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# The Evolution of Graduate Studies in Spanish in American Universities

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Topic: analysis of the evolution of graduate studies in Spanish

**Abstract:** An analysis of the evolution of graduate studies in Spanish in American universities based on the results of a survey that examines the continuity of the programs considering their structure, contents, and faculty.

**Keywords:** Spanish language, literature, United States, university, graduate studies

## 1. Introduction

The general objective of this report is to evaluate the evolution of Spanish graduate studies in American universities. The main issue is determining what structural changes are taking place with regard to the study of Hispanic literature and linguistics in masters and doctoral programs in the United States. More specifically, the study considers the evolution of the graduate programs taking into account three aspects: (1) the existence of the programs themselves, including variations in their structure; (2) the contents of the programs and (3) the faculty that teach in these programs. Consequently, we resolved to gather information from a representative set of institutions, from the private and public spheres, and ensured that the selected universities were geographically diverse.

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When selecting institutions, it was important to establish that they reflect an objective level of quality. The criterion used to satisfy this requirement was to select the top 80 of the *tier-1* universities in the *US News* 2017 ranking,<sup>1</sup> eliminating those universities that did not have graduate programs in Spanish.

To collect data for this report we created a survey and sent it to the Director of Graduate Studies of the departments involved. In cases where there was no response, a second request was made to an alternative contact, usually the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/rankings/national-universities>

department director or a professor known by the researcher. In two instances, the survey was completed over the phone.

The survey was sent to 52 institutions with Spanish graduate programs and a total of 30 responses were obtained. The response rate is substantial given that filling out a survey of this nature, though it was made as concise as possible, is a task that demands of the time and attention of professionals who are considerably busy. Therefore, we would like to express our appreciation for the collaboration of all those who participated in the study.

We understand that the issues addressed in this report are potentially sensitive in nature and as a result some universities may have decided against sharing details—such as the closing of programs or the non-renewal of faculty— which in some cases could be viewed as harmful to the image of the institution. In any case, as our intent is to present general trends rather than comment on specific cases, in this report we present information extracted from the survey without naming the institutions involved in each particular case.

Of the 30 universities that answered the survey a little more than half (16) are public universities and the remainder (14) are private universities. Regarding geographic distribution, the responses cover evenly most of the regions in which the continental U.S. states are traditionally divided: New England (4), Mid-Atlantic (6), Great Lakes (5), South (6), and West (8). The only regions without

representation are the Midwest and the Rockies, a circumstance conditioned by the smaller relative number of universities with graduate programs in Spanish in those regions.<sup>2</sup>

Two versions of the survey with identical content were created: one in English and one in Spanish. The survey was distributed in English by default; the Spanish version was only sent when the recipients were personally known by the researcher and their preference for Spanish assumed. Nonetheless, it was pointed out that it was possible to respond in either of the two languages.

Below are the three questions found on the survey, which address the continuity of the graduate programs, the changes in orientation and the evolution of affiliated faculty. There is also an additional question in which participants were invited to provide any other relevant information.

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<sup>2</sup> A list of participating universities is included at the end of the report.

**SURVEY:**

UNIVERSITY / Department

Please comment on the most relevant aspects of the evolution of Spanish graduate studies in your institution over the last ten years or so.

**1. Continuity of graduate programs:**

Have new programs been created? Have any been eliminated? Are there prospects of any change in the near future?

**2. Changes in orientation:**

Have the existing programs undergone or are they set to undergo changes in their content? In particular, we are interested in changes towards multicultural approaches in which the study of Spanish language and literature may lose its centrality, or vice versa.

**3. Faculty:**

With respect to tenure-track faculty, have new lines for Hispanic linguistics or literary studies been created, or will they be created? When faculty members of language or literary studies have retired, have their positions been eliminated or not renewed, or have they been replaced by individuals with a different disciplinary profile?

**Any other relevant aspects:**

Please comment on any other circumstances not included in the previous questions.

