Program Review Committee summary of review

Program – Department of Modern Languages

This program includes the following degrees, minors, and certificates:

- B.A. French
- B.A. German
- B.A. Russian
- B.A. Spanish
- Minor in French
- Minor in German
- Minor in Russian
- Minor in Spanish
- Certificate in Italian Studies
- Certificate in Russian Studies
- M.A. French
- M.A. Spanish

Recommendation

This program is found to be viable, see report for commendations, concerns, and recommendations.

Date of last review – AY 2007

Date of this review – AY 2017

This review has been sent to department chair and the dean, their responses are attached.

This review has been sent to the Graduate Council, their comment is attached. The chair of the department responded that there was plenty of information in the self-study about the scholarship of the faculty. Presumably the reviewers considered the scholarship adequate. This is also a department without a Ph.D. program and thus the scholarship expectations of the faculty workload are lower than a graduate program with a Ph.D.
Report of the Review Committee  
Ohio University’s Modern Language Department  
November 29, 2016

To:  David Ingram, Chair, Program Review Committee

From:  Diane W. Birckbichler, The Ohio State University, French and Italian; Dale Masel, Ohio University, Industrial & Systems Engineering; Eric Stinaff, Ohio University, Physics and Astronomy

INTRODUCTION

David Ingram, chair of the university’s Program Review committee constituted the departmental review and invited it to conduct an evaluation of the Department of Modern Languages as part of the regular departmental review process in place at Ohio University. The departmental review committee was asked to examine various aspects of the department including the health of the program as a whole, the graduate and undergraduate programs and to offer recommendations, identify issues of importance and to include commendations about points of excellence in the Department.

In a two-day schedule designed according to university guidelines for program reviews, the committee visited the department from the morning of Monday, October 31 through late afternoon on Tuesday, November 1. The Committee had ample time to visit with the stakeholders in the Department including Group I and Group II faculty, the departmental staff members, probationary faculty, graduate and undergraduate students, course coordinators, study abroad coordinators, and individual meetings with department chair, Betsy Partyka, Dean Robert Frank and Vice-Provost Howard Dewald.

Prior to the visit, the Committee was provided with a comprehensive self-study report prepared by the Department along with data regarding enrollments and numbers of majors and minors. The Committee’s report includes our perceptions of the Department’s strengths, issues and problem areas that arose from our discussions, and recommendations to help guide the Department as it moves forward.
PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Department of Modern Languages (DML) offers 4 majors, 4 minors, and 3 certificates at the undergraduate level and 2 majors at the graduate level. For the 2016-17 academic year, the department has 17 Group I faculty, 20 Group II faculty, and 7 other faculty (Group III and IV and Early Retirees).

At the undergraduate level, the number of students in the DML’s majors has decreased from the peak of 191 students in 2009-10. According to the most recent numbers, there were 110 majors in the 2014-15 academic year. The decline appears to correspond to the University’s transition from quarters to semesters, possibly due to the perception among students that it is difficult to add a second major in a foreign language without extending their education beyond four years. Although the decline in the number of majors appears to have leveled off, education of advisors, particularly among other programs in the College of Arts and Sciences, could allow the DML to attract more students to its majors.

For minors, there appears to have been a much smaller decline in enrollment. For 2014-15, there were 161 students in one of the DML minors, down from the peak of 189 in 2009-10.

The graduate programs are MA degrees in French and Spanish. According to the report, enrollment in these programs has held steady and doesn’t appear to have been affected by the transition from quarters to semesters.

The DML is located in Gordy Hall, which is home to the department’s classrooms, faculty offices, and lab facilities. Although the amount of space appears to be sufficient for the department’s activities, the condition of the building is showing signs of wear and deferred maintenance, which should be addressed.
FACULTY—GROUP I AND GROUP II

In this section, we will discuss probationary faculty, Group I faculty and Group II faculty. At both the graduate and undergraduate levels, faculty—both Group I and Group II—seem to get along well and demonstrated an atmosphere of cooperation and collegiality without any rivalry between the sections.

Probationary faculty.

