

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC

MEMORANDUM

To: Senate

From: D. Gagan, Chair 
Senate Committee on Academic Planning

Subject: Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies

Date: May 15, 1996

Action undertaken by the Senate Committee on Academic Planning at its meetings of May 1, 1996 and May 8, 1996 gives rise to the following motions:

"That Senate approve and recommend approval to the Board of Governors, as set forth in S.96 -47 , the following motions:

- 1) "That the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies be dissolved, effective September 1, 1996."
- 2) "That a Program in Latin American Studies be established, with responsibility for the current graduate and undergraduate programs in Latin American Studies."
- 3) "That the (LAS) Program Steering Committee will conduct a review of the present undergraduate and graduate curricula within the new administrative context and, within one year, will bring forward the results of that review, together with any recommendations for change, to SCAP through the Faculty Curriculum Committees, SCUS and SGSC."
- 4) "That responsibility for Spanish language acquisition courses and for Spanish literature courses be moved to the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies. An Academic Steering Committee will conduct a review of the present Spanish programs within the new administrative context and, within one year, will bring forward the results of that review, together with any recommendations for change, to SCAP through the Faculty of Arts Curriculum Committee and SCUS."

SCAP also approved a motion that the Dean of Arts and the Dean of Graduate Studies make every possible effort to assist the graduate students currently within the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies to finish their studies in a supportive environment.

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts
MEMORANDUM

To: David Gagan
Chair, SCAP

From: Evan Alderson
Dean of Arts

Subject: Department of Spanish and
Latin American Studies

Date: March 21, 1996

On behalf of the Faculty of Arts, I am proposing the dissolution of the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies, and a number of accompanying structural changes, including the creation of a Program in Latin American Studies and the transfer of Spanish language courses and Spanish literature courses to the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies. Under this proposal the existing graduate program in Latin American Studies would continue, as would existing joint major programs in Latin American Studies and in Spanish. The independent major programs in Spanish and in Latin American Studies would be phased out. Concomitant with these changes, if approved, I will recommend to the Board of Governors the relocation of all faculty in the current department to other departments and programs or to the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies, with provision for teaching in Latin American Studies and elsewhere as needed and appropriate.

As might be imagined, there is a substantial history leading to these recommendations. I am attaching the concise history of events that I sent to all faculty in the Faculty of Arts as background to the ballot I distributed last month, also attached. That ballot passed the Faculty by a very large majority. I can of course provide additional documentation on the background events if so requested by SCAP. What is more germane I believe is to clarify the issues central to this proposal, some of which may have become clouded through various discussions in the University.

(1) Proposal for the Dissolution of Spanish and Latin American Studies

I believe that there is virtually no dispute by those close to the Department about the need to dismantle the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies as it currently exists. The question is what should replace it.

Although several voices from both inside and outside the University have been raised in defense of the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies, the disciplines it represents and the quality and importance of its programs, those closer to the history of the Department are I believe on the whole in agreement that the Department itself has not worked well in practice and is presently unable to act as a single coherent unit. The

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Department at present includes faculty with special expertise in Spanish literature, others with expertise in Spanish language and linguistics, and Latin Americanists from varying disciplinary backgrounds, plus five active Associate Members from other departments with expertise in Latin American Studies. It was founded with the idea that these different specializations could be drawn together to create an innovative and interdisciplinary academic program. Attractive as that idea was, and is, its realization at Simon Fraser for whatever reasons has proved unworkable. If the problems that have developed were simply matters of departmental governance the various attempts to repair things might have worked, but issues of governance have been intricately interwoven with profound differences of academic perspectives and allegiances and significant deficiencies in collegial relations.

(2) Latin American Studies

Given both the need for change and the will to maintain and if possible enhance valuable academic programs, I at first thought that the dissolution of the current department could most appropriately be accompanied by the creation of a Department of Latin American Studies. Most though not all of the faculty in the current department have teaching interests directly related to Latin American Studies and this core is enhanced by significant expertise in other departments. It was clear that the creation of a new department would be a satisfactory resolution to the majority of those in the department and to many students. I established an ad hoc committee to develop a "blueprint" for the creation of a new department and the residual changes that would be required. After examining the situation with care, this committee did eventually concur with its mandate by recommending that a department be created, but it did so with significant reservations, warning in particular that new resources would be necessary to create a viable unit.

After further careful reflection I have decided not to recommend the creation of a new department at this time. I am not in a position to guarantee new resources or even the maintenance of resources recently available to the Department. In the current budget climate it seems to me unwise to replace one relatively small department with an even smaller department which may be of insufficient size and breadth. I believe that it is possible to maintain the most important and attractive academic programs connected with the current department in other ways, most particularly through the creation of a Program in Latin American Studies. Such a program would not need to house the Spanish language program which serves it and other units; it could make efficient use of expertise available in the Faculty; it could sustain the current graduate program, with modest changes, and continue core undergraduate programming.

Such an approach has the further advantage of providing an opportunity for Latin American Studies to re-establish itself as an independent unit on the basis of the positive and collegial energies of those who wish to be involved. This will equitably allow all the current faculty to either attach

themselves to the new unit or pursue their academic goals elsewhere. Most tenure-track faculty have received indications that they will be welcomed into existing regular departments and programs in the Faculty of Arts. The academic appointments of some individuals will be transferred to the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies. In all these arrangements provision will be made for teaching in the Latin American Studies Program as required to meet student needs and provide a diversity of offerings at the undergraduate level and to run the graduate program. I believe that by these means effective programs in Latin American Studies can be sustained, but on a significantly more cost-effective basis than previously.

I am recommending two changes to the academic programs in Latin American Studies. The first of these is the elimination of the independent major in Latin American Studies while maintaining the several joint major programs now in place. The ad hoc committee observed that last semester there were 11 students undertaking the major, while 31 were enrolled in joint majors, and recommended dropping the major program. The advantage of a joint major is that it insures that an "area studies" approach is accompanied by a disciplinary grounding in a related field. As well as representing the apparent preference of students, it seems the most appropriate concentration for the proposed organizational structure.

The second change I am recommending concerns the graduate program, although this does not require a specific action by Senate. During the summer of 1995 the Department agreed to some reorientation of the graduate program. I have asked Dean Clayman to defer admissions to the existing graduate program for one year in order that required changes can be put in place. I have also strongly recommended consideration of a system of biennial admissions, so that the program can serve an entering cohort effectively and efficiently. The one-year delay in admissions will also enable faculty to focus on helping the rather large number of graduate students now enrolled to complete their work.

(3) Spanish Language

Under the proposal to establish a Department of Latin American Studies it seemed most appropriate to place the Spanish language acquisition courses there. However, the case for subsuming Spanish language instruction within a Latin American Studies Program structure is not persuasive. Spanish language acquisition courses serve not only Latin American Studies, but also Spanish literature students and a wide general audience. The language program can readily be housed within the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies, which is the home for courses in a number of languages. The Division is expected to play a significant role in facilitating the development of language instruction in relation to the new language laboratory and instructional opportunities at Harbour Centre. I believe the Spanish language program can serve its various constituencies very effectively from that base.

(4) Spanish Literature

Most of the existing courses in Spanish literature will also be moved to the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies, with provision for maintaining the current joint major and minor programs. The ad hoc committee recommended abandoning altogether the opportunity to concentrate in Spanish literature at Simon Fraser, on the grounds that a major program is available at UBC and that the critical mass of faculty and students are not likely to be available to maintain an independent program over the long term. My own sense is that the joint majors, with French and with Latin American Studies, can quite reasonably be sustained in response to student interest. Linkages to the study of other European literatures can be encouraged within Interdisciplinary Studies and the Humanities Program.

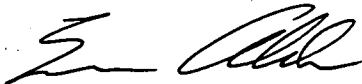
(5) Conclusion

Several members of the present department are understandably unhappy with these recommendations. They would prefer that Latin American Studies be granted the status of an independent department, and that all current programs be maintained. In various appeals to the community a number of procedural issues have been raised concerning the genesis of these recommendations, some of which imply that I have proceeded arbitrarily in this matter without due consultation and departmental assent. I believe on the contrary that there has been a long history of efforts to assist the department to find a direction it could collectively and constructively pursue. If simpler solutions had proved possible I would have welcomed them.

My various responses to ongoing difficulties are outlined in my memo to the Faculty of Arts. It was only at the end of a long process that I concluded that the present department is not viable. Thereafter, I have attempted to find a restructuring that is financially sustainable and academically justifiable, that meets student needs and interests as fully as possible under current circumstances, and that in my judgement provides the most positive available opportunity for all faculty involved. I do not pretend that all of these recommendations have the assent of the majority of the Department. The Faculty of Arts on the other hand has concurred with my view that the proposals represent the most academically responsible course of action at this time. I therefore propose to the Senate Committee on Academic Planning the following motions:

- (i) that a Program in Latin American Studies be established, with responsibility for the current graduate and undergraduate programs in Latin American Studies. Curriculum changes to be brought forward by the Program will include the phasing out of the major in Latin American Studies.

- (ii) that responsibility for Spanish language acquisition courses and for Spanish literature courses be moved to the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies. Curriculum changes to be brought forward will include the phasing out of the current Spanish major.
- (iii) that the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies be dissolved, effective September 1, 1996.



Evan Alderson
Dean, Faculty of Arts

EA/jm:

copy:
J. Stubbs
B. Clayman
Faculty & Staff SLAS

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts
MEMORANDUM

To: All Faculty and Staff
Department of Spanish and
Latin American Studies

From: Evan Alderson
Dean of Arts

Subject: Proposed Dissolution of SLAS **Date:** March 21, 1996

This is to inform you that I have today forwarded the attached recommendations to the Senate Committee on Academic Planning. I have also advised Vice-President Gagan to provide opportunity for representations to SCAP from members of the Department prior to concluding its deliberations.


Evan Alderson

EA/jm:

copy:
D. Gagan —



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts
MEMORANDUM

To: All Faculty
Faculty of Arts

From: Evan Alderson
Dean of Arts

Subject: Dissolution of the Department
of Spanish and Latin American
Studies and related changes

Date: February 19, 1996

I am asking all faculty in the Faculty of Arts to vote on my proposal for the dissolution of the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies and for a major restructuring of the academic programs it has offered. If a majority vote of the Faculty approves of this proposal, I will forward the recommendations to Senate. Please return the attached ballot by Wednesday, March 6.

This proposal follows upon a long process of deliberation, including several stages of administrative review and formal and informal consultation with members of the Department. In what follows here, I set out a concise description of events leading to this recommendation and outline the proposed changes and reasons for them.

As many of you are aware, the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies was formed some years ago as a merger of the Latin American Studies Program and the Spanish Division of the old Department of Languages, Literatures and Linguistics. At the time the merger seemed to be a good way to advance the academic interests of both units and to provide for the development of a coherent and forward-looking interdisciplinary department. Unfortunately, the new department has not worked well in practice. Despite the signal achievement of implementing a new M.A. in Latin American Studies, the Department has not developed as a cohesive and collegial enterprise. Not surprisingly, there are differing views as to the causes of the difficulties, but there is a widely shared perception that the current situation cannot continue.

I have taken a variety of actions to attempt to improve the situation over the past year and a half. Early in the Fall of 1994 I appointed an ad hoc Review Committee of Professors Roger Blackman of Psychology and Santa Aloï of Contemporary Arts to "review the current operations and directions of the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies." While that review was in progress the Chair of the department resigned. I then followed one of the major recommendations of the Review Committee in appointing an Acting Chair from outside the Department for an eight month term. Dr. Blackman took on that task from January to August 1995. During that time some progress was made in securing agreement on how to refocus the graduate program, but at the end of it the Department was unable to find a Chair from among its own members.

Given the inability of the Department to govern itself in the normal way, I struck a new ad hoc committee to propose in detail an alternative organization which would involve the dissolution of the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies and the creation of a new Department of Latin American Studies. This committee included the new externally appointed Acting Chair, Dr. Maureen Covell of Political Science, and Dr. William Cleveland of History and was chaired by Associate Dean Andrea Lebowitz. The work of this committee included consultation with the Department but it was also influenced by the gathering budgetary storm clouds of last semester. Although the Committee did present a plan for a new department, it warned that the viability of the plan was "heavily dependent on the availability of new resources."

After receiving the ad hoc Committee's final report and comments on it from department members, and in light of the increasing severity of the budget prospects and other considerations, I put before department members an opinion ballot that included the Committee's recommendations and my own alternative suggestions. My suggestions included returning Latin American Studies to the original model of an interdisciplinary program, without departmental status or separate faculty appointments, but maintaining the graduate program and undergraduate joint majors.

The outcome of the opinion ballot was decisive in one regard. Almost without exception the Faculty and Associate Members of Spanish and Latin American Studies found the committee's recommendation for dissolution of the present department to be a "preferred" or "acceptable" outcome ("Preferred"- 10; "Acceptable"- 3; "Unacceptable"- 1). A majority of those voting preferred the creation of a new Department of Latin American Studies but just as many found the alternative of a program either "acceptable" or "preferred" as found it "unacceptable." The vote on other matters followed from their general preference for the establishment of a new department with dedicated faculty appointments. A majority wished Spanish language acquisition courses to be included within the new department, and Spanish literature programs to be maintained outside it.

I have considered the range of opinions in the formal ballot and additional representations made to me, particularly by students and faculty associated with Latin American Studies. The recommendations on the attached Faculty-wide ballot are essentially in accord with the "alternative suggestions" I put forward to the Department. I outline my reasoning here:

- 1) There appears to be nearly universal agreement that the present department should be disbanded. Once that decision is taken, the question as to what should replace it must necessarily be addressed from both academic and budgetary perspectives.
- 2) I very much support the continuation of academically strong programs in Latin American Studies at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. At the same time, I believe that such programs should be focused in such a

way as to be sustainable with relatively modest resources. Pressures to build faculty numbers in relation to the perceived needs of a discipline rather than demonstrated student demand should be resisted, as should the development of a disproportionately large graduate program. Although it has been argued that anything less than departmental status would be demoralizing to the Latin Americanists and potentially damaging to the academic programs, I see a program structure for Latin American Studies as appropriate under current restraints. An academically and administratively successful program could seek departmental status at a later time.

- 3) I am now unable to devote new resources to Latin American Studies and cannot guarantee replacements for positions that become vacant. A small department is inherently less efficient than a program which can draw on expertise from elsewhere. It has been argued that I should consider an alternative model under which any excess teaching capacity within the Department could be loaned to other departments, but my analysis of the historical relationship between teaching capacity and student demand in the present department does not inspire confidence that such a system would be highly efficient. Given the ability of our Latin Americanists to teach productively in other departments, I believe that Latin American Studies should draw upon teaching capacity as needed, and not as secured within a departmental structure. The overall savings to the University will arise primarily from a more efficient match between student numbers and faculty availability. Modest additional savings will be available through administrative restructuring.
- 4) Although the ad hoc Committee recommended that Spanish language instruction be kept within the new Department of Latin American Studies, the argument for associating it directly with a program is much less strong. I believe the Spanish language program could more effectively serve its various purposes, including service to LAS students and to Spanish literature students and to all those interested in Spanish language acquisition, as part of a co-ordinated approach to language teaching within Interdisciplinary Studies.
- 5). Given the necessity for change, I believe that each part of the current department, as well as all its faculty and students, should be given some opportunity for refocusing and renewal. My intention is to provide the most constructive opportunities for all affected faculty and students that I believe can be sustained under current circumstances.

Evan Alderson
Dean of Arts

EA/jm:
Copy:
J.Stubbs
D.Gagan
B.Clayman

BALLOT

DEAN'S PROPOSAL TO RESTRUCTURE SPANISH AND LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

- 1) The Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies will be disbanded.
- 2) Faculty members in the Department will be assigned to other units, with provision for teaching in the Latin American Studies program, the Spanish language program, and Spanish literature courses as appropriate.
- 3) A Program in Latin American Studies will be established, to be governed by a Director and a Steering Committee, and with responsibility for graduate and undergraduate programs in Latin American Studies.
- 4) New admissions to the graduate program are to be deferred to the 1997-98 academic year, subject to revisions and consideration of a system of biennial admissions.
- 5) The undergraduate program in Latin American Studies will include the minor and existing joint majors, with the understanding that the curriculum will be reviewed and revised by the Steering Committee. The independent major program in Latin American Studies will be phased out. The Latin American Studies Field School will be continued.
- 6). A selection of the existing Spanish Literature courses (as identified by the ad hoc Committee) will be moved to the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies. The minor and existing joint major programs will be retained, subject to revisions, but the independent major program in Spanish will be phased out. Continuation of these programs will be contingent upon the availability of resources and sufficient faculty and student interest.
- 7). Courses relating directly to Spanish language acquisition will be moved to the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies. Most of the existing courses relating to Spanish linguistics will be dropped. The Certificate in Spanish Language Proficiency will be retained.

☐ AGREE

☐ DISAGREE

☐ ABSTAIN

Enclose your ballot in the small envelope, place it in the larger addressed envelope, print your name in the left-hand corner, and return to the Office of the Dean of Arts by 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 6, 1996

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts
MEMORANDUM

To: Alison Watt
Secretary, SCAP

From: Evan Alderson
Dean of Arts

Subject: Department of Spanish &
Latin American Studies

Date: April 24, 1996

I believe it may be useful for members of SCAP to have before them some documentary background to my initial submission regarding the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies. I am appending the following documents:

- 1) Tally sheet of Faculty of Arts ballot on restructuring of the Department of Latin American Studies.
- 2) Memo to all members of Spanish and Latin American Studies of January 9, 1996 and accompanying "Opinion Ballot", with tally sheets appended.
- 3) Memo to All Members of the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies of December 7, 1995 and the accompanying "Report of the Ad hoc Committee".
- 4) Memos to the Department of September 20 and August 11, 1995.
- 5) The final report of the "Ad hoc Review Committee (Aloi/Blackman) dated November 29, 1994.

Members of SCAP should also be aware that President Stubbs, Vice-President Gagan and I have received numerous letters and e-mails from individuals and institutions external to the University protesting, variously, "closing the program in Latin American Studies at Simon Fraser University"; "the proposed dissolution of the Latin American Studies Department at SFU"; "the dissolution of the University's Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies and the downsizing of its Latin American Studies Program." I have also received several representations from current students. I am also forwarding the one substantial student petition I have received, dated February 21, 1996.



Evan Alderson
Dean, Faculty of Arts

EA/jm:

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BALLOT

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AGREE 118

DISAGREE 31

ABSTAIN 6

Scrutineers:

Richard M. Coe

Boole

Date: 6 March 1996

E-mail: slassu-executiv@sfu.ca

Date: February 21, 1996

From: SLASSU

Re: Pending Decision on SLAS Department's Future

We would like to express our position as regards the above unresolved matter, which is still provoking confusion and demoralization amongst undergraduate students, faculty and staff in SLAS. Confusion because, as time passes, no one knows what to expect, and demoralization, because of the uncertainty of the situation. We are deeply concerned that this situation is further damaging the future feasibility of the programs offered by the SLAS department which will be kept after its restructure.

SLASSU has been carrying out, to the best of its ability, a campaign of support for a planned dissolution of the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies and the creation of a new Department of Latin American studies, which would house the existing LAS undergraduate degrees, MA program, and the Spanish language instruction. During the last two week of January we collected signatures from students who supported our position. Please see enclosed. We based our campaign on your initial position, expressed when you appointed the ad-hoc committee, and the feedback we have received from SLAS students.

Our main concerns with an alternative to a LAS department are those related to accessibility to courses for LAS undergraduate students. In answers to the questionnaire distributed by SLASSU last November, we agreed that LAS courses offered by other departments were too infrequent and irregular to allow proper planning of our course load. Also, for us to register in courses outside our department we have to ask for waivers on pre-requisites, which are not always issued. Furthermore, in-house students have priority over LAS students, thus, we often end on waiting lists. Under these circumstances, the avenues left for us are to take as many of the courses offered by the SLAS department as possible, which do not vary much from term to term, or to switch degrees.

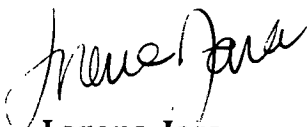
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Considering the current situation, we sincerely do not see how an interdisciplinary program with no home faculty could improve it. Especially when we see that, as a consequence of the freeze placed on contracts due to budget cuts, the LAS program is on the verge of losing a highly qualified Latinamericanist, Dr. Corard Herold, whose expertise on Latin American Economy and Brazil has greatly enhanced our studies and that of the graduate students in the department. Moreover, the History department will soon lose its Latinamericanists to retirement, who may not be replaced, also due to budget cuts.

We are very aware of the situation brought about by government budget cuts, and of the many limitations it imposes on the creation of a new department. On the other hand, the structure for a future LAS department already exists in SLAS, and options, such as sharing in-house faculty resources amongst others, are feasible solutions. Improvements to the SFU's LAS programs rely on a team effort from Latinamericanists working closely together. This key closeness would be provided by a department structure and a strong commitment from the administration to its success.

We would not be asking for a department, if we did not believe that the increasing ties between Canada and Latin America call for more Canadians specialized in the region. In terms of attracting future students, SFU should have the competitive advantage of offering the only LAS department with an MA program in Canada. It will be a lost opportunity for SFU if it steps down from its commitment by creating an interdisciplinary LAS program, instead of building on what it already has and creates a LAS department.

Sincerely,



Lorena Jara
Chair of SLASSU
(604)254-6278
jara@sfu.ca

Encl.

Attached were petitions with approximately 830 signatures.

FINAL

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY MEMORANDUM

To: All members of Spanish
and Latin American Studies

From: Santa Aloï
Roger Blackman

Subject: Ad hoc Review Committee Date: November 29th, 1994
Final Report

Attached is the final report of the Ad Hoc Review Committee.

We received feedback from five core faculty members, one associate faculty member, one graduate student and the graduate caucus, and one staff member. We have considered your thoughtful and sometimes provocative comments and made a number of changes to the report (signalled by vertical bars in the left margin).

We want to address here a criticism made by a number of respondents: that we have simply "told [SLAS] to solve our own problems," and that we are "throwing the ball back into the departmental court." Coupled with observations that SLAS has clearly demonstrated its inability to solve its own problems, the pessimistic conclusion offered by these critics is that nothing will change.

We are indeed tempted to be more directive or prescriptive in our recommendations, particularly since we each have developed a personal sense of the right thing to do on at least some of the issues facing SLAS. However, we have resisted that temptation for the following reasons (listed in order of increasing importance):

- It is beyond our mandate to prescribe specific solutions for substantive (as distinct from procedural) problems;
- We lack the disciplinary knowledge needed to make any such substantive prescriptions cogent and compelling;
- We do not believe that the fundamental problem is that SLAS cannot figure out its own solutions; rather, it is that there is insufficient trust and tolerance in the department to implement those solutions;
- Externally imposed prescriptions might provide some short-term relief but would do little to solve the fundamental problem.

