



Miami-Florida Jean Monnet Center of Excellence FACULTY CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT GRANT Interview with grantee Dr. Jose Morcillo Gomez



Dr. Jose Morcillo Gomez is an Associate Teaching Professor of Spanish and Undergraduate Program Director of Spanish in the Department of Modern Languages at Florida International University. This year, he received the Miami-Florida Jean Monnet Center

of Excellence Faculty Curriculum Development grant for "Creating Educational Materials on Spanish Culture and History of the Spanish Language as State Member of the EU"

He was kind enough to answer a few questions about his project.

MFJMCE: Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

I'm an Associate Teaching Professor of Spanish in the Department of Modern Languages. I currently serve as the Undergraduate Program Director and previously coordinated a Dual Degree Program in Spanish in Qingdao, China, for seven years. I deeply believe in the power of education as the most effective tool to improve people's quality of life and to better understand how our world works. Languages are essential to that process—this is why I love teaching Spanish and being part of a department that offers over ten different languages. In my case, I teach one of the official languages of the **European Union and one of the four most spoken languages in the world.**

MFJMCE: In a few words, can you tell us what the focus of your Faculty Curriculum Development research project is?

The focus is on creating educational materials—including videos, virtual hangouts, and interviews—for courses on Spanish culture and the history of the Spanish language. These resources will emphasize the importance and key role of European Union (EU) policies in Spain's history as a member state, and how EU linguistic policies and the protection of cultural legacies shape educational programs for teaching Spanish.

MFJMCE: How did the idea for this research come up?

I've always believed in finding common ground and building consensus to pursue shared goals. As a Spaniard, I remember how meaningful it was for Spain to become part of the most ambitious economic, political, and social project in modern European history. I vividly recall the moment when former President Felipe González and King Juan Carlos signed the agreement to join the EU. That moment was part of my inspiration for this grant proposal.

I teach courses on Spanish culture and Spanish for business. While I would mention in class that Spain is an EU member and briefly touch on how EU institutions influence national decisions, I hadn't developed this content in a structured or in-depth way. I realized there was a lack of meaningful integration of this important topic in my curriculum. That's why, through this grant, I will develop high-quality materials to use in my classes next semester. As a European teaching outside the EU (both in the U.S. and China), I believe this is essential to understanding Spain's evolving role in today's globalized world.

MFJMCE: Your grant proposal says that you will use this research and pedagogical materials in the classroom. What do you hope student will gain from the course?

I hope students will gain a deeper understanding of how supranational institutions like the EU can transform countries that were previously isolated into active players in a globalized world. Spain is a



Signing of the Accession Treaty of Spain (June 12, 1985)
Photo European Commission



Alhambra, Granada, Spain

great example for a case study, showing how joining the EU in the early 1980s positively impacted its international standing and development across economic, political, and social spheres.

MFJMCE: Why do you think the focus of your course is especially relevant for students in the U.S.?

It's important for U.S. students to understand how the European Union has become one of the most successful international collaborations in recent history. Studying the EU helps illustrate the significance of strong international partnerships, particularly the strategic relationship between the U.S. and the EU across global policy, trade, and diplomacy.

MFJMCE: Where will your research take you in the future? Do you plan to continue developing this project, or do you have others in mind?

Since learning about this grant, I've become more aware of the importance of including supranational contexts when discussing countries or languages—especially Spanish, which is an official EU language. From a linguistic perspective, highlighting the EU as a multilingual community can showcase the value and impact of cultural and linguistic cooperation in shaping international agreements and alliances. I plan to continue incorporating these ideas into my course design and content development to provide more informed and globally aware instruction.

MFJMCE: Do you have any last thoughts to share?

I'd like to thank the Jean Monnet Center of Excellence for this initiative and for giving FIU faculty the opportunity to reflect on, plan, and create new materials that help our university community better understand the significance of the EU. The EU is already a key ally of the U.S. and plays a vital role on the world stage. Creating well-designed, engaging teaching materials is essential for spreading knowledge and building understanding of the EU and its institutions.

By Christine I. Caly-Sanchez

SPAIN & the EU

- **EU Member State:** since 1 January 1986
- **Currency:** euro (€)
- **Euro area:** member since [1 January 1999](#)
- **Schengen:** member since [26 March 1995](#)
- **Capital:** Madrid

