

Modern Languages Program Review

Faculty of Arts

Dean's Summary

Submitted by:

Dr. Jacqueline Nolte, Dean, College of Arts

Accepted by:

Senate in January 2021

Academic Planning and Priorities Committee in November 2020

MEMORANDUM

Academic Planning and Priorities Committee

APPC Chair: James Mandigo

APPC Assistant: Melinda Saretzky

TO: Dr. Joanne MacLean, Chair, Senate

FROM: Dr. James Mandigo, Chair, Academic Planning and Priorities Committee

DATE: November 19, 2020

RE: Modern Languages Program Review

The Modern Languages department underwent a program review in 2019-2020. The Academic Planning and Priorities Committee reviewed all of the documentation related to the program review and accepted them at the November 18, 2020 meeting.

In 1975, the first French language course was offered at UFV. The offerings have expanded through the years and now include 7 different languages which are: French, German, Halq'eméylem, Japanese, Mandarin, Punjabi, Russian, and Spanish. The external reviewers were impressed by the programming and regarded the department as highly functional. As recommended by the external reviewers, consideration will be given to a future 50/50 cross-language faculty hire. The department's action to explore a partnership with the Teacher Education Program towards offering a BA/BEd in French was highly supported by the APPC. More actions include exploring additional experiential learning opportunities such as learning abroad and expanding outside-classroom conversational opportunities for students. More details can be found in the Dean's Summary Report and it is attached for Senate approval.

MOTION:

THAT Senate accept the Dean's Summary Report of the Modern Languages program review as presented.

Dean's Summary of the French Programs, MOLA, 2019

Dr. Jacqueline Nolte, November 2020

The French programs in the Modern Languages department (MOLA) are situated in the College of Arts within the Faculty of Humanities. The following programmes are offered in French: Major, Extended Minor, Minor, Advanced Proficiency Certificate and Intermediate Proficiency Certificate. The Major and Extended minor were the programs that were reviewed. The Dean's scope letter asked the curriculum committee to map French course outcomes to program outcomes, to identify gaps in curriculum design and to provide a plan to address these. French faculty members were asked to assess the effect of K-12 curriculum changes, the efficacy of pre-requisites for courses and the adequacy of support for students. Faculty were also asked to identify possible work-integrated learning opportunities for students. Finally, faculty were asked to attend to a 5-year vision for the department, including a one, three-year and five-year plan and to discuss hiring needs for the next seven-year period.

The delivery of French courses and programming has a long history at UFV. One year after Fraser Valley College was established, language courses began to be offered. The first French courses were modelled after UBC courses (French 101, 102, 111 and 112). In the late 70's second year courses were added, with a strong focus on oral language. By 1997, an Intermediate Proficiency Certificate was offered in French. In 2003, the French Minor was approved by the Ministry of Advanced Education. An Extended Minor in French was then developed and approved in 2007. In the fall 2014, the French major was launched. Today, the department has an ongoing memorandum of understanding with University of Laval to allow for student exchange with three special topics shell courses having been created to that effect: FREN 450, FREN 451 and FREN 452.

The External Review Committee (ERC) was impressed with the constant improvement in programming in French, as well as the overall growth, partnerships, delivery methods, etc. They concluded that MOLA is a highly functional department with well-designed programming, well-focused teaching and curriculum development, and dedicated efforts in service. MOLA was seen to be serious in its commitment to indigenization, internationalization and community engagement. They concluded that MOLA has succeeded in developing a strong and potentially high-quality French major which is working very well, but which can be strengthened by a more effective immersion component.

Recommendations included making a semester abroad compulsory or more strongly encouraged; increasing the administrative assistant to 100%; informing sessionals early enough if the department is considering part-time sections in the schedule; hiring a full-time faculty member to teach 50% French and 50% another language; developing combined majors within MOLA or across academic units; lobbying for a French/education concurrent program; and adding some flexibility to upper level programming. These recommendations will be dealt with in detail below.

Recommendation 2-1: *We support the efforts of French faculty to create a new course, FREN 214, that is intended to assist students who have completed FREN 102 who wish to take 2nd year courses in French.*

Action

This should be ready for fall 2021

Recommendation 2-2: *The French program should continue to expand its efforts to foster conversational opportunities for students (and faculty) outside of regularly scheduled classes and seminars. While efforts should be made to ensure that much of this conversation should take place in French, a few English language social opportunities should also be encouraged as well in order to accommodate beginning students and prospective students.*

Action

The department will supplement its existing opportunities ('Café-croissant', 'soirée culturelle' and the student-led French Club). In the foreseeable future it will reach out to the students to establish 'Zoom' conversation groups. The department will also reach out to le Conseil jeunesse in Vancouver to set up conversation groups in French.

Recommendation 3-1: *The French program should retool FREN 225 to enhance opportunities for collaborative leadership on the part of students and add this to the stated learning outcomes for the course.*

Action

The FREN 225 learning outcomes will be edited to include 'collaborative leadership'

Recommendation 3-2: *The French program should explore the feasibility of creating at least one practicum course, which may or may not be modelled on SPAN 280, 281, 380, or 381.*

Action

French faculty will begin work on one or two courses to focus on practicum study.