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Although the same survey was sent to all universities, the responses vary greatly in length, level of detail, and specific topics covered. The reasons are manifold. First off, the questions themselves are quite open-ended, allowing for responses with a greater or lesser degree of detail and emphasizing very different aspects. The type of information provided also varies greatly depending on the degree of trust with the interviewer. It is understandable that participants would choose not to share details of sensitive issues, especially regarding the renewal or non-renewal of personnel, or of unfavorable events, such as internal conflicts within institutions or

negative evaluations and the closing of programs. On the other hand, an open-ended survey such as the one we provided has the advantage of allowing issues to emerge that we would never have considered in the design of a closed or multiple choice questionnaire. In any case, while being aware that the information provided by each institution is not completely comparable, we believe that thanks to the large number of responses received it is possible to extract some trends that at least give an idea of the status and evolution of Spanish graduate studies in the United States.

The proposed time frame is of the last ten years, although responses are not confined to this timespan. In some cases, previous events are commented on and, in some cases, because the informant does not have a long career in the institution, only information about the most recent years is available.

Although the information that interests us mainly affects Spanish programs, we also include some information pertaining to Portuguese and Catalan, as these disciplines are grouped under the same normative and institutional framework in many institutions.

For the most part, no personalized correspondence has been maintained with the participants in relation to their responses to the survey. However, once a first draft of the report was completed, it was distributed among the participants inviting them to suggest modifications or provide additional information.

## 2. Continuity of graduate programs

The first question of the survey asks whether there have been changes in the continuity of the programs paying particular attention to two aspects: a) if new programs have been created, maintained, or eliminated; b) if there are prospects of any changes in the near future.

Before reviewing the information obtained from the responses, it should be noted that the design of the survey makes it difficult to register whether graduate programs have been eliminated; the reason is that, as it was previously stated, when selecting universities, those that did not have graduate programs were not included. Consequently, we have only been able to obtain this information when at the time of selecting participating universities we were unaware that the elimination had occurred; when a program that had been eliminated for some time had been reinstated; or when an institution had eliminated some graduate programs but had maintained others. In any case, these assumptions cover the majority of situations in which programs have been closed and, in addition, the definitive closure of programs is very rare in institutions of the type studied. Therefore, we do not believe that in the process of selecting universities we have overlooked a substantial number of eliminated programs.

## 2.1. Elimination of programs

There are five universities that report having eliminated graduate programs in Spanish. We only count eliminations that come into full effect; we do not count the cases in which, during a restructuring, a program stopped admitting students while the new program was launched:

- There is a case in which there was a disappearance of an entire Spanish graduate program, both of the master's and the doctoral degree program; these are changes that occurred in the mid-nineties. This institution has continued to provide support to students with an interest in Hispanic subjects through the doctoral degree program in Comparative Literature or General Linguistics. This change signaled the restructuring of language teaching at the beginner levels, which went from being under the charge of graduate students to being conducted by contracted personnel.
- There is another case of elimination of graduate studies in Spanish, also in the mid-nineties, which was the result of a crisis in the department which had managed them. However, the elimination was temporary as the master's degree was reinstated around the year 2000 and a new doctoral degree program was created around 2014.
- In one case, after an external evaluation carried out by the institution every five years, the doctoral degree program was eliminated but the master's program was retained. It was reported that there were currently no prospects for the Ph.D. program to be reinstated.

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- There is also a case of a university in which there was a master's degree that covered the peninsular, colonial, Latin American, and linguistic areas but had no doctoral degree program. The master's degree was eliminated in 2010, meaning there were no graduate programs in that department. We were informed there was a possibility that the master's degree would be reinstated within the next two to three years.
- Finally, a university reported that there was an elimination of the master's degree while maintaining the doctoral degree program, in other words, the option known as a "terminal master" was eliminated. The change was made with the intent to ensure that students who arrived at the graduate level had a higher level of commitment. In other words, if they wanted to obtain a degree, they would have to commit to remain throughout the entire doctoral degree program (compared to the previous configuration in which the students had the option to withdraw from the program early after having obtained a master's degree). The elimination of the master's degree under these conditions does not mean that the institution sought to eliminate a program but rather was the result of a strategic restructuring to enhance the doctoral degree program.