The junior faculty with whom we met seemed very satisfied with the mentoring that they are receiving and the support provided by the faculty at large, even while expressing some concern about what they perceive as a lack of clarity in guidelines and requirements. Although this did not seem to be a serious issue, it would be useful to review promotion and tenure guidelines with these colleagues whose enthusiasm for their teaching and research were notable.

The only note of concern expressed by these colleagues was the level of service expected. One colleague had six service assignments, which seems overly burdensome for a junior faculty member whose efforts need to be concentrated more fully on teaching and research. [We will return to the issue of departmental committees and service loads later in this document.]

Group I faculty.

Group I faculty members were positive about their role as OU faculty members, their participation in both the graduate and undergraduate programs, and their connection with both graduate and undergraduate students. They appreciate the flexibility the department offers in regard to research and creative activities (e.g., the Spanish creative writing and translation program). They praised the department chair and her support of all languages and fairness in distributing resources. They were quite positive about the value of study abroad but mentioned the decreased participation in longer programs due to the semester conversion. They noted the department’s complex relationship with the Office of Global Opportunities (to be discussed further in the study abroad section below). Finally, presentation and attendance at professional conferences is a valued activity among the faculty. Faculty spoke positively about attending and presenting at conference in their role as researchers and university ambassadors: connecting with colleagues in their disciplines, presenting their research and receiving feedback, and keeping abreast of developments in their fields.

Although grateful at the reinstatement of travel funds, the faculty felt that the allotted $1500 is inadequate to support travel to conferences and research sites, especially when international travel is involved. Although the committee would encourage faculty to apply for additional internal funding, we would note that the need to write proposals for these funds is burdensome and takes away from research and teaching.

Advising presented another set of issues. Faculty complained about misinformation given by advisers in other departments and units at the university. For example, incoming students are sometimes told to wait to take their language, which is counterproductive since continuous language study from high school through college leads to greater proficiency. Waiting a year also presents difficulties for students to develop a minor or major if they wait until their second year to begin a new language.
Within the department, all faculty have undergraduate advisees and some faculty felt that their time was not well spent learning about general university requirements and interpreting DARS reports. They suggested either having a professional advising staff at the departmental or college level or having one or several faculty members charged with advising on a rotating basis.

Faculty members are involved with curriculum development on a regular basis, introducing courses such as “Spanish for the Medical Profession,” a new certificate, and additional summer study abroad courses. The development of new programs and courses would be enhanced by the creation of a department vision and strategic plan suggested by the committee. They also noted that they would like to work toward increasing service learning and internship possibilities for the undergraduate students in the department.

Faculty seemed satisfied with their workload except in the area of service where they felt their service obligations were too heavy. This situation arises due to the numerous departmental committees, on top of participation in college and university committees.

**Group II faculty.**

These faculty members are dedicated teachers with deep loyalty to the university and department. Although pleased with the opportunity to be a more integral part of the department and to be eligible for promotion, there were still some concerns about the new administrative structure that allows this.

The following issues emerged from our discussion with them. They feel pressure about class enrollments, both the pressure to increase class size beyond what the profession suggests (15 per class) and pressure in languages where enrollments are not robust. The revised workload for Group II lecturers with its 20% service commitment is still new to them, especially since they had not had any official service obligations previously. Some felt there were too many service obligations. In light of discussions about increasing the teaching load of Group II faculty beyond the 3+3 current load, the Group II faculty felt that this would be detrimental to the quality of their teaching and responsiveness to students. Unlike other subject matters, language teaching requires intensive feedback and regular daily or weekly assignments.

Group II faculty would like to have the option of being given a three- or five-year contract, especially since colleagues in other departments do receive them. Like Group I faculty, these colleagues felt that languages need to have a much greater presence beyond the department and to be involved more directly in international affairs and global planning. Likewise, they saw a need to work more closely with advisers at orientation and to include information about languages at orientation.

The Group II faculty felt that the $750 in travel funds is not sufficient. Although the committee is pleased that OU has taken steps to professionalize Group II faculty, we concur that this is not a sufficient amount to make a significant dent in travel and research funds.

The committee recommends the following.

- The department and its faculty need to develop better relationships with academic advisers outside of the department and help make them aware of issues related to language study: choice of languages, study abroad, and career opportunities.
• The department should reconfigure its committee structure, streamline the number of departmental committees and brainstorm new types of committees needed (e.g., advising committee, outreach, recruitment, foreign language careers for majors and double majors).

