

AAC response to the Program Review Modern Languages

The Modern Languages Program is housed within the Humanistic Studies program and offers majors and minors (both teaching and nonteaching) in French, German and Spanish as well as courses in other languages through a variety of novel exchange programs. The Program also contributes to UWGB's General Education curriculum as well as other disciplines across the university. It shares the Humanistic Studies program goals of "promoting the acquisition of communication skills, the ability to closely analyze complex texts and ideas, knowledge of a broad spectrum of world cultures and sensitivity to values and socio-cultural issues.

The programs interaction with both the university and greater Green Bay community is laudatory. Its faculty serve as translators and interpreters for individuals and businesses both on and off campus. They offer outreach and evening/Saturday courses lectures and cultural events to community members, as well as study abroad and internship experiences for UWGB students. All three majors/minors have a strong associations with area high schools and the language teachers affiliated with those schools.

It is clear that the faculty in the program are constantly seeking new ways to expand cultural sensitivities to UW GB students by developing new international minors and enhancing study abroad opportunities, despite the fact that there is no language requirement for students and program resources are scarce.

Challenges:

The last Modern Language review was in 2009 and there have been several challenges the program has faced the program since that time. The most significant was the loss of the only full time faculty member in the French program. Consequently, the French major is no longer offered. Although the program is making sure that the remaining majors receive the courses they need to complete their degree, with only two upper level courses offered per semester, the program is unable to recruit new students at the lower levels. Thus, the number of declared majors has decreased from 25 in 2009 to 5 in 2015 (all of whom are juniors or seniors)

While the German program and Spanish programs are currently structurally stronger than the French program, they, too, are resource poor, and the lack of new faculty and difficulty in retaining faculty keeps them from growing to their full potential. The Spanish program is particularly affected since it wishes to launch a Master's program, which could be highly popular in the NEW region, but will be hard-pressed to succeed without jeopardizing either the undergraduate offerings or its strong community outreach without new faculty lines. The German program, too, has high caliber faculty who have been frequently recruited for other administrative and professional development opportunities leaving a number of required courses left to adjuncts or temporary faculty.

Enrollment trends in French have been previously mention. While the review suggests that the number of majors and minors graduating from the German program has remained stable for decades, it is clear from the Institutional and Research statistical data that the number of declared majors has declined since 2009 from 28 majors and 22 minors to 16 majors and 9 minors in 2015. Nine of the 16 majors in 2015 were seniors. The review suggests that this is consistent with data across the country when the national economy is tight and the program expects this trend to reverse, needless to say, it should be closely monitored. Enrollments in the Spanish program have been steady, but with a slight dip in 2015.

Strengths:

Now the good news. Since the last review, the MLP has expanded their study abroad and internship programs, including shorter study abroad options during the January interim session. They have invested in developing new collaborative programs with other disciplines (notably the development of the International Environmental Studies and the Film Studies Minor and there is continued discussion of developing a graduate program in Spanish (this was also mentioned in the last review).

Assessment:

Student learning outcomes follow those of the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Assessment is primarily conducted through course exams, and an on-going assessment embedded in daily classroom instruction. Teaching majors are also required to follow DPI requirements. A more formal assessment program was initiated in 2013-2014 for the German and Spanish programs. Each of the subsequent three years, the program has assessed different ACFTL benchmarks. It is unclear from the German review how the quantitative results of these assessments have led to curricular changes but several curricular changes were noted for the Spanish Program based on the new assessments (e.g., name change, and the "coaching" system). The French program will begin this type of assessment in 2016-2017.

While both the graduating senior survey and the alumni survey were presented for all programs, response rate was extremely small. For the Spanish program, only 4/10 responded to the graduating senior survey and only one to the alumni survey. Of concern, is that the one person in the alumni survey made mention that "if you could start college over" they would pursue the same major but at a different college. Rates for the German program were also small with only five responding to the graduating senior survey and 3 to the alumni survey. For the three in the alumni survey, two said they would have chosen a different major and one said they would have chosen the same major but at a different school. Response rate was better for the Spanish program, (graduating senior survey, n= 25; alumni survey, n=5). While advising and student faculty interactions seemed to be slightly problematic in the alumni survey, they did not appear in the graduating senior survey suggesting work had been done to improve that area.

Strengths –

- Community outreach
- Committed faculty
- Deliberateness of increasing international culture on campus and in the community
- Number of students studying abroad (85% in Spanish Major)
- Success in procuring external sources of funding- two major grants offered by the Wisconsin Humanities Council.

Areas in need of attention

Enrollment concerns in German

The need for a plan for French – it appears soon, there will be no students.

Develop an action plan for Spanish Master's program

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