

programs are (or have been) reexamining the intersection between language, literature/culture, and disciplines beyond.

This essay collection was also inspired by the upcoming centenary celebration of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP) to be held in 2017-18. The AATSP's scholarly journal, *Hispania*, will publish a special centenary issue of "visionary essays" on the future of Spanish and Portuguese. Among the topics to be tackled are: What will the future Spanish major look like? What will it mean to be a Hispanist in the future? How will the discipline define itself in fifty years?

Therefore, in the spirit of reexamination, reevaluation, renewal, and reinvention, Ronald J. Friis of Furman University and I co-organized the MIFLC panel. It included a select group of academics with experience teaching Spanish in different contexts such as community colleges, small liberal arts colleges, U.S. service academies, large state institutions, and large private universities. The panelists were professors both tenured and non-tenure track, textbook authors, and department administrators to deliver a variety of viewpoints. Each panelist presented a position paper on one aspect of the futuristic subject matter. Seven roundtable participants delivered short papers.¹ Five members contributed and expanded their contributions for this special essay collection on the future of Hispanic Studies and, in particular, the undergraduate Spanish major.

Benjamin Fraser of Eastern Carolina University began by deliberating on the essential redefinition of the discipline and the need for structural reforms to ensure the future of Hispanic Studies. Shannon Polchow of the University of South Carolina Upstate explored the current state of literary studies within the Spanish language major. Alán José of Duke University analyzed the common business model in language departments and suggested sustainable approaches to support the humanities. Ron Friis argued for the development of locally authored instructional materials in place of corporate textbooks to create meaningful classroom experiences for future language learners and faculty members alike. Lastly I shared information about recent

¹ The original panel also included MaryAnn Blitt of the College of Charleston and Salvador Oropesa of Clemson University. Blitt presented a paper on the textbook and its role in basic Spanish language instruction, and Oropesa discussed Clemson's two Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP) undergraduate degree models that propose pathways to curricular reform.

submission patterns to *Hispania* that provided additional evidence of the subject matter transformation in Hispanic Studies. The second portion of the special session was reserved for discussion. The audience of about fifty ranged from graduate students to distinguished professors, and their contributions were both intriguing and diverse. Audience participation allowed other experts to weigh in on different aspects of our field's future. A major strand of discussion raised the question of students' interests and implied that student input had not been sufficiently explored to date.

The essays presented here are revised versions of the panelists' papers. The essays will carry the timely discussion forward about the future of Hispanic Studies and the Spanish major.

On the Future of Hispanic Studies: Disciplinary Challenges

Benjamin Fraser

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The field of Hispanic Studies will increasingly have to deal with challenges I would refer to as 'disciplinary'. These are long-standing and ongoing challenges that stem from the way in which Hispanic Studies has traditionally conceived itself as a discipline. How do linguistics and literature cohere into a single program? Do we specialize only in traditional literary analysis, or are we open to other forms of cultural production: films, graphic novels, visual culture, popular music, digital media? Are we supportive of other methods (cultural studies and digital humanities come quickly to mind)? Do we embrace the role of Hispanic Studies researchers as contributors to interdisciplinary fields such as disability studies, studies of gender and sexuality, science fiction studies, and urban studies? And most importantly, do we allow our Hispanic Studies colleagues to delve fully into other disciplinary formations—that is, to actually do work that has been more traditionally carried out by researchers anchored in departments of anthropology, history, geography, psychology, sociology, and so on?

At the most basic level, the way our field deals with these issues will determine its relationship with a full range of other disciplines: not

merely other language and literature fields, but other humanities fields, the social sciences, the health sciences and more. At an institutional level, how we approach these disciplinary matters should have an effect on everything from curriculum development and graduate training to hiring processes and tenure and promotion decisions. Our ability to grapple with these central disciplinary issues may also have an impact on how our field is viewed within university structures, structures that may indeed already be changing: I refer here to departmental, school- or college-wide re-organizations, interdisciplinary research clusters, grant-funded research teams and so on. We must anticipate what the university will look like, disciplinarily speaking, in the second half of the twenty-first century.

At the most abstract level, these disciplinary issues are about our ability to speak to the social reproduction of knowledge: here I refer to the notion that knowledge changes over time, the problems of the twenty-first-century world are not necessarily seen as similar to those of the twentieth-century worlds in which many of our institutions were founded, nor still to the seventeenth-, eighteenth- or nineteenth-century worlds in which many of our academic disciplines were established (Klein, Lefebvre). The point is not to see disciplinary change as either inherently progressive or conservative—it is more likely to be contradictory, in fact, as our evolving humanities disciplines are themselves in the best shape to show. Instead, we must understand that the way we conceive ourselves as a discipline will necessarily position our future in relation to forces that increasingly condition the social reproduction of knowledge—and that our teaching, our research, our academic communities and our working and non-working lives are all impacted by this social reproduction of knowledge.

The necessarily brief remarks I share here have been shaped by my experiences as a department administrator, editor, scholar and teacher at a range of four-year institutions in a context of declining state support for education. While my comments should be taken in the context of such institutions, I believe that they are not unrelated to other contexts, private and two-year institutions, for example. Specifically, I have been a faculty member in a Department of Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures, at a university of just under 5,000 undergraduate students in Virginia (2006-2010); in a Department of Hispanic Studies, at a 10,000-student college with selected graduate programs and a strong liberal arts and sciences tradition in South

Carolina (2010-2014); and in a Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, at a research university with some 28,000 undergraduate and graduate students in North Carolina (2014-present).

