

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Academic Program Review

Modern and Classical Languages
(Baccalaureate Programs in French, Japanese and Spanish)

EXTERNAL REVIEWERS

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CAMPUS VISIT:
April 21-23, 2010.

The review team read the self-study written by the faculty in the department; reviewed the curriculum, course syllabi and evaluations; conducted class visits; interviewed faculty, students and staff; and met with the Dean, Associate Deans and other relevant members of the campus community. Prior to their visit, the reviewers were provided with USF's Vision, Mission, Values Statement, the department's self-study and other university materials.

1. How did the external review committee rate the quality of the program – excellent, very good, good, adequate, or poor? How does the program compare with benchmark top-tier programs nationally? Please provide a brief rationale for the external review committee's rating.

- The review team declined to rate the overall quality of the department due to the diversity of its programs. But they indicated that each of the language majors (French, Japanese, Spanish and, in the future, Chinese) had the potential to be “very good” to “excellent”.

2. What are the most important general issues that emerged from the external review process?

- The review team noted that “the Classical and Modern Languages Department is currently in a communication gridlock within itself that obstructs its overall sense of mission, justice, and responsibility as a department” (p.1). As a result, the department's mission and goals are not clearly articulated and communicated to faculty, students, staff and other campus constituencies.
- The department has a number of strengths including the Writing Program; the potential of the tutoring program; the diversity of teaching and research interests among the faculty; the designation of specific language coordinators; the potential of the Chinese and Japanese programs; the realization among faculty that the department needs to move forward; and the willingness of faculty to teach language courses and introduce innovations (team teaching, two-tier courses, etc.).

- However, the department has a number of weaknesses including the lack of a shared mission across languages; demoralization among faculty (due to the “belief that the University supports internationalization but does not value the study of language”); a breakdown in structures of communication within and between language programs; a sense of department history that “makes problems seem intractable rather than solvable through collegial cooperation”; and differences between the department’s view of its role and the expectations of the University for the department.
- The University needs to consider “the role language education should have in its mission for social justice and articulate that role to the department” since the expectations for the department are not clear.
- The department “appears to lack adequate procedures to determine whether it is meeting its instructional goals and to determine or refine curricular content” and “standards of assessment for student outcomes are unclear”.
- The department is overly dependent on adjunct faculty. Furthermore, there is a “hierarchical division” within each program between adjuncts and full-time faculty; adjuncts teach only language (not content) courses; they have high turnover and low morale; and have pedagogical concerns about teaching introductory language courses for 2 ½ hours.
- The consequences of the recent proliferation of international and interdisciplinary programs have “been brutal on French and Spanish”. Faculty have attempted to make languages more visible but this takes them outside the department. This has some disadvantages including the appearance that faculty can “walk away” from their department and create new programs; a loss of collegiality, belonging and homogeneity; faculty being spread “too thin”; and a lack of upper division courses.
- There are also problems in internal governance including a lack of regularly scheduled meetings, over reliance on adjuncts, and the lack of a department chair rotation.

3. **What specific recommendations for improving the program’s quality has the external review committee made to the Dean?**

General Recommendations

1. The reviewers recommended moving classical languages to a different program and changing the name of the department to the “Department of Modern Languages and Cultures”. They did not recommend splitting the department into smaller units.
2. The University needs to “identify language education as a potential ‘area of excellence’ in keeping with its global mission” and be willing to commit long-term resources towards graduating students with measurable cultural fluency and language competence.
3. The University must communicate the importance of language competency and cultural literacy to all University constituencies.
4. Three semesters of language course work are inadequate to turn students into ‘global citizens’. The review team recommended that the University “encourage students to study language well beyond the three-semester requirement by:
 - i. Identifying language as integral to the University’s mission.
 - ii. Educating all faculty on the importance of language competency to the University’s mission.
 - iii. Require all students to start a foreign language in their incoming semester (for potential majors or fulfillment of the requirement).
 - iv. Promote and support language study abroad.
 - v. Require language study abroad in appropriate interdisciplinary majors.

