

**PROGRAM EVALUATION OF :** CASB

*THE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN PROGRAMS IN SPAIN  
(APUNE/AAPS)*

Dates of evaluation (including dates of interviews with students and professors):

Friday, May 22, 2009

List of persons interviewed by the committee (not including students) and their titles:

1. Administrative staff:

Dr. Juan José Romero - Program Director, Professor of History

Ms. Libby Turner – Academic Coordinator and Student Advisor

2. Professors/Instructors:

Dr. Elisa Marti-Lopez – Visiting Professor of Language and Literature (Northwestern Univ.)

Dr. Antoni Luna – Professor of Geology (Pompeu Fabra Univ.)

Members of evaluation committee (Names and Programs they represent):

1. Laura J. Gatzkiewicz (Rutgers in Spain)
2. Carlos A. Vega (PRESCHO)
3. Ana Peláez (Boston College)

**KEY:**

**S = Satisfactory**

**C = Conditional (Improvement needed)**

**U = Unsatisfactory**

**N/A = Not applicable**

**? = No information available**

2.

**PART A : EVALUATION BASED ON RESPONSES OF PROGRAM DIRECTOR  
AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF.**

**CATEGORY I - STUDENTS**

**SELECTION OF STUDENTS.**

- S 1. Appropriateness of selection criteria to the aims of the program.
- S 2. Standards of selection clearly defined.
- S\_\_ 3. Consistent application of stated criteria.
- S\_\_ 4. Method of determining level of language ability.
- S\_\_ 5. Language preparation of participants in relation to the demands of the program.
- S\_\_ 6. Method of determining student maturity and emotional stability.
- S\_\_ 7. Information about students provided to director prior to their arrival in Spain.

**S\_\_ OVERALL EVALUATION OF SELECTION PROCEDURES**

(Space for comments if needed):

Due to the consortium set-up of the program, the selection criteria are not necessarily homogeneous (although this does not seem to be a problem with regard to student satisfaction or performance).

**PREPARATION AND ORIENTATION: PRE-DEPARTURE.**

- S\_\_ 1. Students furnished sufficient, accurate background on Spain before arrival.
- S\_\_ 2. Students made aware of the specific details of the program prior to departure for Spain.
- S\_\_ 3. Time and effort devoted to pre-departure orientation.
- YES\_ 4. If there is no pre-departure orientation program, should there be one? (Reply with yes or no. If yes, please comment).

The CASB program provides the students with useful information, but each of the home campuses seems to view pre-departure orientation differently. While some of the universities in the consortium conduct a specific, well-researched orientation, others do not. This discrepancy is problematic, as noted by students on the evaluations: whereas some were well informed and spoke highly of their pre-departure orientation, others thought they had received either little useful information or, in some cases, misinformation. Unfortunately, there is probably little that the CASB program staff can do about this except to request that the students contact them directly with questions.

### **PREPARATION AND ORIENTATION: ON-SITE.**

- S\_\_1. On-site orientation and/or intensive language program.
- S\_\_2. Effectiveness of the program as an introduction to the experience in Spain.
- S\_\_3. Effectiveness of the program in developing language skills.
- S\_\_4. Appropriateness of amount of credit granted.

### **S\_\_ OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE ORIENTATION PROGRAM:**

Students must have a good level of Spanish before entering the program. The CASB orientation offers a very good introduction to the special characteristics of their Comunidad Autónoma and credit is given for both class time and class-related activities, which are mandatory. The evaluation committee felt that this was appropriate.

### **HOUSING.**

- C\_\_1. Type of housing arrangements in relation to the stated aims of the program as described in brochures, etc.
- S\_\_2. Program assistance in obtaining satisfactory housing.
- C\_\_3. Cost of housing to the student.
- C\_\_4. General student opinion of housing obtained.

### **C\_\_ OVERALL EVALUATION OF HOUSING:**

The director feels that the current dormitory housing does not promote integration into Catalonian society and feels that it is fairly expensive, considering that no meal plan is included. He is therefore looking for alternatives. The evaluation committee applauds his awareness and willingness to act.

### **ACTIVITIES.**

- S\_\_1. Program organizes cultural activities and excursions to enrich students' experience.
- S\_\_2. Appropriateness of activities to stated program aim.
- S\_\_3. Activities described in brochures etc. actually carried out.
- S\_\_4. Cost to the student.
- S\_\_5. Program assistance with respect to other activities and travel not sponsored by the program.
- S\_\_6. Effectiveness of special programs, such as work experiences or language exchanges.
- S\_\_7. General program assistance received by students in obtaining the maximum cultural benefits from experience abroad.

**S\_\_ OVERALL EVALUATION OF ACTIVITIES:**

The activities seemed appropriately balanced and well-thought out. Most of the students felt the activities were beneficial.

**STUDENT WELFARE.**

S\_\_ 1. Procedures for regular and emergency medical care.

S\_\_ 2. Student health and accident insurance coverage (including written proof of adequate overseas coverage).

N/A\_ 3. Overseas transportation arrangements when made by program.

S\_\_ 4. Academic and personal counseling.

