include 1) the Museum of Natural History; 2) Mexican land tenure studies; 3) Brazilian environmental studies 4) Central American indigenous rights movements; 5) Endangered indigenous and Creole languages; 6) Amazonian Cultural Ecology, and 7) MERCOSUR and Paraguayan-Brazilian trade.

2) Strength of sponsored research. Between 1998 and 2003, 23 CLAS administrators, in conjunction with others, were awarded institutional grant funded at $4,783,089. Institutional grants are used for faculty salary, conferences, visiting speakers, travel, research support for faculty, outreach to schools and the community, and to fund language study. During the same period an additional 29 individual grants were awarded for Latin American projects to affiliated faculty, totaling $2,819,440. Between 2004 and 2009 (Spring) CLAS administrators applied for grants totaling $5,048,771. We were awarded grants totaling $2,451,045 (see Figure 2.1 on pg. 4; also see Table 2.1 on pg. 5). This includes grants for support of the Center (Title VI), a U.S. State Department Grant for University Linkage with the University of San Marcos in Peru (3 years), Tinker Foundation Field Research Grants, Fulbright Group Study Abroad Grants, and others. These figures do not include internal grants such as the GRF, travel grants, or grants from the Hall Center for Humanities.

When it was clear in 2006 that Title VI funding would lapse, efforts were made to apply for other funding to cover those needs, but those efforts, in large part, did not succeed; one exception was the success in garnering the Tinker Foundation Field Research Grants for 2008-2010. While
our loss of Title VI funding was devastating, several other well established programs for Latin also lost funding at that time (Ohio State, Arizona, New Mexico, Michigan State, & Vanderbilt).

D. Cost-Effectiveness

CLAS courses, other than indigenous language courses and some KULAC (Language Across the Curriculum) courses, always fill to enrollment limits, far beyond the 6/12 guidelines. DEMIS data gives a rather distorted sense of departmental instructional expenditures because of a combination of cross-listing of courses and requiring courses that have no departmental designation. Many courses are credited to other departments. The teaching of indigenous languages courses is always expensive, but it is important in terms of the legitimacy of our Latin American Studies program and its national standing, as it is something that definitely distinguishes the program. Student credit hour production increased from 665 in FY 99-00 to 1,417 in FY 07-08, with an average of 1,420 from FY 03-04 to FY 07-08. However, these numbers do not fully demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of our program. Many of these courses are credited to other departments. In addition, the vast majority of our courses are cross-listed. Approximately 80% of CLAS student credit hours are taken by non-majors every year, meaning that CLAS courses have a strong service function at KU. As of fall 2003, we had 47 undergraduate majors, with 53 in Fall 2007 (DEMIS figures), and 45 in Spring 2009 (CLAS data). The average number of undergraduate majors during the last 5 years (Fall 2004-Spring 2009) has been 52, an increase of 18 students over the average for the previous five-year period. Thus, the number of students enrolled in the program meets the Regents guidelines (a five year average of 25 students for a bachelor’s program). There has been a steady increase in the number of majors since the fall of 1999. Minors have also steadily increased, with 21 minors declared in Spring 2009.

Seventeen B.A. degrees were awarded in CLAS in FY 07-08. For the five year period from FY03-04 to FY 07-08 an average of 16 B.A. degrees were awarded per year. Projected enrollment for our courses depends heavily on our ability to teach those courses. To date, we have not had assurance of GTAs being assigned to CLAS and thus are never sure of what we can teach. With Anita Herzfeld’s impending retirement this situation will become even more dire. Laura Herlihy is capable of teaching Anita’s courses (and is teaching LAA 332 this semester) but her position is only half-time and she also has courses of her own.

M.A. students have averaged 19 for Fall 2003 through Fall 2007. M.A. degrees in the same period have averaged 6 per year. The program, despite inadequacies in GTA funding, continues to provide exceptional support for Latin Americanist graduate students on campus and in the international setting by sponsoring and funding grant and research presentation competitions that enhance the professional development of our M.A. and affiliate graduate students. The M.A. program explores new avenues of graduate study abroad and the implementation of interdisciplinary core requirements to better integrate the program with other disciplines across campus and extend service learning opportunities into the Lawrence community.
PART IV

REVIEW OF THE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

A. CENTRALITY TO MISSION

1) Brief description of the bachelor’s program. The Center of Latin American Studies offers the Bachelor of Arts and a Minor in Latin American Studies. In addition to requiring language ability for the major, the Center encourages an interdisciplinary approach whereby students learn about Latin American cultures from the perspective of anthropology, history, political science, geography, environmental studies, indigenous nations, sociology, women’s studies, theater and film, music, teaching and leadership, economics, business, and other fields in which KU employs Latin American faculty. Faculty expertise centers especially in the study of Central America, Mexico, Haiti, the Andes and the Amazon, Paraguay, Colombia, Uruguay and Brazil, while courses concerned with much of the rest of Latin America are also offered. The Bachelor of Arts degree in Latin American Studies is designed to provide a broad academic background with a regional focus, usually in conjunction with a second major in a specific discipline and a mastery of Spanish and Portuguese and/or other languages spoken in Latin America. The program enables students to take courses in a variety of departments as part of their plan of study, and lays the foundation for graduate work. Students are encouraged to pursue graduation with honors in Latin American Studies.