The only real long-term hope for SLAS is that in working through the issues that face it - and surely not all the issues are contentious and divisive - a *modus vivendi* will emerge that ensures the department's survival and gives it the opportunity to flourish. It would be naive to think that all hatchets will be buried, grudges forgotten, and enemies transmuted into friends. But it is not unrealistic to hope that accommodations can be reached that allow people with different experiences, skills and aspirations to co-exist within a single administrative unit. If this hope is not realized, despite sincere and concerted efforts by those involved, then the experiment should be declared a failure and appropriate administrative action taken.

But no-one will say that it was for want of trying!

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Contemporary Arts

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CC: Evan Alderson, Dean of Arts
Andrea Lebowitz, A/Chair SLAS

DEPARTMENT of SPANISH and LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

FINAL REPORT

of the

ad hoc REVIEW COMMITTEE

Professor Santa Aloï

School of Contemporary Arts

Professor Roger Blackman

Department of Psychology

Submitted to the members of the SLAS community

November 29, 1994

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 COMMITTEE MANDATE

In a memorandum to the faculty of the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies on September 10th, the Dean of Arts announced that he had struck an *ad hoc* Review Committee of Professors Roger Blackman of Psychology and Santa Aloï of Contemporary Arts to "review the current operations and directions of the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies." The terms of reference of the Review Committee were

"To consult extensively with members of the Department and with others as they deem appropriate in order to:

1. advise the Chair on ways to improve administrative procedures in the Department;
2. advise the Department on effective modes of departmental governance;
3. advise the Dean and the Department on effective ways to establish and pursue appropriate long-term objectives for the Department." In addition:
4. "Should the committee identify matters outside these terms of reference which in its view require attention, it may recommend to the Department or the Dean means by which these matters should be addressed."

1.2 CONSULTATION

In the last two months we have jointly conducted individual interviews with all nine core SLAS faculty members (some more than once), all five associate faculty members, six of seven language/sessional instructors, all three office staff members, eight of seventeen graduate students (including all five committee/assembly representatives), and three additional persons. We did not solicit written input, but received and read some documents that were submitted to us.

It is important to note the extraordinary degree of cooperation that we received. No-one declined to speak to us, and very few seemed defensive or reluctant. Most welcomed the opportunity to reflect on administrative issues

in SLAS, and seemed genuinely appreciative of our efforts. Since we knew we would have very little opportunity to verify what SLAS members told us during interviews, we were obliged to treat everything at face value. This does not mean that we uncritically treated it as true. Rather, we accepted it as that particular member's description of events. We expected that the picture of departmental life that emerged would be in varying degrees rich, complex, confusing and contradictory. After 30 hours of interviews, the picture was certainly rich and complex. Initial confusion was greatly reduced as we were able to cross-check impressions across interviews and to clarify our uncertain grasp of events and issues. Surprisingly, perhaps, there were relatively few contradictions. Of course, different individuals with shared experiences often recalled and interpreted them in contrasting terms. But as outsiders without bias we believe we now have an accurate picture of the SLAS Department's current administrative situation, and are aware of the forces that shaped it. Our vision cannot be perfect, but we doubt that our impressions are badly distorted.

1.3 THE CURRENT MALAISE

Created from the Latin American Studies program then housed in the Faculty of interdisciplinary Studies and the Spanish component of the old Department of Languages, Literatures and Linguistics in the Faculty of Arts, the SLAS department has a legacy of tensions and uncomfortable accommodations. The "marriage of convenience" established as a result of PACUP cuts in the mid-1980s has provided both a challenge and an opportunity to the members of this department. SLAS got off to a good start in establishing a core program and introducing such successful innovations as the LAS Field School. Moreover, in some areas the Spanish and LAS programs meshed well. However, there have remained areas of considerable friction between the two partners in this marriage.

Although there is apparently good will on the part of most individuals, and while each of the people we interviewed was initially optimistic at the prospects for SLAS, things have lately gone badly wrong. Just how bad is the situation? Suffice it to note that in 94-1, one-third of the core faculty were on medical leave that was in two cases characterized as stress-related, and many other members reported experiencing substantial anguish related to departmental strife. We have also been told that almost all of the new MA students have seriously considered withdrawing from the program in this their first semester.

If we believed that the blame for this state of affairs could be laid at the door of just one or two "evildoers," this report would have been much shorter. Such is not the case. Some members of the department have acted in good faith, attempting to steer a rational and balanced middle course through the controversies surrounding them. Unfortunately, others have behaved in ways that range from unhelpful to thoroughly unprofessional. These regrettable actions have occurred in a context of academic and scholarly disagreements, employment insecurity, conflicting political cultures, contrasting leadership styles, and impoverished resources. It would have taken remarkably strong leadership to steer the department safely through such stormy weather. In the event, negative forces vitiated the department's excellent potential.

1.4 DETERMINING FACTORS

It seems to us that there are a number of historical reasons for the problems of governance in the SLAS department. In the breakup of DLLL, the already small and somewhat bruised Spanish division suffered a further setback in the subsequent loss of half its number. Although linking the Spanish division and the LAS program within a single new department can be seen as a bold and imaginative step, the continued sense of insecurity both of programs and positions has left its mark in the department. While the situation varies, a considerable number of the faculty and teaching staff continue to feel that their positions or programs are threatened.

The SLAS constitution declares its "goal of integrating the study, teaching and research of Hispanic Language, Linguistics and Literature with the interdisciplinary study, teaching and research related to the peoples and cultures of Latin America." It seems to us, however, that there has been no concerted commitment to unity of purpose in this merger. In the absence of a reasonably clear and broadly supported mission, academic turf battles have occurred that are intense, hurtful and potentially destructive of the program.

The fault lines in the department run along several quite different dimensions. The separation embedded in the constitution between Spanish and Latin American Studies is only one of several that have become a source of friction, particularly of late. The perception among some is that "interdisciplinarity" in the context of this department means the integration of Hispanic and language studies with Latin American Studies. Others see Latin American Studies as interdisciplinary per se, and see Spanish as one of several disciplines from which to view Latin America.

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While the split between social sciences and humanities is not rigid, some people have suggested that, especially on the graduate level, the social sciences perspective is the most valid one and that serious work in the humanities is tangential to the department's mission. Beside academic fissures, personal alliances, post-colonial political tensions and class resentments also seem to have split the department.

In addition to disagreement on focus and academic turf, certain problems characteristic of small and new departments have intensified the pressure in SLAS. Much work has been done to build programs, devise and teach courses, and establish administrative structures. In the early years of the department, considerable strides were made in putting into place the basic building blocks intended to provide a solid basis for departmental growth. These were impressive achievements since they occurred in a time of economic constraint, when small and new departments faced a particularly daunting challenge in tackling these tasks with minimal faculty and staff resources.

To these sources of stress we must add another, more insidious force - unprofessional conduct. Whether or not it is the case, the department is perceived by many of its members to be rife with authoritarianism, clientilism, and harassment. Most members feel that administrative decisions are not being made openly and fairly. Department morale is low and members show little respect or trust for each other. Old friends feel betrayed; faculty, staff and students are fearful of being seen with "someone in the other camp." Although members have been urged by the Dean to separate the personal from the political and the academic, this seems to have been unachievable to date.

2. THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR

2.1 APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL CHAIR

Even in the best of circumstances, it is a substantial challenge for an external chair to take over a department. In SLAS in 1992, the circumstances were much less than optimal. This was an historically unruly department that demanded a lot of its administrators. Lack of clerical support or a full-time departmental assistant was also a handicap. All past chairs had complained about the inadequacy of university support for the department in this regard. The economic constriction of the past few years has

left its mark on all programs. However, it has been particularly hard in a new department that depends on growth in order to fulfill its potential. Although the university supported the development of SLAS by establishing two senior positions, there is a consistent perception that it did not provide for enough infrastructure support.

2.2 EROSION OF SUPPORT

Our interviews yielded two opposed perceptions of what went awry in the administration of the department over the last few semesters. We offer the following characterization of these two positions. On the one hand, we were told that a small minority of existing SLAS members opposed the chair's appointment from the start. This minority, aided by a recently appointed senior faculty member who has since left, allegedly set about undermining the chair's authority and thwarting his plans. Through means foul and fair, it is said, they disrupted departmental business and disparaged the actions and motivations of the chair. Over the last few semesters, this has had the effect of causing several other members to become disaffected with departmental governance. It is argued that this concerted opposition, combined with the administration's failure to supply the resources that were believed to have been committed to SLAS at the time of the chair's appointment (e.g., three faculty positions), are the root causes of the erosion of support for the chair.

On the other hand, we were offered an alternative scenario. It is argued that the chair sought to achieve his ends through means that sometimes were not democratic or even-handed. These critics feel that the chair failed to give due recognition to opinions and arguments that were not consonant with his own. It is suggested that the normal honeymoon period was abbreviated by the chair's lengthy absence from campus just one semester after assuming his appointment. Without strong management skills, it is argued, the chair squandered the credit many had afforded him as an established and visionary researcher who was expected to put the department on the scholarly map.

We were provided with information and argument supporting each of these contrasting scenarios. Since we are neither a fact-finding commission nor an arbitration panel, we are not obliged to choose between them. In fact, we are inclined to accept that each contains some measure of truth, but probably not to the extent that its supporters believe. What is clear from our interviews is that, regardless of which interpretation one supports, there was little or no hope of resolving departmental governance issues under the recently resigned chair.

2.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The department has an acting chair who is holding the fort. We are recommending that an interim chair be appointed for a two-semester period. That person should use his/her experience to defuse tensions and facilitate accommodations between the various departmental factions. We think it best that the interim chair be an outsider, one who has not been personally embroiled in departmental politics. This arrangement would provide the best opportunity for the department to overcome the suspicious and mistrusting inertia that is currently preventing it from moving forward.

2.3.1 As soon as possible, the Dean of Arts should replace the acting chair of SLAS with an interim chair whose term should extend to August 31, 1995 or until the appointment of new department chair, whichever occurs earlier.

2.3.2 The Dean should choose an interim chair who has substantial academic administrative experience at SFU and who is not a current or past member of the SLAS community.

An external chair needs a good deal of help in the early months in order to avoid getting hold of the wrong end of the stick. Lacking institutional experience and/or disciplinary expertise, the chair may inadvertently make mistakes that would have been avoided by a better informed individual. This is one reason why new chairs are afforded a honeymoon period. The honeymoon will be a lot shorter and smoother if the interim chair of SLAS seeks and receives advice from department members. Since that will inevitably occur, it is better that it is done formally than informally, and that members know and approve the identity of those from whom advice is to be regularly sought.

2.3.3 The interim chair should strike a Chair's Advisory Committee that will provide guidance on matters that lie beyond the chair's disciplinary competence; the membership of the CAC should be representative and acceptable to the majority of the department.

The department has to start somewhere in its effort to identify a common purpose. We suggest that the meeting point should be the graduate program (see also Section 4 below). Many members have told us that that is the key issue. Achieving broad support (if not a consensus) on the graduate program will serve a number of important purposes. It will signal the direction in which the department intends to grow. It will reduce uncertainty for current students and provide clearer guidelines for the selection of new

students. And it will indicate the department's willingness and capacity to solve its own problems. If and when the graduate program issue is resolved, the department will be in a better position to tackle the constitution, some provisions of which are currently in abeyance and some of which appear to be hindering rather than facilitating growth.

2.3.4 The interim chair should initiate two tasks. First, the terms of reference of the LAS MA Program should be revisited with the goal of clarifying its focus. Second, the SLAS constitution should be revised so that it embodies principles appropriate for a truly integrated, interdisciplinary and democratic department.

2.3.5 The revised constitution should be subject to ratification by a 2/3 vote of the departmental assembly.

2.3.6 In the event that the revised constitution is not ratified, the interim chair should so advise the Dean; the university should then reconsider the departmental status of SLAS.

2.3.7 The Dean should initiate the search for a new SLAS department chair to take over from the interim chair as soon as feasible.

2.3.8 Since none of the previous SLAS department chairs appears to have sufficient departmental support to warrant another term of office, it is our opinion that none of them should be recommended for the newly advertised position.

2.3.9 Candidates for department chair should be sought who have demonstrated administrative competence and who are committed to the support and development of SLAS as an interdisciplinary department.

3. DEPARTMENTAL DEMOCRACY

3.1 THE DEMOCRATIC TRADITION AT SFU

SFU has a well-established tradition of participatory democracy at all decision-making levels of the institution.

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The department meeting or assembly is the primary decision-making body of the department and unless it delegates authority, the chair has quite limited formal power to make unilateral decisions. In principle, this feature of participatory democracy makes it very cumbersome and time-consuming. In practice, there is a natural tendency for simpler, more pragmatic administrative procedures to emerge over time. Member participation becomes an option rather than an obligation. If the chair keeps members informed on all matters, members will typically respond by allowing the chair considerable freedom to manage departmental business. Part of that freedom is deciding how to handle items of business.

The most efficient and effective manner of handling administrative business is for the department chair, often with advice from colleagues, to decide whether an item of business should go directly to the relevant department committee for the formulation of recommendations, should receive initial discussion at the department assembly, or should be dealt with by the chair. The purpose of initial discussion at an assembly meeting would be to provide general guidance and allow for the expression of differences of opinion that the relevant committee could take into account in formulating specific recommendations.

Ideally, the issues dealt with at the committee level should be widely advertised, fully discussed, and decided after thoughtful and honest consideration. All members should be allowed - even encouraged - to provide input at the committee level. To the extent this happens, much of the hard work will have been done by the time committee recommendations on an issue reach the department assembly. If this process results in much "rubber stamping" by the assembly, that is arguably a good thing since it frees the assembly to deal with more complex matters of policy or action. At the other end of the scale, the chair is free to make a plethora of day-to-day decisions where some action has to be taken, but it is judged that little of importance hangs on the particular choice made.

This style of governance can continue as long as resources are not too scarce, and, more importantly, as long as the chair retains the trust of department members. That trust is quite fragile and can be eroded rapidly, perhaps through the inattention, poor judgement, or even malfeasance of the chair, or perhaps through the actions of members who want to see the department move in a different direction and who choose not to use the democratic process to achieve this goal.

3.2 ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES IN SLAS

Although internecine disputes seem to have been the way of life in SLAS since its inception, the department has nevertheless managed to operate reasonably effectively, at least until the last few semesters. In particular, a constitution was drawn up and ratified, and a new graduate program was created and implemented. Of late, however, administration in SLAS has become increasingly bogged down. With trust and mutual respect greatly diminished, members have looked more and more to the department assembly as the only acceptable arena for the resolution of conflicts. But the assembly has been unable to carry the load. Too much time and energy has been spent on issues that seemed less than important, such as the minutes of the last meeting or the wording of a brochure. No strong hand was available to ensure the orderly conduct of business, and members seemed unable or unwilling to regulate themselves. Most recently, the facade of courtesy and civility that typically cloaks even the fiercest of academic debates has begun to crack.

Most SLAS members deplored this state of affairs. Although attributions varied, many identified lack of openness as a central issue, both as culprit and casualty. When there was a failure to provide timely, written information to all the participants in a decision, it was taken as evidence that some parties were being deliberately excluded from the democratic process. The vehemence of the resulting protests and rebuttals no doubt contributed to making openness a casualty. This was reflected at the interpersonal as well as administrative level. It became harder to deal with interpersonal concerns in a frank and direct manner. Third-party criticizing became more common. The quality of life in the SLAS community was thus further reduced.

Another casualty of the breakdown of the democratic process has been planning. It was made clear to us that SLAS faculty have made a large investment of time and effort over the last 3-4 years developing the mission statement, a key element in any academic department's plan. But where are the fruits of this labour? As we understand it, the motion to adopt the mission statement remains tabled. More mundane aspects of planning have also become bogged down. For example, course assignments are determined only a little in advance, and the scheduling of faculty teaching and research semesters seems haphazard.

We believe that action on the following recommendations is necessary (if not sufficient) for the return of what the recent chair called "normal working conditions" in SLAS. The first recommendation is a general exhortation; the remainder point to procedural improvements to or clarifications of the administrative process.

3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.3.1 *When engaged in departmental administration, all members of the SLAS community should commit themselves to following an open, fair and democratic process.*

3.3.2 *Full and timely information should be provided to all participants in decision-making, and should be made available to other members who wish to attend the advertised meeting.*

The following recommendation is aimed at preventing surprise actions, in which an unannounced issue is introduced and decided at a meeting to the later consternation of eligible voters who were absent. Note that any procedural regulation can be set aside if 2/3 of eligible and present voters decide to do so, which would allow for the consensus disposition of urgent unannounced business. Also, the term "substantive" is used to exempt housekeeping motions.

3.3.3 *Binding decisions on substantive issues may be made at assembly and committee meetings only if the issue being decided appears on the agenda for that meeting.*

The normal manner of deciding an issue is by an open vote at the meeting. Sometimes, however, members want secret votes and/or mail ballots. Secrecy can foster an atmosphere of mistrust, and should therefore be used only sparingly. Mail ballots are time-consuming and extend voting to members who were not present to hear the discussion at the meeting. Mail ballots should therefore be used only for voting on exceptionally important issues where the perceived cost of disenfranchising absent members outweighs the cost of obtaining their votes. Items of exceptional business might include election of committee members, appointment of new faculty members, and amendments to the departmental constitution.

3.3.4 *Votes on motions pertaining to regular business should be taken by a show of hands, with secret and/or mail ballots being allowed only if supported by a 2/3 majority; votes on exceptional business items should normally be by mail ballot.*

4. GRADUATE STUDIES

4.1 THE GRADUATE PROGRAM

The development of the LAS MA Program has been perhaps the most salient aspect of the department's growth in the last three years. It has also been the site of the most intense dispute about the nature of the SLAS department.

Some department members fear that the original shape of the program as passed by Senate has been distorted to accommodate interests that are not truly focussed on LAS studies. When the graduate program brochure was finally published, not all members of the department signed on to it, and they are now calling for a return to the original form of the program. It appears that the intake of students over its first two years has reflected the push and pull of conflicting interests, and that the nature of the program is in danger of being defined by who sits on the admissions committee in a particular year.

As outsiders, we do not feel qualified to judge the relative academic merits of the emphases the program might take. Clearly there is real growth and market potential for Latin American Studies in today's world. It may well be in the best interests of the University for the program to develop with this in mind. It would seem reasonable that work on the people and culture of Latin America could be sufficiently inclusive to allow for a variety of valid approaches. Ideally, social science, literature and cultural studies perspectives should enrich each other. It comes down to emphasis and focus in the program.

Some members told us that the existing program has not yet struck an appropriate balance. Opinions varied, of course, on how much scope was desirable; what to one student was scholarly breathing room to another student was lack of academic focus. Nevertheless, in our opinion the department should clarify the goals of the MA Program (see Recommendation 2.3.4).

This should then make it easier to specify the type(s) of student who should be admitted to the program, and the extent to which make-up work should be required of students whose profile deviates from the norm.

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.2.1 The focus of the LAS MA Program should be sharpened to give it a clearer identity.

4.2.2 Agreement should be reached on the optimal credentials of students accepted into the LAS MA Program, and on procedures for determining whether make-up courses are required.

Recommendations 2.3.4, 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 call for the department to "bite the bullet" on the objectives, structure and operation of the graduate program. As noted above, the department assembly is not the place to conduct this task. Everyone knows this who has tried to engage in important, detailed and potentially divisive planning in a large, heterogeneous group. The department assembly would normally be the right starting point, for ensuring that the task objectives and central issues are understood and for agreeing on the process. And the department assembly is the certainly the right end point, since that is where the acceptability of a recommended plan is determined. But the hard work of drafting the recommendations should be done by a smaller group. We recommend that a Graduate Program Task Force be established for this purpose. Task Force members should be selected from willing nominees after consultation from the Chair's Advisory Committee.

4.2.3 A Graduate Program Task Force should be struck to formulate recommendations intended to clarify the objectives, structure and operations of the graduate program.

4.3 GRADUATE STUDENTS

"Is this the man we are supposed to be against?" (contents of a note passed from one student representative to another at a SLAS assembly meeting). This was indicative to us of the extent to which SLAS graduate students have become embroiled in what are primarily faculty disputes.

Although the degree of involvement of students in departmental decision making varies across SFU's programs, all provide the opportunity for students to voice their views on relevant issues and to have representative votes at department committee and assembly meetings. We feel strongly that students ought to have a voice on decision-making bodies at the departmental level.

Students generally welcome this opportunity, but it comes at a cost. Such involvement can distract students from their studies. More importantly, student representatives run the risk of becoming caught up in faculty disputes. This may have additional, emotional costs, and in extreme cases may even affect the student's academic career. While students should continue to have a voice in decision-making in SLAS, we must stress that faculty have a responsibility for ensuring that this involvement does not ensnare students in faculty machinations.

4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.4.1 Students should concentrate on achieving the scholarly goals of their programs and avoid involvement in faculty disputes; this includes resisting attempts to indoctrinate or co-opt them.

5. LANGUAGE INSTRUCTORS

The only Language Instructors (LanIs) left in the university are in French and SLAS. For a variety of reasons, the university wants to discontinue this job category. SLAS has considered turning the LanI position into a Laboratory Instructor (LabI) position, and so recommended. However, this recommendation has not been acted on. This failure to proceed has led to a good deal of confusion and uncertainty.

The situation is exacerbated by the need to find TA employment for an increasing number of LAS MA students. Given few TA openings in LAS courses, many of these students compete for work from the same base unit pool for language courses that supplies the LanIs. When the latter are also asked to assist in the training of TAs, this can markedly increase employment insecurity and decrease staff morale.

Although these matters lie outside our primary mandate, we draw them to the department's attention as a set of interrelated issues that need resolving.

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1.1 The Department should address the following concerns of Language Instructors:

- *** *Lack of continuity in the administration of the language instruction program;*
- *** *The proposed change of the Continuing Language Instructor (LanI) position to a Laboratory Instructor (LabI) position;*
- *** *Clarification of the credentials expected of LabIs;*
- *** *The relative employment priority of LanI/LabIs and TAs in the assignment of teaching in language courses;*
- *** *Employment of non-native speakers as TAs in language courses;*
- *** *The training of TAs by LanI/LabIs in language courses.*

6. UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

"The first responsibility of university teachers is the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge and understanding through teaching and research." Thus reads the first statement of professional ethics in the SFU Policies and Procedures. In SLAS, teaching and research do not yet appear to have suffered irreparable damage as a result of departmental strife. However, they are under serious threat, in particular because of the increasing frequency with which SLAS members are engaging in various forms of unprofessional conduct, ranging from the unfortunate to the outrageous. One of our goals in addressing current governance problems is to allow faculty to focus more of their time and energy on this primary responsibility. This can occur only if all members make a concerted and sustained commitment to conducting themselves in a professionally appropriate manner. However, there appear to be differences among the members of the SLAS community in what constitutes unprofessional conduct. It is important, therefore, that we be as clear on this issue as we can, given the limits of our mandate and that we are not a fact-finding committee.