S\_\_ 5. Help fulfilling legal obligations.

**S\_\_ OVERALL EVALUATION OF WELFARE:**

The students were happy with the balance that the program has managed to establish between support for the students and allowing them the freedom to make decisions.

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**OVERALL EVALUATION OF CATEGORY I - STUDENTS**

Please use this space to give your overall rating and specific recommendations.

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The students' biggest concerns were the fact that the housing did not allow them to integrate into Spanish life very well and that some of them did not receive adequate information from their home universities prior to departure. The director is aware of these concerns and is working to ameliorate both, although the former will probably be easier to address than the latter.

**CATEGORY II - ACADEMICS**

S\_\_ 1. Course information supplied to students prior to enrollment in program.

S\_\_ 2. Course descriptions and other information provided to students as an aid in choosing courses and registering.

S\_\_ 3. Type of course of studies clearly described in brochures and other information (special courses for program students only, "Cursos para Extranjeros" at a Spanish university, regular courses in the Spanish university, etc.).

S\_\_ 4. Academic requirements of program courses in comparison to U.S. universities (with respect to intensity, duration, level and intent of class work).

S\_\_ 5. Academic level is maintained bearing in mind students' level of Spanish.

- S\_\_ 6. System of evaluation of students' performance (exams, papers, class participation, etc.).
- S\_\_ 7. Timely and effective feedback from examinations, papers, and other written work.
- S\_\_ 8. System of conversion of Spanish grades to U.S. scale.
- S\_\_ 9. Consistent application of conversion scale if used.
- N/A\_10. Upper and lower division and graduate work clearly defined on transcripts.
- S\_\_ 11. Arrangements for granting credit to students from other institutions.
- S\_\_ 12. Credits granted per course.
- S\_\_ 13. Class size. Methods of compensating for large classes if class size is a problem.
- S\_\_ 14. Academic qualifications of teaching staff.
- S\_\_ 15. System of evaluation of faculty by students.
- S\_\_ 16. Additional academic support if needed to follow course work (tutorials...).
- S\_\_ 17. Background information provided about the Spanish university, its teaching and assessment methods, etc. for direct enrollment students.

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### **OVERALL EVALUATION OF CATEGORY II - ACADEMICS**

Please use this space to give your overall rating of the following aspects and add any specific recommendations you deem necessary:

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1. Teaching staff: The teaching staff is comprised of professors from distinguished Spanish universities (as well as visiting professors from the consortium universities).
2. Demands of curriculum and credits granted: The preliminary program offered through CASB and the subsequent classes taken at the Spanish universities are all highly demanding and awarded credits appropriately in accordance with ECTS standards.
3. Grading: The grading and grade conversion are appropriate.
4. Other: The CASB program provides one of the rare opportunities to take classes directly at the host universities and should be applauded for this. In addition, the promotion and study of the Catalan language and culture is one of the elements that clearly identifies the CASB program.

### **CATEGORY III - ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCES**

#### **DIRECTOR.**

- S\_\_ 1. Qualifications of program director.

- S\_\_ 2. Director's knowledge of Spanish and English.
- S\_\_ 3. Director's knowledge of Spain and Spanish academic system.
- S\_\_ 4. Compatibility of work as director with other activities if any.
- S\_\_ 5. Director devotes appropriate amount of time to students.
- S\_\_ 6. Director devotes appropriate amount of time to program.
- S\_\_ 7. Regularity of director's contact with home institution.
- S\_\_ 8. Director's salary.
- S\_\_ 9. Provisions for continuity in directorship.
- S\_\_ 10. Provision for evaluation of director by students.

**S\_\_ OVERALL EVALUATION OF DIRECTOR'S POSITION AND DIRECTOR:**

The director is both extremely approachable and effective; the students really seemed comfortable with him. The evaluating committee's only concern was that the amount of work involved in this program is considerable and, although the director carries out his duties very efficiently, he may need additional staff if the program continues to grow.

**PROGRAM ASSISTANT(S).**

- S\_\_ 1. Qualifications of assistant(s) for the responsibilities
- S\_\_ 2. Assistant(s)' knowledge of Spanish and English (if necessary).
- S\_\_ 3. Assistant(s)' knowledge of Spain and Spanish academic system.
- S\_\_ 4. Compatibility of work as assistant(s) with other activities if any.
- S\_\_ 5. Assistant(s) devote(s) appropriate amount of time to students/program.
- S\_\_ 6. Regularity of contact between director and assistant(s).
- S\_\_ 7. Assistant(s)' salary.
- S\_\_ 8. Provisions for continuity.
- S\_\_ 9. Provision for evaluation of assistant(s) by students.

**S\_\_ OVERALL EVALUATION OF PROGRAM ASSISTANT(S):**

The program assistant provides invaluable help to the director and is extremely accessible and helpful to the students.

**FACILITIES.**

- S\_\_ 1. Satisfactory facilities.

S\_\_2. Accessibility of facilities to handicapped.

S\_\_3. Guarantee of class continuity if official centers close.

**S\_\_ OVERALL EVALUATION OF FACILITIES:**

The CASB program is housed in a building of the Pompeu Fabra University and is centrally located with modern facilities.

