

Department Strategic Plan Foreign Languages and Literatures

EXCELLENCE IN INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

24 FEB 2015

The Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures aims to lead East Carolina University in preparing students to participate in the global, multicultural community of the 21st century. The Department's goals will be met by working to expand the University's foreign language requirement, by strengthening our students' liberal arts education, and by substantially increasing our majors and overall enrollments as efficiently as possible.

As areas of academic research and teaching, language and culture fields are inherently interdisciplinary. In our published articles and in our classes, our talented faculty routinely conduct research on and teach about the connections between language groups, social issues, cultural practices and identities across the globe. A hallmark of our programs is that they combine language and socio-cultural issues at all levels. Currently we have faculty teaching French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Latin, Spanish, and Russian.

Our named plan – *EXCELLENCE IN INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND EDUCATION* – is a strong move toward expanding interdisciplinarity both within and beyond the department. We take a broad view of interdisciplinarity: not only in recognizing the multifaceted nature of language and culture fields regarding both research and teaching, but also in proposing new combinations of existing language and culture tracks, in planning curricular revision to emphasize connections with business and health sciences, and in engaging research and teaching that involves the surrounding community where possible.

1. Alignment with University and College Mission

How will the Department align with the institutional priorities of (1) greater student access/success, (2) public service/leadership, and (3) regional transformation?

The most important priority for our department is to contribute to the stated mission of the strategic plan, specifically the component that states: *To be a national model for student success, public service, and regional transformation, East Carolina University: Prepares students with the knowledge, skills, and values to succeed in a global, multicultural society.*

ECU is fully committed to regional transformation. This means we must prepare all students – no matter their area of study – for entry into a globalized society. Whether based in Eastern North Carolina or across the world, ECU’s graduates need to be linguistically and culturally competent to function in that globalized society. FLL actively seeks to realize its potential as an indispensable unit bringing linguistic and cultural competence to the university as a whole. Language and culture are inextricably linked. By having students learn about cultural products originating across time and space (literature, film, art, theatre, scholarship, business practices, educational systems, etc.), particularly in their original languages, we augment core leadership values such as empathy, admiration for diversity, critical thinking, and adaptability. By increasing students’ competencies in second languages and cultures, the university improves students’ abilities to live, work, and lead amid the increasingly multicultural societies of our region, the nation, and around the world.

This education happens in the foreign language classroom. FLL is poised to contribute to the linguistic and cultural competence of our graduates, but our actions are limited to the extent that currently the programmatic priorities of other university units do not value the linguistic and cultural competence made explicit in the ECU strategic plan. We thus ask for assistance from ECU administration in order to: institutionalize a 4-semester language requirement for all graduates of ECU, no matter their area of study; work with professional programs whose graduates will be living and working in Eastern North Carolina after graduation in increasingly diverse and multicultural contexts; and collaborate with graduate professional schools whose students will need advanced Spanish skills, in particular, in order to effect regional transformation in an area of North Carolina with a fast-growing Hispanic population.

State Unit Objective(s): To contribute to regional transformation by expanding access to second language competency and humanities-based multicultural expertise.

Identify Metric(s):

1. Number of collaborative discussions with other campus units.
2. Number of students who complete a foreign language requirement through FLL courses.

Specify Unit Action(s):

1. Meet and follow-up with the following units to enlist their collaboration in fulfilling the global promise of ECU’s strategic plan: the Brody School of Medicine, the School of Dental Medicine, the College of Nursing, the College of Engineering, College of Business, the School of Music, the Honors College, Program in Tourism, Construction Management, Agro-medicine
2. Work with ECU administration, Faculty Senate leadership and the Foundations and Instructional Effectiveness Committee to make a foreign language requirement part of the university’s Foundations requirements.

2. Research Identity

What research niche(s) will the Department seek to strengthen?

A hallmark of language and culture fields are their interdisciplinary nature. In brief, we give equal weight to the study of artistic products on one hand and to social formations on the other. Our department boasts faculty whose expertise ranges across all artistic genres: novels, short-stories, poetry, films, painting, photography, drama/theater, popular music and non-fiction, including also cultural studies and digital humanities approaches. In addition, these same faculty members are necessarily—by their training and in their research activities—experts in multiple disciplinary and thematic approaches: science fiction, gender and sexuality, disability studies, fashion, detective fiction, state and regional politics, national history and revolution, race and ethnicity, immigration, urban studies, and more. We are unlike social science or science departments in the sense that this interdisciplinarity is a testament to our success—it would make no sense for a language and culture department to specialize in one artistic product or one approach to culture or society. Simply put, we can and must ‘do it all.’