6.1 GOING TO THE DEAN

We note that SLAS department members have a history of taking their concerns directly to the Dean. Of course, faculty have the right to do so, especially when those concerns are not addressed by the chair. However, we would remind SLAS members of the Policies and Procedures statement that "Through the process of selecting a Chair, all department members commit themselves to support the incumbent, and must tolerate the Chair's right to take a position which differs from that of some members of the Department" (A13.02 #18). This is accompanied by a reciprocal obligation that the Chair provide "democratic leadership taking note of majority and minority views." In this department, these complementary obligations have not received the respect they deserve. Although it is not an egregious form of unprofessional conduct, going to the Dean whenever a problem arises tends to undermine the established administrative linkages in the university. Whether calculated or innocent, it is a practice that should be strongly discouraged.

6.2 DENIGRATING COLLEAGUES

The faculty Code of Ethics and Responsibilities enjoins faculty members to "refrain from denigration of the character and competence of their colleagues." Of course, one cannot work for long in any university before divesting oneself of the notion that this statement is universally respected. It would be foolish to try to impose a ban on all negative comments. However, the public expression of such comments and sustained "private" gossiping have hurt the department both internally and externally.

6.3 FAVOURITISM

Academic favouritism can be characterized as the differential rewarding of an individual or the members of a group, without good reason, using such benefits as advance information, good grades, employment opportunities, or similarly valued resources. To the extent that department members perceive this as occurring - and several say it does - morale can suffer and existing interpersonal tensions can be heightened.

6.4 DUAL RELATIONSHIPS

Many members expressed concern to us over relationships they saw as improper. These concerns included suspicions of intimate relationships, patronage, favoritism, and nepotism. It seems that relatively few in the department have escaped being tarred with one of those brushes, and that they have characterized the department both past and present. Without judging the truth or falsity of such contentions, we can only report that these are issues that must be addressed. More perhaps than any other factor, they appear responsible for poisoning the atmosphere in SLAS.

Ethical issues are raised when a member of the academic community who has a power relationship with another member also has a close personal relationship with that person. For example, a TA might develop a romantic relationship with a student in her tutorial. One ethical issue with such "dual relationships" is the concern that the student in question may be favoured by the TA, in grading for instance. Another ethical issue is that other students may take offence at the dual relationship because they believe that their experience in the course is thereby diminished in various ways. In judging the issue of dual relationships, persons of integrity can draw the line at quite different places in what is admittedly a grey area. Nevertheless, the university has seen fit to take a reasonably clear stand on the issue of dual relationships between graduate students and their supervisors. The following extracts are from the Graduate Student Handbook (1994, pp. 18-19).

"1. The relationship between supervisors and students must be a purely academic one. Any deviations from this require cessation of any evaluative role for the supervisor."

"2. Romantic, intimate relationships (including but not limited to sexual intimacy) are unacceptable between faculty members and graduate students because of the increased potential for coercion, favouritism and harassment and so should be avoided. The societal view of "consenting adults" does not apply in the faculty member - graduate student case, because of pre-existing imbalances in power. Faculty members are responsible for drawing a clear line of separation between their professional and personal lives."

"3. A faculty member who enters into an intimate or close relationship with a graduate student who is or will be subject to the faculty member for evaluation, supervision or employment should terminate or decline the evaluative / supervisory / employment role(s) and take all necessary

steps to avoid any suggestion of bias, including informing the department chair of the situation."

"4. Faculty members who are in a financial relationship with a student shall not be involved in any evaluative role with respect to the student. Such relationships may include business partnership or an employee-employer relationship outside the normal scope of research or teaching assistantships, but normally exclude situations where both faculty member and student are co-holders of the rights to intellectual property."

"5. Faculty members must not permit personal conflict with a graduate student to impinge on that student's relationship with other faculty members. Similarly, faculty members should not allow personal animosities among colleagues to influence graduate students' relationships with those colleagues."

6.5 NEPOTISM

One special type of dual relationship that presents a problem is the practice of nepotism, whereby individuals gain advantage by virtue of their status as relatives of those in a position of influence. A related practice, that might be called "academic nepotism" to distinguish it from "familial nepotism," occurs when advantage accrues to those who had their dissertation supervised by the person in a position of influence. In either case, where an unwarranted advantage is gained or is perceived to be gained, non-favoured members of the community are thereby disadvantaged. Again, we must stress that we do not have the information that would allow us to come to definitive conclusions about the existence of nepotism in SLAS. However, we can note that the frequency of current familial and past academic (supervisory) relationships in SLAS seems much higher than in other departments with which we are familiar.

6.6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.6.1 *All SLAS members should re-read the university codes of ethical conduct for their group, and should reflect on whether their own behaviour is in conformity.*

6.6.2. The department should arrange facilitated workshops in which members will examine such issues as setting boundaries in faculty-student relationships, and conflict resolution.

6.6.3 The department should consider establishing a standing Committee on an Optimal Working Environment with faculty, staff and student members, that will provide a forum for discussion and advice.

6.7 A CODE OF CONDUCT

Only "within the context of civilized and ethical behavior," as one member put it, "is there a chance for things to work in this department." We agree that refining the rules and improving the systems for management will have little effect if there continues to be an inordinate amount of bickering, manipulation, academic imperialism, humiliation and denigration of colleagues. If the department is to get its house in order, it cannot rely only on a fair-minded, efficient and knowledgeable chair and a set of guidelines for governance, but it must also subscribe to a code of conduct that has the following elements:

- *** to disconnect the personal from the political and the academic;
- *** to allow for the free expression of ideas and dissent;
- *** to protect faculty, staff and students from fear of reprisals;
- *** to provide the fair and equitable treatment which is the right of all faculty, staff and students;
- *** to create an atmosphere conducive to good teaching, learning and research;
- *** to encourage members to be more tolerant of those with differing backgrounds, scholarly views, and academic opinions.

7. CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE

What will happen if SLAS fails to make sufficient use of what we believe (and many SLAS members also believe) is the final opportunity to set its house in order? One outcome that might be attractive to certain members is the splitting of SLAS into two departments. Each "side" could then pursue its own agenda unhampered by actions of the opposition. This outcome would be extremely unfortunate, in our opinion, because the vitality and potential of this department lies precisely where its tension lies - in the support each area can give to the other. Even if there were additional money to create two departments, we doubt that the university would find such an investment to be reasonable. The consequence of failure to grasp this opportunity to get back on track would more likely be the disbanding of SLAS, with some faculty and staff being absorbed by other units and the remainder either terminated or moved into some limbo status if termination was not a contractual option. In our opinion, that would be a tragic ending for what was a bold and imaginative academic experiment that had - and still has - the potential for success.

7.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1.1 *That SLAS view the recommendations in this report as an opportunity of last resort to save the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies.*

8. WORKING TOWARD LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES

An academic department is a community, and for a department to function well each member needs to see her/his self-interest in the common good. To achieve common goals requires that individuals participate responsibly, in a spirit of compromise where necessary, to achieve mutually beneficial objectives. For the SLAS department to move forward it, must engage the responsible participation of its members. We suggest that a useful framework may come from considering the question: What should SLAS produce?

8.1 WHAT SHOULD SLAS PRODUCE?

The developing of a mission statement can be a frustrating process. One reason is the difficulty often experienced in trying to produce a statement that goes beyond public relations prose and supplies a blueprint for building. One way to achieve a consensus on such a blueprint is to pose - and then answer - some quite specific questions. In the following recommendations we identify some questions that might serve this purpose.

8.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.2.1 Individually and collectively SLAS should address these questions:

- a) Following its educational mission, what kinds of student with what kinds of skill and knowledge does the SLAS department want to graduate?
- b) In research, what unique or distinctive scholarly products should be expected from the members of SLAS?

8.2.2 To develop a set of common goals, SLAS should consider polling its members on several issues related to teaching, research and service:

In teaching:

- *** Assuming no substantial new resources, what is the minimum set of courses needed to offer an academically respectable program in Spanish and Latin American Studies?
- *** What would be the ideal curriculum for producing the kinds of student you want to graduate?
- *** What are the resources and personnel necessary for the minimum and ideal scenarios?
- *** Considering what you now teach and what you could teach, how could you most effectively contribute to the minimum and ideal programs?

In research:

- *** *Considering your individual work, what resources are minimally required for you to be an effective researcher? How can the department facilitate your research*
- *** *Considering collaborative possibilities, what fields of inquiry is this department uniquely situated to pursue? What programs would facilitate such inquiry?*

In service:

- *** *In what area of service do you feel most qualified and willing to contribute (i.e., department organization, curriculum, planning, graduate studies, extra-departmental committees, outreach).*
- *** *How can the department encourage equitable and effective participation?*
- *** *In what kinds of outreach activities do you feel most qualified and willing to engage?*

9. CONCLUSION

It may be helpful to summarize what we see as the key recommendations in this report. We believe that first step should be the appointment of an interim chair from outside the department. This person, assisted by an advisory committee, would serve as a mediator and facilitator with the initial goal of sharpening the focus of the graduate program. Later, attention could shift to the constitution. Much of the initial work would be carried out by a Graduate Studies Task Force, whose recommendations would be considered by the departmental assembly. Our other recommendations are offered as subordinate and supportive measures.

We are aware that we are recommending the department revisit some difficult territory - the defining of its focus and priorities. We acknowledge that SLAS members are tired and emotionally drained by past conflicts. We do not wish to minimize this. Nonetheless, with no possibility of "winning or losing" but with every possibility of doing fulfilling work in a civilized atmosphere, we hope that there will be a will to keep trying.

We do not expect the department to do this alone or in the context of plenary sessions and department retreat. In fact, our intention is quite the opposite. The interim chair should be responsible for focussing department thinking in a constructive way. The most productive discussions will take place in small groups of people who are comfortable with one another, and when conflictive issues arise the interim chair should facilitate their understanding and resolution.

Like any other department, SLAS has and will continue to have diverse elements. In multidisciplinary departments - even those with a worked-out interdisciplinary mission, maintaining disciplinary integrity can present challenges. Where goodwill and collegiality are high, it seems to take little effort to live and let live. In a more conflicted department like SLAS, it is crucial to find accommodations that allow the diverse elements to coexist in relative peace if not actual harmony. Only then can sufficient effort be directed to the primary academic goals of teaching and research.

\slas\finalrep

S.A. R.B. Nov. 29/94

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts
MEMORANDUM

To: All Members
Department of Spanish & Latin
American Studies

From: Evan Alderson
Dean of Arts

Subject: The Future of the Department **Date:** August 11, 1995

I am writing to you regarding the future of the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies. As I'm sure you are aware, my recent call for nominations for the position of Chair of the Department went unanswered. Under current circumstances, the Department appears to be unable to find a qualified individual to serve as Chair. This turn of events, following upon a significant history of difficulties in the Department, leads me to the conclusion that the Department as presently constituted is not capable of governing itself in the normal way as an academic department at Simon Fraser. In addition, virtually all of the advice I have received is that the current working environment in the Department is unsatisfactory and that for a variety of reasons the members of the Department can not collectively bring about adequate constructive change.

I very much regret that the founding idea of a combined Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies has not worked in practice. I personally believe the idea was academically sound. As you know, there are many explanations for the current dysfunction. I am not sure what weight to ascribe to any of the reasons I have heard voiced, but I take the need for substantial change to have been demonstrated. Under the circumstances, it is my responsibility to propose an alternative future organization.

Given the need for mandated change, the University must choose a clear academic direction. My view, which is shared by many with whom I have spoken, is that in the long term Latin American Studies has a brighter potential future at Simon Fraser than the study of Spanish literature. I therefore intend to move expeditiously toward the creation of a Department of Latin American Studies and the dissolution of the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies. The University should continue to invest in the creation of a strong Latin American Studies program with vital links to other departments and an emphasis upon contemporary social, economic and cultural issues.

This recommendation, and many of the accompanying changes, will require Senate and Board approval. Substantial further work will be required to detail the necessary changes, but I anticipate modifications in some faculty

appointments, in undergraduate curriculum, and in departmental structure.

I anticipate that the curriculum of the new department will include current LAS undergraduate and graduate courses, Spanish language courses, and courses now designated as "SPAN" which have a significant focus on Latin American literature. I expect that courses with an exclusive focus on Iberian literature will be discontinued or removed from the Department. Some Iberian literature courses may find a place in the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies in the Faculty of Arts, possibly with a greater focus than at present on literature in translation. It is possible that the discontinuation of the Spanish major may eventually prove necessary.

With regard to faculty, I anticipate that the appointments of faculty in the present Department who are not directly engaged in teaching and research in Latin American Studies or Spanish language teaching will be transferred elsewhere, likely to the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies. I would support efforts to develop an active group in European and comparative literatures in Interdisciplinary Studies or elsewhere. Other shifts in faculty appointments may also be desirable, including joint appointments for some current Associate Members. I anticipate that full faculty voting rights in the new Department will be limited to those with full or joint appointments.

As I understand the recent departmental action regarding the graduate program, no substantial further changes to the graduate program will be required. There will continue to be the opportunity for graduate study under Special Arrangements. In general I would expect the home department of special arrangement students to be the same as the home department of the senior supervisor.

I intend to begin the implementation of this plan in September. I will provide for interim governance of the Department and appoint an ad hoc committee to develop the detailed specification of changes that will be required for action by the Faculty of Arts, Senate and the Board of Governors. I will not recommend a search for an external Chair or continuing faculty replacements before a viable new structure has been established.



Evan Alderson
Dean of Arts

EA/jm:

Copy:
J. Munro
R. Blackman
A. Lebowitz
S. Aloï

FILE COPY

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts
MEMORANDUM

To: All Members of Spanish and
Latin American Studies

From: Evan Alderson
Dean of Arts

Subject: Future of the Department

Date: September 20, 1995

This is to follow up on my memorandum of August 11 regarding the future of the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies. In that memo I outlined my intention to initiate a planning process leading to the creation of a Department of Latin American Studies and the dissolution of the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies.

I have given further thought as to how the planning can best proceed. A significant re-structuring of this kind requires an overall plan as well as a large number of detailed changes in curriculum and calendar language. It is not necessary or even appropriate that all the details be worked through prior to the establishment of the new department and its membership. In order to enable a careful consideration of the proposal, however, it is important to provide a clear "blueprint" of the structure and mandate of the new department and the other academic arrangements involved. Such a plan can lead to a series of motions to be placed before the present Department, the Faculty of Arts and Senate.

I am appointing a small ad hoc planning committee to formulate this blueprint. This committee will consult with members of the present Department, but it will not include faculty or associate members of SLAS. It is charged to provide full and impartial advice to me regarding relevant academic changes both inside and outside of the new Department of Latin American Studies. The Committee will be open to representations from all individuals associated with the present Department, including students, and may seek advice from department members and others as it sees fit; it will consult formally with the Department concerning a draft of its proposals; I intend to place the Committee's final recommendations concerning academic structure and curriculum before the Department for formal vote before referring the matter to the Faculty of Arts.

In order that the committee will operate within a commonly understood framework of assumptions, I outline below the areas I expect it will consider and some issues I will ask that it address.

1) The New Department.

I will ask the Committee to make recommendations regarding the structure and mandate of the new Department of Latin American Studies. I anticipate that the new Department will include:

- a) The M.A. in Latin American Studies as recently reformulated by vote within the SLAS Department. I will seek advice from the committee as to whether this program should move to a pattern of biennial admissions, with the next admissions for the 1997-98 academic year.
- b) An undergraduate major and minor and appropriate joint majors in Latin American Studies. I expect that these programs may be essentially the same as at present, and I assume that they will include opportunities for the study of Latin American literature and culture.
- c) I anticipate that The LAS Field School will continue to be a valuable part of the undergraduate program. The Committee may choose to comment on prospects for the Department's further involvement in international activities.
- d) Spanish language courses, including a sequence of courses leading toward competence in the language, plus courses in Spanish linguistics directly pertinent to the acquisition of language skills or to the study of Latin American society.

In addition to the consideration of these program areas, I ask the Committee to suggest appropriate governance structures for a department of this kind, including the constitutional role of Associate Members and issues regarding graduate students not enrolled in programs administered by the Department.

2) Other Courses

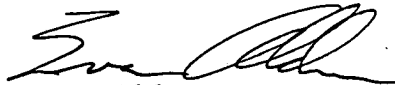
I will receive from the Committee recommendations regarding the continuation and location of existing courses and programs that do not fit within the mandate of the new Department. As one aspect of these recommendations I seek advice as to whether admissions to the Spanish major, joint major and minor programs should be suspended.

3) Faculty Placement

I will ask the Committee to consider the appropriate academic home for each faculty member in the present Department as a result of the curriculum re-structuring. The Committee will make its recommendations regarding faculty placement in confidence to me, which will allow me the opportunity to discuss the matter with each faculty member affected before submitting my recommendations to the Vice-President, Academic for consideration and transmittal to the Board.

The Committee may choose to make additional recommendations following from its consultations and deliberations. I ask that the Committee complete its work before the end of this Fall semester. On the basis of its report, I will formulate a series of motions for consideration and vote at each appropriate level, and in time for proper notice of the changes to be given in next year's University Calendar. I trust that planning for the more detailed calendar changes required to implement the recommendations will follow along without undue delay, and be in full effect by Fall, 1997.

I am pleased to announce that Professor William Cleveland of the History Department, Professor Maureen Covell of the Political Science, and Associate Dean Andrea Lebowitz have agreed to serve on this important ad hoc Committee, with Prof. Lebowitz serving as Chair of the Committee. Dr. Covell has additionally agreed to serve as Acting Chair of the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies from October 1 to the end of this semester. I ask for ratification of Dr. Covell as Acting Chair by faculty members in the Department in the accompanying ballot. As in the past, a separate ballot, for information purposes only, is being provided to Associate Members of the Department.



Evan Alderson
Dean of Arts

EV

cc: D. Gagan
W. Cleveland
M. Covell
A. Lebowitz

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts
MEMORANDUM

To: All Members
Department of Spanish &
Latin American Studies

From: Evan Alderson
Dean of Arts

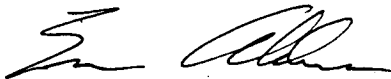
Subject: Future of the Department III

Date: December 7, 1995

I have now received the final report of the ad hoc planning committee I appointed to advise me regarding academic changes appropriate for the planned dissolution of the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies and creation of a new Department of Latin American Studies. I attach that report for your information and comment.

I ask that you provide me with any comments you wish to make in writing by December 22, 1995. It is my intention to seek a formal expression of opinion from the Department regarding the Committee's recommendations early in the New Year. I take very seriously the context of their review which the Committee's report articulates in its opening section. I therefore intend to seek the Department's opinion on a structured series of options before making my recommendations to the Faculty of Arts.

I will be out of town until the 18th of December. Those of you who may wish to speak with me personally can make appointments to do so during the week of December 18.



Evan Alderson

EA/jm:

copy:
M. Covell
D. Gagan
A. Lebowitz

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Future Planning for the Spanish and Latin American Studies Department

The Committee was charged "to make recommendations regarding the structure and mandate of the new Department of Latin American Studies." In the course of undertaking its assigned task, the Committee was compelled to consider the following:

- Any new LAS Department may be too small to offer the full range of courses and expertise expected of a functioning department.
- The viability of a new LAS Department may be brought into further question by the impending retirements of some faculty members.
- This review is being undertaken during a period of projected budgetary cutbacks.

Because of these problems, the fulfillment of the Committee's recommendations is heavily dependent upon the availability of new resources either through internal realignment of existing resources, or external replacements.

In addition, these considerations have led us to recommend that, in the short run at least, the Department offer a limited range of programs. In particular, we have recommended that a LAS major (as opposed to minors and joint majors) be reinstated only after a revision of the undergraduate curriculum. We have also recommended that there be no new admissions to the LAS MA program during the departmental reorganization and that admissions resume after the department has developed a plan for maintaining the undergraduate and graduate programs with its existing resources.

Background

At this point Latin American Studies has 31 joint majors, 11 majors, and 4 minors (including extended). In addition there are 25 graduate students. If Spanish Literature and Linguistics courses were to be removed from the existing curriculum, the remaining LAS curriculum would have 18 courses plus a Field School. It is obvious that the resulting complement of faculty (after reassignment of some faculty and the approaching retirement of others) could not possibly maintain undergraduate and graduate programs of the present scope. Faced with this stark reality, the Committee has had to consider the very existence of the Department. Although we were initially charged to recommend options within a new Latin American Studies Department, this may no longer be a structural

possibility. If a LAS Department is not created, Latin American Studies might continue under one of the following options.

Structural Options:

- Return LAS to an interdisciplinary program structure constituted as a separate unit.
- Reduce LAS to an interdisciplinary program with no separate administrative unit. Faculty would be reassigned and the program would exist only as courses given in separate departments.

The Committee has considered the above options and believes that both the University and the Department must carefully consider them as well. While we are suggesting that a Department be maintained, we realize that financial realities might well require the adoption of one of the above alternatives.

Several considerations argue for the maintenance of a department. Latin American Studies is one of few such programs in Canada and its MA is unique in Western Canada. Latin American Studies are an area of increasing practical interest and one in which SFU has a significant comparative advantage. Our recommendations attempt to preserve the department and its programs as much as possible and to leave open the possibility of restoring programs like the MA when the reorganization is complete.

Committee Recommendation

- That the Department of Spanish/LAS be disbanded.
- That some faculty members in the existing Spanish/LAS Department be assigned to other units*.
- That the Spanish Major and Minor programs be phased out and that no new students be accepted into these degrees but that students with declared programs be allowed to complete.
- That Spanish Literature courses be moved into another unit or abandoned.
- That a new Department of Latin American Studies be created.
- That the curriculum of the undergraduate program be based upon the existing courses outlined on the attached spreadsheet, but that the Department be required to review this curriculum. In particular, that the 100 and 200 level courses

be reviewed. That the review of the courses ensure that the 3 "streams" of History and Culture, Economy and Society, and Politics and the State are in balance. That the overall number of courses be reduced and that the core of Latin American Studies be clearly outlined.