- vi. Require language competency (as defined by faculty in the target language) for majors in international programs.
 - vii. Increase the language requirement in international-interdisciplinary programs to include a fifth-semester content course in the target language.
 - viii. Support the creation of higher-level language courses.
 - ix. Support the creation of a fourth-year capstone experience for senior language majors.
 - x. Recognize that language enrollments vary from year-to-year depending on global and economic trends and that low-enrollment upper division courses will need to be supported as programs adjust to enrollment changes – “depth in the major will only be possible if the University places a priority on the education of majors over enrollment numbers”.
5. The department must be fully consulted on all questions related to diversity, globalization, study abroad and international programs or issues.
 6. The position of chair should rotate regularly among colleagues and language programs in the department. Each language program must determine its own requirements for its major and thus the chair will need to recognize the different needs of the various language programs. This need will be better addressed if the chair regularly rotates among all departmental colleagues.
 7. Faculty members of the department need to have a common sense of purpose. Due to a lack of proper and full communication between all parties, the languages department lacks a sense of collegiality, a sense of common purpose and a single voice. As a result, “rumors are circulated, false perceptions of power structures lead to a sense of helplessness, different groups feel disenfranchised, personality conflicts are dominant, natural peacemakers are overwhelmed, and departmental morale has not improved since the previous departmental review” (p.14). The reviewers recommend that the department, with the support of the University:
 - i. *Enforce monthly department meetings and require all faculty members, including adjuncts, to attend.* The meetings should be scheduled regularly during the semester, have a limited time frame, discuss an agenda (including faculty items) that has been circulated in advance. Administrators should be invited as necessary.
 - ii. *Enforce separate language program meetings at least once a month or three times a semester.* All faculty should consult on course offerings, revisit program goals and coordinate pedagogical and assessment strategies.
 - iii. *Capitalize on the good work of the program review self-study.* The department needs to continue its discussions in order to formulate departmental and individual program missions. A departmental retreat may be an appropriate venue for this work. In addition, the department has an integrated plan for improvement and individual programs have identified a number of interesting initiatives. Each program must now work cooperatively on implementing these changes.
 8. The reviewers recommend that the department stay focused on the specific needs that all language students have.
 - i. *Together with the administration (as advocates for language acquisition), the department must take leadership in communicating with the faculty at large and first-year student advisors in particular.*
 - ii. *The department needs to consider more fluidity in teaching assignments and work on bridging the divide between language courses at the lower division level (currently taught by adjuncts and term faculty) and content courses (currently taught by full-time faculty).*

- iii. *To increase enrollments in upper division courses, all faculty members in the target language program must participate broadly in activities to promote the major among undergraduate students.*
 - iv. *Students **must** be able to complete a rigorous language major once they declare it. Each program should be able to staff a minimum of 3-4 regular courses evenly distributed between 200, 300, 400 levels. These courses must be in the target language.*
 - v. *The department should work in cooperation with other departments in the College to develop courses on the model of “Languages across the Curriculum”.*
 - vi. *The department needs to effectively renumber the course sequences.*
 - vii. *Re-structure the French and Spanish majors by bringing back existing courses and resources that are currently contracted out to other programs (see pp.16-17).*
 - viii. *The department should consider initiating a wide discussion on ‘SECONDARY MAJORS’. If 40 units are required for the major and 24 units for the minor, a secondary major might consist of 30-32 units. This might attract a good number of students in international, interdisciplinary and business programs.*
 - ix. *The department should vigorously advertise their course offerings for each semester in various outlets across the campus.*
 - x. *The department should regularly hold informal teaching workshops among faculty and have sessions in which students can present their work.*
 - xi. *Language instructors should regularly visit each other’s classes for mutual improvement and support.*
 - xii. *The department should re-structure the tutoring program so that tutors are trained, supervised, visited and reviewed. The pay for tutoring jobs needs to be competitive enough to attract good students.*
9. The reviewers recommend that the University actively strengthen its support of the language programs already in place before introducing new languages. The emphasis should be on strengthening the four-year language degree programs before increasing introductory language programs. To support existing language programs, the University:
- i. *Together with the administration (as advocates for languages), the department must take leadership in communicating with the faculty at large and first-year student advisors in particular.*
 - ii. *To support existing language programs, the review team recommend that the University:*
 - a) Lower minimum enrollment in upper division language courses.
 - b) Expect all language program faculty at all ranks to teach language.
 - c) Support offerings each semester of a variety of content courses in the target language at upper division level.
 - d) Encourage all faculty at all ranks to offer content courses in the target language with interesting topics (much like the first year seminar program).
 - e) Encourage department faculty to ‘reinvest’ in language students in order to serve the interests of language majors and minors.
 - f) Establish a rotation and mandate cooperation and consultation in faculty participation in other programs.
 - g) Require online posting of projected offerings at all levels of language and content courses for the next 2-3 years so that students can plan their course of study.
10. The reviewers had some additional recommendations with regard to student development and learning:

- i. *Create more visibility for languages on campus.*
- ii. *Establish language tables (p.19).*
- iii. *Establish workshops and outreach to local high schools.*
- iv. *Student chartered and led language clubs.*
- v. *National honor society memberships*
- vi. *Film Festivals.*
- vii. *Residential options for language learners.*

Recommendations requiring additional resources

Positions

1. The reviewers recommended the University consider an administrative position dedicated to making USF a leader in international programs based on language competency. An “Associate Dean of International Programs” would oversee language, international and area studies programs, ensure the integration of language competency and advocate for international programs on all issues related to diversity, globalization, etc.
2. If the Japanese major is to achieve excellence, it will need a new tenure track position in Japanese to teach additional content courses. The program should hire someone with the ability to teach in Japanese but in a discipline other than literature (such as anthropology, gender studies, media studies, etc.)
3. If Chinese is to develop into a major, it will require at least two new tenure track faculty who can teach both courses in the language and in a discipline other than linguistics.
4. The French program must be staffed fully and regularly in order to keep offering transitional courses and upper division courses each and every semester.
5. While the self-study presents a persuasive case for an additional hire in Latin American and Latino literature and culture, the program might be “requested to build enrollments and increase the number of majors and minors before a search is authorized”.

Courses

6. When courses absolutely have to be taught in English, the department should consider adding an extra 2-unit component that could be taught in French, Spanish, or Japanese.

Language Instructional Goals and Curricula

7. The department should develop higher-level language courses for all languages with majors, especially in Japanese and Chinese. It is not clear exactly what the current graduating USF students’ proficiency levels are but reaching the ACTFL’s Advanced-Low level in speaking and writing and Advanced-Mid level in reading and listening is an ambitious goal. The reviewers observed “it is widely expected that students in Romance languages reach Intermediate High to Advanced Low at the time of graduation”. This will not be achieved without extended stays in countries where the target language is spoken and higher-level language (as opposed to content) courses.
8. Each language course should have a proficiency goal, preceded by assessments to determine the current level of student proficiency (pp.21-22).
9. The curricula should be changed to make language courses more proficiency-oriented and standards-based (pp.22-23)
10. AP credit should be given for Japanese and Chinese.

Training Opportunities

11. Further training opportunities for language instructors must be made available (with financial support and assigned time).

12. Instructors need to be trained in materials development and CBI (content based instruction) courses for all languages.

Recommendations for each baccalaureate major

French

1. Coordination, consultation and cooperation between different faculty members need to be improved.
2. The program should introduce a number of transitional courses taught in French.
3. There needs to be better sequencing, balancing and renumbering of courses at the 200, 300 and 400 levels.
4. The program needs more regular offerings of interesting content courses taught in French that are based within the department.
5. The program should consider starting a capstone experience for senior French majors.

Spanish

1. The Spanish program offers 14-18 sections of Spanish language courses each semester (Self Study, pp.42-43), capped at 22 students. This means that around 280-360 students are taking first through fourth semester Spanish. But the yield in majors and minors is “unimpressive”. The faculty needs to more vigorously recruit Spanish majors and should proactively recruit students who have tested out of Spanish or who have AP credits.
2. Given the concern with course cancellations, the program should consider more creative course management strategies, e.g. offering some courses at both 300 and 400 levels but giving students different workloads and assignments.
3. Spanish is particularly well suited to developing a secondary major option. This would integrate language acquisition and cultural proficiency with other disciplines in Arts and Sciences and would increase enrollments in upper division courses.
4. The program might consider concurrent (or joint) appointments for selected faculty in other disciplines whose research and teaching coincide with the emphasis on cultural studies. Given the program’s limited resources, it might make sense to allow at least two cross-listed courses taught in English to count for the major. The adverse impact of new interdisciplinary programs and the need to increase upper division enrollments makes this otherwise unpalatable option more feasible in current conditions.
5. The program should consider creating several bridge courses at the upper 200-level that could count toward the major.
6. The viability of the University’s goals in internationalization and globalization depends upon advanced language study and cultural proficiency. Thus there should be greater cooperation between the language programs and the Center for Global Education. Students commented on the difficulty of understanding whether courses taken abroad count for the major. This points to the need for more cooperation and consideration of special numbering for courses taken abroad so students return with courses that do not overlap with USF courses but count for the major.
7. The program website is uninspiring but will be a first step for potential majors. It should be updated with active bios for full time and adjunct faculty.

