

Strategic Plan for 2007-2012  
Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

**Mission Statement:** The Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures (DLLC) exists to offer courses of the highest caliber in language teaching, global literatures, linguistics, and culture. The DLLC will accomplish this mission by teaching and research in these fields. In order to fulfill its role in supporting the international focus of *Educating Illinois*, the DLLC will work to expand and solidify its offerings and to proactively place its expertise and personnel at the service of Illinois State University, the citizens of the State of Illinois, and the academic professions.

**Core Values**

*Consistent with the University-wide strategic plan, Educating Illinois, and the College of Arts and Sciences strategic plan, we in the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures value*

*Scholarship* – We value the active pursuit of learning and scholarship through research and its dissemination through publication and teaching. We are seriously committed to the scholar/teacher model in keeping with the longstanding goals of the College and the University. We believe the two roles are indissolubly intertwined. Just as teaching benefits from research conducted outside the classroom, the opportunity to present one's findings and to defend one's conclusions in the classroom benefits research.

*Teaching* – We value the development of student skills necessary for lifelong learning, critical thinking, and engaged citizenship within a global society. We encourage the development of marketable and transferable skills among students, as well as strictly discipline-based skills, in order that our students may take their place as informed citizens in the wider society. We value student-centered instruction, as per the CAS strategic plan, which includes strong academic support services and advisement, excellent instruction and learning that together provide a sense of academic community and identification with the college. We value the development of undergraduate and graduate programs of the highest standards.

*Citizenship* – We value participation at all levels of administrative organization of the University and the College as part of our role as members of a thriving academic community. We value engagement with students and faculty of other disciplines, as part of our contribution to the overall quality of scholarship, learning, and teaching at Illinois State University. As a department of languages, literatures, and cultures, we must perform and indeed seek to expand our role in developing and supporting the global dimension of higher education.

*Shared Governance* – We value the diversity of ideas, academic freedom, cooperation and collegiality among faculty members and the enfranchisement of all members of the Department in setting and managing Departmental goals and priorities, as well as participation in setting goals and recommending policies of the College and the University. We value tolerance of divergent views.

**Vision:** The DLLC will further enhance its strengths in research and teaching by placing resources where they are most likely to strengthen our international reputation in research and teaching. We will ensure long-term success in meeting and exceeding our goals by

Careful investment in faculty recruitment, mentoring, and development, improving student recruitment and development, and improving our facilities, technology, financial health, and intellectual environment. We will do this by continually probing for opportunities to secure external funding, recruit the highest quality faculty, and the best students statewide for our undergraduate and master's degree programs. Both the University's strategic plan, *Educating Illinois*, and the strategic plans of the College of Arts and Sciences are the foundation for this vision, since both emphasize the importance of offering the highest-quality undergraduate learning experience in conjunction with outstanding faculty research. While we are not the only unit on campus whose mission includes enhancement of global awareness, we are posed to make a unique contribution to the curriculum and to the intellectual life of ISU by enhancing our strengths in this area.

Individual components of the vision include the following (no prioritization is intended by this ordering):

- (1) Improving the learning environment for all undergraduate students taking courses in our department (major, minors, and general education students).
- (2) Strengthening our undergraduate majors and minors quantitatively via more active and focused student recruitment efforts and plans;
- (3) Strengthening our master's degree program and our new five-year B.A./M.A. program;
- (4) Final development, after (1) – (3) are accomplished, of a PhD program in Foreign Language Education, perhaps in the latter half of the time scope of this strategic plan;
- (5) Increasing the level of external funding through grants, fellowships, and gifts to the Department;
- (6) Recruiting and developing a diverse, vibrant, and growing student population at graduate and undergraduate levels. We seek to recruit the brightest students, looking especially at high schools with strong language programs in our recruitment efforts. Increasing pay for our graduate student instructors.
- (7) Continue to offer premier quality instruction in all of our courses.
- (8) Effectively integrate into our curricula and overall program the various national, state, and local requirements for teacher training. Further develop our joint efforts with International Studies, Bilingual Education, and International Business and look for other natural alliances of purpose with entities within and external to ISU. Combine our efforts with the Office of International Studies and Programs and build on the various exchange programs already existing at ISU (and for which several of our faculty members act as directors), continue to evaluate existing exchanges and explore opportunities for new ones to meet changing needs of our students.

(9) Encourage and strengthen diversity in the composition of our faculty, students, and the languages, literatures, and cultures taught in our courses, as well as in the majors and minors we offer.

