ANNUAL REPORT FOR JULY 1, 2003 – JUNE 30, 2004
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Dept. of Modern and Classical Languages

Report prepared by: Dr. Reinhard Andress, Chair

1. Context:

   a. Trends in the discipline

      • In the past ten years, enrollments are up from approx. 2003 in 1994-95 to approx. 2575 this past academic year.

      • Spanish has increased most significantly in terms of raw numbers: approx. 1003 in 1994-95 to approx. 1533 this past academic year.

      • Italian has also experienced remarkable growth: from 53 when the program started in 1998-99 to 132 this past academic year.

      • Although the trend is not absolutely clear, it appears that the Spanish graduate program on the home campus is having difficulty attracting sufficient students.

   b. Issues and challenges

      • There is only one fulltime faculty member in Italian (Dr. Simone Bregni) who alone cannot cover the array of courses needed to develop the Italian program, especially in light of the significant increase in enrollment. At the same time, it is difficult to find well-qualified adjunct faculty willing to teach on the basis of parttime pay. A competitively paid instructorship highly desirable and a necessity if the program is to continue to grow.

      • The new Chair of the Department (Dr. Reinhard Andress) will only be teaching one course in German each semester. Together with the other fulltime faculty member in German (Dr. Gregory Wolf), this means that only seven of the 16 courses offered next academic year will be taught by fulltime faculty. A competitively paid instructorship in German (at least for the time of the present Chair's service in that position) is highly desirable and would become a prerequisite to Dr. Wolf's probable sabbatical leave in 05/06.

      • Although the difficulty of finding well-qualified adjunct faculty is not so pressing in Spanish, an instructorship in Spanish would add stability to the Spanish program. Often there is a last-minute rush to find a qualified adjunct.

      • More attractive financial packages for the graduate programs in French and Spanish (including health insurance and study abroad on the Madrid Campus in the case of Spanish) would make us more competitive and bring in more and, to some extent, better graduate students. This is also a key issue in the interdivisional and interdisciplinary PhD program the Department is discussing.
c. Enrollment management information

• Although the space reasons are clear for offering a certain percentage of classes outside the 10 to 2 framework, it is sometimes difficult to get students to enroll in those classes.

2. Pedagogy

a. Teaching/Learning innovations

• The Department continues to be actively involved in offering SLU2000 courses in French, German and Spanish

• WebCT is an integral part of a significant number of courses.

• Dr. Pascale Perraudin team-taught a course with Dr. Joya Uraizee in English during the spring semester on "Violence in Anglo-Franco Literature."

• The Laclede Language Houses continue to provide a space where frequent and more familiar contacts between our faculty and our students and thus where informal learning take place.

• The French and Spanish graduate programs were awarded 12 SLU2000 research assistantships.

b. Noteworthy student achievements

• Our undergraduates are routinely accepted into graduate and professional schools with awards of scholarships and assistantships. Our MA graduate students are regularly accepted into PhD programs.

• Tori Pine, Sara Quiroz, Jessica Riddle, Riahna Weakley and Jackie Emidy (all of them graduate students) presented scholarly papers at regional, national or international conferences.

3. Funding and research

a. External funding

• Dr. Simone Bregni procured an annual grant of $2,500 from the Gene Mariani/Italian Club of St. Louis, aimed at promoting Italian Studies at SLU.

• Dr. Gregory Wolf received a grant from the German federal government for approx. $4,000 to participate in a two-week workshop in Germany on contemporary German society.

b. Research productivity

• 2 books
• 1 workbook
• 16 articles in refereed journals
• 2 book chapters
• 3 translations
• 48 papers in professional settings

• In addition, our faculty is active in reviewing books and serving on editorial boards of journals.

• It goes without saying that the significant cuts in travel funds for the coming academic year will impact research productivity.

4. Outreach and partnerships

• The Department is involved in the 1818 Program in French, German, Latin, Russian and Spanish.

• Members of our Department conducted two workshops this past year.

• There is regular consulting for foreign language educational testing, for publishers of pedagogical materials, books and computer software.

• Latin and Spanish post teaching materials on the Internet.

• French, German, Spanish, Russian and Italian are involved in local professional and cultural groups.

6. Newsworthy items

• In terms of cultural background, the Department probably enjoys the richest level of diversity on campus. Native speakers teach many of the modern languages, literatures and cultures offered. The following countries are represented: Bolivia, Columbia, France, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Russia, Spain, Switzerland and the Czech Republic.

• Hiring strictly on the basis of merit, our Department also has an outstanding profile regarding affirmative action. Nine percent are Jesuits, 9% are Jewish, 48% are women, 39% are members of minority groups, and 52% are immigrants. Only 13% do not belong to one of these groups.

• The digitalization project of the Language Learning Center will bring the Department up to date in terms of language learning technology.

• Dr. Claude Pavur's website containing pedagogical materials for the teaching of Latin receives about 100 hits per day.

8. Space needs/planning

• In connection with the digitalization project of the Language Learning Center, the Department will gain use of RH232 for additional language lab-related activities. This needs to be integrated carefully into lab meetings of the lower-division language classes.
There is a shortage of office space for emeritus professors and if additional fulltime faculty is hired. Some of the adjunct and TA offices are crowded.

9. Assessment results and changes made based on these results

• Some of our faculty have not yet received ACTFL training to assess proficiency levels. We are addressing this problem through the Mellon fund.

• New assessments grids are in place for the Department's contributions to the core and for its majors.

• Program changes made in AY04 and rationale:
  
  • One course related to Hispanic language or culture taught in English now allowed for Spanish minor in order to reflect interdisciplinary aspect of the minor.
  
  • Spanish MA reading list updated to reflect new courses that have been added over the last few years and to correspond to assessment criteria.
  
  • Regarding "Scholarship and Knowledge" in the French MA program, a new course, FR-A532, "Love and Honor in Early Modern French Literature," was instated as a part of the curricular revision of the period prior to the year 1900 and uses a thematic approach as a means of engaging students in reflecting on major themes underlying the early modern period in France.
  
  • In the category of "Knowledge and Communication," the Masters in French Reading List was modified and updated to reflect newly emerging areas of literary and cultural expression, as well as evolving perspectives on more Canonic works.

• Program changes planned for AY05 and rationale:
  
  • Implement updated placement scores for SPA 110, 115 and 210 based on findings of assessment research during the past two years. Scores had previously been based on data from other universities. Data from SLU was used to have more accurate placement scores.
  
  • Begin using new placement scale for SPA 310/315 and SPA 410/415. Previously, upper-division Spanish courses did not use placement scores. Placement scores for these levels will allow better placement of students.
  
  • Implement new data-based auditory comprehension placement and final evaluation scale in upper-division Spanish courses because of a need to establish parameters for advanced students.
  
  • Regarding "Scholarship and Knowledge" in the French BA, the “Writing Sample” is currently under discussion and will likely be eliminated in favor of a “Senior Synthesis/Capstone” project, the form of which will be determined in Fall 04. There are several reasons for eliminating the "Writing Sample": It was not an accurate measurement of the students’ skill level; the form – a spontaneously produced essay – was frustrating and dissatisfying for the students; eliminating the
“Writing Sample” in favor of a “Senior Synthesis/Capstone” project would bring the French Division in line with other Modern Language Divisions.