All undergraduate majors must complete 30 hours of CLAS credits, in addition to language/literature courses. Besides requiring the completion of 16 hours of Spanish or Portuguese, a 400-level course in Latin American Literature, Music, or Film, and two semesters of another language (options include Haitian Creole, Kaqchikel, Quichua, Portuguese, or Spanish), the Center provides students with in-depth knowledge about the cultures of Latin America. Towards that goal, a class in Colonial Latin American History (or a history class that covers the colonial period) and three classes pertaining to Latin America (neither history nor literature) are the basic requirements. In addition, students need to take four courses in a primary emphasis and three courses in a secondary emphasis, all to be chosen from a list of approved courses in five different topic areas entitled 1) Language, literature and culture; 2) Historical studies; 3) Economics, geography, political science and sociology; 4) Anthropology, religious studies, and women’s studies; 5) Environmental policy. Study abroad and fieldwork are highly encouraged. To that effect a student is required to complete 6 hours of subjects taught entirely in Spanish (or Portuguese) if they have studied abroad, or 9 hours if not. “KU Language across the Curriculum” (KULAC) courses provide a variety of choices for those students who are not able to study abroad.

The minor in Latin American Studies was approved in the academic year 2004-2005. It consists of 18 hours of credit, 6 hours of which must be taken from the core classes offered in Latin American Studies and the remaining 12 hours must be chosen from the list of courses approved for Latin American Studies at the junior/senior level. No language requirements are required in addition to the 16 hours required by the College. Even though this is a relatively new program, we have had a substantial number of students who have signed up for the minor and quite a few have already graduated with a minor.

All members of our faculty hold Ph.D.s and are fluent in Spanish or Portuguese, or the Creole or indigenous languages, as their expertise may require. Most make yearly trips to the field and
have spent substantial amounts of time in Latin America carrying out research. Many have obtained grants from Fulbright, National Endowment of the Humanities, National Science Foundation, Social Science Research Council, and the Hall Center for the Humanities grants, among others.

2) The program’s strengths and weaknesses. The key strength of the Center of Latin American Studies lies in the flexibility and diversity of the program as well as in the quality of instruction. We have exceptional faculty in almost every humanities and social sciences discipline, in addition to Professional Schools such as Architecture, Music, Art & Design, Social Welfare and Business, which makes the program truly interdisciplinary. This allows students to choose mentors from a variety of disciplines and to participate in a vibrant intellectual community. The advising process is personal and thorough.

Very significantly for our program, we have established close contact with a series of institutions in Latin America, and have significant Study Abroad programs that form an integral part of our curriculum. Another unique characteristic of the program—a feature that only a handful of universities in this country have—is the emphasis on preparing students for conducting field work in Latin America by offering linguistic training in indigenous and Creole languages such as Kaqchikel, Quichua, and Haitian Creole. In addition, a series of extra-curricular activities take place at the Center every semester. They provide students with a rich experience outside the classroom through several means: we offer a regular weekly lecture series called the “Merienda,” which gives students direct exposure to well-known speakers, drawn both from outside the university and from the regular faculty or graduate student pool; even some exceptionally gifted undergraduates have made presentations in this series. Whenever appropriate, advanced undergraduates have attended the Latin American Seminar held at the Hall Center for the Humanities. Moreover, the Center presents students with the opportunity of attending a weekly film and documentary series for free; invites them to attend occasional CLAS get-togethers, and to participate in workshops—for instance, a workshop to prepare them for an international career. A USIA University Linkage grant (2003-2006) established linkages with the National University of San Marcos in Lima, Perú, and brought distinguished Peruvianists to campus, giving KU faculty and students another opportunity to enrich their academic experience.

As mentioned earlier, the addition of a minor is the single most important formal change that has been implemented recently. Another recent and notable trend has been the inclusion of service learning activities in Latin American Studies courses. For example, Brent Metz (LAA 302/602 Mexamerica) had his class conduct a census of Hispanic migrants living in Lawrence, including interviews on their origins and experiences. This was useful to the Hispanic Leadership Council in Lawrence, which organizes services to the Hispanic population. As a result of an internal evaluation conducted in 2001, students recommended the need for bringing majors and their faculty together more frequently. Consequently, we recently celebrated the “Seventh annual undergraduate get-together,” which provides a forum for students and faculty to mingle. Programs offered on these occasions have varied from going over the requirements to enter graduate school, to panel presentations by graduating students about their future plans, to a recount of their study abroad experiences. They have all been very successful and well attended.