- That the undergraduate program be maintained but only as a Minor, Extended Minor, or Joint Major until the revision of the undergraduate curriculum is complete.
- That Spanish Language Acquisition instruction be maintained in the LAS Department but that Spanish Linguistics courses be removed from the LAS curriculum.
- That the Field School be maintained.
- That there be no new admissions to the LAS graduate program for 1996-97. That the question of admissions be reviewed and admissions resumed after the Department has developed a plan for maintaining both the undergraduate and graduate programs with existing resources and after the number of students currently enrolled in the MA program has been reduced. That the program be revised along the lines recommended in the Graduate Task Force Report. That the program continue to be listed in the university calendar. That, if the program has not been reactivated by the 2000-01 academic year, the university and the Department review the situation and consider the program's deletion.
- That a new Department be created only if the potential members of the unit can select an Acting Chair from their number. That Associate Members, subject to university policy, continue their voting rights but that their relationship to the new Department be reviewed and regularized.

In conclusion, the Committee feels that the University and the Department face some very difficult choices. While we recommend a solution that would preserve a Latin American Studies Department, we must caution that such a suggestion is far from assured in the present financial climate.

* *The Committee is reporting to the Dean on this matter confidentially.*

DEPARTMENT OF LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

PROPOSED CURRICULUM STRUCTURE

(bold text indicates courses changed from SPAN to LAS; underlined text indicates new curriculum currently at SCUS)

<u>Course</u>		<u>Stream</u>
SPAN 102-3	Introduction to Spanish I	
SPAN 103-3	Introduction to Spanish II	
SPAN 201-3	Intermediate Spanish I	
SPAN 202-3	Intermediate Spanish II	
SPAN 303-3	Spanish Conversation and Composition	
SPAN 304-3	Advanced Spanish Conversation and Composition	
LAS 100-3	Images of Latin America	History & Culture
LAS 140-3	Cultural Heritage of Latin America	History & Culture
LAS 200-3	Introduction to Latin American Issues	Economy & Society
LAS 240-3	Introduction to Latin American Literature	
<u>LAS 300-3</u>	<u>Latin American Literature in Transition</u> (formerly LAS 210)	
LAS 309-3	Special Topics: Regional Studies I	all streams
LAS 310-3	Special Topics: Regional Studies II	all streams
LAS 311-3	Special Topics: Latin American International Relations	Politics & the State
LAS 312-3	Special Topics: Latin American Cultural Topics	History & Culture
LAS 318-3	Political Economy of Latin American Development	Economy & Society
LAS 320-3	Canada and Latin America	Politics & the State
LAS 323-3	Women in Latin American Literature and Society	History & Culture
LAS 352-3	Colonial and 19th Century Latin American Literature	History & Culture
<u>LAS 380-0</u>	<u>Practicum I</u>	
<u>LAS 390-0</u>	<u>Practicum II</u>	
<u>LAS 480-0</u>	<u>Practicum III</u>	
<u>LAS 490-0</u>	<u>Practicum IV</u>	

Course**Stream**

LAS 402-5 Field Study
LAS 403-3 Special Topics: Latin American Economy and

Economy &
Society

LAS 404-3 Special Topics: Field School I
LAS 405-3 Special Topics: Field School II

LAS 410-4 Andean History and Culture

History &
Culture

LAS 456-5 Selected Topics in Modern Latin American
Narrative

History &
Culture

LAS 457-5 Selected Topics in Modern Latin American
Poetry and Theatre

History &
Culture

LAS 460-3 Selected Topics
LAS 461-3 Directed Studies

LAS 498-5 Independent Study Project

Literature courses that might be moved to another unit:

SPAN 210 Spanish Literature in Translation
SPAN 349 Basic Texts in Hispanic Literature I
SPAN 350 Basic Texts in Hispanic Literature II
SPAN 353 Approaches to Textual Analysis
SPAN 445-5 Selected Topics in Modern Spanish Literature
SPAN 448-5 Selected Topics in the Golden Age

Linguistics courses that might be moved to another unit:

SPAN 220 Introduction to Spanish Linguistics
SPAN 307 Practical Spanish Phonetics
SPAN 401 Dialectology I: Phonology
SPAN 402 Dialectology II: Lexicon
SPAN 411 Grammatical Analysis of Modern Spanish
SPAN 413 History of the Spanish Language
SPAN 425 Teaching Spanish as a Second Language

Courses to be deleted:

SPAN 440	Modern Spanish Novel
SPAN 441	Modern Spanish Theatre
SPAN 442	Modern Spanish Poetry
SPAN 443	Spanish Theatre of the Golden Age
SPAN 447	Cervantes
SPAN 451	Modern Latin American Novel
SPAN 452	Modern Latin American Poetry
SPAN 453	Modern Latin American Short Story
SPAN 454	Latin American Theatre
SPAN 465	Honors Essay

Opinion Ballot
Faculty and Associate Members, SLAS

Associate

- 1) Committee Recommendation:
That the Department of Spanish/LAS be disbanded.

☐ preferred

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

|||| (5)

- 2) Committee Recommendation:
That some faculty members in the existing Spanish/LAS Department be assigned to other units.

☐ preferred

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

|||| (4)

Dean's alternative suggestion:

That all faculty members in the existing Spanish/LAS Department be assigned to other units, with provision for teaching in the Latin American Studies program as appropriate and required.

☐ preferred

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

|||| (4)

- 3) Committee Recommendation:
That the Spanish Major and Minor programs be phased out and that no new students be accepted into these degrees but that students with declared programs be allowed to complete.

☐ preferred

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

1

|| (3)

Dean's alternative suggestion:

That a moratorium on admissions to the Spanish Major and Minor programs continue, but that those interested be encouraged to propose a new and limited program which will be attractive to students and sustainable within available resources.

☐ preferred

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

1

||| (3)

4. Committee Recommendation:
That Spanish Literature courses be moved into another unit or abandoned.

☐ preferred

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

||| (3)

1

Dean's alternative suggestion:

That pending further developments the Spanish Literature courses identified by the ad hoc committee (i.e. SPAN 210, 349, 350, 353, 445, 448) be moved to IDS.

☐ preferred

1

☐ acceptable

|||| (4)

☐ unacceptable

5) Committee Recommendation:

That a new Department of Latin American Studies be created.

☐ preferred

|||| (4)

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

Dean's alternative suggestion:

That a new Program in Latin American Studies be created, to be governed by a Director and a Steering Committee and with Associate Members only.

☐ preferred

1

☐ acceptable

1

☐ unacceptable

||| (3)

6) Committee Recommendation:

That the curriculum of the undergraduate program be based upon the existing courses outlined on the attached spreadsheet, but that the Department be required to review this curriculum. In particular, that the 100 and 200 level courses be reviewed. That the review of the courses ensure that the 3 "streams" of History and Culture, Economy and Society, and Politics and the State are in balance. That the overall number of courses be reduced and that the core of Latin American Studies be clearly outlined.

☐ preferred

1

☐ acceptable

||| (3)

☐ unacceptable

Dean's alternative suggestion:

Identical, except for the substitution of "Program" for "Department".

☐ preferred

1

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

|||| (4)

7) Committee Recommendation:

That the undergraduate program be maintained but only as a Minor, Extended Minor, or Joint Major until the revision of the undergraduate curriculum is complete.

☐ preferred

|| (2)

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

||| (3)

- 8) Committee Recommendation:
That Spanish Language Acquisition instruction be maintained in the LAS Department but that Spanish Linguistics courses be removed from the LAS curriculum.

☐ preferred

111 (3)

☐ acceptable

1

☐ unacceptable

Dean's alternative suggestion:

That Spanish Language Acquisition instruction be moved to the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies and be coordinated with other languages offered through the Division. That Spanish Linguistics courses particularly relevant to language acquisition be considered for retention.

☐ preferred

1

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

111 (4)

- 9) Committee Recommendation:
That the Field School be maintained.

☐ preferred

111 (5)

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

- 10) Committee Recommendation:
That there be no new admissions to the LAS graduate program for 1996-97. That the question of admissions be reviewed and admissions resumed after the Department has developed a plan for maintaining both the undergraduate and graduate programs with existing resources and after the number of students currently enrolled in the MA program has been reduced. That the program be revised along the lines recommended in the Graduate Task Force Report. That the program continue to be listed in the university calendar. That, if the program has not been reactivated by the 2000-01 academic year, the university and the Department review the situation and consider the program's deletion.

☐ preferred

Dean's alternative suggestion:

That new admissions to the LAS graduate program be deferred to 1997-98. That the review and revision recommended as above by the ad hoc committee take place, with a view to introducing a two-year cohort-based program with biennial admissions.

☐ acceptable

1

☐ unacceptable

111 (3)

☐ preferred

1

☐ acceptable

1

☐ unacceptable

111 (3)

11)

Committee Recommendation:

That a new Department be created only if the potential members of the unit can select an Acting Chair from their number. That Associate Members, subject to university policy, continue their voting rights but that their relationship to the new Department be reviewed and regularized.

☐ preferred

111 (3)

☐ acceptable

1

☐ unacceptable

Dean's alternative suggestion:

That a Steering Committee for the prospective Program in Latin American Studies be appointed forthwith and be asked to select a Director from among its number.

☐ preferred

1

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

111 (4)

PLEASE RETURN THIS BALLOT TO THE DEAN OF ARTS' OFFICE NO
LATER THAN 4:00 P.M., MONDAY, JANUARY 22, 1996.

Counted by
W. Basil McDermott
23 Jan. 1996

D. J. Smith

Opinion Ballot
Faculty and Associate Members, SLAS

- 1) Committee Recommendation:
That the Department of Spanish/LAS be disbanded.

☐ preferred ☐ acceptable ☐ unacceptable
(5) ~~////~~ // (3) /

- 2) Committee Recommendation:
That some faculty members in the existing Spanish/LAS Department be assigned to other units.

☐ preferred ☐ acceptable ☐ unacceptable
//// (4) // (2) // (3)
Dean's alternative suggestion:
That all faculty members in the existing Spanish/LAS Department be assigned to other units, with provision for teaching in the Latin American Studies program as appropriate and required.

☐ preferred ☐ acceptable ☐ unacceptable
/// (3) / ~~////~~ (5)

- 3) Committee Recommendation:
That the Spanish Major and Minor programs be phased out and that no new students be accepted into these degrees but that students with declared programs be allowed to complete.

☐ preferred ☐ acceptable ☐ unacceptable
Dean's alternative suggestion:
That a moratorium on admissions to the Spanish Major and Minor programs continue, but that those interested be encouraged to propose a new and limited program which will be attractive to students and sustainable within available resources.

☐ preferred ☐ acceptable ☐ unacceptable
/// (3) / ~~////~~ (5)

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That Spanish Literature courses be moved into another unit or abandoned.

☐ preferred ☐ acceptable ☐ unacceptable
// (4) / // (4)

Dean's alternative suggestion:

That pending further developments the Spanish Literature courses identified by the ad hoc committee (i.e. SPAN 210, 349, 350, 353, 445, 448) be moved to IDS.

☐ preferred

// (2)

☐ acceptable

////// (7)

☐ unacceptable

5)

Committee Recommendation:

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//// (4)

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// (2)

☐ acceptable

/// (3)

☐ unacceptable

//// (4)

6)

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☐ preferred

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

Dean's alternative suggestion:

Identical, except for the substitution of "Program" for "Department".

☐ preferred

// (2)

☐ acceptable

// (2)

☐ unacceptable

//// (5)

7)

Committee Recommendation:

That the undergraduate program be maintained but only as a Minor, Extended Minor, or Joint Major until the revision of the undergraduate curriculum is complete.

☐ preferred

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

//// (4)

//// (5)

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☐ preferred

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

~~///~~ (5)
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That Spanish Language Acquisition instruction be moved to the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies and be coordinated with other languages offered through the Division. That Spanish Linguistics courses particularly relevant to language acquisition be considered for retention.

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~~///~~ (3)

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~~///~~ (5)

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// (2)

// (2)

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☐ preferred

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

~~///~~ (5)
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That new admissions to the LAS graduate program be deferred to 1997-98. That the review and revision recommended as above by the ad hoc committee take place, with a view to introducing a two-year cohort-based program with biennial admissions.

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☐ acceptable

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☐ unacceptable

Dean's alternative suggestion:

That a Steering Committee for the prospective Program in Latin American Studies be appointed forthwith and be asked to select a Director from among its number.

☐ preferred

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

1/ (2)

1/1/ (3)

1/1/1/ (4)

PLEASE RETURN THIS BALLOT TO THE DEAN OF ARTS' OFFICE NO LATER THAN 4:00 P.M., MONDAY, JANUARY 22, 1996.

*W. Paul McHarmot
23 Jan. 1996*

Doleynick

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts
MEMORANDUM

To: All Members
Spanish & Latin
American Studies

From: Evan Alderson
Dean of Arts

Subject: Future of the Department IV **Date:** January 9, 1996

Further to my memo of December 7 distributing the final report of the ad hoc committee on the future of the department, I have now received a variety of comments on that report and related matters. I have also consulted carefully with Vice-President Gagan regarding the current and prospective financial situation as it affects forward planning for programming in both Spanish and Latin American Studies.

I am now soliciting a formal expression of opinion from the Department regarding various options, before setting forward my own recommendations to the Faculty of Arts. Because the alternatives are complex, I have structured the accompanying ballot in a way that I hope will provide clear indications of departmental opinion. These indications will inform and accompany my recommendations to the Faculty and to Senate.

I have included on the ballot the recommendations of the ad hoc committee, along with my own suggestions where these differ. My suggestions are motivated by two considerations: first, the budget prospects are such that it seems to me unlikely that a full Department of Latin American Studies can be sustained over the near term; and second, I continue to support the maintenance and development of programs with strong potential, such as Latin American Studies, provided that these can be offered efficiently and effectively within available resources. The alternative model I am proposing attempts to maintain viable programming, but does not create a new Department. Although the accompanying ballot sets out the essential aspects of this model as a set of "alternative suggestions," it may be helpful to outline the whole model here.

Basically I am suggesting a return to the "interdisciplinary program" structure mentioned as an option by the committee. This structure is compatible with the continuation of a somewhat revised graduate program and substantial undergraduate programming. The program would have its own courses as well as drawing on related courses in other departments. It would have a small administrative structure and a Steering Committee but no faculty housed permanently within it. All faculty would move to other departments, or to the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies, with the provision that several would regularly be assigned teaching in the Latin American Studies Program. Graduate admissions to the M.A. in Latin American Studies would be deferred to the Fall of 1997, at which time a

pattern of biennial admissions to a cohort-based program would begin. An undergraduate program in Latin American Studies would be reviewed by the Steering Committee but would be maintained at least to the level of joint majors. The Field School would be continued (appropriately scheduled in relation to the graduate program). The Latin American Studies Program, and potentially an associated research institute, would be encouraged to become central in further interactions between this University and Latin American societies.

A narrowed range of Spanish literature courses would be administered by the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies. The moratorium on new admissions to the current major and minor programs would continue, but interested faculty would be encouraged to develop revised programs on a sustainable scale. Spanish language courses and the Certificate in Spanish Language Proficiency, revised as necessary, would be administered by the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies. Faculty involved in language teaching might eventually become part of a new "Centre for Applied Language Studies" which would support and co-ordinate the teaching of several languages and the development of language pedagogy at Simon Fraser. Other faculty moving to Interdisciplinary Studies would be encouraged to develop strong working relationships with existing programs and departments, leading toward possible full or joint appointments.

Among the options available, this set of arrangements in my present view would do the least academic damage, be fairest to the various individuals involved, reasonably protect student interests, permit an efficient deployment of present resources, and allow for future growth and development of academic programs that prove successful. Although these arrangements would require restructuring of the current departmental office, because of other accompanying changes it should not be assumed that they would necessitate the lay-off of current staff.

The ballot attached is for Faculty and Associate Members of the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies. As in the past the ballots of these groups will be accounted separately, for information purposes. Please return the ballot to my office by 4:00 p.m. Monday, January 22.



Evan Alderson
Dean of Arts

EA/jm:

Dean's alternative suggestion:

That pending further developments the Spanish Literature courses identified by the ad hoc committee (i.e. SPAN 210, 349, 350, 353, 445, 448) be moved to IDS.

☐ preferred

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

5) Committee Recommendation:

That a new Department of Latin American Studies be created.

☐ preferred

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

Dean's alternative suggestion:

That a new Program in Latin American Studies be created, to be governed by a Director and a Steering Committee and with Associate Members only.

☐ preferred

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

6) Committee Recommendation:

That the curriculum of the undergraduate program be based upon the existing courses outlined on the attached spreadsheet, but that the Department be required to review this curriculum. In particular, that the 100 and 200 level courses be reviewed. That the review of the courses ensure that the 3 "streams" of History and Culture, Economy and Society, and Politics and the State are in balance. That the overall number of courses be reduced and that the core of Latin American Studies be clearly outlined.

☐ preferred

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

Dean's alternative suggestion:

Identical, except for the substitution of "Program" for "Department".

☐ preferred

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

7) Committee Recommendation:

That the undergraduate program be maintained but only as a Minor, Extended Minor, or Joint Major until the revision of the undergraduate curriculum is complete.

☐ preferred

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

Dean's alternative suggestion:

That pending further developments the Spanish Literature courses identified by the ad hoc committee (i.e. SPAN 210, 349, 350, 353, 445, 448) be moved to IDS.

☐ preferred

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

5) Committee Recommendation:

That a new Department of Latin American Studies be created.

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Dean's alternative suggestion:

That a new Program in Latin American Studies be created, to be governed by a Director and a Steering Committee and with Associate Members only.

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☐ preferred

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

Dean's alternative suggestion:

Identical, except for the substitution of "Program" for "Department".

☐ preferred

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

7) Committee Recommendation:

That the undergraduate program be maintained but only as a Minor, Extended Minor, or Joint Major until the revision of the undergraduate curriculum is complete.

☐ preferred

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

- 8) Committee Recommendation:
That Spanish Language Acquisition instruction be maintained in the LAS Department but that Spanish Linguistics courses be removed from the LAS curriculum.

☐ preferred

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

Dean's alternative suggestion:

That Spanish Language Acquisition instruction be moved to the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies and be coordinated with other languages offered through the Division. That Spanish Linguistics courses particularly relevant to language acquisition be considered for retention.

☐ preferred

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

- 9) Committee Recommendation:
That the Field School be maintained.

☐ preferred

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

- 10) Committee Recommendation:
That there be no new admissions to the LAS graduate program for 1996-97. That the question of admissions be reviewed and admissions resumed after the Department has developed a plan for maintaining both the undergraduate and graduate programs with existing resources and after the number of students currently enrolled in the MA program has been reduced. That the program be revised along the lines recommended in the Graduate Task Force Report. That the program continue to be listed in the university calendar. That, if the program has not been reactivated by the 2000-01 academic year, the university and the Department review the situation and consider the program's deletion.

☐ preferred

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

Dean's alternative suggestion:

That new admissions to the LAS graduate program be deferred to 1997-98. That the review and revision recommended as above by the ad hoc committee take place, with a view to introducing a two-year cohort-based program with biennial admissions.

☐ preferred

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

11) Committee Recommendation:

That a new Department be created only if the potential members of the unit can select an Acting Chair from their number. That Associate Members, subject to university policy, continue their voting rights but that their relationship to the new Department be reviewed and regularized.

☐ preferred

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

Dean's alternative suggestion:

That a Steering Committee for the prospective Program in Latin American Studies be appointed forthwith and be asked to select a Director from among its number.

☐ preferred

☐ acceptable

☐ unacceptable

**PLEASE RETURN THIS BALLOT TO THE DEAN OF ARTS' OFFICE NO
LATER THAN 4:00 P.M., MONDAY, JANUARY 22, 1996.**

65

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of SCAP

From: Jorge García
Professor & Chair,
Standing Committee for Latin American Studies

Subject: Dean of Arts motions

Date: March 29, 1996

The case for Latin American Studies¹

The Dean of Arts is recommending the dissolution of the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies, the cancellation of Majors in Spanish and in Latin American Studies, the reduction of Latin American Studies to Interdisciplinary Program status, the transfer of the Language Teaching component to IDS, the dispersion and transfer of LAS faculty to other departments, and the curtailment of Graduate Studies admissions.

The current proposal is the diametric opposite of his own earlier assessment that recognized "a brighter potential future (for Latin American Studies) at SFU"² and that the University should continue to invest in the creation of a strong Latin American Studies Department.³ This reversal seems to have been motivated not by academic considerations but as an expedient opportunity to solve the immediate urgency of budgetary planning.⁴ Hardship for members of SFU's LAS community (students, staff, faculty and other stakeholders) would represent a benefit to a few: departments would get 'free' additional faculty⁵ and the Spanish Language component would prop up the viability the Dean's planned Language Centre. But our department is not spoils to be distributed. The measures included in the Dean's motions are punitive, demoralizing and regressive. They could also be interpreted as a slap in the face to the growing Canadian-Latin American cultural minority.

SCAP is being asked to approve a demotion of Latin American Studies from its departmental status to what it was in 1979 – now when the need for Canadian expertise in Latin American Affairs is increasing; when economic, cultural and scientific links are being established, and when financial and research sources are becoming available.

The historical record

1971. LAS Program is created by Senate as the first interdisciplinary Program at SFU.

1979. A Joint-Major BA in LAS and six Faculty of Arts disciplines is approved.

¹The case about abolition of the disciplinary Spanish Major has to be judged on its own merits. This document speaks for Latin American Studies only. It does not in any way imply agreement with recommended provisions related to the Spanish Program.

²Dean's memo, The Future of the Department, 11 August 1995, p1. This document is marked as [LAS1], all subsequent documents are marked in alphanumeric sequence.

³Dean's memo, 11 August 1995, p1. [LAS1]

⁴"My suggestions are motivated by two considerations: first the budget prospects are such that it seems to me unlikely that a full Department of LAS can be sustained over the near term;"...Dean's memo 9 Jan 96,p1.[LAS2] "Spanish language...might become part of a new "Centre for Applied Language Studies" p2. [LAS2]

⁵Those departments who have agreed to take SLAS Faculty should the department be disbanded do not necessarily support such an outcome.

1984. LAS Program is transferred to Arts.

1988. LAS merges with SPAN in a new Department of SLAS.

The **new department's** recent history can be divide in two periods:

a) Three years of unprecedented success and innovation. Student enrollment trebles from approx. 150 to 450. The Department attains a national & international profile and sponsors various international symposia. LAS BA Major is approved in 1989, and the MA in LAS is approved in 1991.

b) Three years of decline and internal strife.

1992. An external chair position is authorized. Serious irregularities take place. The Search Committee does not include "one faculty member from another department in the Faculty..."⁶ The Dean's Office proceeds with the Chair's appointment omitting the mandated ratification vote by faculty.⁷ The new Chair's administration is plagued with problems arising from confrontational and undemocratic style, and from exacerbation of personality conflicts.⁸ The Chair of Graduate Studies and full professor feels obliged to resign.⁹ A bitter split about implementation of the LAS MA and about academic focus (Iberian literature vs. Latin American Studies) in the Department occur. The Dean's Office does not take any action until Fall 1994, and fails to call for the scheduled External Departmental Review. The Chair resigns after a faculty recall petition. [A 13.02 19.]