• Although recognizing the budgetary constraints faced at all levels of the university, the committee suggests that the department work with the Dean and Provost to increase travel stipends and encourage faculty to seek additional monies from those competitions open to them.

• Faculty need to work with the chair, dean and provost to have a more visible presence on university committees that deal with international affairs and that are involved with planning OU’s global strategy.

• The establishment of new programs and courses should be formulated within the structure of a departmental strategic plan and vision statement.

THE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

The undergraduate program is designed to provide students a “base of knowledge not only in languages, but, just as importantly, in cultural content so vital for understanding and navigating the world.” (Undergraduate Catalog) The department offers majors and minors in four languages French, German, Russian, and Spanish. Upon completion of a program in Modern Languages students are expected to be proficient in the target language and be able to communicate effectively. They should also be knowledgeable of the target culture, being able to engage people from diverse backgrounds and adapt to unfamiliar environments and situations. Graduates should also be able to identify questions of interest related to their studies and conduct effective research.

We were very impressed with our visit with undergraduate students. The group consisted of approximately 20 students from German, Italian, Russian and Spanish. There were no undergraduate students from French at the meeting. The students were articulate in their comments about the value of foreign language study and its value to their future careers and also about the transformational experience of study abroad. They praised the excellent guidance and advising that they received from their programs, help that went over and beyond expectations as one student from German noted. Each of the Spanish students had a Spanish adviser but felt that they had multiple advisers because of the openness of the Spanish faculty.

The committee feels that the department is fulfilling its service role and provides an excellent undergraduate curriculum that helps both majors and non-majors. See below for our recommendation about providing more and sustained information on foreign language careers and about having a double major. Its curriculum provides an excellent background for graduate work but less so for the double major or a student majoring in the language with aspirations for a non-academic career.

Although very happy with their experiences in the Modern Language Department, students offered the following suggestions to improve the program: Increase number of courses and students in Russian; improve the website because information was often difficult to find; improve marketing of foreign languages and provide more information on career opportunities.
From a language development perspective, they asked that conversation and the development of interpersonal and presentational speaking skills be a more integral part of their courses and that there be increased work on pronunciation throughout their programs.

The committee recommends the following:

- Because of their articulate defense of and enthusiasm for language study, the committee recommends that the department develop a student ambassador program that involves these talented students in outreach both within and without the university. They will be formidable proponents of the value and importance of foreign languages.
- Students also felt that they needed more information and guidance on possible careers that use foreign languages and since many are double majors, how their two majors can be blended into international opportunities. Career fairs, career-building events, visits from alumni using their languages, and a career page (or links to other career pages) on the department’s website—all would be useful to students seeking to use their language professionally.
- The enrollment patterns in the department mirror national figures with Spanish drawing enrollments that are far larger than other languages. Thus the smaller enrollments in other languages is not surprising though still of concern. How to deal with these lesser enrolled languages is something that the department needs to come to terms with: e.g., should these languages be kept (the committee feels strongly that they should be), should they be reduced further in size, should they be considered as online options? More robust recruitment efforts are one possible solution. The formulation of a vision statement for the department and a five-year strategic plan will also be essential in dealing with these issues. These are clearly issues that concern administrators beyond the department and the department must undertake a clear-headed look at how to proceed.

THE GRADUATE PROGRAM

Graduate students

The graduate students are very satisfied with their professors, the quality of teaching and the support and advising they receive. They find the atmosphere in the department warm and welcoming. As one graduate student said, “We are basically like a modern language family.”

They did, however, raise issues pertaining to their orientation to the department; fees and tuition; TA funding; and the TA training and supervision that they receive. They stated that their orientation to teaching was excellent but that they would have benefitted from learning more about administrative and financial issues. Given the importance of technology in instruction, they asked that technology-enhanced instruction be added to their orientation. Although the graduate students were generally pleased with their TA training after the orientation, there was some concern about how the one-hour course they take each semester is graded. It is clear that the department provides excellent training, supervision and assessment of graduate students. They also want to make sure that they are given the opportunity to evaluate their course coordinators and provide feedback about their training and supervision. Thus, the committee
concludes that teaching is adequately assessed but with some caveats to be discussed in the section of TA training and TA supervisors below.