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There is additional information that, without indicating closures of programs, indicates obvious limitations to existing programs. In four cases, it was reported that although all graduate programs have continued, the number of admitted students has been reduced. Even though questions about this particular issue

were not directly asked in the survey, it is very probable that it is also occurring in other universities. In some cases, concrete figures were given:

- A department with three doctoral programs (Hispanic Linguistics, Hispanic Literature and Portuguese Literature) previously admitted 10-15 students annually for each program, as of the 2008 economic crisis and due to a reduction in available faculty, the program currently admits only 6 students per academic year.
- Another university reports a drastic reduction to 2-3 new entrants per year without specifying the previous number.
- In another case, there is talk of a reduction from about 8 students per year to 3-4 students. This problem may further be aggravated by the university's intent to reduce the foreign language requirement for undergraduate students from two years to one. If this change occurs, the need for Spanish instruction by graduate students and, consequently, the possibilities of financing for students will be substantially reduced.
- The fourth university that mentions this issue reported that the number of new students must be negotiated each year with the deans and due to the increase in expenditure per student that number has been reduced from year to year.

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On the other hand, a university reported the suspension (not elimination) of a Portuguese doctoral degree program due to a low number of interested students.

## 2.2. Creation of programs

Seven universities, in which there were already graduate courses in Spanish, reported they had created new programs:

- Two universities created or are creating new master's programs: in one case it is the creation of a double master's degree in Spanish and Portuguese that is already in operation. In the other case, a master's degree in Teaching Spanish whose implementation was imminent.
- In three universities that already had doctoral degree programs with options of literature and culture, an option with an emphasis on Hispanic linguistics has been created. In one case the new doctoral degree program was created ten years ago and in the other two cases they were created more recently: approximately five years ago.
- In a university with a doctoral degree program in Hispanic Literature, a specialization in Latin Studies has been created.
- In a university with a doctoral degree program in literature and linguistics, a specialization in creative writing was created. This university also launched a graduate certificate in Spanish as a Heritage Language and is considering the possibility of adding a distance learning master's degree.

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## 2.3. Restructuring of programs

In addition to the aforementioned cases of closure of programs, in recent years there have been restructurings which have impacted various aspects of the curricula. Most issues involving changes in orientation are discussed in the next

section. We comment here on one type of situation which resulted in the implementation of certain limitations to the duration of plans of study: four universities reported that they had made adjustments to the requirements so that the time of completion for the doctoral degree program did not extend beyond five years (in three cases) or six (in one case).

## 2.4. Partial conclusion

Generally speaking, it does not seem possible to infer from the available data that there is a generalized policy of elimination of graduate studies in Spanish. Instead the data suggests that restructurings have occurred due to circumstances specific to each department. From the nineties to the present we found the permanent elimination of only two doctoral degree programs, while other eliminations of Spanish graduate programs had been temporary or strategic. At the same time new programs have been created, a trend that seems more pronounced in the area of Hispanic linguistics, in which three doctoral degree programs and a master's degree program in teaching Spanish were newly created. It should also be noted that there are relatively fewer new programs of literature and culture, which is largely due to the fact that all the universities surveyed already had graduate programs in those areas; in any case, new programs of traditional literature were not created, instead new areas such as creative writing or Latin studies were incorporated.

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### 3. Changes in orientation

The second question of the survey addresses the issue of whether existing graduate programs have undergone changes regarding the orientation of their content, with particular attention to the centrality of the study of the Spanish language and literature versus a more multidisciplinary approach. This is an issue that affects literature studies more acutely; as a result, our focus will primarily be on this aspect.

