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Program and Unit Review: Modern Languages

Dean's Summary Report

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March 2014

Operating within the Faculty of Humanities in the College of Arts, MOLA offers four programs in French (two certificates, a minor and an extended minor), two certificates in Russian, two certificates in

Action: Heads have been requested to implement annual professional worklo

Information on placement tests will be added to course descriptions and the MOLA web-site, as well as distributed to Arts Advisors.

Recommendation 5: The Committee recommended more focus on the communicative approach in course content at the first and second year, with less attention to

NOTE: The department will investigate the possibility of collaborating with the Teaching and Learning Centre to organize a full day or weekend departmental retreat aimed at assessing programs, course delivery, curricular practices, academic assessment and standards for grading and evaluating

ENROLMENT, RETENTION AND STUDENT SUCCESS

Contrary to the perception of the MOLA department members that MOLA is shrinking in size, evidence in the UFV Fact Book shows that FTE in MOLA have increased steadily between 2006-07 and 2011-12. However, enrolment in upper level classes remains low in many languages.

Recommendation 1: Advising should be more proactive, and previous learning better assessed to ensure appropriate placement.

Action: See #4 in section above.

Recommendation 2: The department should hold workshops on articulation with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

Action: This has been done in French and Spanish; this will improve international recognition and mobility. The CEFR is not useful for Asian languages. It was noted that the Japan Foundation is currently working on an equivalent standard for Japanese language.

Recommendation 3: A closer affiliation with TEP is recommended.

Action:

Spanish (with an emphasis on language and culture) with a view to increasing the research profile of the department.

Action: Budget does not allow for hires at the moment but these areas of specialisation will be taken into consideration when we are in a position to recruit.

RESOURCES

Recommendation 1: The department should commit to modern technologies better adapted to students and eliminate the Educational technology position that services Can 8 software.

Action: The department is attempting to find a free, open-source replacement for Can 8.

Recommendation 2: Japanese classes should always have e-rooms.

Action: E-rooms are requested every semester, but are not always available; the Dean will bring this to the attention of Campus Planning and speak to those in charge of room bookings.

Recommendation 3: The website and other social media tools should be better used to bring a fresh face to the department.

Action: One-time funding can be directed to the department to assist with this.

ALIGNMENT WITH UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY NEEDS/PLANS

Recommendation 1: MOLA should explore collaborations with Education regarding the Major in French, and collaborate with Business regarding students studying Spanish, Punjabi and Mandarin.

Action: The department will approach the School of Business regarding a certificate for Japanese for business

Recommendation 2: French instructors should develop more partnerships with associations.

Action: The department has developed contacts with the Abbotsford branch of Canadian Parents for French and is pursuing collaboration with the Teacher Education Program (TEP).

RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING SPECIFIC LANGUAGE PROGRAMS AND COURSES

FRENCH

Recommendation 1: Develop the French Major.

Action: A cost-neutral proposal for a French Major has gone forward to DQAB.

Recommendation 2: Do not register immersion students and beginners in the same courses.

Action: Guidelines have been developed and are available on the MOLA web-page in the registration flow chart for former French Immersion students.

Recommendation 3: Provide more opportunities for students to challenge.

Action: The department will look into the possibility of creating a block challenge for native or near-native speakers, to enable them to challenge both FREN 215 and 216 at the same time.

Recommendation 4: Consider mandatory placement tests and pass on clear information to students.

Action: See #4 in the section on Program Curriculum, Standards and Delivery. Mandatory placement tests would require a significant outlay of institutional resources and additional faculty workload. The alternative, charging students for testing, would lower enrolments. In most cases, testing is unnecessary; student proficiency is known from their prior level of study. Instead, MOLA has put a clear statement on placement tests in the calendar and on the MOLA website advertising the opportunity for placement tests, and advising students that they should consult the relevant language advisors within the department to be placed appropriately.

Recommendation 5: Focus on French as a pragmatic tool to enable students to communicate and interact socially in order to build their professional careers.

Action: The department will place greater emphasis on oral proficiency. In 2014-15, FREN 242 (Intermediate Oral Communication) will be included in the French Minor; the new Advanced French Oral Communications course, which will be a part of the French Major, need not require FREN 219 (Intermediate Composition) as a pre-requisite.

