

Department/School: Writing & Language Studies

Tagline: *Innovative teaching, engaged learning, writing & language without borders.*

Vision

[tentative #1] Be innovative designers of teaching, research, and service to develop sustainable networks of communication and change with our students, our colleagues, and our communities.

[tentative #2] Understanding the past, engaging the present, and inventing the future of writing and language studies.

Mission

Located in the College of Liberal Arts at UTRGV, WLS is a unique and multilingual department providing students with compelling programs of study in writing and language. Our faculty specialize in Spanish and English Linguistics, Rhetoric and Composition, and Language Acquisition in eight languages. WLS faculty are dedicated to engaged learning and teaching, impactful research, and collaborative service partnerships across our shared communities in order to support UTRGV's strategic plan. Our mission is to use our teaching, research, and service strengths to develop multilingual students who will create positive change through their expertise in writing, listening, speaking, and analyzing language.

Profile

Undergraduate & Graduate Programs:

- Minor, BA, BA-Teaching Certification, and MA in English
- MA in Teaching English as a Second Language
- BA, BA-TC, and MA in Spanish
- Minor, BA, and MA in Translation & Interpreting (SPICE)
- Minors in Asian Studies, French, Medical Spanish, & Professional Writing
- Undergraduate & Graduate Certificates in ESL
- First Year Writing Program
- First Year Language Acquisition in Arabic, Chinese, German, Italian, Korean + Russian & Japanese

Number of Students in Majors, Minors, and Graduate Programs (F18 undergraduate; F19 graduate)

- MA English 46
- BA English 594
- BA English TC 186
- Minor English 236
- MA Spanish 28
- BA Spanish 188
- BA TC Spanish 63
- Minor Spanish 216
- MA-ESL 13
- Minor Asian Studies 42
- Minor French 12

Student Characteristics

Our students, the majority of whom work in educational contexts, represent the international profile of UTRGV and our departmental expertise in teaching/learning. They are:

- innovative, interdisciplinary, multilingual, and complex/global thinkers;
- interested in writing and language studies, rhetorical and professional communication, language acquisition, teaching, public service, and literacy;
- engaged in our discipline-specific courses in early college, the general education core, majors, and graduate programs

Number & Rank of Faculty

- 24 tenured and tenure-track faculty (11 Professors, 7 Associate Professors, 6 Assistant Professors)
- 33 three-year lecturers
- 13 one year lecturers
- 3 part-time lecturers

Campus Program Offering

- 100% of program-required courses are available at both campuses (face-to-face, online, hybrid, or ITV)
- 100% of program-required courses in the first 2 years of study per major map are available at both campuses (face-to-face, online, hybrid, ITV)
- 100% of program-required courses in the upper division are available at both campuses (face-to-face, online, hybrid, ITV)
- 100% of graduate program courses are available at both campuses (face-to-face, online, hybrid, ITV)

General Stats & Highlights

- 6518 undergraduate SCHs in 283 courses; 147 graduate SCHs in 16 courses
- Breakdown of sections by method: F2F-238 undergraduate/1 graduate, ITV-5 undergraduate/9 graduate, Online-6 undergraduate/6 graduate, Hybrid-24 undergraduate/0 graduate, Dual Enrollment-10 undergraduate
- 3 active grants and 6 grant proposals in process
- Deep level of scholarly expertise with 11 lecturers in PhD programs and a growing amount of peer-reviewed presentations and publications from our lecturers
- Active college-readiness reading/writing curriculum in all RGV highschoools and partners in Houston and San Antonio

WLS Student Engagement Assessment

- Student, Staff, & Faculty Engagement Committee Survey
- Annual Open House(s) Prior to Registration & Events Committee/Subcommittee

WLS Student-Centered Events (8-10 per year)

- Weekly Linguistic Seminar Series (Fall-Spring) & Annual MultiLingua Fest (Fall) [Linguistics & Acquisition]
- Annual Spanish Heritage Celebration & Día de los Muertos Displays/Activities (Fall); 6th National Symposium on Spanish as a Heritage Language [Spanish]
- RhetX (Fall) & Compocon (Spring) [WP]
- National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing [RCLS]
- >> Plans: Deeper Data Gathering & Analysis of Student Engagement and Event Impacts