1995. The Dean charges that the department is unable to govern itself in the normal way. What he does not disclose is his prior ruling disenfranchising¹⁰ five voting associate faculty, in violation of the Department's Constitution¹¹ tilting the power back to the unseated Chair. No one accepts nomination under these circumstances.

Spring Semester 1996. An orchestrated attack against the Department is under way, precursory to the Faculty of Arts Referendum. It includes an arbitrary freeze on declarations of Majors, suspension of admissions to Graduate Studies and offering of LAS faculty transfers to other departments. The Department is placed under a virtual trusteeship.¹²

22 February 1996. A Standing Committee for Latin American Studies is struck with a membership of the great majority of Latin Americanists. Their offer to the Dean to cooperate and participate in the restructuring of Latin American Studies is ignored.¹³

Due Process

Two fundamental University principles have been transgressed: the principle of free debate and full discussion of issues; and the principle of deference to professional expertise. No expert's academic assessment preceded the Dean's motion to discontinue or curtail Programs of Instruction.

Latin Americanists who, after all, would have to run any new structure on a daily basis and are familiar with developments in their field of specialization, were excluded from the planning process. Collective wisdom and experience were disregarded. Does the Dean intend to run the

⁶ A 13.02, 4 d), [old AC 57, 5 d)] of SFU Policies & Procedures.

⁷ A 13.02, 6.9. [old AC 57 5.9.]

⁸ See Ad Hoc Review Committee Final report; 29 November 1994. [LAS3]

⁹ A 'wrongful dismissal' legal action has been filed.

¹⁰ Dean's memo of 29 June 1995: Call for nominations for SLAS Chair [LAS4]

¹¹ Constitution : Articles 4.3.1 & 3.1 [LAS5]

¹² See memo to Evan Alderson, 18 March 1996. [LAS6]

¹³ See memo to Dean 22 January 1996 [LAS7]

new Program from his office? Will he repeat past mistakes and appoint a "Director" without ratification?

The Dean did not submit his recommendations to any forum for open discussion prior to a faculty referendum. The only two debates took place in the floor of two SLAS departmental meetings. In the first one, the Ad Hoc Committee report was repudiated as an unwarranted attack on the Department, and an intrusion beyond its professional field of competence.¹⁴ In the second one, a motion to reject the Dean's restructuring proposal was carried by unanimously.¹⁵ While it is true that the Dean sought the formal opinion of SLAS faculty by ballot¹⁶, it is also true that all of his major proposals were defeated. This fact was concealed from members of the Arts faculty when asked to vote.¹⁷ Both the Dean and his Ad Hoc Committee chose to hear only what they wanted and to ignore all the adverse formal representations by students and faculty alike.

The Dean's "restructuring" plans were produced in an autocratic fashion with a paternalistic attitude. As a result, his proposals are unwise and their results would be unworkable. Recent trends in Interdisciplinary Studies show a development of distinct research methodologies, and growing marketability of 'independent major degrees': Women Studies, Black Studies, Chicano Studies, Latin American Studies, Canadian Studies, Native Studies, to name a few. Language and culture are essential elements in the training of area experts and should remain integrated.

Feasibility

The Departmental structure and its terms of reference seem the most appropriate to enable Latin American Studies to thrive and to ensure successful servicing of its various graduate and undergraduate programs and outreach activities. As for the Dean's contention that a "smaller LAS Department would not be viable", suffice it to point out that the whole Department of S/LAS had fewer faculty members when approved in 1988 than a LAS Department would have now, after the transfer of Spanish Literature faculty to IDS.

A successful model should be built on existing strengths, not by reduction and partitioning. The faculty college should be kept together, (the title is irrelevant "Department", "School", "Institute", "Centre"). Internal academic decisions should be "internally" generated (degrees, curriculum, admissions). Language & culture should remain within the academic unit. Latin Americanists should be allowed to originate their own plan. After all, LAS has a twenty-year record of democratic self-government, innovation, and growth (prior to its merger with SPAN).

The paper trail in the six documents originating in the Dean's Office¹⁸ show that at first (D1, D2, D3) there was a genuine search for a creative solution. LAS was to have departmental status, and "deserved further University investment". D4 and D5 record the "switching to reverse gear" favoring a destructive approach. Not only LAS would be reduced to a Program but its BA Major would be discontinued and its faculty dispersed. The reasons given are budget related, and as such constitute an unfair and unjustified "vertical" cut. Document D6 is clearly one of damage control, now that the threat of budget cuts is less severe. The good prospects of LAS remain the same — nothing has changed, only the Dean's recommendation has. A political failure of

¹⁴Minutes of meeting 23 November 1995 [LAS8]

¹⁵Departmental meeting 23 February 1996. No minutes were distributed to date

¹⁶Opinion ballot results 22 January 1996 [LAS9]

¹⁷19 February 1996 memo to All Faculty of Arts. [LAS10]

¹⁸See attachments, also labeled: D1 to D6.

governance is being construed as an academic deficiency and addressed with abolition of programs of instruction.

The Dean's model foresees no home faculty for LAS; therefore it will suffer from a lack of coherence and commitment, which cannot be imposed from above. A *program* (which is "not part of the regular academic units in the University"¹⁹) will have serious difficulties in securing an adequate share of scarce resources. It will neither be able to fill appointments in key interdisciplinary sectors: (popular culture, communication, Hemispheric business studies, Brazilian studies, development studies), nor will it be incapable of ensuring priority enrollment for its majors. Traditional departments have their own priorities and are unable to provide for specific interdisciplinary needs. LAS will have all the responsibilities of a department, but no means to discharge them appropriately.

In conclusion:

Although we concur with the Dean that the Department of SLAS has experienced an irreparable disciplinary split, his office has to share the responsibility for having tolerated and participated in the administrative irregularities that have led to it. His response to the crisis has oscillated between two extremes: protracted inaction and ill-conceived overreaction.

The Dean's Office has obtained the Arts Faculty's approval with misinformation and a duplicitous interpretation of the SLAS faculty vote in the absence of a forum for debate. Therefore he can not legitimately speak on behalf of the Faculty of Arts in this instance.

The Dean of Arts has failed to produce any evidence to construct a credible case of academic failure against LAS that would justify his motions. This type of wholesale administrative restructuring and abolition of academic programs of instruction is totally unwarranted and unjustified. Furthermore, the Dean has admitted "on the record" at the Annual Meeting of the Faculty of Arts of 28 March 1996, that his sudden decision against a "Department of Latin American Studies" was budget driven.

A political and administrative problem has to be addressed with administrative remedies. A transfer of the Spanish Literature component of the department to IDS is all that is needed to resolve the internal conflict.

This sad episode reveals the need to implement clear "procedures" to prevent autocratic intervention against academic units, and to secure due process.

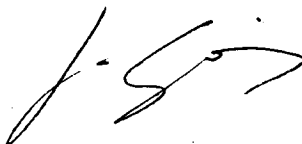
Petition to SCAP

Please exercise your mandate "to review existing programs according to the criteria set out in [S 80-98] for the purpose of assessment, and in some cases, possible expansion, curtailment, or discontinuance".

Defeat or amend the Dean of Arts proposal to maintain the departmental status for Latin American Studies.

Seek the advice of an external review committee to evaluate the academic alternatives before making a final decision.

¹⁹R 40 01 of Policies & Procedures



appointments, in undergraduate curriculum, and in departmental structure.

I anticipate that the curriculum of the new department will include current LAS undergraduate and graduate courses, Spanish language courses, and courses now designated as "SPAN" which have a significant focus on Latin American literature. I expect that courses with an exclusive focus on Iberian literature will be discontinued or removed from the Department. Some Iberian literature courses may find a place in the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies in the Faculty of Arts, possibly with a greater focus than at present on literature in translation. It is possible that the discontinuation of the Spanish major may eventually prove necessary.

With regard to faculty, I anticipate that the appointments of faculty in the present Department who are not directly engaged in teaching and research in Latin American Studies or Spanish language teaching will be transferred elsewhere, likely to the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies. I would support efforts to develop an active group in European and comparative literatures in Interdisciplinary Studies or elsewhere. Other shifts in faculty appointments may also be desirable, including joint appointments for some current Associate Members. I anticipate that full faculty voting rights in the new Department will be limited to those with full or joint appointments.

As I understand the recent departmental action regarding the graduate program, no substantial further changes to the graduate program will be required. There will continue to be the opportunity for graduate study under Special Arrangements. In general I would expect the home department of special arrangement students to be the same as the home department of the senior supervisor.

I intend to begin the implementation of this plan in September. I will provide for interim governance of the Department and appoint an ad hoc committee to develop the detailed specification of changes that will be required for action by the Faculty of Arts, Senate and the Board of Governors. I will not recommend a search for an external Chair or continuing faculty replacements before a viable new structure has been established.



Evan Alderson
Dean of Arts

EA/jm:

Copy:
J. Munro
R. Blackman
A. Lebowitz
S. Aloï

LAS2-
D4

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts
MEMORANDUM

To: All Members
Spanish & Latin
American Studies

From: Evan Alderson
Dean of Arts

Subject: Future of the Department IV Date: January 9, 1996

Further to my memo of December 7 distributing the final report of the ad hoc committee on the future of the department, I have now received a variety of comments on that report and related matters. I have also consulted carefully with Vice-President Gagan regarding the current and prospective financial situation as it affects forward planning for programming in both Spanish and Latin American Studies.

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pattern of biennial admissions to a cohort-based program would begin. An undergraduate program in Latin American Studies would be reviewed by the Steering Committee but would be maintained at least to the level of joint majors. The Field School would be continued (appropriately scheduled in relation to the graduate program). The Latin American Studies Program, and potentially an associated research institute, would be encouraged to become central in further interactions between this University and Latin American societies.

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Among the options available, this set of arrangements in my present view would do the least academic damage, be fairest to the various individuals involved, reasonably protect student interests, permit an efficient deployment of present resources, and allow for future growth and development of academic programs that prove successful. Although these arrangements would require restructuring of the current departmental office, because of other accompanying changes it should not be assumed that they would necessitate the lay-off of current staff.

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Evan Alderson
Dean of Arts

EA/jm:

(excerpts)

LAS 3

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY MEMORANDUM

To: All members of Spanish
and Latin American Studies

From: Santa Aloï
Roger Blackman

Subject: Ad hoc Review Committee Date: November 29th, 1994
Final Report

Attached is the final report of the Ad Hoc Review Committee.

We received feedback from five core faculty members, one associate faculty member, one graduate student and the graduate caucus, and one staff member. We have considered your thoughtful and sometimes provocative comments and made a number of changes to the report (signalled by vertical bars in the left margin).

We want to address here a criticism made by a number of respondents: that we have simply "told [SLAS] to solve our own problems," and that we are "throwing the ball back into the departmental court." Coupled with observations that SLAS has clearly demonstrated its inability to solve its own problems, the pessimistic conclusion offered by these critics is that nothing will change.

We are indeed tempted to be more directive or prescriptive in our recommendations, particularly since we each have developed a personal sense of the right thing to do on at least some of the issues facing SLAS. However, we have resisted that temptation for the following reasons (listed in order of increasing importance):

- It is beyond our mandate to prescribe specific solutions for substantive (as distinct from procedural) problems;
- We lack the disciplinary knowledge needed to make any such substantive prescriptions cogent and compelling;
- We do not believe that the fundamental problem is that SLAS cannot figure out its own solutions; rather, it is that there is insufficient trust and tolerance in the department to implement those solutions;
- Externally imposed prescriptions might provide some short-term relief but would do little to solve the fundamental problem.

22A

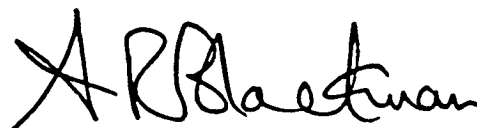
The only real long-term hope for SLAS is that in working through the issues that face it - and surely not all the issues are contentious and divisive - a *modus vivendi* will emerge that ensures the department's survival and gives it the opportunity to flourish. It would be naive to think that all hatchets will be buried, grudges forgotten, and enemies transmuted into friends. But it is not unrealistic to hope that accommodations can be reached that allow people with different experiences, skills and aspirations to co-exist within a single administrative unit. If this hope is not realized, despite sincere and concerted efforts by those involved, then the experiment should be declared a failure and appropriate administrative action taken.

But no-one will say that it was for want of trying!



Santa Aloï
Contemporary Arts

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Home: 261-8243
Fax: 291-5907
E-mail: Santa_Aloï@sfu.ca



Roger Blackman
Psychology Department

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CC: Evan Alderson, Dean of Arts
Andrea Lebowitz, A/Chair SLAS

3.2 ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES IN SLAS

Although internecine disputes seem to have been the way of life in SLAS since its inception, the department has nevertheless managed to operate reasonably effectively, at least until the last few semesters. In particular, a constitution was drawn up and ratified, and a new graduate program was created and implemented. Of late, however, administration in SLAS has become increasingly bogged down. With trust and mutual respect greatly diminished, members have looked more and more to the department assembly as the only acceptable arena for the resolution of conflicts. But the assembly has been unable to carry the load. Too much time and energy has been spent on issues that seemed less than important, such as the minutes of the last meeting or the wording of a brochure. No strong hand was available to ensure the orderly conduct of business, and members seemed unable or unwilling to regulate themselves. Most recently, the facade of courtesy and civility that typically cloaks even the fiercest of academic debates has begun to crack.

Most SLAS members deplored this state of affairs. Although attributions varied, many identified lack of openness as a central issue, both as culprit and casualty. When there was a failure to provide timely, written information to all the participants in a decision, it was taken as evidence that some parties were being deliberately excluded from the democratic process. The vehemence of the resulting protests and rebuttals no doubt contributed to making openness a casualty. This was reflected at the interpersonal as well as administrative level. It became harder to deal with interpersonal concerns in a frank and direct manner. Third-party criticizing became more common. The quality of life in the SLAS community was thus further reduced.

Another casualty of the breakdown of the democratic process has been planning. It was made clear to us that SLAS faculty have made a large investment of time and effort over the last 3-4 years developing the mission statement, a key element in any academic department's plan. But where are the fruits of this labour? As we understand it, the motion to adopt the mission statement remains tabled. More mundane aspects of planning have also become bogged down. For example, course assignments are determined only a little in advance, and the scheduling of faculty teaching and research semesters seems haphazard.

We believe that action on the following recommendations is necessary (if not sufficient) for the return of what the recent chair called "normal working conditions" in SLAS. The first recommendation is a general exhortation; the remainder point to procedural improvements to or clarifications of the administrative process.

3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.3.1 *When engaged in departmental administration, all members of the SLAS community should commit themselves to following an open, fair and democratic process.*

3.3.2 *Full and timely information should be provided to all participants in decision-making, and should be made available to other members who wish to attend the advertised meeting.*

The following recommendation is aimed at preventing surprise actions, in which an unannounced issue is introduced and decided at a meeting to the later consternation of eligible voters who were absent. Note that any procedural regulation can be set aside if 2/3 of eligible and present voters decide to do so, which would allow for the consensus disposition of urgent unannounced business. Also, the term "substantive" is used to exempt housekeeping motions.

3.3.3 *Binding decisions on substantive issues may be made at assembly and committee meetings only if the issue being decided appears on the agenda for that meeting.*

The normal manner of deciding an issue is by an open vote at the meeting. Sometimes, however, members want secret votes and/or mail ballots. Secrecy can foster an atmosphere of mistrust, and should therefore be used only sparingly. Mail ballots are time-consuming and extend voting to members who were not present to hear the discussion at the meeting. Mail ballots should therefore be used only for voting on exceptionally important issues where the perceived cost of disenfranchising absent members outweighs the cost of obtaining their votes. Items of exceptional business might include election of committee members, appointment of new faculty members, and amendments to the departmental constitution.

3.3.4 *Votes on motions pertaining to regular business should be taken by a show of hands, with secret and/or mail ballots being allowed only if supported by a 2/3 majority; votes on exceptional business items should normally be by mail ballot.*

7. CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE

What will happen if SLAS fails to make sufficient use of what we believe (and many SLAS members also believe) is the final opportunity to set its house in order? One outcome that might be attractive to certain members is the splitting of SLAS into two departments. Each "side" could then pursue its own agenda unhampered by actions of the opposition. This outcome would be extremely unfortunate, in our opinion, because the vitality and potential of this department lies precisely where its tension lies - in the support each area can give to the other. Even if there were additional money to create two departments, we doubt that the university would find such an investment to be reasonable. The consequence of failure to grasp this opportunity to get back on track would more likely be the disbanding of SLAS, with some faculty and staff being absorbed by other units and the remainder either terminated or moved into some limbo status if termination was not a contractual option. In our opinion, that would be a tragic ending for what was a bold and imaginative academic experiment that had - and still has - the potential for success.

7.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1.1 *That SLAS view the recommendations in this report as an opportunity of last resort to save the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies.*

8. WORKING TOWARD LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES

An academic department is a community, and for a department to function well each member needs to see her/his self-interest in the common good. To achieve common goals requires that individuals participate responsibly, in a spirit of compromise where necessary, to achieve mutually beneficial objectives. For the SLAS department to move forward it, must engage the responsible participation of its members. We suggest that a useful framework may come from considering the question: What should SLAS produce?

8.1 WHAT SHOULD SLAS PRODUCE?

The developing of a mission statement can be a frustrating process. One reason is the difficulty often experienced in trying to produce a statement that goes beyond public relations prose and supplies a blueprint for building. One way to achieve a consensus on such a blueprint is to pose - and then answer - some quite specific questions. In the following recommendations we identify some questions that might serve this purpose.

8.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.2.1 *Individually and collectively SLAS should address these questions:*

- a) *Following its educational mission, what kinds of student with what kinds of skill and knowledge does the SLAS department want to graduate?*
- b) *In research, what unique or distinctive scholarly products should be expected from the members of SLAS?*

8.2.2 *To develop a set of common goals, SLAS should consider polling its members on several issues related to teaching, research and service:*

In teaching:

- *** *Assuming no substantial new resources, what is the minimum set of courses needed to offer an academically respectable program in Spanish and Latin American Studies?*
- *** *What would be the ideal curriculum for producing the kinds of student you want to graduate?*
- *** *What are the resources and personnel necessary for the minimum and ideal scenarios?*
- *** *Considering what you now teach and what you could teach, how could you most effectively contribute to the minimum and ideal programs?*

In research:

- *** *Considering your individual work, what resources are minimally required for you to be an effective researcher? How can the department facilitate your research*
- *** *Considering collaborative possibilities, what fields of inquiry is this department uniquely situated to pursue? What programs would facilitate such inquiry?*

In service:

- *** *In what area of service do you feel most qualified and willing to contribute (i.e., department organization, curriculum, planning, graduate studies, extra-departmental committees, outreach).*
- *** *How can the department encourage equitable and effective participation?*
- *** *In what kinds of outreach activities do you feel most qualified and willing to engage?*

9. CONCLUSION

It may be helpful to summarize what we see as the key recommendations in this report. We believe that first step should be the appointment of an interim chair from outside the department. This person, assisted by an advisory committee, would serve as a mediator and facilitator with the initial goal of sharpening the focus of the graduate program. Later, attention could shift to the constitution. Much of the initial work would be carried out by a Graduate Studies Task Force, whose recommendations would be considered by the departmental assembly. Our other recommendations are offered as subordinate and supportive measures.

We are aware that we are recommending the department revisit some difficult territory - the defining of its focus and priorities. We acknowledge that SLAS members are tired and emotionally drained by past conflicts. We do not wish to minimize this. Nonetheless, with no possibility of "winning or losing" but with every possibility of doing fulfilling work in a civilized atmosphere, we hope that there will be a will to keep trying.

We do not expect the department to do this alone or in the context of plenary sessions and department retreat. In fact, our intention is quite the opposite. The interim chair should be responsible for focussing department thinking in a constructive way. The most productive discussions will take place in small groups of people who are comfortable with one another, and when conflictive issues arise the interim chair should facilitate their understanding and resolution.

Like any other department, SLAS has and will continue to have diverse elements. In multidisciplinary departments - even those with a worked-out interdisciplinary mission, maintaining disciplinary integrity can present challenges. Where goodwill and collegiality are high, it seems to take little effort to live and let live. In a more conflicted department like SLAS, it is crucial to find accommodations that allow the diverse elements to coexist in relative peace if not actual harmony. Only then can sufficient effort be directed to the primary academic goals of teaching and research.

ARR Blodman
S. Als

\slas\finalrep

S.A. R.B. Nov. 29/94

LAS4

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts
MEMORANDUM

To: SLAS Faculty, Associate Members,
and elected student representatives

From: Evan Alderson
Dean of Arts

Subject: Call for Nominations: SLAS Chair

Date: 29 June 1995

As I indicated in our meeting today, I am now calling for nominations for the position of Chair of the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies from among the faculty and Associate Members of the Department. I believe that the appropriate title and term for this position may be either Chair for a one- or two-year term, or Acting Chair for a one-year term. Associate Members who have departmental voting rights are eligible to stand for the position with the understanding that to assume the title of Chair, an individual should have and would be recommended for at least a joint appointment in the Department for the duration of the term.

The deadline for nominations is July 13, 1995. To be valid, nominations should include the signature of the nominee and in addition the signatures of two nominators from among those eligible to vote in departmental elections. The Vice-President has expressed his reluctance to accept as Chair a non-tenured faculty member.

If more than one valid nomination is received, I will conduct an election as specified in A 13.02, section 5 (1) under "Method of Appointment." The candidate identified through a single valid nomination or through an election will be subject to ratification by the faculty, as specified in Section 9 of the same policy. Only those holding faculty appointments in the Department will be eligible to vote in the ratification ballot. Because the confidence of the full department as it normally functions will be important to any candidate, I will put the name of any final candidate before the Associate Members in a separate ballot for information purposes.

I recognize that there may be some contention around the status of Associate Members of the Department in the ratification ballot, given the constitution of the Department. I ask those who may feel that this interpretation of University policy abrogates departmental rights and practices to consider not only the language of the policy but some of its logic: the ratification of the Chair is the clearest occasion on which faculty have the opportunity to assent to the appointment of an individual who may have substantial influence over their professional lives, including chairing their DTC. Associate Members, even where they participate fully in departmental affairs, have no such direct interest in the outcome.