(10) Enhance support for faculty research and creative activity (supports *Educating Illinois*, Goals 1, 3, and 5).

(11) Enhance the quality of the Department's academic programs (supports *Educating Illinois*, Goals 1, 2, 6).

(12) Enhance the college-wide technology infrastructure to support excellence in scholarship, teaching, and learning (supports *Educating Illinois*, Goals 1 and 4). In particular it is among our highest priorities to bring the technology and organization of our language lab up to date.

### ***Strategic goals and directions***

**Strategy 1.** The most important goal of our department as a whole is undergraduate teaching, specifically providing undergraduate majors and courses in languages, literatures, and cultures of the highest professional and pedagogical standards.

#### Actions

Maintain the current enrollment strategy to manage increased demand for the Spanish major and minor and develop new strategies to ensure the long-range maintenance and growth of our majors in French and German and all minors, including those in Italian and Japanese, and increase curricular options wherever needed and possible to meet changing demands of ISU objectives and student interests.

Revise undergraduate programs so as to more effectively use faculty, staff, facility, and resources in a fiscally challenging environment, and to respond to University reports on our various offerings and subprograms.

Ensure that in all changes quality is never sacrificed.

The German program will be revised in accordance with the plan attached as Appendix One to this document. The goal of this plan is to both recognize and maintain the high quality of our German major as this contributes to the Department, College, and University vision for diversity and quality instruction and research.

To meet changes in student needs and interests, we have recently established a BA/MA program, and as we implement it we will monitor it closely.

In cooperation with the Department of English, we will continue our efforts to develop a program in Global Literature(s).

**Strategy 2:** Enhance support for faculty research and creative activity.

#### Actions

Establish a research enhancement program to make funds available to both tenured and tenure-track faculty to support course releases and graduate research assistantships.

Enhance the colloquium series and participate in open forums sponsored by other University programs.

Chair will invest greater effort in contacting alumni and in identifying grants for departmental development.

Faculty will give greater priority to identifying and seeking funding for their research and creative activities.

Department will invest a greater percentage of revenue generated in summer term for faculty travel. First priority will be given to travel that could potentially generate funded research projects. This is only operative if the entrepreneurial summer funding model continues.

**Strategy 3:** Hiring new faculty to enhance the quality of our current programs and to enhance our contribution to research and teaching of diversity in languages, literatures, and cultures.

Actions

Maintain the faculty mentoring program to support and increase the retention of newly hired faculty (feedback on the URGs, general orientation about how the DFSC works, how things are evaluated, etc.).

Priority will be given to our existing majors in making hiring decisions for new TT and NTT faculty.

Priority will be given wherever possible to 'double-matching' hires (i.e. those in which the candidate is qualified to contribute to more than one of our subprograms or initiatives, e.g. French and Arabic, etc.)

**Strategy 4:** Improve administrative efficiency of DLLC, for both internal and external constituencies.

Actions

Develop interactive website in order to eliminate most departmental paperwork for students and applicants.

**Strategy 5:** Increase the local, state, national, and international visibility of the Department's programs, student and faculty achievements (this supports *Educating Illinois* Goal 2).

Actions

Enhance and update the Department web site.

Strengthen contact with donors, alumni, students, and members of the various disciplines represented by the Department, via our website, publications, presentations, personal contact, and newsletters.

Disseminate faculty, student, and other Departmental accomplishments to the CAS News and ISU Media Relations.

Strengthen our colloquium series by locating funds for bringing in more outside speakers with solid academic reputations from a variety of institutions.

Increase the level of external funding (grants, fellowships, and gifts) for research, teaching, and co-curricular programming.

Identify competitive seed grant programs for projects with high potential to attract external funding.

Establish a research enhancement program to make funds available to faculty to support course releases and graduate research assistants.

Support faculty travel, especially when connected to efforts to seek external funding through a travel supplement grant program.

Enhance the college-wide technology and infrastructure to support excellence in scholarship, teaching, and learning.

Strengthen our ties with other institutions, including those with which we have current exchanges, and those with which we can develop exchanges that would be mutually beneficial.

## **Achievements**

### **1. Growth in majors:**

The total number of undergraduate language majors continues to increase steadily, nearly doubling over the past 5 years. Almost all of the growth in Languages, Literatures, and Cultures major enrollment has occurred in Spanish, which now serves 80% of the department's majors.