WLS Program Development

- Interdisciplinary Asian Studies Minor
- Spanish Curriculum Review & Redesign
- Medical Student Spanish Curriculum
- New Minor in Professional Writing, growing Minor in Asian Studies
- New Continuing Ed series on Professional Writing and Leadership
- University Writing Program partnerships with College of Ed (graduate student testing) and Biology (writing across the curriculum)
- >> Plans: Development of WLS-focused Minors and Majors

WLS Student Mentoring

- Relunched Graduate Professional Development Series
- Staff & Work Study Mentoring
- >> Plans: Integrated Faculty, Staff, & Peer Support Services & Departmental application for Mentoring Award; More cohesive student-centered service

Examples of Success

Research (1516-1819)

- Large number of faculty mentoring students who are local and national award winning for research projects
- Steady increase of publications/presentations over 4 years; doubled lecturer scholarship; almost all tenure-track faculty are producing 50% more than minimum for promotion + working on funded grants & grant proposals; all tenure-track faculty have individual, collaborative, and international scholarship experiences

Grant Funding

- 1617 . 77k
- 1718 . 91k (+20%)
- 1819 . 6 proposals under review; 2 proposals under revision for resubmission; 3+ book contracts have emerged from grants; meeting with faculty to identify areas for proposal collaboration, departmental longitudinal studies, and potential area sponsorships

Service Enhancements/Projects

- 1516 . 11
- 1617 . 28
- 1718 . 56 (+100%) Fiesta de Palmas, Sea Turtle, Inc., San Carlos Literacy Initiative, College Transitions (HB5)

We are networked, and we have likely the largest set of active partnerships impacting our students, faculty, and community partners for a UTRGV department:

- B3 Institute
- Center for Teaching Excellence
- CHAPS Program (Community Historical Archaeology Program with Schools).
- Chinese Language & Culture Association
- College of Engineering & Computer Science
- College of Education
- Collegiate Recovery Program
- Communication Disorders (ASL)
- Cross Linguistics Undergraduate Board
- Engaged Scholarship & Learning
- Faculty Success & Diversity - Teaching Academy
- Food Pantry
- Japanese Culture Club
- Korean International Social Syndicate
- Korean Language & Culture Association
- Language Institute
- Learning Center
- Literature & Cultural Studies
- The Library
- Math & Science Academy
- Mexican American Studies
- Occupational Therapy
- Office of Global Engagement
- Office of Student Success' First Year Experience Team
- Office of Sustainability
- Professional Education and Workforce Development (formerly Continuing Education)
- Robert C. Vackar College of Business & Entrepreneurship
- School of Medicine
- School of Rehabilitation Services & Counseling
- Sigma Delta Pi Spanish Honor Society
- SPICE
- Student Union
- Study Abroad Club
- Translation & Recovery Office
- Vaquero Tech Centers w/Apple Stores
- The Writing Center
- Access Esperanza Clinics
- Angry Tias and Abuelas of the Rio Grande Valley
- City of McAllen with the Fiesta de Palmas
- Civil War Trail
- Dustin Sekula Library
- The Felix Project - London
- Food Bank RGV
- The Endowment Center, San Carlos
- Gladys Porter Zoo
- LUPE
- Museum of South Texas History
- Old Dominion University
- Palm Valley Animal Center
- Rio Grande Valley ISDs (all of them, so I'm not listing)
- Sea Turtle Inc.
- Swarthmore College
- Texas Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators
- Texas Hunger Initiative (Baylor University)
- Uniendo Naciones Solo por Servir

Traditions

- Fall and Spring Kickoffs, holiday potlucks, and departmental graduation/end of the year celebrations
- Organizing and hosting dozens of engaging student events
- Partnering with university colleagues, students, and community organizations
- Collaborating on innovative curriculum and cross-teaching opportunities