Two-Year Progress Report
French Studies (BA, MA, PhD)
September 2022

Background

The last review of the Department of French Studies programs was conducted in 2018-19. In January 2019, two external reviewers, Dr. Joël Castonguay-Bélanger (Professor of French and Chair, Department of French, Spanish and Italian, University of British Columbia) and Dr. Kathleen Kellett (Professor of French, Department of Literatures, Languages and Cultures, and Associate Dean of Arts, Undergraduate Studies, Ryerson University) conducted a site visit and prepared a report on the Department's programs. The Department's response and implementation plan were endorsed by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts in November 2019. The Final Assessment Report was approved by Senate in January 2022.

The external reviewers found that all programs (BA, MA, PhD) delivered by the Department of French Studies were in "in overall good standing" and noted that "The Department maintains a high standard of excellence in teaching and research." A total of 8 recommendations were provided by the reviewers, including maximizing human and physical resources, increasing enrollments, and revising curriculum and delivery methods. In response, the Department created a plan outlining the specific actions proposed to address each recommendation as well as a timeline for implementation.

Enrollment over the past two years

	General	Honours	Co-op	Grad
2021-2022 (CURRENT YR)	8	25 +28 FTS*	10	16
2020-2021 (LAST YR)	10	26 +21 FTS*	16	11

*French Teaching Specialization

Progress on Implementation Plan
Recommendations

1. Maintain a strong Francophone identity as a stand-alone department while not ruling out interdisciplinary initiatives with other departments in areas of shared interests.

    Status: in progress

Details: While the Department seeks to preserve its identity as French-speaking unit within the Faculty, it is keenly aware of the need for increased cooperation with other departments. Since the site visit, French Studies has become involved in the interdisciplinary Cultural Identities Minor, with several French (FR) courses included in this program. The Department is also actively taking part in the creation of the proposed Major in Cultural Identities. In addition, a faculty member will begin teaching in the Arts First program starting in Fall 2022.

2. Human resources and academic governance: Provide longer-term contracts to staff; review the job grade and position descriptions of staff; better integrate permanent staff as student advisors and website administrators. Mental health training should be undertaken. Succession planning should take into account upcoming retirements, including that of the French instructor at St. Jerome's University. Administrative tasks and committee work should be assigned in a more transparent manner and better communication is advised.

Status:
HR Staff: **completed**
HR Faculty: **in progress**
Administrative Tasks: **completed**

Details: The staff positions have had less turnover since the return of a staff member from a secondment. In Fall 2019, the Chair and Administrative Manager met with the Faculty of Arts Executive Officer to discuss the staff position descriptions and USG levels. We requested that the "Exceptional verbal and written communication skills in French and English" qualification (removed in the standardization of staff position descriptions in 2018) be added back to the job descriptions. This was done by Human Resources but did not result in a USG review. Permanent staff are now fully involved in various administrative tasks including advising and web administration. The Chair, Associate Chairs and staff undertake mental health training such as QPR, More Feet on the Ground, and Making Spaces.

St. Jerome's has not yet determined how it will replace the recently-retired Dr. Kerry Lappin-Fortin in the long term, but it remains fully committed to providing all the resources necessary to meet its equity targets in French, normally by offering 3-4 course sections per year, depending on enrolment.

The current chair (since July 1, 2019) consults all faculty members (via email) to request input regarding the service roles they might be willing to undertake. Service roles are distributed based on interest, availability, and other responsibilities. The Chair reviews possible service assignments with the Associate Chairs and circulates a list of assignments at

the beginning of each academic year. This list includes mandate terms of two years for Associate Chair positions, while all other positions are updated annually. Since 2019-20, most service tasks are being undertaken in teams of two, in order to give more colleagues exposure to a variety of tasks and foster collaborative work.

3. Student Advising: A placement test should be created to facilitate undergraduate advising or the department should provide appropriate benchmarks for students to better measure their abilities. More workshops for graduate students are encouraged, as well as improved graduate student advising.

Status:
Placement test: **non adopted**
Benchmarks: **completed**
Graduate Advising: **completed**

Details: The Department feels the preparation of a placement test to be unnecessary and burdensome. The most common placement questions do not concern which *level* of course, but rather which particular course to take: FR250 (oral French) or FR203 (French phonetics), both at the same level, but serving different purposes. These types of questions would not be resolved by a placement test. Benchmark information for placement on the Department website has been rendered more visible. General placement rules also appear at the top of all course syllabi with detailed placement information appearing on all first- and second-year language course syllabi. These guidelines capture a variety of prior experiences in French in the form of a chart: absolute beginner, grade 9 French, grade 10 or 11 French, Grade 12 Core/Extended/Immersion French, IB French. New benchmark information with respect to the European Common Language Framework has been added to the website. Master syllabi for multi-section language courses were also added to the website. Course requisite information was updated in the 2019-20 Calendar. In 2019, the Department created a French Studies Undergraduate email address to centralize all requests for help regarding appropriate course choices, as well as any other questions. This email is monitored by both a staff member and the Associate Chair, Undergraduate.