**FINANCES.**

S\_\_1. Amount of total income available for program expenses.

S\_\_2. Allocation of money available to the program.

S\_\_3. Financial accountability.

S\_\_4. Complete and accurate description of program costs in brochures and other publicity.

C\_\_5. Reasonableness of cost to student.

**S\_\_ OVERALL EVALUATION OF FINANCES:**

The students, whose home universities are already quite expensive, did not seem to think that the cost was excessive. Still, the evaluation committee felt that since the price does not include meals or transport, it seems higher than comparable offerings in Spain. When looking for housing, the director may want to look into ways to include either a meal plan or a food allowance, and perhaps urban and commuter rail passes.

**EVALUATION.**

S\_\_1. Students have opportunities to evaluate program.

S\_\_2. Evaluations are used to improve program.

**S\_\_ OVERALL EVALUATION OF EVALUATION PROCEDURES:**

**OVERALL EVALUATION OF CATEGORY III - ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE**

Please use this space to give your overall evaluation and add any specific recommendations necessary.

Please see comment under finances above.

**PART B:1 : EVALUATION BASED ON INTERVIEWS WITH PROFESSORS**

S\_\_1. Teaching facilities are adequate.

S\_\_2. Spanish level and type of student is adequate.

S\_\_ 3. Professors are satisfied with the academic requirements of the program.

S\_\_ 4. Professors are satisfied with the conditions offered by the program (pay, facilities, etc.).

S\_\_ 5. Professors feel program offers appropriate structure and support to students directly enrolled in Spanish university courses.

**S\_\_ OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM BY THE PROFESSORS:**

The professors interviewed seem to be delighted with the freedom the program allows them in designing their courses, the opportunities for students to engage in learning outside the classroom, and the caliber of students admitted to the program. The relationship between the director and his fellow professors in the CASB program is excellent.

**PART B.2 : EVALUATION BASED ON INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENTS**

C\_\_ 1. Students are satisfied with information provided to them prior to their arrival in Spain.

S\_\_ 2. Students find orientation program(s) is/are helpful and sufficient.

\_\_ 3. Students are satisfied with: S\_\_ courses and faculty  
S\_\_ administration and staff  
C\_\_ housing.

S\_\_ 4. Students find program costs reasonable.

**S\_\_ OVERALL EVALUATION OF PROGRAM BY THE STUDENTS:**

Of the three students interviewed, one seemed dissatisfied with the information she had received prior to coming to Spain, which she indicated led to certain disappointments and frustrations. There was also a general consensus that the initial tours of the city and the preliminary Catalan language course needed to be more practical. All applauded the director's efforts to find a better housing facility. Other than these details, however, the students were extremely happy with the director and academic coordinator, the course offerings of the three Spanish universities, and the opportunities for immersion that the program provides. They were also pleased to enjoy Catalonia as a distinct region of Spain and seemed very content to be in Barcelona.

**OVERALL EVALUATION OF CATEGORY IV - EVALUATION OF PROFESSORS AND STUDENTS**

Please use this space to give your overall rating and add any specific recommendations necessary.

1. Students' responses confirm / do not confirm the information learned in our interviews with the administrative staff.
2. Professors' responses confirm / do not confirm the information learned in our interviews with the administrative staff.
3. Specific recommendations:

There is a general consensus that the housing should be changed; the evaluation committee feels this change would provide the director with a good opportunity for offering either a meal plan or food allowance included in the price of the program.

Perhaps redesign some elements of the preliminary tours and courses to make them more useful for the students.

Try to convince all the home universities to provide a good pre-departure orientation. Short of this, have them encourage students to contact CASB personnel directly.

### GENERAL COMMENTS

Please comment on the strong and weak aspects (if any) and, if appropriate, make recommendations that may improve the program.

- The weakest element of this program as mentioned above is the lack of integrative housing. The director is aware of this shortcoming and is looking for alternatives.
- Another potential problem is the difference in pre-departure orientation policies of the various home universities.
- The cost also seems high, although financial aid can be applied to the program.

These details are far outweighed by the strengths of the program:

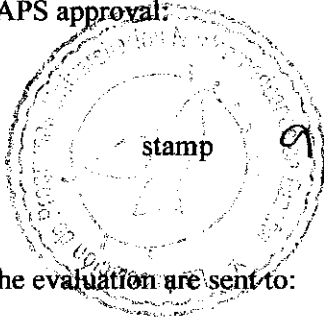
- The dedication of the director and academic coordinator.
- The unique nature of a US consortium sending students to a consortium of three prestigious Spanish universities.
- The academic opportunities and the high academic level.

1. *Laura A. Gatzkiewicz*  
Name: LAURA A. GATZKIEWICZ  
Program RUTGERS IN SPAIN

2. *Ana Peláez Amador*  
Name: ANA PELÁEZ  
Program BOSTON COLLEGE

3. *Carlos A. Vega*  
Name: CARLOS A. VEGA  
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APUNE/AAPS approval:



9/6/09

Copies of the evaluation are sent to:

Revised version: January 1999