Recommendation 6: Address prerequisites and the gap between FREN 102 and FREN 215.

Action: This will be addressed through a curriculum mapping session in 2015. The department has requested and received data from Institutional Research with regards to the success of students moving directly from Grade 12 French into either FREN 102 or 215. Prerequisites for FREN 215 will be listed as "French 12 with a B or higher, or FREN 102". FREN 102 will be listed as "French 12 with less than a B or FREN 101". These pre-requisites will be re-evaluated after each semester and revised if necessary.

SPANISH

Recommendation 1: The Review Committee was not in favour of the development of the Spanish Minor as presented

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Action: This will be explored in 2014/15. Further practical courses could be introduced in rotation with existing upper-level courses. They could be offered through study abroad or Canadian partner institutions.

Recommendation 3: There should be

Action: The Dean's office will support the establishment of a network comprising UFV and teachers of Halq'eméylem. Such forum will also include elders and scholars instrumental in establishing this program.

Recommendation 3: Overreliance on Can8 should be replaced by transfer of digital content to a flexible open source system.

Action: This is being explored.

Recommendation 4: Form stronger links with SFU Office of Indigenous Education and First Nations Studies and University of Victoria, where First Nations research has gained national and international recognition.

Action: Our Halq'eméylem instructor will continue to build links with UVic's office of Indigenous Studies, First Nations researchers and linguists.

GERMAN

Recommendation 1: German courses exemplify UFV's mission to "educate citizens for a global community" and meet and sometimes exceed the standards of curriculum design and delivery with post-secondary education in BC. There are easily rectified discrepancies between the course descriptions on the UFV website and the syllabi.

Action: These minor discrepancies have been corrected.

Recommendation 2: To make instructional materials more consistent with MOLA's emphasis on oral communication, additional materials should be reviewed for possible inclusion.

Action: This will be done in 2014-15.

Recommendation 3: Supplement basic learning materials with cultural artifacts from literature, film, fine and performing arts.

Action: This will be done in 2014-15.

Recommendation 4: Germany's generosity with respect to awarding scholarships should be exploited on behalf of UFV students.

Action: Scholarships will be better advertised on the department web-site and through the International Education's Study Abroad blog.

Recommendation 5: It will be beneficial to develop a Proficiency Certificate in German similar to those offered in other languages. This

Recommendation 6: A 12-month permanent appointment for the instructor would provide stability and continuity, and enable the instructor to generate new initiatives.

Action: Current student demand does not warrant offering the seven courses required for such an appointment to be considered.

MANDARIN

Recommendation 1: Mandarin 210, linked to the Study Tour to China, should contain tasks and measures that encourage students to get more immersed in the Chinese language.

Action: As part of 2013 Study Tour, students submitted their daily journals in Mandarin to record their experience in China. This will be formally included as a learning objective in the Mandarin 210 course outline.

Recommendation 2: The content of the Intermediate Proficiency Certificate is more of a basic level.

Action: UFV students have been successful in the provincial Mandarin speaking contests and have won impressive academic scholarships. There is confusion in the interpretation of the word "intermediate", which in the context of the certificate program at UFV refers to the end of second year; this will require further consultation with experts in the various language fields.

Recommendation 3: The learning outcomes for the Intermediate Proficiency Certificate should be revised to specify the number of characters that students should be able to read and write.

Action: The number of characters varies according to the way they are counted. It could be misleading to list a specific number of characters that will be learned. Further advice will be solicited.

Recommendation 4: Provide stability for a dedicated sessional faculty.

Action: There are no resources to create a permanent appointment unless demand grows considerably.

Recommendation 2: A better balance between oral and written competencies is recommended.

Action: This will be addressed 2014-15.

Recommendation 3: To mitigate the problem of students of different levels registering in Punjabi 101 classes, encourage students with previous knowledge to challenge the course and do not permit students who have taken Grade 11 Punjabi in high school to take Punjabi 101.

Action: the first has been implemented; regarding the second suggestion, the department agrees but there is only one section of Punjabi per term. If a placement test could be given before the beginning of term the department could determine if there is sufficient demand for a "self-funded" Punjabi 102 to be offered at the same time as the 101 section. The department will look into doing this