The main weakness of the program is our lack of regular budgeted faculty in our program. We have been fortunate to be able to find and fund graduate students and instructors to teach our primary courses while we had Title VI funding, through 2006. However, since then, and especially since Anita Herzfeld is on phased retirement, it has been very difficult to staff courses. Laura
Herlihy’s appointment as a lecturer in Latin American Studies has been extremely helpful, but it would be much better to have her as tenure-track faculty. A regular appointment for Robert Rodriguez would also be helpful (even part-time) since political science is so important to students in our major. Another weakness, as pointed out by the students themselves (see “Overall program quality,” pg. 19), is the fact that few students seem to know about the possibilities, advantages, and the ease of combining, for example, a Spanish major with a major in Latin American Studies. The undergraduate committee is considering recommending changes in the Major that would make requirements more transparent while retaining the strong language requirements and offerings, and a focus on Study Abroad. We are determined to publicize the major better, especially among those students who are interested in obtaining a Spanish degree. In addition, we do not do a very good job of finding out what our majors are doing after graduation. We have tried to contact them, but the lack of current addresses at the Alumni Center has made our task very difficult.

3) Evaluation by a national organization. Our program has been reviewed by a number of distinguished Latin Americanists from other institutions in both 2003 and 2005, but not by a national organization.

B. CURRICULUM & IMPACT ON STUDENTS

1) Assessing the quality of the curriculum. The curriculum is unique in four main ways, as mentioned earlier. First, we have exceptional faculty in almost every humanities and social sciences discipline. Our strong alliance with other interdisciplinary units on campus, including Environmental Studies, Global Indigenous Nations Studies, and Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies provides another level of interdisciplinarity to our program. Students choose mentors from a variety of disciplines and participate in a vibrant intellectual community. Second, the advising process is personal and thorough, working through each student’s curriculum every semester, for all students in the program—this allows following the student’s progress in a careful manner from the minute they express interest in the major until they graduate. Third, the interdisciplinary core courses developed since 1993 are a great asset to the program. LAA 100 is a principal course in the social sciences that introduces Latin American Studies as an interdisciplinary realm of endeavor. LAA 332 (Language & Society in Latin America) introduces students to the diversity of languages and cultures in Latin America and looks at how language can be politically important. LSS 335 (Politics of Language in Latin America) takes a case study approach to indigenous cultures, their histories, and their political struggles in Latin America. These courses provide interdisciplinary course content and bring together students from various disciplines interested in Latin America. Study abroad is integral to our program and we have established close contact with a series of institutions abroad, among them the 45 year old exchange program with the University of Costa Rica, the oldest extant program of its nature between a U.S. university and a Latin American university. In addition, the Spanish Department conducts a series of summer study abroad programs in Mexico and Brazil, and semester programs in Spain, which our students frequently take advantage of, particularly to enhance their foreign language speaking ability. We also have non-literature, non-language courses taught in Spanish (KULAC) courses every semester to provide students with the experience of reading and talking about substantive issues such as politics and culture in the language of the people discussed. KULAC courses have been offered in Political Science, Anthropology, History, Geography, and Environmental Studies.
2) How does the program recruit students? Students regularly enroll in Latin American Studies classes or become majors, co-majors, or minors, after having taken one of our core courses, LAA 100 or LAA 332, which fulfill a principal course requirement or a non-Western civilization requirement, respectively.

Outreach efforts are another method of recruitment. The Center is constantly offering workshops to primary and high school teachers, both locally and regionally. In addition, the traveling-trunk service for loaning outreach materials, as well as the lending library of videos and CDs is available to K-12 teachers, in an effort to introduce the teaching of Latin American Studies in their curriculum. The Center also provides some Spanish teachers for extra-curricular activities at several local primary schools (See the discussion on Outreach, pg. 3).

Minority enrollment of undergraduate majors since 1998 has been about 20% of majors, with 22.6% listed in Fall 2007. The minorities who are usually attracted to our program are members of the Latino or Mexican American ethnic groups. International Students are also attracted to Latin American Studies.

In addition, we sponsor extra-curricular activities mentioned earlier in this document, events, such as the Day of the Dead, and participate in department information distribution activities as sponsored by study abroad, career services, major’s day, and seniors’ day, among others.

3) Assessing the quality of students. Students who major in Latin American Studies are better than average students, with ACT scores since Fall 1998 of 25 and above. The mean ACT score for Fall 2007 was 26.9. Similarly, the mean GPA at graduation for Latin American Studies majors since 1998 has consistently been above 3.2. Often, several of our majors are also honors students or graduate with honors from Latin American Studies.

4) Students’ progress to degree. The mean years-to-degree for majors in Latin American Studies is generally 4.4 years or more. One reason for this longer time to degree is that many of our majors do double or triple majors, and also want to take a semester for Study Abroad. Many students also have full-time jobs, therefore limiting the number of credit hours they can enroll in.

5) Activities to document and measure learner outcomes. Syllabi and lists of requirements for all courses to be taught for Latin American Studies are reviewed and approved by the Director. Course goals for learner outcomes are an important focus of this mentoring activity. All Latin American Studies courses have learner outcomes that include knowledge of the geography and languages of Latin America, knowledge and sensitivity to Latin American cultures, knowledge of major issues of Latin American nations within global society, ability to read for knowledge, and an ability to write coherently based on research. Student evaluations are utilized in all courses and play an important role in evaluating selected reading, films and teaching methods.