#### 3.1. Debates around the study of literature

In a good number of cases, participants' responses highlighted the various debates taking place in the humanities field. These debates revolve around the varying theoretical and methodological approaches on what the study of literature means and what its relationship should be to related fields. At one extreme, there is the traditional conception of the history of literature based on the study of a series of canonical texts in relation to the history, culture, and aesthetic currents of the moment. At the other extreme, there is a cultural studies trend in which there is room for a series of alternative approaches in which literature may play a marginal role. Evidently, there are also intermediate approaches in which literature and its relationship with other cultural forms (cinema, visual arts, legal discourses, politics, sociology, and history) are studied.

Below we attempt to extract the main tendencies that emerge from participant responses:

- Seven responses allude specifically to the importance of literature studies maintaining centrality in the curriculum and express their desire for the curriculum to remain this way with phrases such as "we hope" or "we prefer" for it to be so. With regard to concrete measures to preserve the centrality of literature, two responses allude to the existence of a list of mandatory readings of literary texts from major areas of literature and culture that account for a part of the study material for doctoral exams.
- At the same time ten responses report changes in recent years that imply a shift away from the traditional study of literature. According to one of the universities surveyed, the tendency to change curricula incorporating the paradigm of cultural studies is a direct reflection of trends in the field. Changes mentioned in the responses include the incorporation of the following elements: a) voices of minorities or marginalized groups, b) the study of diverse cultural manifestations aside from literature, particularly visual culture, c) cross-border studies, d) new methodologies and perspectives, such as digital humanities, e) study of translation, not in the technical sense, but as a communicative and cultural competency, f) study of other languages that are not Spanish. These changes are realized in variety of ways including the hiring of professors whose main area of study is not literature, the implementation of multidisciplinary programs with other departments, and the renaming of programs and departments in which the words "language" or "literature" are eliminated and are replaced

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by "studies" or "cultures". These changes are explained in more detail in the following sections.

- In four cases, participants indicated that changes in program orientation resulted in a divergence of opinions within the departments and in disagreements among administrators. In two cases, generational differences were mentioned: younger faculty had an orientation towards cultural studies, which was not shared to the same extent by older faculty. In another two cases, participants report pressure by administrators towards the implementation of interdisciplinary and multicultural approaches through the combination or merger of programs and departments. Administrators promoting these initiatives justify them as both a desire to follow new trends in the discipline and as necessary to optimize resources. In both cases reported, the initiative did not seem to count with the support of the departments involved.
- In two responses, changes to curriculum orientation were justified by a need to adjust to new labor market demands. In one case, changes geared towards greater flexibility and multidisciplinary, as well as the inclusion of subjects in English, responded to a need to train students for a labor market that increasingly includes non-academic areas. Another participant indicated that changes addressed the need to prepare versatile students with knowledge of both the history of literature and cultural studies for the labor market of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which includes humanities in the public

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sector, since many graduates will not work in research universities but will work instead at cultural institutions, museums, or NGOs.

### 3.2. Restructuring of programs

Some responses commented on recent restructurings of the curricula that specifically affect the centrality of the study of the literature. Among the changes mentioned the following are included:

- One of the key goals in the restructuring of the curriculum was to give more flexibility to students when selecting content. One response mentioned that in the new doctoral program of a department, students could choose to focus exclusively, partially, or only minimally on the study of literature. In another case, in which there was a restructuring from a traditional doctoral degree program of literature to one of "Hispanic Studies", the new curriculum entails a curriculum open to all kinds of approaches, without lines or divisions: literature, cultural studies, cinema, politics and even material culture.
- In another case it was reported that students had greater freedom to take subjects outside the department, and exams and reading lists were tailored to the interests of the student, which in many cases, according to the responses, resulted in a shallow training in the field of Spanish at the expense of other areas.