### **2. Growth in minors:**

Our growth in minors (a number tracked by academic rather than calendar year) has also been significant, though numbers were intentionally lowered slightly in 05-06: 483 in AY 01-02, 531 in AY 02-03, 647 in AY 03-04, and 553 in AY 05-06. Among the initiatives in the FY 06 budget narrative was a decision to continue to limit admission to the Spanish minor due to the shortage of Spanish faculty. Demand for the Spanish minor averages well over 500, but at present we can accommodate no more than 425. Hence the total number of minors was reduced to 603 in Fall 05 and to 619 by Fall 2006.

Of that total, 37 are in East Asian Studies, 66 in French (4 teacher ed, 62 non-teaching), 32 in German (4 teacher ed, 28 non-teaching), 24 in Italian Studies, 3 in Latin Studies (1 teacher ed, 2 non-teaching), 1 in Comparative Literature, and 389 in Spanish (37 teacher ed, 352 non-teaching). In the minors, growth in demand has been concentrated in Spanish, East Asian Studies and Italian Studies.

### **3. Continued excellence in faculty productivity:**

Our Department's investment in and strong encouragement of scholarly research continued in FY05. During the year, our faculty of 18 tenure-track members published 5 books, over 32 articles or book chapters, and numerous book reviews, and gave some 32 conference papers or presentations.

## **Accountability**

**Strategy 1:** The Undergraduate Committee and Section Coordinator will bear responsibility for monitoring the quality and diversity of offerings, in consultation with the Chair and the NTT and TT faculty of the Department.

**Strategy 2:** The DFSC and the Chair will work together to monitor faculty productivity and to monitor individual faculty member initiatives to identify external funding for their own research. The Academic Advisory Board will work with the Chair to set priorities for funding initiatives, both in contacting donors and in developing faculty expertise in external grant-getting.

**Strategy 3:** The Department as a whole will determine the exact descriptions of responsibilities and expertise for new TT hires and the searches will be overseen by appointed Search Committees, in consultation with the Chair.

**Strategy 4:** The Chair and his administrative assistant will be accountable to the Department and the College for this strategy.

**Strategy 5:** The Chair, the Colloquium Director, and the rest of Departmental Staff and Faculty will be responsible for assessing progress and taking steps to further the accomplishment of this strategic goal. Faculty directors of exchanges will be responsible for assessment of the health of existing exchanges and of possibilities for new exchange arrangements.

*Approved by faculty vote 3/21/2007*

## **Response to the Review of the B.A. in German**

This proposal responds to the questions raised by the Program Review of the German major. The program review specifically cites the extensive German faculty involvement in the General Education program, the success in student recruitment and outreach, the major's appeal to excellent students, the 100% pass rate of its Teacher-Education students in the Oral Proficiency Interview, and the overall importance of international languages as part of curricular diversity at Illinois State University. The Review of the B.A. in German also recognizes that the German B.A. is considered to be of high quality. At the same time, the Review correctly notes that "enrollments in the major are low with 11 majors in 2005" and that the Department should "engage in a meaningful deliberation of the viability of sustaining the degree program." As a result of these two concerns, the faculty in German is complying with the Academic Planning Committee's request by submitting a follow-up report.

### **Background:**

In many regards, the concerns noted in the "Review" encompass the challenges that many smaller language programs face on a year by year basis. Because the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures is committed to fostering an appreciation for cultural and linguistic diversity, high academic standards, and broad course offerings that reflect global diversity, it must continue to search for ways to provide a wide-range of language programs for students at Illinois State and exercise appropriate financial stewardship. This response is also cognizant of the fact that student enrollments and numbers of majors are driven by market forces that are beyond the immediate control of faculty. For this reason, the Department, and in particular the faculty in German, needs to shift its focus and energies to effectively manage its resources, capitalize on its gains since the last program review, and provide a sustainable model of smaller, yet important language programs at Illinois State. To this end, the faculty in German proposes an internal restructuring of the major so that the Department may continue to grow and develop in all its different areas.

### **Statement of Problem:**

For the last decade the Department has been active in the recruitment and retention of students as well as the promotion of languages as an essential part of an undergraduate education at Illinois State. What is particular to many of the smaller language programs is the problem of scheduling and staffing. While it can be said that these are problematic to some degree for many programs, larger programs compensate by offering multiple sections of their core curriculum. Many smaller language programs, however, do not have this luxury. Hence, finding an adequate time to schedule essential courses so that the maximum number of interested students can and will enroll is often a challenge for smaller language programs. To address this problem, the faculty in German proposes the internal restructuring of the B.A.