The Department offers an orientation day for graduate students, and a mandatory teaching workshop/year and has organized writing workshops for graduate students. In spring term 2020, the Department updated its Graduate Studies website, making it easier to navigate and find essential information about comprehensive exams, the thesis, scholarship opportunities, etc. The Department bases its practices on the Guidelines for Graduate Research and Supervision produced by the Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs Office. All students fill out a progress report once a year and a yearly committee meeting of all members and the student is required. In addition to written exams, the sequence of comprehensive examinations requires two oral exams involving all committee members. This structure actively engages all

committee members in the early stages of the thesis research and provides encouragement and detailed feedback at a crucial stage in the process. Regular meetings with the supervisor, several times per term, are encouraged. The Associate Chair of Graduate Studies also reaches out to every graduate student at least twice a term to make sure they are receiving the support they need.

4. Enrollments, Recruitment and Retention: at the Undergraduate level, the website should be improved and updated, the Department should use waitlists for courses, organize career workshops for students, and create French courses for special purposes (e.g. French in popular culture). At the Graduate level: the website should be redesigned and kept up-to-date and the Department should consider cooperation with other graduate programs at the University of Waterloo. The Department should better liaise with the central recruitment office.

Status:
Website update at undergrad and grad level: **completed**
Use of waitlists**: completed**
Career workshops: **in progress**
Cooperation with other graduate programs: **completed**
Liaising with central recruitment: **completed**
Creation of new courses in popular culture: **incomplete**

Details: The Department has redesigned and updated both the undergraduate (Fall 2020) and graduate (Spring 2020) websites and uses waitlists for courses. In 2019, the Department took part in the Languages Career Boost Day. Due to the pandemic, no further career events have been organized. French Studies graduate students can take one seminar in English in another department as part of their program. While some departments permit up to two extra-departmental courses, French Studies limits this possibility to one course in order to maximize the students' work in the French language, as developing advanced skills in both written and oral French is a key feature of the graduate programs. We actively promote the Certificate in University Language Teaching program. Graduate students participate in interdepartmental research activities, when such opportunities arise (e.g., a conference in linguistics organized in the summer 2019 by the Department in collaboration with St. Jerome's University and the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies). The Department has a good working relationship with the Arts Recruitment Office. The Associate Chair, Graduate Studies met with the Graduate Recruitment Officer in Fall 2021 and French Studies was subsequently promoted on Google searches for grad programs in the discipline with a paid ad. With the help of the Arts Recruitment Office, we are in the process of updating a new physical one-pager with a digital, accessible component. The Department has not been able to develop any new popular culture courses. However, in Fall 2019 the Department undertook a significant revision of the sequence

of second-year online literature/culture courses, adding interactive exercises to each. Factors affecting course development will be addressed later in this report.

5. Space: Better use could be made of the space to which the Department currently has access, particularly the language laboratory space. The Department's concerns about scheduling conflicts for the undergraduate course FR250 should be resolved in consultation with the Arts Computing Office, the Scheduling Office and the Dean of Arts Office. Given the need for more space for faculty research, most notably for online course development as well for the CRC Chair's research, the Department should consider collaboration with other units across campus to share space, with each unit having its own assigned hours. It may even be advisable to consider renting shared space off campus.

Status:
Lab scheduling: **completed**
Shared space: **in progress**
Rent space off campus: **N/A**

Details: As of October 1, 2020, the position of Language Computing Consultant within the Arts Computing Office (ACO) has been eliminated. Scheduling and use of the lab as well as the hiring of lab TAs will be done by the Departmental Administrative Manager in French Studies, effectively eliminating the conflict. French Studies will coordinate with the other language departments regarding the use of lab space for the French Writing Centre, once a wide-spread return to campus has been approved. The Department does not have the financial means to rent space off campus.

6. Curriculum development, undergraduate: The Department should develop more courses in French for practical purposes (e.g. translation, Business French, sports and leisure, popular culture, applied linguistics, second language acquisition) as well as more conversation courses at the 3rd and 4th year level. The Department should also consider the development of service courses in English. The Department should aim for more predictable rotation of courses and greater transparency for students regarding course selection. The Department should strongly promote the program at the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi. The Department should build upon its strengths in online course development to create more online courses. The Department should develop a database of co-op placements in French.