There were concerns about the level of financial support for graduate students. Students felt that their TA stipends were not sufficient, especially since they usually teach one class and summer teaching is limited. Though this is beyond the Department’s control, it is the committee’s opinion that the level of the stipend is insufficient to live on. This will often result in the student needing to supplement their income at the expense of their studies. Several of the international students questioned the need to buy OU student insurance when they had insurance from their home country.

The graduate students were interested in exploring the option of writing a thesis instead of taking the comprehensive exams at the end of their MA programs. This was particularly of interest to those who were considering going on to graduate school. It seems that there are thesis options that students can avail themselves of; however, they do not seem to be aware of these options and that a thesis is not necessarily needed for admission to a doctoral program.

Both the French and Spanish programs are fairly traditional in their emphasis on literature with more flexibility available in Spanish. As to the curriculum and course offerings, the French reading list tends to be somewhat traditional, focused mainly on metropolitan France, and lacking women and Francophone authors. Thus, they prepare their graduate students to move into academic careers but are less successful in helping them with alternate career paths. The French and Spanish faculty, in light of the current job market, might want to consider reorganizing their curricular offerings and emphases to attract students with interests in international studies or business, for example, where in-depth cultural knowledge could enhance their professional profile. In addition, are there ways to bridge the languages, cultures and literatures of the French-speaking and Spanish-seeking worlds with courses that have a thematic approach: immigration, war, gender issues and so on?

The recruitment efforts and number of students in the graduate program are appropriate for the Department. The Department provides resources and strong faculty support such that students entering the program are likely to succeed.

We feel that the program provides adequate background for students desiring to pursue an academic career in French and in Spanish and that students receive appropriate guidance in this area. When it comes to alternate careers, faculty members are less informed and do not seem to be able to help students in this area.

The committee recommends the following:

- The committee suggests that the department advocate for larger stipends. Since the College determines the amount of TA stipends, the department could become part of a larger effort to increase stipends or research positions that could enhance their careers and provide a larger stipend.
- As part of its vision for the department and its five-year strategic plan, it would be beneficial to examine whether a literary-focused MA program is the most appropriate for the 21st century and the committee would suggest looking at ways to modernize the graduate curricula.
COURSE COORDINATORS

The Department’s commitment to graduate and undergraduate instruction can be seen in a variety of ways, particularly in the presence of course coordinators. The language course coordinators get one course release per year. The French and Spanish course coordinators for the 1000 level also serve as TA supervisors. They receive one course release for coordination, and one for working with the TAs. The French and Spanish coordinators for the 2000 level each receive a course release. Italian, German and Russian are smaller programs; thus the course coordinators do both the 1000- and 2000-levels for one course release.

It was clear from our discussions with the course coordinators that they were enthusiastic about the work that they are doing, that they are dedicated to maintaining and strengthening their programs, and that they are concerned about their students and the quality of instruction that they are receiving. They appreciated the freedom that the chair gives both Group I and Group II faculty members to teach their interests and to meet the interests of their students. Those present indicated an interest in discussing the possibility of online courses and in curricular innovation. For example, the Spanish TA coordinator has been reshaping the Spanish 1000-level courses using principles of universal design that will, among other things, make the course accessible to both disabled and able students.

Along with their enthusiasm and dedication, this group raised the following issues. They were concerned about the class size, both in terms of small enrollments and in attempts to raise class size for budgetary and staffing reasons. Like Group I and Group II faculty members in earlier discussions, they want the department to have greater representation at international events across campus. As with any program, articulation between and across levels is an issue—Spanish noted this as a concern, but all programs would benefit from reexamining the congruence and fit of their programs as a whole. The issue of the department’s committee structure was again raised: service loads are too high, in their view, and there are too many committees.