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- Another type of change reported, was the inclusion of more languages. Three universities mentioned that Portuguese had been added to the course offering, and two had added Catalan. Several universities also mentioned the incorporation of faculty or students who work with other languages, such as Arabic or Amerindian languages, or that the curriculum allows, from a comparative perspective, the study of literature and culture in any language.
- In regard to the reforms previously mentioned, five departments report that they incorporated professors from other departments or other fields with their corresponding courses into their doctoral programs (we also comment on this aspect in the section on faculty continuity). Sometimes these professors have shared appointments between two departments, or even the Spanish department is their main destination despite their lack of a doctoral degree in Spanish language or literature. According to the information provided, the most frequent disciplines in these incorporations are: History (5), Cinema (3), Latin American Studies (2) Anthropology (2), History of Art (2), Sociology (1), Music (1), Religion (1), Digital Humanities (1), Native American and Indigenous Studies (1).
- The opposite phenomenon also occurs; that is, that the Spanish departments offer subjects to students in other programs. Specifically, two departments report that they have begun to offer subjects in English to attract students from other disciplines.

### 3.3. Changes in the names of departments, sections, and programs

The names of the departments that offer graduate programs are also indicators of their orientation and focus, as well as the centrality they give to the study of language and literature. In the current names of the 30 departments included in the study, we found the following trends:

- A large majority (21) mention the name of the Spanish language ("Spanish"), or use the word "language" or "literature". The most frequent formulation, in fifteen cases, groups Spanish with Portuguese ("Spanish and Portuguese"), to which Italian is added twice ("Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese"). The other departments (6) in this group use the formulation: "Romance (or Modern in a case) Languages (and Literatures)".
- A second group (7) uses the term "Spanish Studies" (or "Spanish and Portuguese" when it is the case) in such a way that "Spanish" no longer refers to the language but is an adjective that modifies "Studies". In these formulations "Spanish" alternates with other areas such as "Hispanic" or "Latin American" that were not present in the previous group, probably because the combination "Hispanic Language (s)" or "Latin American Language (s)" does not have a clear accepted meaning. The most frequent formulations among the seven names that use "studies" are: "Spanish and Portuguese Studies" (3), followed by "Hispanic Studies" (2); less frequently, with only one example, we find "Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies" and "Hispanic and Portuguese Studies".

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- A third group, very small to this day, with only two universities, uses the term "cultures", without mention of languages and referring to cross-border areas such as "Iberian" and "Latin American".

Although changes in the denominations of departments and programs are an aspect that is not explicitly included in the survey, some universities report restructurings that have been accompanied by changes of this type. The data shows that the trends are broadly in the same direction: towards more inclusive approaches, in which the term "Spanish" referring to the Spanish language, or the word "literature", is eliminated and the formula "studies" is adopted; or in those that change from areas such as "Hispanic" to cross-border and multilingual entities such as "Iberian". It is also worth mentioning restructurings in which Hispanic studies acquire more relevance by separating themselves from other Romance languages such as French or Italian, with which they usually share a department or program. At the same time, the tendency to group the Spanish-speaking sphere with the Portuguese language continues.

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Next, we comment on name changes to programs, sections, or departments-- both those already in effect and those that are planned:

- A doctoral program's name was changed from "Hispanic Linguistics" to "Iberian Linguistics"; it was specified that it is a more comprehensive approach that, despite the name, is not restricted to the Iberian Peninsula.

- As a result of the restructuring of a program and the creation of a Hispanic Linguistics specialization, the name "Romance Studies" was changed, from separate itineraries for Spanish and French to "Literary, Cultural and Linguistic Studies" in which the possibility exists of concentrating in one of the two languages, both languages, or other combinations (Caribbean Creoles, Chinese, Arabic) through comparative approaches.
- In a department of "Romance Languages and Literatures" the section of Spanish whose name was simply "Spanish" was renamed "Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Studies", which signals the incorporation of the Portuguese language.
- In a university there was a restructuring that involved the creation of a separate department for Spanish. The previously "Hispanic and Classical Studies" was renamed "Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies". Similarly, another university created a department of "Hispanic and Portuguese Studies" becoming independent from its previous grouping with "French and Italian".
- The two departments that currently bear the name "Latin American and Iberian Cultures", in one case, and "Iberian and Latin American Cultures" in the other, do so as a result of a change that occurred in 2008 that marked the elimination of the name "Spanish and Portuguese". Another department, which currently bears the name "Spanish and Portuguese", announced that the name will change later this year to "Latin American and Iberian Cultures."