What has been common to all three of these contexts is that my faculty colleagues have recognized the need to rethink the boundaries of our discipline and have taken action, often through concrete curricular change. In all three there have been discussions about how to make curriculum in a single language and literature field more fluid, effectively allowing tenure-stream professors of all ranks the ability to teach their area(s) of expertise. In one case this led to replacement of the traditional civilization and culture class with a theme-based course that might cross multiple areas, or focus on a single place or time for that matter; in addition to implementing a more flexible model for survey courses. In another case, upper-level courses were created to push beyond literature and embrace other cultural products or methods. At all three institutions faculty worked to develop courses—common instructional spaces—allowing instructors to combine insights from multiple language areas (i.e. a global major concentration allowing students to combine knowledge of two different language contexts; a theme-based senior capstone course for different language majors, or in the case of the Hispanic Studies department, for both literature and linguistics majors). Conversations about business classes, healthcare professions classes and heritage speaker classes have always been afoot. Curriculum is the area in which, perhaps, it is least difficult to effect change, but it is not for that reason any less significant. In concrete places, individual departments can and do tailor the Hispanic Studies program differently for new generations of students, instructors and junior professors alike in ways that exploit place-bound concerns and advantages.

Despite what I see as manageable success on a small scale, however, there are large-scale matters that continue to condition what we might accomplish as a discipline. Some such as Joan Brown in *Confronting Our Canons* (2010) argue that revisiting the notion of canon is crucial to our collective attempt to secure our disciplinary footing in this contemporary period of best practices. In her thorough study, Brown is concerned with how canon operates in doctoral programs in particular. And yet, while she draws attention to a number of gaps in this notion, I am not sure that even a reconfigured notion of canon can capture the current state of our discipline. I believe even

more strongly, in fact, that a reinvestment in canonicity cannot take us where we need to go. Some—myself included in a co-authored response to Brown in the *ADFL Bulletin* in 2014 (Fraser, Larson and Compitello)—have argued that the notion of canon is problematic at the least and perhaps even untenable, once we recognize how much Hispanic Studies has already changed from its traditionally literary form.

The changing course of academic life over the past two to four decades is one that—drawing on a reading of Mary Burgan’s *What Ever Happened to the Faculty?* (2006)—I would describe as education’s loss of its relative autonomy to a so-called economic realm. One major response to this loss of relative autonomy has been for researchers in the humanities to entrench themselves in disciplinary positions that reflect priorities of an earlier and traditionally literary period in our histories. But if we employ narrow disciplinary definitions to express the value of our discipline, we risk pushing all else besides literature itself to the margins. Rather than risk repeating the list with which I began my comments, I will say that the move toward entrenchment adversely affects: other forms of cultural production, other methods than textual analysis alone, work in or across interdisciplinary fields, and disciplinary work carried out in fields other than Hispanic Studies proper.

The opportunity we have is to be more intentionally open as a discipline. If we are open not just to other content but to other methods and other disciplines we must act accordingly. Our action must unfold simultaneously in different areas of academic life: we must change the structure of our undergraduate curricula, we must allow graduate students more flexibility in directing their advanced study, we must compose ads for departmental positions differently, and, on the path toward tenure and promotion, we must value scholarly work that takes place across disciplines or even fully within the boundaries of other disciplines. All of this, it should be emphasized, will require much more consensus than any individual department can muster alone. Our most prominent professional associations—the Modern Language Association and the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese among others—must continue to lead us forward in this respect. But individual faculty and individual departments, conference organizers and journal editors, must also commit to a process of transformation. To wit, a recent collective interview by journal editors

in Hispanic Studies reveals some interesting and productive friction evident in the field regarding non-traditional subjects and methods (Fraser and Henseler).

Can we move beyond the traditional boundaries of our collective discipline without experiencing that move as a loss, a betrayal or a transgression? Can we see innovation not as something imposed upon us from the outside but rather as an inherent part of our own tradition? The reason I feel these questions require our attention so urgently is that, one way or another, our centrality as a discipline in the twenty-first century depends on our ability to self-direct and exploit our own connections with other disciplines. Hispanic Studies has lacked the urgency that has driven disciplinary change in other language and literature fields. We have, it is clear, enjoyed increasing numbers during the same time in which German and French, for example, have seen declining enrollments. But I believe this has led also to a certain complacency. And over all the years during which we have remained relatively isolated from disciplinary shifts, the stakes of the interdisciplinary game have been steadily, and dramatically, increasing.

In closing I will say this: Hispanic Studies can quickly and decisively move to the forefront of the interdisciplinary humanities and social sciences. We have the chance to make ourselves fundamental to university curricula in the second half of the twenty-first century—whatever they look like. But to do this we must think more expansively about how we define our discipline, and we’re just not there yet.

Hispanic Studies in the 21st Century: Literature and Its Role in an Evolving Curriculum

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Faced with rising tuition costs and mounting student loan debt, today’s perception of higher education has shifted. Students place more value on their education based on their job prospects post graduation. In “Why College Is Not a Commodity,” Gary Gutting notes: “Current thinking about education [. . .] assumes that college is a natural place to acquire the relevant instrumental knowledge [. . .] for the vast majority