This important contextualization notwithstanding, we must double-down on our investment in the construction of an interdisciplinary identity. New hires, where possible, should reflect our need to continually diversify—in terms of languages offered, artistic products studied and methodological approaches employed. This should be carried out in line with the priorities given to student success, public service and regional transformation wherever possible.

Strengthening our research identity, for us, means not strengthening a particular area or approach, but rather implementing and sustaining policies that benefit the overall research profile of the department. This may mean shifting to a competitive model of conference funding, setting aside operating budget money for publication subventions and fostering research production in other ways should they be made possible by the HCAS Dean’s office (variable workload policy, course release for research active faculty). Our operating budget has been slashed in half since 2008, and given the increasing SCH production pressures, we were unable then and are much less able now, to offer course releases to research active faculty from our own funds.

State Unit Objective(s): To increase the overall research profile of the department, recognizing book-length and article-length publications as the hallmark accomplishment of FLL fields.

Identify Metric(s): Number of book-length publications, number of article-length publications.

Specify Unit Action(s): The department will publish more book-length publications and more article-length publications, considered separately, during AY2014-15 than during AY2013-14.

3. Instructional Mission

How will the department grow its undergraduate majors, and by how much?

Foreign Languages and Literatures is in the process of radically reconceiving its curriculum to attract more majors and minors and speed their progress toward graduation. Two important steps are being taken: one at the undergraduate level and one at the graduate level.

At the undergraduate level, the addition of a **new Global Studies concentration** will capitalize on our dual expertise in **artistic genres** (*novels, short-stories, poetry, films, painting, photography, drama/theater, popular music and non-fiction, including also cultural studies and digital humanities approaches*) and **socio-cultural issues** (*science fiction, gender and sexuality, disability studies, fashion, detective fiction, state and regional politics, national history and revolution, race and ethnicity, immigration, urban studies, and more*). This will be a more flexible concentration than is offered by our existing language and culture majors, allowing for students to combine multiple languages and count departmental courses taught in English toward their degree. This concentration will decrease time-toward-degree for a number of students in our existing programs, and it will also attract new kinds of students who are not attracted to our current traditional programs. Our task will be to create and sustain this program as a key mechanism for our overall growth. Doing this successfully will increase our enrollments in all language areas, and it will substantially increase our total majors and minors. We are preparing to launch this program in Fall 2016 and will need to take further actions after launch to assure the program's continued success.

Note that this new concentration will not become the primary concentration we offer. Instead, this will be one part of our move to grow student numbers in all of our current concentrations and interdisciplinary programs.

At the graduate level, the addition of a **new MA in Hispanic Studies** will strategically align our department with ECU's strategic plan. This is not a traditional degree program, but one that is truly unique nationwide. Its structure boasts a flexible curriculum of 30 hours with only 9 hours of a common core. It will appeal to full-time and part-time students, have a thesis and a non-thesis option, and half of its offerings will be taught via Distance Education in the second year of the program. Overall it is geared toward maximizing linguistic proficiency and cultural competency, with an emphasis on engagement and outreach. There is potential here to attract a diverse body of graduate students, and to pilot and sustain collaborative work at the graduate level across disciplinary boundaries. We are working with area partnerships that will provide placement for graduate students conducting original research on the Hispanic/Latino communities in the 29 counties east of the I-95. The success of this program will also require re-thinking our undergraduate curriculum in Spanish to attract and retain students interested in outreach and engagement and ultimately move them into a 4 +1 undergrad-grad model of education. We are preparing to launch this program in Fall 2017 and will need to take further actions after launch to assure the program's continued success.

State Unit Objective(s): To increase the number of students in all FLL undergraduate major programs

Identify Metric(s): Percentage increase.

Specify Unit Action(s): An increase of at least 50% within 5 years.

How will the Department increase the size and quality of its graduate program(s)—number of applicants, enrollment yield, cohort quality? [As appropriate.]

State Unit Objective(s): To create and sustain student growth in the MAHS program.

Identify Metric(s): Increase in number of students.

Specify Unit Action(s): Growing from 0 to 25-30 enrolled graduate students within five years of beginning the program.

4. Generating External Resources

How will the Department increase sponsored research (grants, contracts, fellowships)?