The committee recommends the following:

1. As we mentioned earlier in this document, we would encourage the department to revise and streamline its committee structure and reexamine service loads.
2. Prepare a report on class size in foreign language classes to offer to administrators.
STUDY ABROAD COORDINATORS

The study abroad programs are a core component of the Department of Modern Languages and, as described in the Department’s mission statement, “provide students the opportunity to experience, analyze, and understand cultural differences while improving their language skills.” These have a long history within the department and have undergone significant development, redesign, and modification throughout the years to adapt to changing conditions such as budgetary constraints, quarters to semesters, and administrative reorganization. It was clear to the committee that the department prides itself in offering total-immersion programs that not only provide comprehensive language and cultural components, but also have “strong OU ties.” The committee’s impression was that these programs are customized to the needs of Ohio University students and are developed and overseen by DML faculty, building on their extensive experience and enhanced by direct interaction and responsibility to their students.

The DML’s study abroad programs have come under notable enrollment pressure resulting from the shift to semesters and the proliferation of professional organizations, referred to as 3rd party providers by the Department. Given the importance of study abroad and the long history and experience the Department has in facilitating such programs, the perceived lack of coordination with the Office of Global Opportunities (OGO) seems especially concerning. There was an impression that the DML felt as if they were not adequately represented and that their programs were presented to students as simply one choice among many programs. It would seem to be in the best interest of the University to promote and support programs with “strong OU ties.”

The committee recommends that all stakeholders have a substantive role in the development, evaluation, administration, promotion, and execution of the Global Programs offered at Ohio University with the goal of providing a coherent set of options with clearly and consistently articulated aspects such as true costs, credits, student expectations, and expected program outcomes. Though there are many purposes and student motivations for an experience abroad which may necessitate the use of 3rd party providers, it would seem to be in the University’s best interest to promote locally developed OU-centric programs such as those provided by the DML.

The committee recommends the following:

1. Upper level administration action be taken to formalize a process in which all stakeholders in Global Programs, such as study abroad, have representation and decision making power in the development, evaluation, administration, promotion, and execution of these programs.
2. The Department should formalize a clear statement of purpose and value, for students of their programs, in the context of semesters and the availability of alternative programs to help those not familiar with their programs understand the OU advantage.
3. Similarly, the Department should articulate the ways in which OU-centric programs serve the University, such as academic quality, branding, the “OU experience” leading to Alumni loyalty, etc.
MODERN LANGUAGE STAFF

At present, the department has two full-time staff members. Janelle Harmon has been with the department for 17 years; Shelley Barton for several months. Both are hardworking and overworked staff members whose dedication to the Department is clear. They both seemed very positive about their work in Modern Languages. Their contributions are clearly valued by the departmental faculty and students. It was clear from our discussion that the department would benefit from an additional staff member. They also expressed concern about the neglected physical state of the building and the problems that causes.

Given the pressures the department faces to recruit graduate and undergraduate students, promote its study abroad programs, create materials that promote the importance of languages for the 21st-century student, there is a clear need for another staff member who can become the department’s communication/multimedia/marketing manager. For example, the Department’s website, the first stop for students and others interested in language study, has an outdated feel, lacks consistency, and does not promote the department’s offerings. Nor does it adequately describe the need for language study or showcase the talented faculty in the department.

The Committee recommends the following:

- The department seeks funding for an additional staff member. The committee feels that a staff member with communication and media skills who could plan and implement an advertising campaign for languages and language-related careers, outreach to the university at large and to high schools in the area would be beneficial to all of the language programs.

THE PROGRAM AS A WHOLE

In conclusion, we very much enjoyed our visit to the Modern Language Department and our well-planned agenda provided many opportunities to talk with departmental colleagues, staff, students and OU administrators. What emerged from these discussions was a sense of a department whose dedication to its students—both graduate and undergraduate—is impressive, whose faculty valued both their teaching and research and manage well the delicate balance between the two, where students at all levels feel welcomed and appreciated, and where the staff contribute significantly to the mission of the department. Faculty members were enthusiastic about the leadership of the current chair, Professor Betsy Partyka, and praised her even-handedness in dealing with faculty from the different sections and in encouraging them in their research and teaching.

Despite the creativity of the faculty in creating new courses, responding to student needs, and creating new areas of emphasis, the committee felt that what was lacking in these discussions and in the review document was a vision for the department and a strategic plan for developing new areas of focus, new courses, and faculty hires. Given the budgetary difficulties and the reduction in staff that the department has undergone in the past decade or so, it is understandable
in some ways that colleagues are reluctant to think too far in the future. Nonetheless, the department would benefit greatly from the development of a strategic plan that deals with issues internal to the department and finds ways for the department to interact regularly with colleagues across the curriculum and to have a greater voice in international affairs and OU’s global strategy. An important aspect of this plan would be a study of peer institutions, which was missing from the departmental report.