C. STUDENT NEED FOR PROGRAM & EMPLOYER DEMAND

1) Evaluate the strength of student demand in the program. Undergraduate credit hour production in CLAS was 1,178 in FY 03-04 and 1,324 in FY 07-08. These only include the core courses taught in LAA, which are a small part of our major. It is notable that these numbers continue to increase, even with fewer available instructors and with Anita Herzfeld (our
undergraduate advisor) on phased retirement. Several of these classes always fill to capacity (LAA 100, LAA 332, & LAA 334) and we could certainly bring in more student credit hours if we could fund GTA’s or instructors to teach more courses.

As of fall 2003, we had 47 majors with 53 in Fall 2007 (DEMIS figures) and 45 in Spring 2009 (LAS data). The average number of majors for the last 5 years (Fall 2004-Spring 2009) has been 52, an increase of 18 for a five-year average from the previous period. Thus the number of students enrolled in the program meets the Regents guidelines (a five year average of 25 students for a bachelor’s program). There has been a steady increase in the number of majors since the fall of 1999. Minors have also steadily increased with 21 minors declared in Spring 2009.

Seventeen B.A. degrees were awarded in CLAS in FY 07-08. For the five year period from FY 03-04 to FY 07-08 an average of 16 B.A. degrees were awarded per year. Projected enrollment for our courses depends a lot on our ability to teach those courses. To date, we have not had assurance of GTAs being assigned to LAS and thus are never sure what we can teach. With Anita Herzfeld’s impending retirement this situation will become even more dire. Laura Herlihy is capable of teaching Anita’s courses (and is teaching LAA 332 this semester) but her position is only half time; she also has courses of her own.

2) Placement of students after graduation. We have had difficulties in tracking students after graduation. We have worked with the KU Alumni Association to attempt to track student activities and have succeeded in tracking only about 25% of those taking 15 or more hours in Latin American Studies courses (including courses given in other departments). Some additional information has been acquired through casual interaction with the adviser or Director, who sometimes hear personally from the students, either to ask for reference letters or simply share their new position. Information for students graduating AY 03-07 tracked through the alumni association suggests that about 25% go to graduate school, 19% become teachers for K-12, 4% work for the federal government, 7% work for state or local government, 33% have jobs in the private sector, 4% work for non-profit organizations, and 15% have not reported their employment.

D. OVERALL PROGRAM QUALITY

Overall assessment as measured by both our own evaluation and that of the annual major survey is that we are a “very good” to “excellent” program. Our commitment to interdisciplinary excellence is our prime strength, to which we add outstanding advising and mentoring. Our office staff, the high quality of faculty and the breadth of programs related to Latin America, the wealth of our library resources (which holds one of the top three Central American collections in the country), the resources that have been made available thanks to the grants obtained by the Center, the quality and dedication of our students, and the general success of our graduates all combine to make this an extremely well known and vital program both nationally and internationally.

According to the Senior Survey (2005), undergraduates in Latin American Studies appear fairly satisfied with the major, as compared with KU undergraduates overall. LAS could do better in terms of numbers of courses in the major, their availability, how they are integrated in the major, and in some cases their quality. Satisfaction with advising is very high but this was before Anita Herzfeld went on phased retirement. General satisfaction with faculty is very high.
A. CENTRALITY TO MISSION

1) Program description. Since 1970, the Center of Latin American Studies is home to KU's interdisciplinary Master of Arts (M.A.) program in Latin American Studies. Today, it also includes two graduate certificate programs, one on Mexico & Central America and another on Brazil. The Center also now offers a joint M.B.A.-M.A. with the School of Business. The M.A. program provides students with solid language preparation (in Spanish and/or Portuguese, and to a somewhat lesser knowledge of the second language, or Kachequil Maya or Quichua) and interdisciplinary courses on Latin America focusing on thematic areas of interest. Students have substantial flexibility in choosing their courses and work with the CLAS Graduate Adviser to create a coherent and focused program of study. Most find mentorship and disciplinary interests with our affiliated faculty of Latin Americanist scholars, and student interests may range widely, from politics and economics or business, to literature, history and culture, geography, environmental studies, and biology.

There are two types of M.A. degrees in Latin American Studies, one requires a thesis and the other does not. The non-thesis option is a degree particularly suitable for a career in the public or private sector. The culmination of the non-thesis M.A. is an oral examination before a committee of three faculty during the last semester of the program. The M.A. thesis degree is most appropriate as preparation for a doctoral program and dissertation. The student defends the completed thesis in an oral examination before three faculty. A minimum of 30 graduate credit hours is required in social sciences or humanities courses with Latin American content. At least 18 hours must have 50 to 100 percent of their content dedicated to Latin America. Also required among the 30 hours are LAA 700 Introduction to Latin American Library Resources, LAA 701 Interdisciplinary Seminar in Latin American Culture and Problems, and two other seminars with at least 50 percent of their content dedicated to Latin America, each in a separate discipline, at the 700 level or above (excluding thesis and readings hours). Up to 12 graduate hours from the University of Costa Rica may be applied to the M.A. Well-prepared students can finish the graduate program in two years. However, students who study abroad in Latin America and do primary research for their thesis will often take a third year. Many spend one or more summers at intensive language programs in Brazil, Guatemala or Ecuador. Those opportunities are a major draw for the program.