Evan Alderson
Dean of Arts

EA/hj

cc: J. Munro
R. Blackman

**DEPARTMENT OF SPANISH
AND LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES**

CONSTITUTION

0. PREAMBLE

- 0.1 The Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies (SLAS) is constituted with the goal of integrating the study, teaching and research of Hispanic Language, Linguistics and Literature with the interdisciplinary study, teaching and research related to the peoples and cultures of Latin America.
- 0.2 The study of Portuguese, Brazilian Literature and Brazilian Studies, as well as Caribbean and Amerindian Studies, are part of the Department's academic mandate.

1.0 THE DEPARTMENT

- 1.1 The Department has two equally important academic components: the Spanish Program and the Latin American Studies Program.
- 1.2 The Spanish Program includes: Spanish Language, Spanish Linguistics and Spanish and Latin American Literature.
- 1.3 The Latin American Studies Program includes: interdisciplinary courses and joint cross-disciplinary studies with Archaeology, Communication, Geography, History, Political Science, Sociology/Anthropology and Spanish.
- 1.3.1 The Latin American Studies Interdisciplinary Field School is an integral complement to the Department's programs. It is scheduled at least every other year, and offers the students a full semester of academic credit in addition to first hand experience with the language and culture of the area.

2.0.0 THE CONSTITUTION

- 2.1 The Constitution shall comply with the SFU Policies and Procedures and will be amended as necessary.

- 2.2 Amendments shall be adopted when approved by two-thirds majority of voting members.

3.0 FACULTY AND TEACHING STAFF

- 3.1 Permanent SLAS Faculty are tenured and tenure-track designated faculty in three categories: faculty exclusively appointed to the Department, joint appointments to SLAS and other SFU departments, and founding associated faculty with appointments to other SFU departments who regularly teach full Latin American content courses.

- 3.2 Faculty shall also include:

- 3.2.1 Professors Emeriti (Academic [AC] 42).

- 3.2.2 Senior Lecturers and Lecturers (AC23)

- 3.2.3 Adjunct Professors (AC30)

- 3.2.4 Sessional Faculty (AC32)

- 3.3 Teaching staff shall include:

- 3.3.1 Continuing Language Instructors

- 3.3.2 Non-continuing Language Instructors

- 3.3.3 Graduate Teaching Assistants

4.0 GOVERNANCE

- 4.1 The Chair has an overall responsibility for ensuring that departmental policies are formulated and executed, that University, Faculty and departmental regulations are followed and that individual members of the Department fulfill their assigned duties.

- 4.2 Specific responsibilities related to the academic content and operation of the various department programs will be discharged by committees.

- 4.2.1 All committees will report to the Departmental Meeting.

4.3 Departmental Meetings

- 4.3.1 Membership of Departmental meeting with voice and vote are all permanent faculty (3.1), lecturers with a two or more years appointment (3.2.2) and two elected student representatives (one graduate and one undergraduate).
- 4.3.2 Professors Emeriti (3.2.1); non-founding associate faculty; Adjunct professors (3.2.3); limited-term faculty and limited-term lecturers, with less than a two-year appointment; sessional instructors (3.2.4), and language instructors (3.3) may have voice but no vote.
- 4.3.3 The Department will meet not less than once a semester, or when there is business to be considered, or when requested in writing by three or more voting members (4.3.1).
- 4.3.4 The Departmental Meeting has jurisdiction over departmental policy, Continuing Faculty (CFL) appointments (4.9) and academic matters.
- 4.3.5 The Departmental Meeting receives reports from the Spanish Steering Committee (SSC) (4.4) and the Latin American Studies Steering Committee (LASSC) (4.5) and has power to refer back documents for clarification and/or for amendment, but not to overrule them.
- 4.3.6 The Departmental Meeting also receives reports from departmental representatives to Faculty and University Committees.
- 4.3.7 Quorum is a majority of voting members.

4.4 Spanish Steering Committee (SSC)

- 4.4.1 The SSC consists of all faculty appointed to the Department who teach at least one Spanish course, professors Emeriti, teaching staff (3.2 - 3.3), and two student representatives (one graduate and one undergraduate). It shall elect its own chairperson and determine its own procedures.
- 4.4.2 The SSC has full jurisdiction over the academic content of the Spanish Program and Spanish courses. The LASSC (4.5) will have no veto power over these decisions.

4.5 Latin American Studies Steering Committee (LASSC)

4.5.1 The LASSC consists of all permanent faculty (3.1) who teach at least one full Latin American content course, professors Emeriti, sessional faculty and two student representatives (one graduate and one undergraduate). It will elect its own chairperson and determine its own procedures.

4.5.2 The LASSC has jurisdiction over the LAS Program, LAS courses and the LAS Field School. The SSC (4.4) will have no veto power over decisions in these areas.

4.6 Tenure Committee

4.6.1 The Department Tenure Committee (DTC) will be formed in accordance with (AC2) of the SFU Policies and Procedures and may draw its membership from the complete list of permanent faculty of SLAS (3.1).

4.7 Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC)

4.7.1 The Department Undergraduate Curriculum Committee will have a three member minimum membership as follows:

- two elected faculty members - one from Spanish and one from LAS
- one elected student representative.

The Chair of the Department may be an ex-officio member. The Committee will elect its own Chair and establish its own procedures.

4.7.2 The UCC will have the responsibility of planning and projecting calendar revisions.

4.8 Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)

4.8.1 The Graduate Studies Committee will consist of a three-member minimum membership as follows:

- Chair of Graduate Studies elected by voting members of the Department for a two-year mandate
- Chair of the Department
- one elected faculty representing Spanish or LAS
- one student representative

4.8.2 The GSC will have the responsibility of planning and projecting the administration of graduate studies in the Department.

4.9 Appointments Committee (APC)

4.9.1 The APC will have the following membership:

- Chair of the Department
- four elected faculty members, two from SPAN and two from LAS
- one elected student representative

4.9.2 The APC will produce a shortlist of candidates, interview them and submit a ranking to the Department. The decision will be formalized by a departmental vote.

4.9.3 The APC will also deal with a selection of limited-term and sessional appointments.

4.10 Other Committees

4.10.1 The Departmental Meeting may strike any other committees as deemed necessary. The terms of reference for these committees will be specified.

5.0 STUDENT REPRESENTATION

5.1 Student representatives will be invited to participate in all departmental committees with the exception of the Tenure and Salaries Committee and other committees dealing with "faculty only" matters.

5.2 Student representation shall have voice and vote.

6.0 INTERNAL CHAIR SELECTION

6.1 Will be made under the terms of reference of SFU Policies and Procedures (AC44) with the following additional conditions:

6.2 A Chair's Search Committee shall consist of a Dean of Arts representative, a representative from SSC (4.4) and a representative for LASSC (4.5).

6.3 The Search Committee will solicit and receive nominations, will interview candidates, and will produce a shortlist with a recommended ranking.

6.4 The Dean of Arts will conduct a ratification ballot for the candidate ranked as number one in the shortlist.

6.4.1 All permanent SLAS faculty (3.1) will have the right to vote in the ratification balloting.

6.4.2 The candidate must be ratified by absolute majority in order to be recommended for appointment.

6.4.3 If the candidate fails to receive the required majority, a similar ballot will be conducted for candidate number two, and so on until ratification occurs.

6.4.4 If no candidate from the shortlist receives the required support (6.4.2) the Dean of Arts will proceed with an appointment without further procedures.

7.0 EXTERNAL CHAIR SELECTION

7.1 Will be conducted by the Dean of Arts in agreement with the University Policies and Procedures Manual.

8.0 LEAVE

8.1 Sabbatical leave, leave of absence, and medical leaves will be governed by SFU Policies and Procedures (AC19), (AC8) and (AC25).

9.0 RULES OF ORDER

9.1 Unless specifically superseded by the procedures in this Constitution, the procedures in Roberts' Rules of Order shall apply.

10 September 1991

LAS 6

evan_alderson, 10:28 AM 3/18/96, Dissolution of S/LAS

To: evan_alderson
From: Jorge Garcia <garcia@sfu.ca>
Subject: Dissolution of S/LAS
Cc: jstubbs, dgagan, dubiel, las-sc, slas-dept, percival
Bcc: rieckhof, whitbrea, dclose@kean.ucs.mun.ca
X-Attachments:

To: Dr. Evan Alderson,
Dean of Arts

Dear Evan:

I would like to lodge my strongest objection to the pre-mature and unprecedented actions taken by your Office in breach of University Policies, interfering in the SLAS Department operations and planning, as "if the Department were already disbanded". Senate alone has the power to discontinue Programs of Instruction and Departments, and the matter has not even been discussed yet.

Your Office has maintained a arbitrarily imposed moratorium on declaration of Majors in Spanish and in Latin American Studies, and a suspension of admissions to the LAS MA Program since the beginning of the 1996 Spring Semester. Recently you have appointed Dr. Andrea Lebowitz, who does not represent the interests of Spanish or Latin American Studies, as Chair of SLAS pro-tem without ratification by faculty. I also understand that Dr. Lebowitz is taking decisions without consultation with faculty and by-passing the appropriate Departmental Committees. The Chair's secretary has been given lay-off notice, teaching assignments and scheduling of courses are being managed directly through the DA's office. Nedless to say that these actions are decimating enrolments and causing hardship to students and faculty alike.

Jorge Garcia,
Professor SLAS,
Chair of the Standing Committee for Latin American Studies.

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LAS7

Simon Fraser University
Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies
Memorandum

To: Dr. Evan Alderson
Dean of Arts

From: Jorge García
Professor

Date: January 22, 1996.

Re: The future of Latin American Studies

Dear Evan:

I would like to inform you that a Standing Committee for Latin American Studies has been established with representation of the great majority of faculty, and representation of students and Sessional Instructors. The Committee has held two formal meetings and has approved by unanimity the following resolutions which we would like to submit for your consideration.

On behalf of the Standing Committee I would also like to offer our full cooperation to plan the immediate steps for a rapid transition to a permanent departmental structure for Latin American Studies.

Resolution # 1

"Be it resolved that a Standing Committee for Latin American Studies be constituted with the following membership: Brohman, De Grandis, Escudero, García, Gates, Herold, Newton, Otero, Zuccolo, Jara (undergraduate), Giles (graduate), Everton (Sessional).

The mandate of the Committee to be: To advocate for the creation of a Department of Latin American Studies that would house the existing LAS Major and MA Programs and the Spanish Language instruction, and to cooperate with the Dean of Arts and the University Administration to that effect.

The Committee shall cease its functions at such time as the SFU Senate and Board of Governors have approved the new Department."

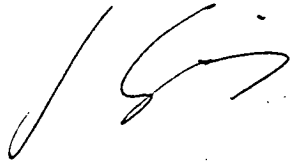
Resolution # 2

"We are deeply concerned by the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Future Planning for the SLAS Department, in particular those which underlie the cancellation of the LAS Major and the suspension of admissions to the MA Program.

These actions have worked confusion and hardship on students; they have a strong negative effect on current enrollments and on future recruitment.

We maintain that recommendations with such sweeping consequences can have force only if they are the outcome of an academic evaluation --a proper peer review. This has ~~been~~ ^{not} carried out. The members of the Ad Hoc Committee are not Latin Americanists; their professional competence does not extend to evaluation of professional matters. The procedure that has been followed is therefore (in our view) questionable. On this point we are seeking further opinion from the Faculty Association Executive and the appropriate committees of Senate.

We urge that the temporary measures noted above be rescinded immediately; that the relevant standing committees of the existing SLAS Department, the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and the Graduate Studies Committee, be requested to provide recommendations on the respective programs, and that no change to the existing LAS Programs of Instruction be considered without an external peer review."



DEPARTMENT OF SPANISH AND LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES
DEPARTMENTAL MEETING
Minutes 23 November 1995 1230

Present: Covell (Acting Chair, SLAS)

Lebowitz, Cleveland (Ad Hoc Committee members)

Brohman, Ciria, DeGrandis, García, Gates, Herold, Otero, Sosa, Spurling

Corzo, Erickson, Everton

Brook, Hostetler, Jara, Freibisch, Sandoval

Ludington (DA)

Hill (recording secretary)

1. Approval of agenda

The agenda was approved as circulated.

2. Approval of minutes of 26 October 1995

Clavero asked that on page, item two "Literature to Texts "of" the Colonial Period be changed to "Texts of the Colonial Period"; under item d) the name of John Cameron be changed to Jaime Cisneros. Otero asked that on page two, item four 20th Century Art be changed to 20th Century Mexican Art. The minutes of 26 October 1995 meeting were approved as amended.

3. Business arising from the minutes

UCFV minor in LAS and a joint major between LAS and Geography proposal: A memo was sent to UCFV from Spurling informing them of the departmental approval of these programs.

4. Ad-Hoc Committee Draft Report

Covell introduced the Ad-Hoc Committee members to the department. The Dean asked the Ad-Hoc Committee to prepare a report making recommendations as to the structure of a new Department of Latin American Studies and its viability within university resources. Under the assumption that no increase of resources would be available, the committee drafted a report and is here to answer questions, clarify some points and get reactions from the department. The committee was commended for their work and their main recommendation of creating an LAS department was generally supported. It was mentioned that we have the first LAS joint major and MA programs in Canada placing SFU as the center for LAS and the momentum for the creation of a LAS department is strong as the Canada-Latin America relationship is more emphatic. A lengthy discussion ensued:

There was general disagreement with the pessimistic assessment in the report and most felt that the LAS program has not failed as more people are interested now than when the Major was originally approved. The graduate program has been the most positive achievement of the department. Pending faculty retirements are a fact of life and don't diminish institutions or universities. This is bad timing to suspend the graduate program, the performance of graduate students have exceeded our expectations and the fact that we now have such a high number of students should not be a concern as three to four students are getting ready to defend their theses. The graduate program was the goal of the LAS program from the beginning, without it LAS would not exist. Biannual admission or reduction of

damage the integrity of a three year old program, she expressed that students will be organized to fight this decision. The LAS Department should decide on the viability of the MA program. Lebowitz will discuss it with the other members and decide as a committee. The Committee was asked if it would be opened to a new option: in one step, close SLAS, open LAS and consider graduate and undergraduate problems that the new department will be faced with to reduce the negative effects of the Department being closed without a new Department beginning. Lebowitz stated that he first step was to end the Department of SLAS, she reminded all members that the committee's recommendation was to suspend admission to the MA program, not the program itself.

The members pointed out that the report should be much more detailed, it should include the reasons and bases for such recommendations, it should also exclude words such as "suspension" "cancelling". The question was raised whether the decision to "suspend" the Graduate program was based on the assessment of the future departmental resources (re: members) or to budgetary considerations. ✓
Lebowitz responded that the decision was made on the basis that the future Department might be too small to handle the job.

5. Other business - Budget

Covell informed the department that the Dean has asked for specific reduction for each department's Temporary Instructional Budget. It was suggested by the Dean that each department reduce their Summer course offerings by two courses. Covell asked if the UCC should handle the decide on this matter. It was decided to allow the Chair and Ludington to decide what two courses funded by this budget could be cut.

The meeting adjourned at 2:25

Maureen Covell

No Recipient, opinion ballot results

To:
 From: Jorge Garcia <garcia@sfu.ca>
 Subject: SLAS opinion ballot results
 Cc:
 Bcc:
 X-Attachments:

>
 >Date: Thu, 21 Mar 1996 17:59:07 -0800 (PST)
 >X-Sender: garcia@popserver.sfu.ca (Unverified)
 >
 >The tallies of the 22 January 1996 "Opinion Ballot" conducted by the Dean of
 >Arts amongst SLAS faculty members were realeased to me as chair of the LAS
 >Standing Committee on march 5, 1996 with a total of 14 votes cast. By this
 >time the ballot submitted to the Arts faculty was already out (since
 >February 19).
 >
 >The results are as follows:
 >1) Cmtee.'s recommendation [CR]: That the Dept. of SLAS be disbanded. 10
 >preferred [P]; 3 acceptable [A]; 1 unacceptable [U].
 >
 >2) CR: That some faculty in the existing SLAS Dept. be assigned to other
 >units. 8[P]; 3[A]; 3 [U].
 >2) Dean's aternative [DA]: That all faculty members in the xisting dept of
 >SLAS be asigned to other units, with provision for teaching in the LAS
 >program... 9[U]; 3[P]; 1[A]
 >
 >3) CR. That the Saprish Major and Minor be phased out and that no new
 >students be accepted into these degrees...12[U]; 1[P]
 >3)DA. That a moratorium on admissions to the SPAN major and Minors continue,
 >but that those interested be encouraged to propose a new and limited
 >program...8[U]; 4[P]; 2[A]
 >
 >4) CR. That Span literature courses be moved into another unit or abandoned.
 >7[P]; 4[U]; 2[A]
 >4)DA. That pending further developments the Sapn Lit courses identified by
 >the Ad Hoc Cmte. de moved to IDS. 11[A]; 3[P]
 >
 >5) CR. That a new Department of Latin American Studies be created. 9[P];4[U]
 >5) DA. That a new Program in LAS be created, to be governed by a Director
 >and a Steering Committee and with Associated members only. 7[U]; 4[A]; 3[P]
 >
 >6)CR. That a curriculum of the undergrad. progr. be based upon the existing
 >courses...But that the Department be required to revise this
 >curriculum...That the overall number of courses be reduced and that the core

No Recipient, opinion ballot results

- >of LAS be clearly outlined. 8[A]; 4[U]; 1[P]
- >6) DA. Identical except for the substitution of "Program" for "Department".
- >9[U]; 5[A]
- >
- >7) CR. That the undergrad. prog. be maintained but only as a Minor, extended
- >minor, or Joint Major until the revision of the undergrad. curriculum is
- >complete. 8[U]; 4[A]; 2[P]
- >
- >8) CR. That Span. Lang. instruction be maintained in LAS Dept. but that Span
- >Linguistics be removed from the LAS curriculum. 8[P]; 4[U]; 1[A]
- >8) DA. That Span Lang instruct. be moved to the Div. of Interdisciplinary
- >Studies and be coordinated with other lang. offered through the Division.
- >That Span Ling. courses relevant to lang. acquisition be considered for
- >retention. 9[U]; 4[P]; 1[A]
- >
- >9) CR. That the Field School be maintained. 10[P]; 2[A]; 2[U].
- >
- >10) CR. That there be no new admissions to the LAS grad Prog. for 1996/97.
- >that the question of admissions be reviewed and admission resumed after the
- >Dept has developed a plan for maintaining both the undergrad and grad progr
- >with existing resources and after the number of students currently enrolled
- >in the MA Prog has been reduced..... 11[U]; 2[A]
- >10) DA. That new admissions to the LAS grad prog be deferred to 1997/98.
- >That the review and revision recommended as above by the AH Cmtee take
- >place, with a view to introducing a two-year cohort-based program with
- >biennial admissions. 8[U]; 3[A]; 3[P]
- >Jorge Garcia
- >
- >
- >

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts
MEMORANDUM

To: All Faculty
Faculty of Arts

From: Evan Alderson
Dean of Arts

Subject: Dissolution of the Department
of Spanish and Latin American
Studies and related changes

Date: February 19, 1996

I am asking all faculty in the Faculty of Arts to vote on my proposal for the dissolution of the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies and for a major restructuring of the academic programs it has offered. If a majority vote of the Faculty approves of this proposal, I will forward the recommendations to Senate. Please return the attached ballot by Wednesday, March 6.

This proposal follows upon a long process of deliberation, including several stages of administrative review and formal and informal consultation with members of the Department. In what follows here, I set out a concise description of events leading to this recommendation and outline the proposed changes and reasons for them.

As many of you are aware, the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies was formed some years ago as a merger of the Latin American Studies Program and the Spanish Division of the old Department of Languages, Literatures and Linguistics. At the time the merger seemed to be a good way to advance the academic interests of both units and to provide for the development of a coherent and forward-looking interdisciplinary department. Unfortunately, the new department has not worked well in practice. Despite the signal achievement of implementing a new M.A. in Latin American Studies, the Department has not developed as a cohesive and collegial enterprise. Not surprisingly, there are differing views as to the causes of the difficulties, but there is a widely shared perception that the current situation cannot continue.

I have taken a variety of actions to attempt to improve the situation over the past year and a half. Early in the Fall of 1994 I appointed an ad hoc Review Committee of Professors Roger Blackman of Psychology and Santa Aloï of Contemporary Arts to "review the current operations and directions of the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies." While that review was in progress the Chair of the department resigned. I then followed one of the major recommendations of the Review Committee in appointing an Acting Chair from outside the Department for an eight month term. Dr. Blackman took on that task from January to August 1995. During that time some progress was made in securing agreement on how to refocus the graduate program, but at the end of it the Department was unable to find a Chair from among its own members.

Given the inability of the Department to govern itself in the normal way, I struck a new ad hoc committee to propose in detail an alternative organization which would involve the dissolution of the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies and the creation of a new Department of Latin American Studies. This committee included the new externally appointed Acting Chair, Dr. Maureen Covell of Political Science, and Dr. William Cleveland of History and was chaired by Associate Dean Andrea Lebowitz. The work of this committee included consultation with the Department but it was also influenced by the gathering budgetary storm clouds of last semester. Although the Committee did present a plan for a new department, it warned that the viability of the plan was "heavily dependent on the availability of new resources."

After receiving the ad hoc Committee's final report and comments on it from department members, and in light of the increasing severity of the budget prospects and other considerations, I put before department members an opinion ballot that included the Committee's recommendations and my own alternative suggestions. My suggestions included returning Latin American Studies to the original model of an interdisciplinary program, without departmental status or separate faculty appointments, but maintaining the graduate program and undergraduate joint majors.

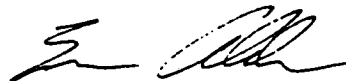
The outcome of the opinion ballot was decisive in one regard. Almost without exception the Faculty and Associate Members of Spanish and Latin American Studies found the committee's recommendation for dissolution of the present department to be a "preferred" or "acceptable" outcome ("Preferred"- 10; "Acceptable"- 3; "Unacceptable"- 1). A majority of those voting preferred the creation of a new Department of Latin American Studies but just as many found the alternative of a program either "acceptable" or "preferred" as found it "unacceptable." The vote on other matters followed from their general preference for the establishment of a new department with dedicated faculty appointments. A majority wished Spanish language acquisition courses to be included within the new department, and Spanish literature programs to be maintained outside it.

I have considered the range of opinions in the formal ballot and additional representations made to me, particularly by students and faculty associated with Latin American Studies. The recommendations on the attached Faculty-wide ballot are essentially in accord with the "alternative suggestions" I put forward to the Department. I outline my reasoning here:

- 1) There appears to be nearly universal agreement that the present department should be disbanded. Once that decision is taken, the question as to what should replace it must necessarily be addressed from both academic and budgetary perspectives.
- 2) I very much support the continuation of academically strong programs in Latin American Studies at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. At the same time, I believe that such programs should be focused in such a

way as to be sustainable with relatively modest resources. Pressures to build faculty numbers in relation to the perceived needs of a discipline rather than demonstrated student demand should be resisted, as should the development of a disproportionately large graduate program. Although it has been argued that anything less than departmental status would be demoralizing to the Latin Americanists and potentially damaging to the academic programs, I see a program structure for Latin American Studies as appropriate under current restraints. An academically and administratively successful program could seek departmental status at a later time.