In conclusion, the Department of Modern Languages is to be commended for the following:

1. Its unfailing enthusiasm and commitment to the university and their graduate and undergraduate students despite significant budget reductions and reductions in staff.
2. Its tradition of excellence in undergraduate education and its commitment to going beyond the call of duty in advising and mentoring its undergraduate and graduate students.
3. Their passion to maintain educational quality by striving for reasonable class sizes, strong proficiency measures, and personalized undergraduate interactions, among others.
4. Its commitment to its graduate program and graduate students and to the training of its teaching assistants.
5. Their commitment to incorporating new technologies and innovations into instruction and study abroad experiences such as Skype, Google Earth, Theater in the Classroom, and flipped classrooms.
6. The department’s scholarly activity and support for faculty development is healthy despite limited funding and resources.
7. Its strong participation in the Honors Tutorial College.
8. Their encouragement of undergraduate success and recognition as indicated through the number of undergraduates receiving awards.
9. Their curricular adaptability in designing new courses, certificates, and study abroad programs when faced with changing academic calendars, demographics, and funding levels.
10. The department has contributed substantially to multiple of the College of Arts and Sciences Themes demonstrating the commitment to the College’s mission and success.
11. Its commitment to public school teachers and students as demonstrated by its involvement in programs such as the Foreign Language in Elementary Schools program, the Ohio Valley Foreign Language Alliance, and involvement with the Ping Institute for the Teaching of the Humanities.
12. Its commitment to outreach and cultural awareness throughout the University and surrounding community through the hosting of various performances and cultural events such as foreign language films and plays, conversation hours, and talks by invited speakers.
RECOMMENDATIONS

There were many recommendations that emerged from our discussions with the different groups of stakeholders. This section summarizes and consolidates the recommendations found in the different sections.

1. Despite the excellent review document provided to the committee, it was a report on what is and not what could or should be the vision of the department in coming years. Thus, as stated earlier, the department would benefit greatly from the creation of a vision statement for the department, the establishment of areas of focus and emphasis for the department and a strategic plan that outlines the future of the department, including its hiring plan. This discussion and plan would provide a framework to discuss issues of importance to the department and higher administration: the role of online language courses and programs for the department; the issue of enrollments across the different programs; statements on the importance of languages and cultures in a global environment.

2. It was clear in discussions with almost all of the department stakeholders that faculty members felt that the department was not playing a prominent role in international affairs and events across campus and in the development of Ohio University’s Global Strategy. The committee recommends that the department enlist the help of the Dean of Arts and Sciences and the Provost’s office to develop a strategy to increase the department’s visibility and participation in global areas. For its part, the department needs to articulate clearly its role in this area and the importance of foreign languages and cultures in any discussion of globalization.

3. Dissatisfaction with the department’s relationship with the Office of Global Opportunities was a recurring theme in our discussions across these two days. It was not always clear to the committee what the department’s issues were. Thus we would suggest a two-step process: (1) that the department articulate clearly what these issues are and suggest alternatives, and (2) then work with the Dean of Arts and Sciences who has offered to help get the relevant groups together.

4. Although the department seems satisfied with the status quo of having languages taught in different departments, the committee feels that the separation of languages across campus does not allow common solutions to shared problems (among them lack of visibility in international discussions, enrollment issues, study abroad). Thus, we suggest the establishment of a Second Language Committee that would meet regularly to discuss issues of common concerns and develop a university-wide vision for the teaching and learning of other languages.

5. The issue of service loads and the numerous departmental committees was another recurring theme. The committee recommends that the department examine the current committee structure with a view to reducing the number of committees through combining and / or eliminating committees. We would also suggest that as part of this reexamination the department see if there are new committees that might replace some of its current committees. Also important is to review which committees need a representative from each language and which do not.