Recommendation 4.1: *The administration of UFV should lobby the BC Ministry of Education for the inception of a combined or concurrent BA/BEd in French.*

Action

The department and the College of Arts will explore the prospect of a closer working relationship between TEP and French and the Dean of Arts will discuss this possible partnership with the Dean of Professional Studies.

Recommendation 4-2: *Develop combined majors, specifically French and Indigenous studies, and/or French and Spanish and/or French and Japanese (Asian Studies), etc.*

Action

The department is very keen to explore such ideas further, e.g. a combined French Major -Spanish Minor or Double Minor in Spanish and French, a combined degree in French and Indigenous Studies, French and Asian Studies or even a BA in Languages, where a learner could study three languages to the 300 level through language courses, but two in more detail (i.e. culture, literature, linguistics, practicum courses, etc.).

Recommendation 4-3: *Students in the program might benefit from greater integration of the DELF (international French proficiency test) at all levels of the program, and appropriately articulated credit for DELF certificates could be considered.*

Action

The department offers regular DELF exam prep sessions for third and fourth-year students entering the PDP program at SFU. This semester, seminars incorporate DELF oral comprehension exercises in all second-year classes. These prep sessions will be offered in future to first-year students as well. All MOLA regular French faculty will be certified to test for the DELF certificates. Costs involved in training and team development will be explored with the dean's office.

Recommendation 5-1: *Make a semester in Quebec or abroad compulsory or more strongly encouraged.*

Action

Efforts to provide a semester of study at Laval have had mixed results for students, so will be revisited. The department will reach out to several other universities in Canada (UQAM, Cégep de Chicoutimi, Université Sainte Anne, and others) and in Europe (Lille, Montpellier and others) to attempt to set up some exchange opportunities. The department will also review and promote programs like EXPLORE through UVic and Quebec immersion programs.

Recommendation 5-2: *The third year of the French major should be made more flexible by requiring only two or three specific French courses rather than five and allowing substitutions of other 3rd year French courses for the remaining 8-12 credits.*

Action

Prerequisites in the degree requirements will be modified to make the program more flexible. A third-year shell course will be developed for flexibility and to make better use of the fourth-year special topics course.

Recommendation 5-3: *Special topics shell courses at the 3rd year level should be created at the third-year level in order to enable continued flexibility and continued curricular innovation.*

Action

See above

Recommendation 5-4: *The 4th-year linguistics course (FREN 430) should be modified to allow for more variety in content. We would recommend turning it into a special topics course.*

Action

FREN 430 will be redesigned following discussions amongst faculty, and taking into consideration the relative emphasis on linguistics and possible focus on teaching French.

Recommendation 6-1: *Hire a full-time faculty member with a background in linguistics to teach 50% French and 50% another language.*

Action

The College of Arts is not in a position to pursue any new hires in the immediate future but in the interim the department will discuss their next request, which could be a cross-appointment in French and Spanish, or some other combination.

Recommendation 6-2: *The current shared administrative assistant position should be converted into a full-time position dedicated 100% to MOLA.*

Action

This increase of the current department assistant contract will be submitted as part of the coming budget submission to the Provost. Approval is contingent on Arts addressing its current deficit due to current Covid-19 challenges.

Recommendation 6.3: *Sessionals should be notified of future available work at least one semester in advance whenever possible. When this is not possible, factors affecting workload decisions and likelihood of changes in workload should be shared with sessionals to allow for effective planning.*

Action

The department will endeavour to put this into effect.

Recommendation 6-4: *Offer, whenever possible, both FREN 101 and FREN 102 in the summer session.*

Action

MOLA will consider offering FREN 101 and 102 as consecutive spring and summer offerings. The department will also consider offering them both in the same semester.

Recommendation 6-5: *The French faculty should increase their research activities. Our suggestion would also be to team up within MOLA or across departments in order to present strong research projects, whenever possible.*

Action

The department's response to this recommendation was that the reviewers were showing a disregard for the mandate of UFV as a teaching university that has an expectation of a seven course load for faculty. However, the reviewers did explicitly state a recognition of this load and encouraged faculty to take advantage of being able to apply for research or scholarly releases. The Associate Dean of Faculty will encourage faculty in this regard.

Concluding comments:

In the concluding Section 7 "Building on Strengths" in the ERC report, the reviewers' primary recommendation was identified as needing to ensure greater flexibility in the degree, particularly at the 300 level. Such flexibility would allow for immersive learning experiences and the ease of adding or changing course content under shell topics.

Regarding exploring collaboration across disciplines and faculties, the reviewers note that, "...the saddest and most frustrating part of our site visit was discussing the training of French Immersion teachers with Teacher Education. Members of that program share the dream of training French immersion teachers in-house, but are discouraged about the obstacles, many of them political, that bar the way. We support collaboration between Teacher Education and MOLA to try to sweep those obstacles out of the way." As noted above, the Dean of Arts will explore these obstacles with the Dean of Professional Studies.

Finally, it is worth noting that reviewers concluded that their recommendations are aimed at making an already very good program, truly outstanding. Faculty and staff are to be commended on the delivery of these French programs that are clearly succeeding with respect to student satisfaction and success.