Status:
Development of new courses: **incomplete**
Course rotation: **completed**

Promotion of the UQAC program: **completed**
Development of more online courses: **in progress**
Database of French co-op positions: **in progress**

Details: More information on online course development will be provided later in this report. Course rotation follows a schedule and this has been rendered more visible on the website. Virtual information sessions for the UQAC program were held in Fall 2020 and 2021 terms, but due to the pandemic no students went on exchange in 2021. The Department invites prospective students to meet with those who have already participated in the exchange, and the Undergraduate Studies Coordinator guides students through the application process and serves as a liaison to UQAC. All French Studies Honours programs are now fully available with co-op, and students also have the option of completing an EDGE certificate. In September 2019, the Chair and Associate Chair, Undergraduate Studies met with Cooperative Education to discuss French-language placements. The Co-op office has an already-existing network of contacts both in the immediate community and further afield (e.g., Ottawa). The local availability of bilingual positions is very small (almost non-existent). The Co-op office already does track co-op opportunities in French. One of the difficulties for French Studies students, particularly in their initial co-op placements, is that there are also a significant number of native French speakers who are students in other programs and faculties, who may apply for and obtain positions requiring fluency in French. Our students are therefore competing with native speakers for the relatively rare positions that require French.

   7. Curriculum development, Graduate Studies: the Department should develop courses in applied linguistics, develop more online graduate courses and strictly maintain the distinction between upper-level undergraduate courses and graduate courses.

Status:
Graduate courses in applied linguistics: **not adopted**
Development of graduate level online courses: **in progress**
Maintaining division between upper-level UG and grad course: **incomplete**

Details: Applied Linguistics is not a field of expertise of any colleague and therefore not an area in which we can develop graduate courses. More information on online course development will be provided later in this report. It is simply not financially viable to maintain the division between UG courses and grad seminars in the spring term, when only a few graduate students may need to take a seminar to advance in their program. In such cases, spring seminars are "held with" an advanced-level literature course.

   8. New Initiatives: The review team encourages the Department to continue launching new Initiatives designed to make the best use of the faculty's expertise such as an online

professional diploma or MA for French teachers or open-enrollment courses for the purposes of adult education.

Status: incomplete

Details: During the pandemic, the Department has not attempted to launch any new programs. There are currently no plans to develop new programs solely within the department, but French Studies is now actively involved in the creation of the new Cultural Identities program and will contribute new courses to this plan.

Circumstances that have altered the original implementation plan

The COVID 19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the Department's ability to launch new initiatives or to consider creating new courses (e.g., new service courses in English or new popular culture courses in French) or new programs. Prior to the pandemic, the Department had a robust offering of true online CEL courses, but very few upper-level online courses and only one online graduate seminar (in methods and professional communication). Faculty members have had to mount upper-level courses and graduate seminars for remote delivery, and colleagues teaching entirely online courses experimented with various formats for integrating some virtual contact and French conversation practice into these courses. Although a committee had been struck in Fall 2019 to look at the creation of new service courses in English, this project has been put on hold to allow faculty members to mount existing courses required in all plans in a remote format. In light of the proposed creation of a new Cultural Identities program, French Studies will prioritize the creation of new courses in English for this plan.

Significant developments or initiatives that have arisen since the program review process

The experience and expertise gained in mounting remote courses has resulted in new initiatives for developing existing courses. Two upper-level courses are now being offered in blended format and a third upper-level course are being prepared as a new CEL course using materials prepared for remote delivery. The Department has continued to run its monthly guest speakers' series online and may choose to continue to run at least some talks online after the return to campus, as several of these virtual events have reached a wider and even international audience. Similarly, the Department has found that the French Writing Centre works well in an online format. Students can share their screen to consult with the graduate student volunteers who provide assistance in French to students working on essays, and we have seen greater uptake of the service in a convenient online format. The Department will continue to capitalize on what we have learned during the pandemic to provide students with different options for courses and for access to events and services we provide.