### 3.4. Linguistics

As far as linguistics is concerned, we did not detect a particularly marked evolution in the teaching of the subject (as most of the people who answered the survey are professors of literature perhaps the responses give less details about the evolution of the teaching of linguistics). In the field of Hispanic linguistics, the various approaches (formal, functional, applied) have varying degrees of emphasis across institutions; data gleaned from the survey does not allow us to detect a concrete trend. Only in one case was it reported that more emphasis is being placed on applied aspects, such as teaching and language acquisition, to the detriment of more theoretical studies; this change is a reflection of student and faculty interest. At the same time, as noted in the previous section, the creation of new programs incorporates relatively new fields such as Spanish as a Heritage language.

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### 3.5. Partial conclusion

The information presented in this section makes it clear that paradigm changes are taking place in the study of Spanish literature in American universities, from more traditional approaches to more multidisciplinary, multicultural, and cross-border approaches. A high number of responses point to changes towards substituting the traditional study of literature with the paradigm of cultural studies while no movement is reported in the opposite direction; this development reflects new trends in the field. We also note the incorporation of other disciplines of the humanities (art, history, sociology, anthropology, and cinema) at the expense of the study of literary texts as well as changes to the name of departments and programs

in which the word "literature," or "Spanish" referring to the Spanish language, is eliminated.

At the same, it is important to note that university professors are free to delve into new areas of interest (not necessarily pertaining to the study of literature) and in turn attract students interested in those often diverse areas. As a result, the teaching of Spanish literature can evolve and change even in departments where there is no formal program restructuring in progress.

#### 4. Continuity of faculty

The third question addresses the issue of the continuity tenure-track faculty focusing on three factors: creation of new positions; elimination of positions due to the non-renewal of vacancies; changes in the profile of new incoming faculty with respect to outgoing faculty.

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Of the 30 departments surveyed, 26 commented on this subject. This is perhaps the issue that most directly affects departments and in which the most changes are taking place: of the 26 responses, eight expressed that they had been able to fill vacancies or even experience some growth in teaching staff, in many cases with faculty of a similar profile to those who had left the position. On the other hand, 18 reported some incidence, delay or difficulty regarding the filling of a vacancy.

#### 4.1. Renewal

In the clearest case of systematic renewal, a university reported the existence of a "timely replacement policy"; that is, when a vacancy occurs, the faculty pledges to renew the position without delay; to date that policy has been enforced. In this department, a profound restructuring took place beginning in 2005 with the creation of a large number of new positions that have been maintained.

Two other universities reported some growth in personnel, in one case a slight growth occurred, in the other case growth was more substantial.

Five universities reported that in recent years their vacancies have been filled without incident.

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It should be noted that of these eight universities in which faculty renewals have been the norm, there are only two public universities and the remaining six are private, including the three in which there have been increases in staff.

#### 4.2. Reduction

In the majority of the universities surveyed vacancy renewals due to retirement, death, illness, transfer, or not having obtained tenure are not automatic but must be requested to university officials and thoroughly justified through a process that involves negotiation. Purportedly, this situation is different from that which occurred in previous times, when renewals were essentially automatic.

Five of the universities surveyed noted that at this time a faculty member had left the department and that, due to the slowness of the hiring process, a replacement position had not been approved. In these cases, it was not guaranteed that the positions in question would be approved however it wasn't assumed that those positions were lost.

Sometimes it is not possible to specify if there has been an actual loss of faculty, as some departments have undergone major restructurings with intense entry and exit of personnel and mergers with other departments. In the most clearly quantifiable cases, fourteen departments report a net loss of teaching staff in Spanish Language or Literature due to non-renewal of faculty positions. These are cases in which the possibility of renewal is considered to have been definitely rejected. We detail the available information of the fourteen departments below:

- In four departments it was reported that faculty had been reduced due to a hiring freeze, without specifying numbers.
- Two departments reported the loss of three positions respectively.
- Four departments reported two vacancies without replacement.
- Four departments mentioned the loss of a position.