- 3) I am now unable to devote new resources to Latin American Studies and cannot guarantee replacements for positions that become vacant. A small department is inherently less efficient than a program which can draw on expertise from elsewhere. It has been argued that I should consider an alternative model under which any excess teaching capacity within the Department could be loaned to other departments, but my analysis of the historical relationship between teaching capacity and student demand in the present department does not inspire confidence that such a system would be highly efficient. Given the ability of our Latin Americanists to teach productively in other departments, I believe that Latin American Studies should draw upon teaching capacity as needed, and not as secured within a departmental structure. The overall savings to the University will arise primarily from a more efficient match between student numbers and faculty availability. Modest additional savings will be available through administrative restructuring.
- 4) Although the ad hoc Committee recommended that Spanish language instruction be kept within the new Department of Latin American Studies, the argument for associating it directly with a program is much less strong. I believe the Spanish language program could more effectively serve its various purposes, including service to LAS students and to Spanish literature students and to all those interested in Spanish language acquisition, as part of a co-ordinated approach to language teaching within Interdisciplinary Studies.
- 5). Given the necessity for change, I believe that each part of the current department, as well as all its faculty and students, should be given some opportunity for refocusing and renewal. My intention is to provide the most constructive opportunities for all affected faculty and students that I believe can be sustained under current circumstances.



Evan Alderson
Dean of Arts

EA/jm:
Copy:
J.Stubbs
D.Gagan
B.Clayman

February 19, 1996

B A L L O T

DEAN'S PROPOSAL TO RESTRUCTURE SPANISH AND LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

- 1) The Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies will be disbanded.
- 2) Faculty members in the Department will be assigned to other units, with provision for teaching in the Latin American Studies program, the Spanish language program, and Spanish literature courses as appropriate.
- 3) A Program in Latin American Studies will be established, to be governed by a Director and a Steering Committee, and with responsibility for graduate and undergraduate programs in Latin American Studies.
- 4) New admissions to the graduate program are to be deferred to the 1997-98 academic year, subject to revisions and consideration of a system of biennial admissions.
- 5) The undergraduate program in Latin American Studies will include the minor and existing joint majors, with the understanding that the curriculum will be reviewed and revised by the Steering Committee. The independent major program in Latin American Studies will be phased out. The Latin American Studies Field School will be continued.
- 6) A selection of the existing Spanish Literature courses (as identified by the ad hoc Committee) will be moved to the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies. The minor and existing joint major programs will be retained, subject to revisions, but the independent major program in Spanish will be phased out. Continuation of these programs will be contingent upon the availability of resources and sufficient faculty and student interest.
- 7) Courses relating directly to Spanish language acquisition will be moved to the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies. Most of the existing courses relating to Spanish linguistics will be dropped. The Certificate in Spanish Language Proficiency will be retained.

☐ AGREE

☐ DISAGREE

☐ ABSTAIN

Enclose your ballot in the small envelope, place it in the larger addressed envelope, print your name in the left-hand corner, and return to the Office of the Dean of Arts by 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 6, 1996

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts
MEMORANDUM

To: All Members of Spanish and
Latin American Studies

From: Evan Alderson
Dean of Arts

Subject: Future of the Department

Date: September 20, 1995

This is to follow up on my memorandum of August 11 regarding the future of the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies. In that memo I outlined my intention to initiate a planning process leading to the creation of a Department of Latin American Studies and the dissolution of the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies.

I have given further thought as to how the planning can best proceed. A significant re-structuring of this kind requires an overall plan as well as a large number of detailed changes in curriculum and calendar language. It is not necessary or even appropriate that all the details be worked through prior to the establishment of the new department and its membership. In order to enable a careful consideration of the proposal, however, it is important to provide a clear "blueprint" of the structure and mandate of the new department and the other academic arrangements involved. Such a plan can lead to a series of motions to be placed before the present Department, the Faculty of Arts and Senate.

I am appointing a small ad hoc planning committee to formulate this blueprint. This committee will consult with members of the present Department, but it will not include faculty or associate members of SLAS. It is charged to provide full and impartial advice to me regarding relevant academic changes both inside and outside of the new Department of Latin American Studies. The Committee will be open to representations from all individuals associated with the present Department, including students, and may seek advice from department members and others as it sees fit; it will consult formally with the Department concerning a draft of its proposals; I intend to place the Committee's final recommendations concerning academic structure and curriculum before the Department for formal vote before referring the matter to the Faculty of Arts.

In order that the committee will operate within a commonly understood framework of assumptions, I outline below the areas I expect it will consider and some issues I will ask that it address.

1) The New Department.

I will ask the Committee to make recommendations regarding the structure and mandate of the new Department of Latin American Studies. I anticipate that the new Department will include:

- a) The M.A. in Latin American Studies as recently reformulated by vote within the SLAS Department. I will seek advice from the committee as to whether this program should move to a pattern of biennial admissions, with the next admissions for the 1997-98 academic year.
- b) An undergraduate major and minor and appropriate joint majors in Latin American Studies. I expect that these programs may be essentially the same as at present, and I assume that they will include opportunities for the study of Latin American literature and culture.
- c) I anticipate that The LAS Field School will continue to be a valuable part of the undergraduate program. The Committee may choose to comment on prospects for the Department's further involvement in international activities.
- d) Spanish language courses, including a sequence of courses leading toward competence in the language, plus courses in Spanish linguistics directly pertinent to the acquisition of language skills or to the study of Latin American society.

In addition to the consideration of these program areas, I ask the Committee to suggest appropriate governance structures for a department of this kind, including the constitutional role of Associate Members and issues regarding graduate students not enrolled in programs administered by the Department.

2) Other Courses

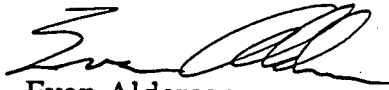
I will receive from the Committee recommendations regarding the continuation and location of existing courses and programs that do not fit within the mandate of the new Department. As one aspect of these recommendations I seek advice as to whether admissions to the Spanish major, joint major and minor programs should be suspended.

3) Faculty Placement

I will ask the Committee to consider the appropriate academic home for each faculty member in the present Department as a result of the curriculum re-structuring. The Committee will make its recommendations regarding faculty placement in confidence to me, which will allow me the opportunity to discuss the matter with each faculty member affected before submitting my recommendations to the Vice-President, Academic for consideration and transmittal to the Board.

The Committee may choose to make additional recommendations following from its consultations and deliberations. I ask that the Committee complete its work before the end of this Fall semester. On the basis of its report, I will formulate a series of motions for consideration and vote at each appropriate level, and in time for proper notice of the changes to be given in next year's University Calendar. I trust that planning for the more detailed calendar changes required to implement the recommendations will follow along without undue delay, and be in full effect by Fall, 1997.

I am pleased to announce that Professor William Cleveland of the History Department, Professor Maureen Covell of the Political Science, and Associate Dean Andrea Lebowitz have agreed to serve on this important ad hoc Committee, with Prof. Lebowitz serving as Chair of the Committee. Dr. Covell has additionally agreed to serve as Acting Chair of the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies from October 1 to the end of this semester. I ask for ratification of Dr. Covell as Acting Chair by faculty members in the Department in the accompanying ballot. As in the past, a separate ballot, for information purposes only, is being provided to Associate Members of the Department.



Evan Alderson
Dean of Arts

EV

cc: D. Gagan
W. Cleveland
M. Covell
A. Lebowitz

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts
MEMORANDUM

To: All Members
Department of Spanish &
Latin American Studies

From: Evan Alderson
Dean of Arts

Subject: Future of the Department III Date: December 7, 1995

I have now received the final report of the ad hoc planning committee I appointed to advise me regarding academic changes appropriate for the planned dissolution of the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies and creation of a new Department of Latin American Studies. I attach that report for your information and comment.

I ask that you provide me with any comments you wish to make in writing by December 22, 1995. It is my intention to seek a formal expression of opinion from the Department regarding the Committee's recommendations early in the New Year. I take very seriously the context of their review which the Committee's report articulates in its opening section. I therefore intend to seek the Department's opinion on a structured series of options before making my recommendations to the Faculty of Arts.

I will be out of town until the 18th of December. Those of you who may wish to speak with me personally can make appointments to do so during the week of December 18.


Evan Alderson

EA/jm:

copy:
M. Covell
D. Gagan
A. Lebowitz

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Future Planning for the Spanish and Latin American Studies Department

The Committee was charged "to make recommendations regarding the structure and mandate of the new Department of Latin American Studies." In the course of undertaking its assigned task, the Committee was compelled to consider the following:

- Any new LAS Department may be too small to offer the full range of courses and expertise expected of a functioning department.
- The viability of a new LAS Department may be brought into further question by the impending retirements of some faculty members.
- This review is being undertaken during a period of projected budgetary cutbacks.

Because of these problems, the fulfillment of the Committee's recommendations is heavily dependent upon the availability of new resources either through internal realignment of existing resources, or external replacements.

In addition, these considerations have led us to recommend that, in the short run at least, the Department offer a limited range of programs. In particular, we have recommended that a LAS major (as opposed to minors and joint majors) be reinstated only after a revision of the undergraduate curriculum. We have also recommended that there be no new admissions to the LAS MA program during the departmental reorganization and that admissions resume after the department has developed a plan for maintaining the undergraduate and graduate programs with its existing resources.

Background

At this point Latin American Studies has 31 joint majors, 11 majors, and 4 minors (including extended). In addition there are 25 graduate students. If Spanish Literature and Linguistics courses were to be removed from the existing curriculum, the remaining LAS curriculum would have 18 courses plus a Field School. It is obvious that the resulting complement of faculty (after reassignment of some faculty and the approaching retirement of others) could not possibly maintain undergraduate and graduate programs of the present scope. Faced with this stark reality, the Committee has had to consider the very existence of the Department. Although we were initially charged to recommend options within a new Latin American Studies Department, this may no longer be a structural

possibility. If a LAS Department is not created, Latin American Studies might continue under one of the following options.

Structural Options:

- Return LAS to an interdisciplinary program structure constituted as a separate unit.
- Reduce LAS to an interdisciplinary program with no separate administrative unit. Faculty would be reassigned and the program would exist only as courses given in separate departments.

The Committee has considered the above options and believes that both the University and the Department must carefully consider them as well. While we are suggesting that a Department be maintained, we realize that financial realities might well require the adoption of one of the above alternatives.

Several considerations argue for the maintenance of a department. Latin American Studies is one of few such programs in Canada and its MA is unique in Western Canada. Latin American Studies are an area of increasing practical interest and one in which SFU has a significant comparative advantage. Our recommendations attempt to preserve the department and its programs as much as possible and to leave open the possibility of restoring programs like the MA when the reorganization is complete.

Committee Recommendation

- That the Department of Spanish/LAS be disbanded.
- That some faculty members in the existing Spanish/LAS Department be assigned to other units*.
- That the Spanish Major and Minor programs be phased out and that no new students be accepted into these degrees but that students with declared programs be allowed to complete.
- That Spanish Literature courses be moved into another unit or abandoned.
- That a new Department of Latin American Studies be created.
- That the curriculum of the undergraduate program be based upon the existing courses outlined on the attached spreadsheet, but that the Department be required to review this curriculum. In particular, that the 100 and 200 level courses

be reviewed. That the review of the courses ensure that the 3 "streams" of History and Culture, Economy and Society, and Politics and the State are in balance. That the overall number of courses be reduced and that the core of Latin American Studies be clearly outlined.

what happens
to LAS major?

That the undergraduate program be maintained but only as a Minor, Extended Minor, or Joint Major until the revision of the undergraduate curriculum is complete.

- That Spanish Language Acquisition instruction be maintained in the LAS Department but that Spanish Linguistics courses be removed from the LAS curriculum.
- That the Field School be maintained.
- That there be no new admissions to the LAS graduate program for 1996-97. That the question of admissions be reviewed and admissions resumed after the Department has developed a plan for maintaining both the undergraduate and graduate programs with existing resources and after the number of students currently enrolled in the MA program has been reduced. That the program be revised along the lines recommended in the Graduate Task Force Report. That the program continue to be listed in the university calendar. That, if the program has not been reactivated by the 2000-01 academic year, the university and the Department review the situation and consider the program's deletion.
- That a new Department be created only if the potential members of the unit can select an Acting Chair from their number. That Associate Members, subject to university policy, continue their voting rights but that their relationship to the new Department be reviewed and regularized.

In conclusion, the Committee feels that the University and the Department face some very difficult choices. While we recommend a solution that would preserve a Latin American Studies Department, we must caution that such a suggestion is far from assured in the present financial climate.

* *The Committee is reporting to the Dean on this matter confidentially.*

D6

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts
MEMORANDUM

To: David Gagan
Chair, SCAP

From: Evan Alderson
Dean of Arts

Subject: Department of Spanish and
Latin American Studies

Date: March 21, 1996

On behalf of the Faculty of Arts, I am proposing the dissolution of the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies, and a number of accompanying structural changes, including the creation of a Program in Latin American Studies and the transfer of Spanish language courses and Spanish literature courses to the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies. Under this proposal the existing graduate program in Latin American Studies would continue, as would existing joint major programs in Latin American Studies and in Spanish. The independent major programs in Spanish and in Latin American Studies would be phased out. Concomitant with these changes, if approved, I will recommend to the Board of Governors the relocation of all faculty in the current department to other departments and programs or to the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies, with provision for teaching in Latin American Studies and elsewhere as needed and appropriate.

As might be imagined, there is a substantial history leading to these recommendations. I am attaching the concise history of events that I sent to all faculty in the Faculty of Arts as background to the ballot I distributed last month, also attached. That ballot passed the Faculty by a very large majority. I can of course provide additional documentation on the background events if so requested by SCAP. What is more germane I believe is to clarify the issues central to this proposal, some of which may have become clouded through various discussions in the University.

(1) Proposal for the Dissolution of Spanish and Latin American Studies

I believe that there is virtually no dispute by those close to the Department about the need to dismantle the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies as it currently exists. The question is what should replace it.

Although several voices from both inside and outside the University have been raised in defense of the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies, the disciplines it represents and the quality and importance of its programs, those closer to the history of the Department are I believe on the whole in agreement that the Department itself has not worked well in practice and is presently unable to act as a single coherent unit. The

Department at present includes faculty with special expertise in Spanish literature, others with expertise in Spanish language and linguistics, and Latin Americanists from varying disciplinary backgrounds, plus five active Associate Members from other departments with expertise in Latin American Studies. It was founded with the idea that these different specializations could be drawn together to create an innovative and interdisciplinary academic program. Attractive as that idea was, and is, its realization at Simon Fraser for whatever reasons has proved unworkable. If the problems that have developed were simply matters of departmental governance the various attempts to repair things might have worked, but issues of governance have been intricately interwoven with profound differences of academic perspectives and allegiances and significant deficiencies in collegial relations.

(2) Latin American Studies

Given both the need for change and the will to maintain and if possible enhance valuable academic programs, I at first thought that the dissolution of the current department could most appropriately be accompanied by the creation of a Department of Latin American Studies. Most though not all of the faculty in the current department have teaching interests directly related to Latin American Studies and this core is enhanced by significant expertise in other departments. It was clear that the creation of a new department would be a satisfactory resolution to the majority of those in the department and to many students. I established an ad hoc committee to develop a "blueprint" for the creation of a new department and the residual changes that would be required. After examining the situation with care, this committee did eventually concur with its mandate by recommending that a department be created, but it did so with significant reservations, warning in particular that new resources would be necessary to create a viable unit.

After further careful reflection I have decided not to recommend the creation of a new department at this time. I am not in a position to guarantee new resources or even the maintenance of resources recently available to the Department. In the current budget climate it seems to me unwise to replace one relatively small department with an even smaller department which may be of insufficient size and breadth. I believe that it is possible to maintain the most important and attractive academic programs connected with the current department in other ways, most particularly through the creation of a Program in Latin American Studies. Such a program would not need to house the Spanish language program which serves it and other units; it could make efficient use of expertise available in the Faculty; it could sustain the current graduate program, with modest changes, and continue core undergraduate programming.

Such an approach has the further advantage of providing an opportunity for Latin American Studies to re-establish itself as an independent unit on the basis of the positive and collegial energies of those who wish to be involved. This will equitably allow all the current faculty to either attach

themselves to the new unit or pursue their academic goals elsewhere. Most tenure-track faculty have received indications that they will be welcomed into existing regular departments and programs in the Faculty of Arts. The academic appointments of some individuals will be transferred to the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies. In all these arrangements provision will be made for teaching in the Latin American Studies Program as required to meet student needs and provide a diversity of offerings at the undergraduate level and to run the graduate program. I believe that by these means effective programs in Latin American Studies can be sustained, but on a significantly more cost-effective basis than previously.

I am recommending two changes to the academic programs in Latin American Studies. The first of these is the elimination of the independent major in Latin American Studies while maintaining the several joint major programs now in place. The ad hoc committee observed that last semester there were 11 students undertaking the major, while 31 were enrolled in joint majors, and recommended dropping the major program. The advantage of a joint major is that it insures that an "area studies" approach is accompanied by a disciplinary grounding in a related field. As well as representing the apparent preference of students, it seems the most appropriate concentration for the proposed organizational structure.

The second change I am recommending concerns the graduate program, although this does not require a specific action by Senate. During the summer of 1995 the Department agreed to some reorientation of the graduate program. I have asked Dean Clayman to defer admissions to the existing graduate program for one year in order that required changes can be put in place. I have also strongly recommended consideration of a system of biennial admissions, so that the program can serve an entering cohort effectively and efficiently. The one-year delay in admissions will also enable faculty to focus on helping the rather large number of graduate students now enrolled to complete their work.

(3) Spanish Language

Under the proposal to establish a Department of Latin American Studies it seemed most appropriate to place the Spanish language acquisition courses there. However, the case for subsuming Spanish language instruction within a Latin American Studies Program structure is not persuasive. Spanish language acquisition courses serve not only Latin American Studies, but also Spanish literature students and a wide general audience. The language program can readily be housed within the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies, which is the home for courses in a number of languages. The Division is expected to play a significant role in facilitating the development of language instruction in relation to the new language laboratory and instructional opportunities at Harbour Centre. I believe the Spanish language program can serve its various constituencies very effectively from that base.

(4) Spanish Literature

Most of the existing courses in Spanish literature will also be moved to the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies, with provision for maintaining the current joint major and minor programs. The ad hoc committee recommended abandoning altogether the opportunity to concentrate in Spanish literature at Simon Fraser, on the grounds that a major program is available at UBC and that the critical mass of faculty and students are not likely to be available to maintain an independent program over the long term. My own sense is that the joint majors, with French and with Latin American Studies, can quite reasonably be sustained in response to student interest. Linkages to the study of other European literatures can be encouraged within Interdisciplinary Studies and the Humanities Program.

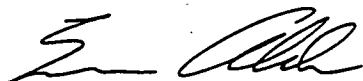
(5) Conclusion

Several members of the present department are understandably unhappy with these recommendations. They would prefer that Latin American Studies be granted the status of an independent department, and that all current programs be maintained. In various appeals to the community a number of procedural issues have been raised concerning the genesis of these recommendations, some of which imply that I have proceeded arbitrarily in this matter without due consultation and departmental assent. I believe on the contrary that there has been a long history of efforts to assist the department to find a direction it could collectively and constructively pursue. If simpler solutions had proved possible I would have welcomed them.

My various responses to ongoing difficulties are outlined in my memo to the Faculty of Arts. It was only at the end of a long process that I concluded that the present department is not viable. Thereafter, I have attempted to find a restructuring that is financially sustainable and academically justifiable, that meets student needs and interests as fully as possible under current circumstances, and that in my judgement provides the most positive available opportunity for all faculty involved. I do not pretend that all of these recommendations have the assent of the majority of the Department. The Faculty of Arts on the other hand has concurred with my view that the proposals represent the most academically responsible course of action at this time. I therefore propose to the Senate Committee on Academic Planning the following motions:

- (i) that a Program in Latin American Studies be established, with responsibility for the current graduate and undergraduate programs in Latin American Studies. Curriculum changes to be brought forward by the Program will include the phasing out of the major in Latin American Studies.

- (ii) that responsibility for Spanish language acquisition courses and for Spanish literature courses be moved to the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies. Curriculum changes to be brought forward will include the phasing out of the current Spanish major.
- (iii) that the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies be dissolved, effective September 1, 1996.



Evan Alderson
Dean, Faculty of Arts

EA/jm:

copy:
J. Stubbs
B. Clayman
Faculty & Staff SLAS

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF SPANISH AND
LATIN AMERICAN STUDIESBURNABY, BRITISH COLUMBIA
CANADA V5A 1S6
Telephone: (604) 291-5933
FAX: (604) 291-5950

MEMORANDUM

TO: SCAP members
FROM: Mónica Escudero & Lilian Zúccolo
RE: Future of SLAS Department
DATE: 23 April 1996

We have been members of the Steering Committee for Latin American Studies, chaired by Prof. Jorge García, since its creation in January of this year. We do believe that a strong Latin American Studies Department should be a priority at SFU, so we support the arguments advanced by Prof. García regarding the procedural steps taken by the administration and how they have affected our department. We feel, however, that the faculty vote held on March 6 overwhelmingly supported the dissolution of the Department. It seems to us that the arguments presented to continue the department, no matter how right or wrong they may be, will not make a significant change in the faculty vote. What will happen, though, is a delay in process; that is, if SCAP does not approve the Dean's proposal it will delay important decisions regarding the implementation of the LAS program. Many of us who have been working very hard for the Department are very demoralized after years of struggle and uncertainty, and, quite frankly, we have had enough.

We actually support the dissolution of SLAS, and we are sure that many of our colleagues do too. What we regret deeply is the future of Latin American Studies. Many of us would have preferred the dissolution of SLAS Department followed by the creation of LAS Department instead of a program. Given the absence of other real alternatives, and our collective fatigue with the current situation, we believe we should think positively, cut our losses and support the proposed LAS program. This does not mean complete agreement with the Dean's proposal. In fact, we would like to see changes in some of the conditions that he proposes.

To summarize, we believe that SLAS cannot continue as it is at present and that it should be dissolved, but we deeply regret the decision taken by the Dean of Arts in terms of instituting a program in LAS instead of a Department of Latin American Studies. Given the circumstances, however, we feel the need to cooperate and try to re-build a program that we all support and cherish. We will be attending the SCAP meeting on May 1st, should you request more information from us.