Japanese

8. The rationale for using Robo-Sensei (in addition to *Genki*) does not seem very clear to faculty or students.
9. Any further development of Robo-Sensei should be done in “full and transparent coordination with all Japanese language teachers”.

10. The reviewers did not have time to see Robo-Sensei in action. But they did note some real disadvantages to using it as a main text. In particular, they noted 1) it is grammar based and introduces only one type of grammatical category at a time, and 2) it does not cover the range of “basic Japanese” but concentrates on difficult structures.
11. All Japanese language faculty at all levels should work towards consensus in deciding which texts and materials to use at each language level.
12. Students complained that the Japanese program does not offer enough courses to complete the major smoothly and comprehensively over four years. The department would benefit from another hire (with the ability to teach in Japanese but from a discipline other than literature).
13. The review team encouraged the Japanese faculty to set up a structure for regular discussion with adjuncts being brought into the meetings at regular intervals.
14. The program is strong at the lower and intermediate levels but needs more upper division courses designed for students returning from study in Japan.
15. To be a top-tier program in Japanese, the University should forego minimum enrollment levels for advanced courses. Japanese programs traditionally have 50% attrition from year to year – thus a beginner class of 40 students will graduate fewer than 10 majors. Thus the University will have to accept variability in enrollments.
16. There are inadequate numbers of faculty to provide enough non-language courses to educate students in Japanese culture. Faculty should work on a curricular plan that articulates the outcomes expected of students in Japanese for both language and culture.

4. In the opinion of the external review committee is the program following the University’s strategic initiative in that it is;

Recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty of outstanding teachers and scholars.

- The review team noted that the faculty “value diversity and have worked hard to distinguish themselves through high quality scholarship, innovative programs and the development of courses with service learning components”.
- Furthermore, faculty demographics reflect “diversity of all kinds” and the faculty are from top-tier institutions and remain professionally active.

Enrolling, supporting and graduating a diverse student body that demonstrates high academic achievement, strong leadership capabilities, a concern for others, and a sense of responsibility for the weak and vulnerable.

- The reviewers were “impressed with by the quality of the students, their genuine interest in the welfare of the department and the ease with which they could articulate responses to questions they were being asked”.
- In addition, the review team noted that “the students at USF genuinely appreciate their professors and classes.

Providing the environment necessary to promote student learning in the program.

- The faculty realizes that the department is “at a crossroads and wants to move forward, bridge divisions and implement new ideas”.
- The talent, professionalism and dedication of the faculty in the department, the quality and enthusiasm of their students and the genuine good will and support of the College administration” impressed the review team.

- 5. In what way is the program contributing to the goal of making the University of San Francisco a premier Jesuit, Catholic urban university with a global perspective that educates leaders who will fashion a more humane and just world?**
- The department is “uniquely positioned” to fulfill the University’s mission to educate socially responsible leaders.
 - With University support, “the program can become well positioned for distinction at a national and international level”.
- 6. What is the timetable for the response to the external review committee’s recommendations for program improvement? What can the Office of the Provost do to appropriately respond to the review?**
- The reviewers felt that “a long-term commitment by the University to the value of language proficiency and cultural knowledge in all international programs will be essential if the department is to communicate effectively and make the changes necessary to achieve its mission.”
 - The University can help alleviate the challenges the department faces by “identifying language education as a potential area of excellence within its international mission”.
- 7. What general comments or issues, if any, are crucial to understanding the reviewers report?**
- The reviewers clearly felt that language instruction is central to the University’s international and global ambitions. In their view, “language study engages students directly in the experience of other cultures, promoting the value of diverse viewpoints. Competency in a second language and study of its culture equip students to become responsible global citizens”.