Between one-third and one-half of our M.A. graduates go on to Ph.D. programs at KU or other universities. Other graduates become high school teachers, take positions with the US government or international agencies, work with international businesses or NGOs in Latin America, or work with Hispanic migrants to the US. The new M.B.A./M.A. has only one graduate and one student enrolling, but offers exciting possibilities.

2) Program strengths and weaknesses. The M.A. program draws on a significant Latin Americanist faculty across campus, and is notably strong in the social sciences and humanities, biology, environmental studies, and business. Most students write theses under the mentorship of affiliate faculty members. The quality of students attracted to the program and the kind of placement they achieve has improved over time, but is presently threatened by lack of graduate
student funding support, as detailed below. A strong attention to advising and quick and personal attention to queries from prospective students is important to combat this issue. Efforts are also made to coordinate with the Department of Spanish & Portuguese to assist graduate students in obtaining GTA’s in that department, if appropriate.

The CLAS M.A. program: a) serves as an intellectual hub of Latin Americanist activities for students and professors, bringing together the scholarly breadth and methodological diversity from across campus; b) connects a strong group of Latin Americanist-affiliated faculty with students who research and teach courses covering the entire region, being especially strong in Mexico, Central America, the Andes, Paraguay and Brazil; c) delivers an innovative graduate curriculum of advanced course work and seminars focusing on a multitude of different disciplinary strengths and interests; d) supports M.A. student involvement in “KU Latin Americanist research clusters” that combine original research with graduate student mentoring; e) financially supports an average of 15 to 20 of our M.A. and affiliate (M.A. and Ph.D.) graduate students to do research and language study abroad (and on campus) through winning external and internal grants, notably the Foreign Language and Area Studies fellowships (FLAS) under the Title VI program (until 2006) and Tinker Field Research Grants (2008-present); f) promotes original graduate student research, with recent thesis topics on land reform in Costa Rica, constitutional changes recognizing domestic work in Venezuela, indigenous Latin American immigrants in Lawrence, microfinancing in Mexico, and soybean farming in Brazil; g) promotes graduate student work in K-12 outreach and service learning with community organizations.

An emerging weakness in the M.A. program may stem from the Center’s own success in funding its M.A. program with teaching assistantships, fellowships, and field research grants from the previous FLAS fellowships and the NRC Title VI grant. Since losing this support, we struggle to pull together funding solutions to meet basic needs in the M.A. program (i.e., having M.A. students fill roles as instructors and as office workers), and we have great difficulty attracting good students without fellowships or regular TA support. During the last five years of NRC grants, for example, the Center was able to fund 34 M.A. students through institutional grants. Fortunately we were able to obtain another Tinker Field Research Grant for 2008-10, which assists us in supporting graduate research in Latin America, but leaves us without support for graduate students during the academic year. Another weakness is that CLAS has no way of planning or predicting what graduate classes and seminars with Latin American content will be offered by which departments in any given semester, a problem further exacerbated by the Center’s own difficulty to meet demands in offering our own core courses. We rely too heavily on adjunct faculty and unemployed graduate students to cover the basics.

We are considering a collaborative core course for the M.A. degree that is comparative, international, or methods based, with a service-learning component, to strengthen communication and ties with other academic units in the university while connecting with community groups outside the university. A new service-learning experience for students will be developed with Centro Hispano in Lawrence. On the international front, we hope the pilot study abroad program with the Autonomous University of the Autonomous Regions of the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua will offer new opportunities for graduate students to study the language and culture of the Miskito Coast of Nicaragua. We also plan to work with the Dean of Social Sciences at the University of Costa Rica to promote new faculty and graduate student study and research opportunities, and to help reinforce the historic KU-UCR partnership.
3) Program Review. The M.A. program has not been reviewed by a national organization. Placement of the program among the top 15 Latin American Studies programs in the United States is likely, however, given that KU’s Center of Latin American Studies was one of 13 U.S. Centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education as a Comprehensive National Resource Center on Latin America, having been so distinguished from 1983-1988 and from 1993-2006. Three times we have also been awarded three-year Tinker Field Research Grants to fund graduate student research in Latin America (1995-1998, 2000-2003, and 2008-2010).

B. CURRICULUM AND IMPACT ON STUDENTS

1) The quality of the curriculum is remarkable given the excellent affiliated faculty across many fields. Two courses are unique to the program: LAA 700: Library Resources of Latin America (taught by Bibliographer Jana Krentz) and LAA 701: Interdisciplinary Seminar on Latin America (taught by the CLAS Director, Associate Director or team-taught with Affiliated Faculty). The substantive topic of the seminar varies from year to year. Language study and thesis research abroad are extremely important components of the M.A. program that the Center promotes by providing students with funding options and collaborative ties.