Mónica Escudero, Lecturer

Lilian Zúccolo, Lab. Instructor

MEMORANDUM

TO: All SCAP Members

DATE: April 24, 1996

FROM: SLAS Graduate Students Committee
for Departmental Crisis(SLAS-GSCDC)

SUBJECT: **Perspectives on the SLAS Crisis**

Enclosed please find, for your information, a text prepared by a group of SLAS graduate students who feel that it is necessary to contribute a different perspective and to expose some important issues that have been obscured during the public discussion of the SLAS crisis. Our viewpoint and experiences may be pertinent for the ensuing debate on the Dean of Arts' recommendations concerning SLAS at the SCAP special meeting of May 1st, 1996.

The enclosed document was submitted for the consideration of the editorial board of The Peak as an opinion article. It was written in response to Ms. Katherine Whitbread's article entitled, "Questioning democracy: the SLAS crisis," (copy attached), which appeared in The Peak's issue of April 1, 1996. We contribute our views on the SLAS situation prompted by Ms. Whitbread's exhortation for student input contained therein.

Thank you in advance for your time.

Sincerely yours,

Kf Scott (Barquero.)

SLAS-Graduate Students Committee for
Departmental Crisis (SLAS-GSCDC)

Encls.

e-mail: barquero@sfu.ca or slas-grad@sfu.ca

Behind the Scenes of the SLAS Crisis. A response to Katherine Whitbread's Questioning of Democracy. *

(*) This article was written by the SLAS Graduate Students Committee for Departmental Crisis (SLAS-GSCDC), a group of students who offer a different view on the SLAS problematic.

The recently formed Standing Committee for Latin American Studies (LAS-SC), is guilty of assigning blame for the demise of the Spanish and Latin American Studies Department where it is least likely to be found. Accusations of undemocratic behavior made about a Departmental Chair or a Dean, like those of Ms. Whitbread's article, reflect the LAS Standing Committee's tendency of finger-pointing and "mud-slinging," as well as their penchant to re-interpret or ignore facts. As students of SLAS, and as members of the SLAS-GSCDC, we have been witnesses to, and victims of, this type of behavior.

Ms. Katherine Whitbread, a student member of the SCAP and the BOG, represents the stand of the LAS-SC for the creation of a new LAS Department and against the continuance of the SLAS Department. The Dean of Arts' recommendation to dissolve SLAS and his proposal not to replace it with a new LAS Department is being debated in the SCAP. However, the information provided by several members of the LAS Standing Committee to Ms. Whitbread regarding the events that led to the current SLAS crisis is inaccurate, and we are concerned that fellow students and faculty members external to SLAS have been sucked into the quagmire of academic politicking. The SLAS Department has a bitterly divided faculty whose conflicts are largely based on geographic grounds and on how exclusive or comprehensive the field of Latin American Studies should be, but the likely effect of the behavior of some faculty now in the LAS-SC will be that of destroying the SLAS Department and its interdisciplinary programs. These faculty members hope to establish a more restrictive social sciences-focused department (the would-be LAS Department), and, as a means of transforming SLAS into LAS, they have eroded the credibility and undermined the authority of more than one Chair, creating the perception of generalized chaos and lack of governance in SLAS.

In 1994, two impartial faculty from other departments were appointed by the Dean of Arts to undertake an Internal Review of SLAS in order to advise the Chair, the Department, and the Dean on ways to address the problems that troubled SLAS and make recommendations aimed at their solution. In their report the reviewers pointed out the presence of some SLAS faculty whose conduct resembles that of some LAS-SC members, "who [wanted] to see the department move in a different direction [and chose] not to use the democratic process to achieve this goal." (3.1, p.8). Ironically, these very members, currently grouped in the LAS-SC, now claim loudly to be upholding democratic values.

The internal reviewers indicated that among the many sources of stress troubling SLAS was the "more insidious force [of] unprofessional conduct," (1., p.4-3) which ranged "from the unfortunate to the outrageous" (6., p.14). Allegations of academic misconduct, (harassment, dishonesty, etc.), on the part of several members of the LAS Standing Committee were reported by students --readily branded by some as troublemakers-- to the Harassment Office, the TSSU, and to different levels of the Administration. Unfortunately, the current university rules regarding these issues, which, among other things, offer no real protection against retaliation, have made it very difficult for some of the complainants to proceed further. Other issues have been silenced for the "good" of the department and the

university, because legal processes were under way, or because the complainants (as several of us are) were too tired or had already wasted too much time fighting a hopeless situation. This is the reason why no-one (faculty or student) has ever bothered to answer public statements that may fall under the general description of slander.

As student representatives to departmental committee meetings we have received superb training in obstructionist politics (attempts to disenfranchise student reps, surprise motions, boycotting, stalling, constant calls for secret balloting, etc.), repeatedly carried-out by some faculty now in the LAS-SC. The internal reviewers were told that "almost all of the new MA students have seriously considered withdrawing from the program in their first semester" (1.3, p.2). To date, several graduate students have left SLAS, allegedly for not being able to deal with the pathetic ambiance of the department. Some incoming students were "directed" with whom to take courses, late delivery of papers became a chronic problem, and many of us were unable to proceed with our work in reasonable conditions. The bitter division of the department has inflicted enormous suffering on students, the extent of which can only be underestimated from the outside. At present, however, more than disgruntled individuals we are a group of students at considerable disadvantage due to the machinations of some who are now in the LAS-Standing Committee.

The Dean of Arts provided several mechanisms for SLAS' self-improvement which should have been conducive to the maintenance of the Department. Among these were: appointment of new faculty, the aforementioned Internal Review, the appointing of several neutral Acting Chairs from other departments--one of whom organized a Graduate Program Task Force-- and the formation of an Ad Hoc Committee. Furthermore, the Dean called for nominations for a new Chair for SLAS from among its core members, but the self-proclaimed majority did not come forth with a candidate for Chair. This indicates, first, that while clamoring as a majority, these faculty members were cognizant of the fact that they do not command enough support to rise to this position, and second, it indicates their willingness to let SLAS dissolve.

The unprofessionalism reported in the Internal Review is, in our opinion, the "malaise" which led to the disintegration of SLAS. We would like to point out the Administration's weakness in not attributing enough importance to this "malaise," and for not confronting in a more timely manner--be it through keener mediation or more drastic measures-- the outrageous unprofessional behavior identified by the internal reviewers. In our perception, the Dean's recommendation to terminate SLAS and his proposal not to create LAS is an acknowledgment that the SFU Administration has been unable to stop, or unwilling to confront, the impelling force of this unprofessionalism despite its repeated interventions.

In this historically unruly department, strangled, of late, by public and internecine squabbling, we have tried to distance ourselves from becoming part of and party to the problem. It is not publicity we object to, but rather the distortion of facts and the drafting of unsuspecting fellow students. We give some of the members of the LAS Standing Committee credit for having efficiently utilized a rhetoric which enlisted faculty members all over the SFU campus for questionable reasons, and for contributing to the general confusion of the university community at large regarding the SLAS problem.

As students and as SLAS members it is impossible that there is a group more interested in the continuance of a Department. However, we have had to come to terms with the painful reality that this endeavor would be possible only in a space free of such conditions, and we hope that the Administration will adopt a more intolerant position regarding the kind of behavior that led to this unfortunate situation. The maintenance of SLAS (or the creation of LAS) will not resolve our problems, since the Department would

still be plagued by a bitterly divided faculty, a demoralized and divided group of graduate students, an impossible intellectual climate, and a continuance of the unprofessional conduct described in the Internal Review. We have arrived at this distressing conclusion after years of drowning in departmental strife. At this stage, while faculty members are being assigned to other administrative units and staff are getting ready to move into new offices, our impotency grows and we are led to believe that the maintenance of SLAS (or the creation of a new LAS Department) is contingent upon Divine Intervention, given that the human resources such a Department needs are not easily found in its vocal few.

**SLAS-Graduate Students Committee
for Departmental Crisis (SLAS-GSCDC)**

The Peak, April 12, 1996

Opinion

Questioning democracy: the SLAS crisis by Katherine Whitbread

IEWVS

lems, or to the fact that the chair did not follow the basic democratic principles in his governance. They did say, however, that there had been a serious breakdown in democratic processes within the department.

The internal reviewers were not evaluating the quality of instruction in the department nor the success of the program. The only concrete information available on these counts points to a department with spectacular climbing enrollments and enough interest to justify the creation of Canada's only masters of Latin American studies.

The two arguments for the dissolution of the department of Spanish and Latin American studies (SLAS) being offered by the dean of arts are that it is ungovernable and there isn't enough in the budget to make a department work.

On their "ungovernability" ... There are significant extenuating circumstances. At SFU, a department chair must be ratified by a two-thirds majority of the department. In 1992, the chair of SLAS was not ratified; no vote took place. A failure such as this has never happened before or since at SFU.

In 1994, a letter of recall of the chair was presented to the dean of arts, but the dean accepted the chair's resignation before the recall vote could take place. The ex-chair is still a member of the department.

to find out why they are so successful.

Are we prepared to take the ad hoc committee's judgment that the new department would not have "critical mass" or would we like to give the would-be members of the new department a chance to examine and report on the resources they would need to operate the only department of Latin American studies in western Canada? At the very least, their input should be sought before a decision is taken at SCAP or Senate.

The actions of the dean of arts ... In an August 1995 memo to SLAS, dean Alderson relates his decision to finally separate Iberian (Spanish from Spain) literature from the SLAS department via the creation of a new department of Latin American studies. In a September 1995 memo, he explains the creation of an ad hoc committee to assist him proceeding.

But in November, he declared a moratorium on the declaration of SLAS majors and minors and a freeze on the intake of grad students. In December, he presented the findings of the committee, the gist of which is that a department of Latin American studies is too small to be viable, along with a ballot. The dean's interpretation of the results leaves this social scientist confused. Based on the tally, it seems reasonable to assume that all the members of SLAS who would be involved in a LAS department voted to support its creation. Those who would be moving to other areas preferred that LAS be a program. The dean's subsequent ballot to the faculty of arts characterizes the SLAS "wish to dissolve their department" as its only decisive element.

According to SFU policy, all academic units (i.e. departments) are to be externally reviewed at least every seven years, and new units are usually reviewed within five years. Every other academic unit at SFU has been reviewed within the last seven years except SLAS (which was formed in 1988).

SLAS did have an internal review in 1994, however, that characterized the early years of the department as an impressive achievement, especially considering the economic restraint. The reviewers commented that the department, of late, had gone badly wrong, but refused to attribute the turnaround to either a minority faction that had caused the prob-

that the usual procedure of making associates joint appointments was an unnecessary formality in the SLAS case. However, one member of the dean's office suggested that Alderson need not stick to the agreements of his predecessor.

On the budget ... The SLAS department has been expanding and every indication is that its quality of instruction is high, even on a shoestring budget. When it formed itself in 1988, it was smaller than a new department of Latin American studies will be if it is formed today, and its budget was just as dismal. We should not be disbanding them and scattering their faculty all over the university. I think we should videotape them

SLAS members were not asked to choose between maintaining their department and becoming a program. The only way members of the faculty of arts have of knowing the SLAS point of view is the way the dean describes it, since the matter has not been discussed in any open forum (such as FACC).

The misinformed faculty of arts voted to support the SLAS department's "wish to disband themselves." And soon the matter will appear before the Senate committee on academic planning (SCAP). This whole situation leaves me with a number of questions. What the dean refers to as "formal and

continued on next page

SLAS crisis continued
informal consultation with members of the department. ... The total lack of open debate ... point of debate ... to allow the dissolution ... to be ... and even the ... standing of an issue ... can emerge ... and all sides ... tell their own stories.
I am reminded of the woman who stood up at a recent public meeting with members of the administration and said that she and many of her co-workers would ...
I've gladly taken a cut in pay to ... one would listen to them. ... of the administration ... debate ... because otherwise ... can help to make them work ... Can't I get in for restructuring ... developed by a committee with ... their representation from that de ... payment not expert opinion ... from ... should ... can be allowed to unilaterally stop ...
If you want to help, email me at ... whether @sfu.ca for a list of the ... members of SCAP, so you can go ... directly to the people in positions ... to detail the autocratic expres-

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BURNABY, BRITISH COLUMBIA
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April 23, 1996

Senate Committee on Academic Planning
Simon Fraser University
Burnaby, B.C. V5A 1S6

Dear Sir/Madam,

Because of a recent research trip to Central America, I have been unable to play much of a role in deliberations over the future status of Latin American Studies (LAS) at Simon Fraser University. I now recognize that the deliberation process is in a late stage. However, I hope that it is not too late to avoid making decisions which, I believe, will be needlessly harmful to LAS at Simon Fraser. In this letter I will outline why I think the decision-making process concerning Latin American Studies has been fatally flawed, and why the consequences will be unnecessarily, and perhaps irreparably, destructive to the interests of Latin American Studies at SFU.

When I returned from Central America a few weeks ago, I was shocked by the turn of events concerning LAS at Simon Fraser. My distress was heightened by several factors. First, shortly before I left, a group of Latin Americanists, including myself, met with the Dean of Arts, who informed us that he was leaning toward dissolving the department in favor of a LAS program. He also informed us that this decision was largely budget driven, given expectations of substantial spending cuts. We then told the Dean that we Latin Americanists at SFU are virtually unanimously opposed to this plan, which we believe would 'gut' LAS at the university and reverse the considerable academic progress that LAS has recently made. Instead, we proposed that any budgetary concerns over LAS be cooperatively examined through consultation between the Dean and department representatives. The Dean informed us that he thought this was a good idea and that he would forward us his concerns shortly. We then promised to communicate back to the Dean immediately in a spirit of cooperation. Despite repeated requests, we did not receive any budgetary information from the Dean. Moreover, the feared spending cuts (which would have been triggered by cuts in federal transfer payments) failed to materialize. Our offer to the Dean to discuss any budgetary concerns over LAS still stands.

The second major reason for my distress is based in the glaring procedural problems in the process by which LAS decisions are being made. Above all, the decision by the Dean to dissolve the department in favor of a program was made without any input from Latin Americanists themselves, either within or outside the university. No informed assessment was made of the academic merits of the department. Such an assessment, I believe, would find a vibrant group of Latin Americanists who, despite the department's difficulties, have been remarkably successful in expanding the course selection, attracting undergraduate majors and graduate students, securing outside grants and funding, producing timely and significant publications, and, generally, rapidly improving the profile of Latin American Studies at SFU. It should also be noted that the decision by the Dean to dissolve the department was made not only without any expert peer review, but also went against the recommendations of an ad hoc committee which the Dean created to examine the department last summer.

A further procedural problem in the decision-making process concerns the way in which the LAS vote was carried out among the Faculty of Arts. The ballot was accompanied by a memorandum from the Dean outlining his views of the situation. Despite the fact that virtually all Latin Americanists at SFU are opposed to the Dean's recommendations, no opportunity was given for this opposing view to be included alongside the Dean's. Moreover, the Dean's memorandum contained a number of misleading statements which, in my opinion (and that of many colleagues inside and outside of LAS), may have profoundly influenced the results of the vote and therefore detract from their legitimacy.

Especially misleading is the Dean's assessment of a vote which his office had previously carried out among members of the department. Moreover, the Dean withheld the results of this vote from department members, despite repeated requests, until after the vote by the Faculty of Arts had been completed--thereby preventing any questioning of his interpretation of the departmental vote. Concerning the departmental vote, the Dean's memorandum states:

Almost without exception the Faculty and Associate Members of Spanish and Latin American Studies found the committee's recommendation for dissolution of the present department to be a 'preferred' or 'acceptable' outcome ('Preferred'- 10; 'Acceptable'- 3; 'Unacceptable'-1). A majority of those voting preferred the creation of a new Department of Latin American Studies but just as many found the alternative of a program either 'acceptable' or 'preferred' as found it unacceptable. (emphasis added)

Many of my colleagues around the university who voted to accept the Dean's proposal have since indicated to me that this represented a key argument. After all, if more-or-less the same number of Latin Americanists favour a LAS program rather than a department, then why not go along with the Dean's proposal (especially at a time when severe budget cuts appeared to be hanging over the Faculty)? However, the above statement of the Dean is extremely misleading and profoundly misrepresents the wishes of virtually all Latin Americanists who would remain in any LAS structure at SFU. It is true that almost all department members favoured the dissolution of the present department. However, for the overwhelming majority (especially of Latin Americanists, as opposed to Spanish scholars), this was clearly contingent on the creation of a LAS department. While there was some minimal support for a LAS program, all but one of the votes for this (according to a count that I have since done) came from faculty that would no longer be members of any future LAS structure at Simon Fraser. The motives of these non-Latin Americanists may only be surmised. Thus, among Latin Americanists at SFU (or those who will comprise any future LAS structure), there is virtually unanimous support (9 of 10 votes for 'preferred') for the creation of a LAS department and overwhelming opposition to being relegated to a LAS program.

Much of the opposition to a LAS program among Latin Americanists comes from a realistic assessment of the advantages that a department possesses over a program at SFU, especially concerning resource allocations. While departments may count on receiving a regular share of their faculty's resources according to enrolment figures and other criteria, programs often find themselves severely underfunded—forced to squabble over the diminishing funds that remain after regularized departmental allocations. This is a fact of life at SFU which is widely recognized by university members, both inside and outside of various programs. A recent external review of the Canadian Studies Program at SFU emphasized this fact: "The ultimate goal should no doubt be to make Canadian Studies a department, the plan adopted for Women's Studies. The programme is unlikely to achieve its share of resources until this is achieved."

Given such realities, Latin Americanists remain sceptical of statements by the Dean and others that the relegation of LAS to a university program does not imply a diminishing commitment to LAS. Such scepticism is further heightened by uncertainties over future levels of university funding.

Additional opposition among Latin Americanists to the Dean's proposal is largely based in the plan to create a LAS program without any 'core' faculty. Members of the program would be spread around the university in various home departments, thereby severely compromising cooperation and coherence. It is a well known fact that programs at SFU without core faculty are at a serious disadvantage. The aforementioned external review of the Canadian Studies Program notes at the top of its recommendations: "It seems clear that there must be additional core faculty. . . . [O]ur recommendations refer to additional resources which in our view must be forthcoming if the programme is not to lose its credibility and, along the way, damage the university's credibility too."

This is exactly the fear of most Latin Americanists at SFU. The plan of relegating LAS to a program, and spreading LAS faculty around the university, would inexorably damage the growing reputation of LAS at the university. Most Latin Americanists in Canada and elsewhere will not find the Dean's rationale for these moves credible, and will question the university's commitment to Latin American Studies. Such perceptions are exceedingly hard to turn around and, I fear, will inevitably cause a decline of LAS at Simon Fraser, despite all efforts by Latin Americanists at the university.

Perhaps the major (non-budgetary) argument of the Dean against retention of the departmental status of Latin American Studies is the supposed 'ungovernability' of the present Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies. As I'm sure you are aware, the fields of Spanish and LAS have existed for a number of years at SFU in a rather 'unhappy marriage,' which has often been justified for administrative reasons. Despite numerous attempts over the years by members of the department to prompt action by the Dean concerning this 'unhappy marriage,' the department has unfortunately been allowed to drift. This situation permitted animosities within the department to rise to an intolerable level.

From my point of view, virtually all the rancor in the department has been caused by feuding among a few senior faculty--most of whom are now close to retirement and will not be members of any future LAS structure, and many of whom initiated these hostilities decades ago in the old Department of Languages, Literatures and Linguistics. Because most of these faculty are close to retirement, the loss of departmental status by LAS will affect them minimally if at all. However, the major negative effects will be felt for some time by the more junior and intermediate members of the department who have recently been hired and who will form the core of LAS at Simon Fraser for the foreseeable future. I should also add that relations among the junior and intermediate members of the department have consistently been characterized by mutual respect and consideration. These members, including myself, feel that it is exceedingly unfair that they should bear the brunt of any actions directed against LAS due to a problem of 'ungovernability' essentially caused by a small minority of senior faculty.

It is my opinion, and the virtually unanimous opinion of other Latin Americanists at SFU, that the members of SCAP should vote to revisit the LAS issue once it has been carefully considered, especially through an external review by experts in the field. We feel that the proposal before

you has little if any academic basis, and is largely based on rumour and innuendo. Its acceptance will severely damage the reputation of Latin American Studies and the university in general.

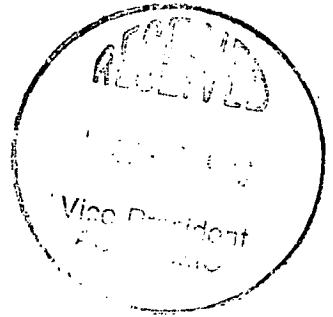
Sincerely yours,


John Brohman
Assistant Professor

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May 6, 1996



To: Senate Committee on Academic Planning, SFU

I missed last week's SCAP meeting which addressed the future of Latin American Studies at SFU because I was out of the country, returning from a research semester in Mexico. Consequently, I would like to submit for your consideration this brief comment on the performance of LAS to date and our plans for the future.

Despite the recent internal frictions between Latin Americanists and Spanish scholars, the Latin Americanist contingent in SLAS is proud of its achievements at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. We have built a solid program steadily over the last 25 years from occasional courses, through a minor and numerous joint-majors to include a single major at a time when Canadian interest in Latin America was minimal. This effort was spearheaded by the LAS field school, which has been offered with great success in Chile, Cuba, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru, often attracting students from other universities. As Canadian interests in Latin America expand in the free trade era, other universities and colleges are embarking on specialized LAS programs, following the trail that SFU has blazed.

Our fledgling graduate program has succeeded far beyond our initial expectations. We had hoped to attract a mix of highly qualified recent graduates and professionals with life-experience in Latin America and have been delighted with the caliber and diversity of those attracted to the program so far. Workers from Amnesty International, Oxfam and other NGOs have joined students with backgrounds in agriculture, anthropology, film, economics, geography, political science and sociology to engage in a wide range of theses on important contemporary topics. Two students have completed their degrees to date, with half-a-dozen more due to finish in the near future, an impressive achievement considering the extended field components of their research.

Our future plans include the development of a Latin American Business Institute at Harbour Centre, cross-listed team-taught graduate courses and increased collaboration with Latin American Studies Programs at UBC, the University of Victoria, the University College of the Fraser Valley and Langara, Capilano College etc. These institutions are starting to promote lively LAS programs with fewer and more dispersed faculty resources than we have accumulated at SFU, thus we should continue to play a leadership role in the provincial arena. In order to do this,

however, we need to build on our achievements to date, which requires the retention of the single undergraduate major and continued annual admissions to our graduate program as well as the strong institutional support to which we are accustomed.

Thanks for your attention.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Gates

Marilyn Gates (Associate Professor, Anthropology and LAS Associate)