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### 4.3. Profile maintenance

Normally, in the process of filling a position that has become vacant, it is not guaranteed that the profile for the vacancy is identical to that of the person who left. As has already been noted, renewals are not automatic and must be



negotiated with university officials. One of the issues up for negotiation is the desired profile for applicants. Typically, deans promote multidisciplinary profiles, which allow for the maintenance of a variety of courses as well as the participation of the new faculty in various programs. Deans also favor profiles that align with newer trends in the field over more traditional profiles. In one case it was reported that the creation of positions is not based on programmatic needs of graduate students but is largely conditioned by the number of undergraduate students: the intention is to maintain a reasonable ratio of students per class. Another occurrence that should be taken into account is, as was previously discussed, the change to "studies" when restructuring programs implies the participation of faculty from other departments, with which specialists in History, Latin American Studies, History of Art or Music are now incorporated into the former Spanish departments.

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Regarding the profile of positions not renewed, some responses include specific information that allows us infer some trends:

- One department has lost professors specializing in Brazilian studies, Peninsular Studies, and Southwest studies.
- In one case, a professor specializing in Mexican Studies retired and the position has yet to be filled.
- In the case of a doctoral degree program that was terminated, two positions in Hispanic linguistics were lost.
- Two departments have lost professors specializing in Peninsular Studies; in both cases one of the losses pertains to Golden Age experts. Three

departments have each lost a professor specializing in peninsular studies (two cases pertain to Golden Age experts or Medievalists). Consequently these departments have lost a total of seven peninsular studies positions, four of which belong to Golden Age experts. In some of these cases, it was specified that it is merely a reduction within Peninsular studies and not its total elimination as there was another Peninsular studies specialist active in the department.

There are also cases in which there was no net loss of positions or in which new positions were created after a period without hiring. Profile changes mentioned are outlined below:

- In one department, a professor specializing in Colonial studies retired and a professor of Latin American studies was hired.
- In a university with ten years of hiring freezes, positions for anthropological-sociocultural linguistics and cross-border Mexican-American studies have been opened.
- A professor of the history of the Spanish language was replaced by one of experimental phonetics. In addition, a position in Pragmatics was created.
- In a program that has undergone major restructuring, there has been a shift from four professors specializing in Peninsular studies and four specializing in Latin America to three professors of peninsular literature and culture and six professors of Latin American culture and literature.

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Although we do not have exhaustive and detailed information, based on the data collected it is evident that peninsular literature is the area that has suffered the most from reductions in personnel.

#### 4.4. Partial conclusion

Graduate programs in Spanish, as has been the case with other fields in the humanities, have suffered difficulties when it comes to renewing faculty. It is currently a problem that visibly affects the majority of Spanish departments. With regards to the continuity of the profiles of the professors, the area of peninsular literature, particularly that of the Golden Age, has been particularly affected by this situation.

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#### 5. General conclusions

In light of the information gleaned from the 30 surveys received, we can draw some general conclusions about the evolution of graduate programs in Spanish in the United States.

With regard to the continuity of the programs, there does not seem to be a systematic policy to eliminate or reduce the relevance of Spanish language and literature studies in the American university system. In the last 25 years, the permanent closing of programs has been rare, while the creations of new programs have increased, especially with regards to Hispanic linguistics. However, even

though there have not been concrete eliminations, there are limitations of another kind, such as a drastic reduction in the number of new students admitted.

Regarding the restructuring and reorientation of programs, the variations and trends in changes are the result of several processes: the waning evolution of the humanities in general, the institutional policies aimed at conserving funds and maximizing resources and, in the case of literature, the very dynamics of the field of study, with tendencies to the incorporation of alternative voices, methodological approaches, and subjects of study. The result of all this is a loss of centrality in the study of literature in the traditional sense, in other words, centered on historical periods and canonical texts. There is no unanimous agreement on the virtues of this occurrence, which some view as positive while others view it as less desirable.

