

**Progress Report on the Department of Modern Languages's
Program Review Action Recommendations (2007)
July 2010**

The department's foreign language programs (Spanish, French, German and Japanese) were reviewed in 2007.¹ An external program review was conducted and submitted in 2008. Action recommendations were created based upon the findings of both the internal and the external program reviews; the following is an update on the progress that has been made toward those recommendations.

Recommendation 1. Develop standardized rubrics for oral and written assessment.

In progress. Rubrics were created and in place by 2009 for French, Spanish and German oral exams and presentations; written assessment rubrics are also in place for senior exams (French) and senior projects (French & Spanish), as well as research papers produced in upper division courses. We are currently working on standardized rubrics for both oral and written assessment in the lower division language classes.

Recommendation 2. Investigate alternate oral assessment modes, such as software or Internet-based tools.

No progress. This process has not yet been initiated due to more pressing priorities.

Recommendation 3. Consider alternate models for the senior culminating activity, including the possible addition of a comprehensive examination for Spanish majors and/or a revision of the current nature of the senior project. Consider adding an oral assessment component, such as an oral presentation or defense of the senior project before a committee and fellow language majors.

Addition of an alternate Spanish senior project model: accomplished. In Fall 2008, the Spanish Program added as an option a portfolio of 3 distinct monographs (in lieu of one larger, single-topic research paper). The portfolios may incorporate a variety of writing styles and have allowed majors the opportunity to present companion pieces to their works in which they reflect upon their learning, writing, and other creative processes, as well as their undergraduate academic career in general. The portfolios have been of a similar academic quality to that of the longer research papers, but in a format that seems to be more accessible, relevant and interesting to many students.

In progress: the Spanish Program is still considering the adoption of an exit exam (as currently exists in the French Program). In the future, both the Spanish and the French programs plan to arrange the oral defense of the senior project so that it is presented to faculty members (departmental, and others, if interested) and to fellow students in the particular language program.

Recommendation 4. Address the needs of majors in the process of preparing their senior project; to this end, evaluate the success of the newly introduced Spanish 499, Senior Project class (Fall 2007).

In progress. Spanish 499 was offered in Fall 2007 with a modicum of success. In course evaluations, all members of that class claimed to find useful the groundwork laid in that class and

¹ The department's Writing Program and the International Business and Language major were reviewed separately; the ESL Program is currently under review.

all finished their senior projects within the prescribed time frame; however, the bulk of the research and preparation of the projects continued to be done subsequent to the class, and supported by individual conferencing with their advisors. At this point in time, SPAN 499 is being run as a directed study. However, with the addition of a new senior project model, we continue to consider and re-envision Spanish 499 as a class (vs. independent study).

French 499 continues to be given only as a directed study, and French majors typically complete the senior project in the semester in which they register for it. The smaller number of graduates makes it possible to meet their needs on an individual basis with the course as it currently exists.

Recommendation 5. Create an *Introduction to Literary Studies* course as a core requirement for the Spanish major and a prerequisite for the following literature courses: SPAN 430, 431, 432, and 433.

Creation of the course: accomplished. Introduction to Hispanic Studies, as it was ultimately entitled, was created in the summer of 2008 and has been taught twice since that time as a Special Topics course. In progress: faculty are reviewing the class to determine whether it warrants inclusion as a core requirement and/or prerequisite for more advanced literature courses (and thus, its own independent course number).

Its "sister" course in the French Program is FRENCH 430, which comprises an introduction to literary analysis in presenting the "explication de texte" model and literary terminology and is offered every other year. Students are assessed in a midterm, final and final research project which require them to complete literary analyses. This component was strengthened in the Spring 2010 offering. French faculty hope to collaborate with Spanish faculty in applying insights into improving the teaching of literary analysis skills in French 430 and 431.

Recommendation 6. Revise course outlines to reflect the current syllabi, course objectives and learning outcomes, and ensure that course goals, expectations, and policies are clearly communicated to students.

In progress. Syllabi are continually reviewed to ensure that they meet and clearly articulate course, program and department objectives, outcomes, and policies. Several courses have been recently approved under the new General Education. Some outlines have yet to be created for courses that have only syllabi on file.

Recommendation 7. Investigate alternate study abroad options.

Goal accomplished, with further consideration of options. Dr. Capraroiu traveled to Chile in January 2010 to investigate study abroad options, resulting in the creation of *SPAN 357, Politics and Culture: Post-Dictatorship and Indigenous Communities in Chile*, an instructor-led trip to Chile scheduled for January 2011.

In the French Program, the Paris study-tour class, *FREN 374: Modern Paris: Image, Text, and Reality*, is being revised. The class will no longer be co-taught or cross-listed with the Art Department but will instead focus on the experiences of writers, immigrants, and innovators in the formation of the modern French capital. The course will be renamed *Experiencing Paris: Text and Reality*, and is being proposed for new General Education requirements. The class, previously offered infrequently as a spring or summer class, is scheduled to be taught in January this year. Students wishing a short-term French language study experience are being encouraged to enroll individually in oral communication classes at the University of Montreal's summer session, for which transfer credits had been established in previous years, although no organized trip is planned for the current year. The French faculty will also investigate the possibility of

short-term study abroad at Laval University in Quebec which is reputed for its summer French language session.

Recommendation 8. Incorporate innovative multi-media resources into the language classroom and the language laboratory; assess the ways in which the lab is currently used, its current materials, resources, etc.

In progress. Full-time and adjunct instructors have met on several occasions to discuss, encourage and share strategies regarding the incorporation of multi-media resources in the classroom; it appears that technology is being utilized much more—and more effectively—than in the past.

The French faculty is adding multi-media resources to all classes. The beginning French text, Motifs, comes packaged with a CD for individual listening practice and instructors are making use of its video component in class as well. The faculty is in the process of adopting an Intermediate French text, Bien vu, Bien dit, with a video component for 2010. In addition, the French Program has incorporated French film more integrally into the intermediate French curriculum with a supplementary text to be used as a resource for French faculty in teaching film. In the coming year, the French faculty will investigate moving to an e-text for the beginning language series.

We have yet to undertake a detailed review of the language laboratory.