6. The building is showing addressable signs of wear. Specifically, in areas the carpeting was buckling resulting in a notable trip hazard and in certain classrooms the curtains were failing making it difficult or impossible to effectively use the projector. In addition, some furniture
and equipment in the common areas show signs of significant wear, but can’t be replaced by DML because they are located in the common areas and not in DML spaces.

7. Although recognizing the budgetary constraints faced at all levels of the university, the committee suggests that the department work with the Dean and Provost to increase travel stipends and encourage faculty to seek additional monies from those competitions open to them.

8. In light of a weak job market in foreign languages, the committee suggests that the department make a concerted effort to make information about alternate careers available through its website, through mentoring sessions with students, and through the use of the substantial amount of information on alt-careers offered by many organizations, especially the Modern Language Association. In addition given this tight job market, the department might want to consider as part of its strategic plan the advisability of a literature-focused MA program.

9. Careers were understandably an issue of importance for undergraduates who also felt that they needed more information and guidance on possible careers that use foreign languages and since many are double majors, how their two majors can be blended into international opportunities. Career fairs, career-building events, visits from alumni using their languages, and a career page (or links to other career pages) on the department’s website—all would be useful to students seeking to use their language professionally.

10. Because of their articulate defense of and enthusiasm for language study, the committee recommends that the department develop a student ambassador program that involves these talented students in outreach both within and without the university. They will be formidable proponents of the value and importance of foreign languages.

11. The department and its faculty need to develop better relationships with academic advisers outside of the department and help make them aware of issues related to language study: choice of languages, study abroad, and career opportunities.

12. Although recognizing the budgetary constraints faced at all levels of the university, the committee suggests that the department work with the Dean and Provost to increase travel stipends and encourage faculty to seek additional monies from those competitions open to them. In addition, the issue of TA stipends should be placed on the agenda of the Dean, Provost and appropriate budget officers.

CONCLUSION

Based on the materials contained in the departmental self-study and our interviews with multiple stakeholders in the Department of Modern Languages, we conclude that all of the current offerings from this department (majors, minors, and certificates) are viable and are worthy of future investment and support from the university.
Date: December 21, 2016

TO: David Ingram, Program Review Committee

FROM: Robert Frank, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

RE: Seven year review of Modern Languages

This is my response to the 2016 report submitted for the Department of Modern Languages seven year program review.

The review report correctly identifies many commendable practices and departmental accomplishments, most importantly, a dedication to high quality teaching and research and a true commitment to student success. The department’s activities and impact at the college, university and community outreach levels are worthy of praise as well.

I share an enthusiasm for the reviewer’s suggestions that (1) the department develop a strategic plan and (2) the department participate in a discussion of language instruction offered by the university. It is important that the department participate in the process of reacting to changing student demand for language instruction that goes beyond the languages they offer. I also encourage the department to work more closely with the Office of Global Opportunities regarding study away programs. I am glad to help with this conversation, but a proactive as opposed to reactive approach is needed by the department. It is noteworthy that significant new funding has been provided to the department for professional development activities (including conference travel). Routine international travel will remain a challenge given the current budget realities, but I believe a departmental process could be put into place to better support faculty travel opportunities. Finally, I look forward to collaborating with the department regarding the replacement of furniture and equipment that needs to be replaced. We have been making good progress on replacing furniture and equipment in many Arts and Sciences buildings including Gordy, but certainly need to continue these efforts where the need arises.
Date: December 21, 2016
To: David Ingram, Program Review Committee
From: Betsy Partyka, Chair, Department of Modern Languages
Re: Seven Year Review of Modern Languages

I have reviewed the 2016 report submitted for the Department of Modern Languages Seven Year Program Review, and consulted with two of my senior colleagues.

We find the report represents our department well, and very much appreciate the recommendations. We look forward to sharing these perspectives and ideas with all of our faculty and having some early discussions about a strategic plan and new foci for our multiple programs.

I only have one correction that I feel needs to be addressed. In the report there is a reference to the College Themes that states that the department has made a “substantial” contribution. Although we would love to say that, we are actually in the preliminary stages of making a great contribution. We have developed one course that is on the books for Food Studies and are piloting another in the spring. We are also developing a couple of German courses that will tap into other Themes, but these are currently in the preliminary phases.

We have learned a lot from the process of compiling the review, and even more from the perspective of the reviewers.