A challenge for the program, as mentioned, is finding enough seminars at the 700+ level for the MA students. An urgent need is for a Central Americanist historian to fill the void left by the retirement of Charles Stansifer in 2006.

2) Effect of the undergraduate mission on the graduate curriculum. The undergraduate mission funnels some students into our graduate courses and sometimes undergraduate majors in CLAS enter the MA program.

3) Graduate Curriculum. Since 2004, while 29 affiliated (17 core) faculty were lost (mainly to other institutions or denied tenure),12 affiliated and 9 important hires have strengthened Latin Americanist offerings in American Studies, Anthropology, Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, Geography, History, Sociology, Spanish & Portuguese, and Political Science. Typically, excellent seminars and classes with Latin American or Iberian content are offered by these and other affiliate faculty, but it is an ongoing job to convince departments with their own priorities to offer graduate-level courses and seminars needed by CLAS M.A. students. Professors are usually enthusiastic, but they must cooperate with their home departments. We need a better way to predict when departments will offer courses to meet course requirements of the CLAS M.A. students. One small proposal to help improve links is to establish a collaborative core Latin American Studies graduate course that is comparative, international, and/or methods based using affiliated faculty to help teach it. Another specific and urgent need is for a historian of Central America to meet curricular needs for our students and for those of other departments across campus.

4) Activities to document and measure learner outcomes. Student exit surveys emphasize the writing and research skills, training in grant writing, foreign language skills, opportunities to attend professional conferences, quality and availability of advising and the quality of the professors and study abroad options as being the most important benefits of the program. Surveys focusing on the level of student satisfaction show 70 percent of our graduates rank the M.A. program as very good or excellent and well over 80 percent rank the graduate teaching by faculty and the overall climate of the program as very good or excellent. Over 80 percent would also
select KU again if starting over (source, AIMS Survey 2005). The CLAS M.A. program is only now beginning to look at new ways of documenting and developing learner outcomes. For example, our M.A. students are frequently involved with community and governmental organizations during their classes and field research that we have never documented.

5) Recruitment of students. The website continues to be our most important recruitment tool. Recognizing potential students usually first visit our Center online, we are increasingly diversifying and developing the information and functions found at our Website. We want the Website to become more dynamic and interactive to reflect all the Center’s activities, its faculty, and affiliated faculty. We continue to send letters and brochures to Spanish departments at undergraduate institutions, and alumni of our Study Abroad programs in Costa Rica, Mexico, and Brazil. We unfortunately no longer have the FLAS fellowships for recruitment purposes – ending a strategy that had worked well. Now, we work with qualified students to nominate them or help them apply for fellowship and GTA positions across campus. We also arrange campus visits for interested students. The fact that we essentially have no teaching assistantships in the department means that support depends upon the willingness of the Spanish & Portuguese or other departments to give GTA’s to one of our students. Otherwise students end up working at non-university low-paying jobs.

6) Quality of students. Students are selected based on motivation and interest, letters of recommendation, undergraduate record, and a writing sample. GRE scores are also required, though they are not decisive. Students graduating from our program have excellent language training, almost always have had opportunities to spend time in a Latin American country, and have had exceptional training in research methods and critical thinking and writing. See Tables 5.1 and 5.2 for applicant and admitted student demographics (pg. 24).
### Table 5.1 – Graduate Program Applicants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center of Latin American Studies</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applicant Data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Applied</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Accepted</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>85.71</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>92.8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRE Score Verbal</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>593.3</td>
<td>557.5</td>
<td>567.3</td>
<td>545.5</td>
<td>532.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal % Below</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>70.6</td>
<td>69.9</td>
<td>66.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRE Score Quantitative</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>574.4</td>
<td>601.7</td>
<td>538.2</td>
<td>540.9</td>
<td>552.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative % Below</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>51.83</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRE Score Analytical</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>663.3</td>
<td>662</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>650</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical % Below</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Analytical</td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CLAS & AIMS data

### Table 5.2 – Graduate Program Admissions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center of Latin American Studies Graduate Program – Enrolled MA Students Demographic Profile &amp; GRE Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA Students (fall)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Minority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Am. Ind, Black, Hisp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% KS residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Verbal GRE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Quant. GRE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Essay GRE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% reporting scores</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CLAS & AIMS data

7) Applicant pool. For the 2001-2008 period, the applicant pool shows that an average of 10.8 students applied per year, and an average of 5.6 entered the program each year (CLAS and AIMS data).

8) Progress to degree. The majority of our students complete the CLAS M.A. program in just under three years (AIM data shows an average of 2.9 years and median of 2.6 years for the 2000-09 period). While comparative data is unavailable, we consider that students generally finish their degrees in a timely fashion, especially given that most complete a thesis based on foreign field research abroad. It helps that CLAS supports its students with possibilities for field research support.

9) Financial support. In the past, with NRC funding, the Center supported an average of 6.83 graduate students from the M.A. program and affiliate departments each year, until we lost the grant in 2006. GTA appointments in CLAS for the past two years have been limited to us putting
forward qualified students in open competitions or to making special pleas to the College administration to support our graduate students to cover our basic teaching and administrative needs. The Center has no regular GTA positions.