## **Internal Restructuring of the Program**

We will revise the requirements for the major to insure sustainable viability and flexibility. In particular, these changes involve: (1) the continuation of the German faculty's involvement in German courses at the 100-level; (2) the creation of two new online courses (214--Online "Review of Grammar" and 215--Online "Strategies for Reading"); (3) the double tiering or cross-listing of courses; (4) the reduction of the number of 300-level courses offered each semester; and (5) the acceptance of 3 credit-hours from German-related courses in other departments.

1) The 100-level courses currently have enrollments on par with other language courses. Most teaching at this level is carried out by graduate students. In German, however, tenure line faculty has become actively involved, which provides opportunities for student recruitment into the major and into the 200 and 300-level courses. Institutional support is of course essential, and enough sections of 111-116 must in future be offered to meet the demonstrable student demand.

2) Online courses: Online formats, which make use of platforms like WebCT, Blackboard, podcasts, mp3 files, and video, will provide viable alternatives to traditional classroom structures, sustain the major, and responsibly deploy university resources. This type of delivery will permit students with vastly different schedules to enroll. This format will also make coursework available to students who reside off campus, outside of central Illinois, and who are currently looking for AP credit. (The transition to this format involves additional training of German faculty by staff at LILT and CTLT (Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology.)) New courses earmarked for this format include: 214--"German Grammar Review" and 215--"Strategies for Reading German," which are requested frequently and fill a real need. Constructed to serve also as "5<sup>th</sup>-year" or AP German courses for high-achieving high school students, 214 and 215 will serve outreach and recruiting purposes as well.

3) Double-tiered courses: one of the current practices in many programs is scheduling a 200-level course simultaneously with a 300-level course. While all students participate in the same lecture-discussion, advanced students submit additional work to meet higher requirements. To this end, the existing German 222 (Survey of Literature) will be fashioned into a new Topics course 285, which will run concurrently with 385 (also Topics). In this way, 285 and 385 will serve (and count for faculty) as one course on a given topic, but with different requirements for each level. This arrangement is a more efficient use of resources.

4) The above-mentioned double tiering will result as well in a reduction in the number of 300-level courses offered and will effectively reallocate the resources of the German faculty while sustaining the major and Smaller Language Programs in general. More than one 300-level course would be offered per semester, only if warranted by sufficient student demand.

5) Courses outside of the Department: a list of approved courses for the German major, but external to the offerings of the DLLC from such departments as History, Politics and Government, Philosophy, Geography, Sociology, Art, or Music will be prepared and made available to our students. The change in requirements to include courses currently outside, but related to, the existing major will provide greater flexibility for students and will better situate and contextualize German within the broader university undertaking. This modification will both better serve and be more attractive to many of our students who have interdisciplinary interests, but find it difficult to enroll in courses. These changes will moreover promote the viability of the double major, again a very popular option but not easily possible for many of our students in German. Lastly, this measure will draw on resources from colleagues across the college and university and will likely permit a further reduction in German course offerings so that the enrollments of remaining German classes can be maintained more adequately.

**Conclusion:**

In sum, the German faculty foresees that these modifications will not only achieve a 3-course "savings" per year, but will also sustain linguistic and cultural diversity, maintain the German faculty's (and LLC's) commitment to the General Education program, and provide the opportunity for growth in German. The faculty believes that these proposals have the promise of genuine success. Each feature of this course of action is truly feasible; even its relatively small changes will result in a substantially altered trajectory over time.

The fate of Smaller Language Programs, like the German major, is closely linked to the university's strategic plan as outlined in *Educating Illinois*, certainly with respect to recruiting high-achieving, motivated students; to encouraging diversity; and to enhancing instructional capacity. Largely thanks to *Educating Illinois*, the fortunes of the German major have been rising demonstrably (as evident in the revived and improved enrollments of the foundation courses 111-116, not to mention the respectable increase in the number of majors in 2006). This trend stands in direct relation to the success of *Educating Illinois*, which has raised admission standards and brought highly motivated students to ISU and concomitantly more students into our department's German classes. Our department's German major serves in no small way to advance our university toward the goal set forth in *Educating Illinois* that ISU provide the premier undergraduate education in the state.

*On 21, March, 2007, the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures endorsed this proposal and approved it for inclusion in the departmental Strategic Plan.*