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In any case, although some participants expressed an interest in continuing the centrality of the traditional study of literature in Spanish, all indicators show that the trends of change go in the opposite direction, that is, towards diversifying the subjects of study. This is confirmed by the restructuring of programs, the incorporation of personnel from other fields and departments, and even changes to the names of the departments themselves, with the elimination of the denomination "Literature" or "Spanish" when referring to the language. These trends simply follow the evolution of the discipline and are justified by the need to provide students with the necessary training to succeed in an increasingly diversified field.

As for the variations in the hiring of personnel, the data collected demonstrates that a large number of departments are not able to fill vacant positions or are only able to do so with great difficulty. It is a problem that disproportionately affects public institutions and puts them at a disadvantage compared to private institutions. This situation is, again, a result of a combination of economic and academic circumstances which we have previously discussed. The tendency of the university officials to decrease support for the humanities, especially during unfavorable economic cycles, results in faculty positions not being filled or filled slowly and with difficulty. This situation has a particularly serious effect on peninsular literary positions, especially with regards to the Golden Age. In the context of the economic difficulties of some universities, the desire to maximize resources leads to the merging of programs and consequently to the hiring of faculty that can offer courses in various departments. These developments result in the incorporation into Spanish departments of professors trained in fields such as history, art, or cinema to the detriment of candidates whose profiles are more clearly oriented towards literature or linguistics.

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In short, graduate programs in Spanish seem to have secured their presence in the American university scene, but they will have to face the same problems and challenges that affect the study of humanities in general.

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Observatorio del Instituto Cervantes at Harvard University

Universitat de les Illes Balears

List of participating universities in alphabetical order.

1. Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA / Romance Languages and Literatures Department
2. Brown University, Providence, RI / Department of Hispanic Studies
3. Columbia University, New York, NY / Department of Latin American and Iberian Cultures
4. Emory University, Atlanta, GA / Department of Spanish and Portuguese
5. Harvard University, Cambridge, MA / Department of Romance Languages and Literatures
6. Pennsylvania State University - University Park, University Park, PA / Department of Spanish, Italian and Portuguese
7. Princeton University, Princeton, NJ / Department of Spanish and Portuguese
8. Purdue University, Lafayette, ID / Department of Spanish and Portuguese
9. Rice University, Houston, TX / Department of Spanish, Portuguese & Latin American Studies
10. Rutgers, State University of New Jersey / Department of Spanish and Portuguese
11. Stanford University, Stanford, CA / Department of Iberian and Latin American Cultures
12. The University of Arizona / Department of Spanish and Portuguese
13. The University of Massachusetts at Amherst / Department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies
14. Tulane University, New Orleans, LA / Department of Spanish and Portuguese
15. University of California - Davis, Davis, CA / Department of Spanish and Portuguese

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16. University of California - Irvine, Irvine, CA / Department of Spanish and Portuguese
17. University of California - Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA / Department of Spanish and Portuguese
18. University of California - Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA / Department of Spanish and Portuguese
19. University of Chicago, Chicago, IL / Department of Romance Languages and Literatures
20. University of Georgia, Athens, GA / Department of Romance Languages
21. University of Houston / Department of Hispanic Studies
22. University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL / Department of Modern Languages and Literatures
23. University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, Ann Arbor, MI / Department of Romance Languages and Literatures
24. University of Minnesota / Department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies
25. University of New Mexico Albuquerque, NM / Department of Spanish and Portuguese
26. University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA / Department of Hispanic and Portuguese Studies
27. University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA / Department of Spanish and Portuguese
28. University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA / Department of Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese
29. University of Washington, Seattle, WA / Department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies
30. Yale University, New Haven, CT / Department of Spanish and Portuguese

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