10) Professional development. The two seminars LAA 700 and LAA 701, as discussed, provide important and basic Latin Americanist training, including speaking and writing ability, as well as the use of library and other archival sources. The M.A. program couples language training with research and study abroad experiences in Latin America, providing critical training for students to become comfortable doing research or work in that region. Efforts are made to encourage student participation in professional conferences such as the Latin American Studies Association Conference. For that conference we have several times rented vans and driven groups of students who attended or presented papers. We promote graduate student involvement in giving professional presentation and writing publications. As further support, and to showcase the field research of students, Graduate Director Peter Herlihy developed the “KU Latin Americanist Graduate Research Competition.” This is a one day conference with panels, a lunch, judges, and prizes for the best presentation at the M.A. and Ph.D. levels. Student participation in these events is important for their professional development. We hold career workshops for students that emphasize interview strategies and resume preparation, as well as the range of options that have been taken by previous students. We usually bring in Alumni for this experience. We are also planning to revitalize the Center’s publication series and involve graduate students in it.

11) Post-doctoral appointments. CLAS has always had foreign scholars visiting and teaching in its M.A. program and, although not formally “post-docs,” they contribute greatly to the intellectual environment of the program.

C. Student Need for Program & Employer Demand

1) Strength of student demand. Since 2000, we have averaged 99 graduate student credit hours per year, with an average of 20 students in the program (see Table 5.3, pg. 26). Over the same nine-year period, we awarded an average of six degrees a year. Last year, 13 graduate students were enrolled and four MA degrees were awarded. Enrollment fluctuates and any downward trend may relate to the continued lack of TA/GTA support for our students, as the best student applicants are aggressively recruited elsewhere with multi-year financial support offers. Many students who apply to Latin American Studies are individuals who are making a career change, after trying something else, or trying to move in a new direction, after pursuing a different path for their B.A. degree. Latin American Studies allows students to rethink career plans and redirect their energies. The thesis allows them to present their abilities in a different light as they go forward for a Ph.D. or an internationally-focused job.
TABLE 5.3 – GRADUATE PROGRAM DATA

2) Current level of demand for employment. In terms of employers we have seen very good results in placement (see Table 5.4 below).

3) Placement of students after graduation. The quality of our students is also demonstrated by the excellent Ph.D. programs they are recruited into when they receive their M.A.s and related achievements. Institutions such as Emory, Rutgers and University of Maryland praise the quality of training received by these students at KU and are especially impressed by the theses based on primary research done in the field. Previous alumni are now Professors at Vanderbilt, Rice, Arkansas, Long Beach, Truman State, Johnson County Community College, KU, University of Sao Paulo in Brazil, University of Kansas, and the University of Costa Rica. Others have joined the Foreign Service, gone into international business, work for the military, or work in non-instructional positions at universities. Secondary teaching is also a popular choice. Almost without exception the students find positions that utilize their training in Latin American Studies.

TABLE 5.4 – GRADUATE PROGRAM PLACEMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CENTER OF LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Placement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary/Secondary Education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Government</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Government</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Study</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Organization (in U.S.)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Organization (non-U.S.)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Sector (Prof.)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Sector (Non-Prof.)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State / Local Government</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Military</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total of Graduates (36/44, or 82%)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CLAS data

D. OVERALL PROGRAM QUALITY
CLAS has awarded M.A. degrees since 1970 and was given national recognition by being designated and funded by U.S. Department of Education as a Comprehensive National Resource Center on Latin America from 1983-1988 and again from 1994-2006. Three times we have been awarded three-year Tinker Field Research Grants to fund graduate student research in Latin America (1995-1998, 2000-2003, and 2008-2010). A US State Department University Linkage Grant (KU/Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, Lima, Peru) for 2003-2006 brought 23 different Peruvian scholars to KU for individual stays and for a 3 day conference in 2006. This grant also brought a number of graduate students into close contact with Peruvian professors who encouraged them to do research in Peru.

Since 2003 our M.A. students have been recruited with several years of guaranteed support to Ph.D. programs at UC Davis, UC Santa Cruz, Rutgers, Emory University, University of Maryland, University of Florida, University of Texas and University of South Florida. Some students (after completion of the PhD) have garnered prestigious positions at universities and in the public and private spheres, almost without exception utilizing their knowledge from Latin American Studies. AIMS data shows high levels of overall satisfaction related to the CLAS M.A. program and the student exit questionnaires emphasize the very positive learner outcomes mentioned above. Nevertheless, they also point out the problems related to insufficient funds to support graduate students and difficulties in class scheduling because courses are sometimes not available. I would rank the Program as “Exceptional,” except for the problem of graduate funding; in that category we must be ranked as “Poor.”
Executive summary

Mission
As an interdisciplinary Center, LAS provides a way for faculty interested in Latin America to coordinate teaching, grants, and events of common interest. LAS offers both a major (B.A.) and a minor at the undergraduate level, and an M.A., a joint M.A./M.B.A., and graduate certificates, in Mexican & Central American Studies and Brazilian Studies, at the graduate level. When funded by external grants, LAS provides resources to Latin American and International faculty across KU, including support for conferences, lectures, research/conference travel, library resources, adjunct faculty, academic year and summer fellowships for graduate students, and as a forum for contact with other faculty working in the same geographic area. Many of our resources, including our video collection and trunks of cultural artifacts, are loaned to teachers throughout the US for educational purposes.