Considered in isolation, nationwide Arts and Humanities research enjoys neither the high levels of support nor the diverse sources of funding enjoyed by other areas in the Sciences and Social Sciences. In the last 10 years, funding trends have either remained the same or dwindled as federal support for the Arts and Humanities has also dwindled. Recent years have seen fewer National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grants awarded, for example. The importance of collaboration is now recognized by new NEH collaborative research grants, new NSF social and behavioral science research grants; and NIH grants that include collaboration with cultural anthropologists and community engagement. There certainly continue to be the same time-honored venues for grants in the humanities (Fulbrights, NEH, ACLS...), but by-and-large the future of grant funding in our fields involves collaborative research between and across different departments and colleges at East Carolina University.

Keeping this important contextualization in mind, the Foreign Languages and Literatures department is committed to fostering collaborative discussions with other units on-campus and area partners off-campus. Internally to the department—and understanding that we currently have no material support for grant seekers available in our operating budget, which has been slashed in half since 2008—grant-seeking activities are now valued in the unit code and will be valued by the department to the extent possible under difficult conditions. In particular, there are possibilities for grants that leverage interdisciplinary connections, such as Spanish for Healthcare Professions and Digital Social Sciences and Humanities. Grant funding in language instruction, teacher education and programming are valued, and international grants are also of equal value to national grants.

State Unit Objective(s): To increase the number of grant applications submitted by FLL faculty.

Identify Metric(s): Number of grant applications sent out.

Specify Unit Action(s): Increase the number of faculty applying for grants both internally in HCAS, across ECU and externally.

How will the Department increase support for its programs through Advancement?

Keeping in mind that, as ECU's lead advancement officer has said time and again, advancement is an incredibly time-consuming activity that requires regularized contact and follow-up; and also understanding that HCAS's lone advancement officer provides incredible support within the College, but that one person is insufficient support for 15 departments needing help with advancement; we will need to adopt an innovative solution to our challenges.

Foreign Languages and Literatures will create and sustain a Council of Student Ambassadors whose activities will assist in advancement. This group, formed by stand-out student leaders from each of the language areas, will assist with such tasks as creating and publishing materials that can keep us in touch with alumni and possible donors (e-newsletter, video content, social network updates). This group will also brainstorm for and hold fundraising events and create synergies by working in tandem with the FLL Advancement Council.

State Unit Objective(s): To increase number of donors and amount of contributions through the formation of an advancement council.

Identify Metric(s): Amount of funding brought in to supplement the restricted application of the operating budget.

Specify Unit Action(s): Form an advancement council to replace the 'Friends of FLL' group. Form a Council of Student Ambassadors to help with alumni connections, publicity materials and fundraising events.

5. Efficiency

How will the Department increase the efficiency of its operations and improve the management of its resources?

Our department is fully committed to organizing around a set of principles that will increase our enrollment numbers and our numbers of majors/minors. This necessitates that we streamline our programs. We have already taken the first step by asking for authorization to consolidate our six separate degrees into one single degree plan, which offers several concentrations.

New FLL degree, CIP and concentrations:

- B.A. in Foreign Languages and Literatures 16.0101
 - concentration in French
 - concentration in French Education
 - concentration in Hispanic Studies
 - concentration in Hispanic Studies Education
 - concentration in German
 - concentration in German Education
 - new concentration in Global Studies

Students in the current majors will experience no disruption in their programs of study during the transition to these merged degree programs. Individuals in these degree programs will be allowed to complete their degrees under the current structure. There will be no costs associated with this shift whatsoever.

Once this new consolidated degree program is fully operational, we will launch a Global Studies concentration. This concentration—including its large-enrollment intro class and upper level seminar classes—will be staffed by our current resources, and we will restructure existing curricula to allow for that staffing. This means that ultimately overall enrollment numbers will continue to move up. Our management of resources will be improved by increasing numbers of majors and cutting time-to-degree without any financial added costs.

State Unit Objective(s): To consolidate six degree programs into one unified degree program, create Global Studies concentration and reorganize program structure so that faculty are teaching a greater number of students overall.

Identify Metric(s): Number of degree programs in department.

Specify Unit Action(s): Degrees in French, French Education, German, German Education, Hispanic Studies, Hispanic Studies Education will become concentrations within a unified Foreign Languages and Literatures degree. Global Studies concentration will maximize SCH production by shifting faculty further toward large-enrollment classes.

6. Unexploited Opportunities

What 1-2 unexploited opportunities (not already identified above) hold the greatest promise for advancing the Department's mission?