Updated Implementation Plan

	Recommendations	Proposed Actions	Responsibility for Leading and Resourcing (if applicable) the Actions	Timeline for addressing Recommendations
1.	Maintain a strong Francophone identity while engaging in interdisciplinary initiatives with other departments.	Work to preserve distinctiveness and strong Francophone identity. Be actively engaged in the interdisciplinary Cultural Identities program initiative.	French Studies	In progress
2.	Provide longer-term contracts to staff; review the job grade and position descriptions of staff; better integrate permanent staff as student advisors and website administrators. Mental health training should be undertaken. Engage in succession planning re: upcoming retirement at SJU. Assign administrative tasks and committee work in a more transparent manner with better communication is advised.	Add bilingual qualifications to position descriptions	Chair	Completed
		Review USG grades.	Chair, Arts Executive Officer, Human Resources	Not Completed
		Undertake Mental Health Training	Chair, Associate Chairs, Staff	In progress
		Consult with SJU re: succession planning after retirement there	Chair, Chair of French and Italian at SJU	In progress SJU has an ongoing commitment to meet equity targets.
		Consult colleagues re: service task preferences; adopt a team approach to service tasks; apply two-year mandates to Associate Chair positions.	Chair	Ongoing
3.	Create a placement test; provide better benchmarks. More workshops for graduate students are encouraged, as well as improved graduate student advising.	Placement test not deemed useful	French Studies	Not adopted
		Create better benchmarks	French Studies, Undergrad	Completed

		Run workshops for grad students Improve graduate advising	French Studies, Grad	
4.	Improve website, use waitlists for courses, organize career workshops for students, and create French courses for special purposes (e.g. French in popular culture). At the Graduate level: redesign website, consider cooperation with other graduate programs at the University of Waterloo. The Department should better liaise with the central recruitment office.	Update website	French Studies	Completed
		Create waitlists	French Studies	Completed
		Organize career workshops in conjunction with other language departments	French Studies and other language departments	One activity organized in Fall 2019; revisit in Fall 2022, assuming a normal return to campus after the pandemic when we can have group activities again.
		Connect with Arts Recruitment office	French Studies, grad	
		Create new courses	French Studies	Incomplete - Postponed until after the pandemic and return to normal working conditions; new courses to be linked to new Cultural Identities major potentially starting in 2025.
5.	Space: resolve conflict over scheduling language-lab use, make better use of this	Improve Lab scheduling	French Studies	Completed

	space. Collaborate with other departments to find or rent research space.	Make better use of Lab space	French Studies in collaboration with other language departments	Fall 2022, assuming a normal return to campus
		Not financially possible to rent research space	French Studies	
				N/A
6.	Develop more courses in French for practical purposes and service courses in English. Aim for more predictable rotation of courses and greater transparency. Promote the program at the UQAC. Create more online courses, develop a database of co-op placements in French.	Develop new courses	French Studies	Incomplete: will revisit Post-pandemic, in conjunction with development of new Cultural Identities program, Fall 2025
		Announce course offering/rotation on website	French Studies, Undergrad	
		Organizes info sessions for UQAC program	French Studies, Undergrad	
		Develop more online courses	French Studies	Completed
		Create database of French co-op positions	Co-op office	Completed – takes place every fall
				In progress
				In progress
7.	Develop graduate courses in applied linguistics; develop more online graduate courses; strictly maintain the distinction between upper-level undergraduate courses and graduate courses.	No course in applied linguistics at grad level as does not correspond to any faculty member's area of expertise	French Studies	Not adopted
			French Studies	

		Create more online grad courses: possibility of using materials created during the pandemic to create blended or online grad courses	French Studies	In progress; to be revisited in Winter 2023
		Not financially feasible to run separate grad seminars and upper-level UG courses in spring term; must be "held with"		Non adopted
8.	New Initiatives: consider the creation of an online professional diploma or MA for French teachers or open-enrollment courses for the purposes of adult education.	Exploration of new programs/diplomas put on hold during the pandemic. Instead, use materials created for remote delivery to increase number of online courses offered and to create blended courses for first time.	French Studies	Incomplete: creation of new programs. Completed: creation of 1 new CEL course FR332 (first offer Fall 2022) and 2 new blended courses: FR452 and FR473 (first offer Winter 2022).

The Department Chair/Director, in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty shall be responsible for monitoring the Implementation Plan.

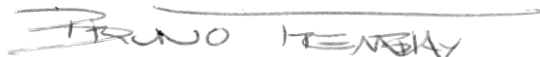Date of next program review: **2025-2026.**

Signatures of Approval:

[signature: Tara Collington]

February 11, 2022

Tara Collington, French Studies

Chair/Director   Date

[signature: Bruno Tremblay]

Bruno Tremblay, Italian & French Studies   28 September 2022

Chair, Department of Italian and French Studies, SJU   Date

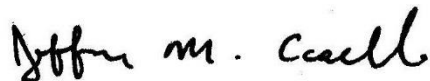Faculty Dean   Date

Note: AFIW programs fall under the Faculty of ARTS; however, the Dean does not have fiscal control nor authority over staffing and administration of the program.

[signature: Dan DeVidi]

June 10, 2022

Associate Vice-President, Academic   Date
(For undergraduate and augmented programs)

[signature: John M. Cacell]

August 17, 2022

Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs   Date
(For graduate and augmented programs)