Faculty
The only budgeted LAS faculty member is Anita Herzfeld, Full Professor. Her position as Undergraduate Advisor for LAS resulted in an increase in the number of undergraduate majors, from about 10 in 1995 (when she started), to 53 in 2007, to 29 in 2010 (we note that the number has decreased since she began phased retirement in 2008). Other LAS faculty include Laura Herlihy, currently a lecturer, who teaches LAA 100, 332, 503, and a lesser taught language, Miskito. The 101 faculty affiliated with our program span 8 schools and 22 departments and many of them regularly offer classes with Latin American content. All faculty hold Ph.D.s and are fluent in Spanish or Portuguese, or the Creole or indigenous languages, as their expertise may require. Most make yearly trips to the field and have spent substantial amounts of time in Latin America carrying out research. Many have obtained grants from Fulbright, National Endowment of the Humanities, National Science Foundation, Social Science Research Council, and the Hall Center for the Humanities, among others. The diversity of faculty involved in the program is an important strength.

Programs
BA: The Center of Latin American Studies offers the BA and a Minor in LAS. In addition to requiring language ability for the major, the Center encourages an interdisciplinary approach whereby students learn about Latin American cultures from the perspectives of anthropology, history, political science, geography, environmental studies, indigenous nations, sociology, cultural studies, teaching and leadership, economics, business, and other fields in which KU employs faculty with regional expertise. The BA degree is designed to provide a broad academic background with a regional focus, usually in conjunction with a second major in a specific discipline and a mastery of Spanish and Portuguese or other languages spoken in Latin America. The program enables students to take courses in a variety of departments as part of their plan of study, and lays the foundation for graduate work. Students may pursue graduation with honors.

The minor in LAS was approved in 2005 and consists of 18 hours of credit, 6 hours of which must be taken from the core classes offered in LAS and the remaining 12 hours must be chosen from the list of courses approved for Latin American Studies at the junior/senior level. There is no language requirement in addition to that of the College.

Master’s degrees: We have offered the interdisciplinary M.A. program in LAS since 1970. Today, it also includes two graduate certificate programs, one on Mexico & Central America and
another on Brazil, and a joint M.B.A.-M.A. with the School of Business. The M.A. program provides students with preparation in a pertinent language and interdisciplinary courses on Latin America focusing on thematic areas of interest. Students have flexibility in choosing their courses and work with the LAS Graduate Adviser to create a coherent and focused program of study. Student interests may range widely, from politics and economics or business, to literature, history and culture, geography, environmental studies, and biology.

There are two types of M.A. degrees in LAS, one requires a thesis and the other does not. The non-thesis option is a degree particularly suitable for a career in the public or private sector, while the thesis degree is most appropriate as preparation for a doctoral program. Field research and intensive language programs in Latin America are opportunities that are a major draw for the program.

Between one-third and one-half of our M.A. graduates go on to Ph.D. programs at KU or other universities. Other graduates become high school teachers, take positions with the US government or international agencies, work with international businesses or NGOs in Latin America, or work with Hispanic migrants to the US. The new M.B.A./M.A. is still small, but offers exciting possibilities.

Changes as a Result of the Review Process

Reviews have noted that we are understaffed and rely too heavily on adjunct faculty and graduate students to cover courses. We are exploring alternative ways of staffing some courses and revising the requirements for the major, while still maintaining our strengths. We are also developing a capstone course for the BA. We are considering a collaborative core course for the M.A. degree that is comparative, international, or methods based, with a service-learning component, to strengthen communication and ties with other academic units in the university while connecting with community groups outside the university. On the international front, the study abroad program with the Autonomous University on the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua will offer new opportunities for graduate students to study the language and cultures of the Miskito Coast. We are also working with the University of Costa Rica to promote faculty and graduate student study and research opportunities to reinforce the historic KU-UCR partnership. We have recently put updated governance structures into place with the participation of core faculty, redesigned the website, publicized the research clusters we sponsor, and conducted a very successful Model Organization of American States class, culminating in a trip to Washington, DC.

Overall evaluation

The enormous strength of our program combines: 1) very strong and unique library collections on Latin America; 2) our very highly ranked Spanish & Portuguese department plus indigenous languages and linguistics; 3) with breadth across disciplines and professional schools related to Latin America. These strengths are especially notable with respect to Central America and Brazil, and we have an increasing focus on the Andean area. Within other disciplines, our strongest areas are History, Anthropology, Geography, Political Science, Environmental Studies, and tropical Biology. The existence of a Title VI-funded Center for International Business Education and Research in the Business School also lends strength. The B.A. degree provides an excellent interdisciplinary grounding in Latin American Studies, in addition to Study Abroad and language immersion experiences and the MA prepares students for a variety of international careers.