

Two Year Progress Report for Germanic and Slavic Studies (BA, MA, PhD) November 2015

This report follows on the 2012-13 augmented review for programs in Germanic and Slavic Studies. After the review, several meetings and discussions addressing the implementation plan have taken place. Most notably, the department held a retreat in April 2013 as well as several departmental and working group meetings, and had discussions and visits with our partners on programs at the University of Mannheim, Germany. The current report summarizes the outcomes, and was prepared under the direction of the chair with input from faculty members in the department.

The first part of this report directly addresses the assessors' recommendations as stated in their report from the 2012-13 augmented review. It is followed by additional information regarding the progress achieved on the implementation plan that was outlined in the departmental response to the assessors' report from March 2013, in which the department translated recommendations into concrete goals.

Recommendation 1: A faculty hire of heritage language research or immigrant identity, possibly focused on Slavic languages and cultures, possibly a Canada Research Chair to strengthen the emerging focus on multilingualism and multiliteracy.

Status: Not done.

Details: The Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies strongly supports this recommendation because it would anchor the department's research and teaching direction (multilingualism, transculturality and intercultural studies). A position in Slavic Studies would also stabilize Russian and East European Studies at UW. Funding for a position is tied to resources and decisions at the university level.

Recommendation 2: Sign agreement for undergraduate student exchange with Tomsk Polytechnic University.

Status: Not done.

Details: In discussing this with several constituencies (department, faculty Dean), it was decided to not to pursue this any more.

Recommendation 3: Institute undergraduate scholarships (\$2,000/semester) for study abroad.

Status: In progress.

Details: This item is now part of the fundraising campaign in Arts.

Recommendation 4: Ease burden on overworked departmental staff.

Status: Partly done.

Details: Adjustments were made to shift some work to faculty members (e.g. website, recruitment, marketing). Increasing the staff positions from 1.5 FTE back to 2 FTE has not happened but has been discussed with the Dean of Arts.

Recommendation 5: Increase the quality of classrooms, especially multi-media resources, and make progress on 'language commons' initiative.

Status: Pending

Details: The department is working with other units to develop a plan for a "language commons" (a multi-media "active learning" classroom) to be considered by the Faculty as part of its development plans.

Recommendation 6: Institute film budget.

Status: Done and continuing.

Details: The department received the requested yearly \$500 budget from the Dean of Arts for two years and will continue to request funds as needed. A personal film library donation by one of GSS's professors (Alice Kuzniar) was made.

Recommendation 7: Sessional instructors need better computers.

Status: Done.

Details: The possibility for a sessional (online) instructor to borrow a departmental laptop for use during the teaching terms has been arranged, and such arrangements will continue to be made whenever possible. Stand-alone office computers were up-graded.

The following provides an elaboration on the goals the department developed in its implementation plan from March 2013 as part of the response to the assessors' report. These goals were encouraged by the assessors' more general recommendation for the department to "take a much more prominent place in its intellectual context," especially with regard to the solidification of the multilingualism/ multiliteracy/ multiculturalism theme.

1) Progress achieved on the various action items in the original implementation plan (as outlined in the response to the assessors' report submitted in March 2013):

With regard to the direction towards the *multilingualism theme*, encouraged by the assessors, this perspective has been integrated more strongly into current undergraduate courses (GER 211, GER 212) and the department created a new course (GER 200: Transcultural German Studies). On the graduate level, we have developed some new courses that are tailored to this focus, especially for the MA in Intercultural German Studies; e.g. GER 623 (Transnationalism in Film & Literature) and GER 612 (Multilingualism and Intercultural Communication).

Multilingualism (and likewise transculturalism and intercultural studies) has become a stronger

interest of faculty and student research (e.g. research on intercultural experiences in study abroad with the help of LITE grants received by a team of colleagues, and MA/PhD projects on transcultural literature and film), and a focus of guest speakers in the GSS lecture series. As part of our multilingualism/internationalisation strategy, we have increased our ongoing visiting professor exchange with the University of Mannheim to 3 exchanges over the past 4 years.

In terms of **links with other departments**, GSS has continued to teach courses for other units (e.g. Alice Kuzniar for Fine Arts/VCULT and English, Barbara Schmenk for APPLS). The exploration of teaching and research links with other departments is ongoing (e.g. with Women's Studies, due to our department's teaching and research interest in gender; with Fine Arts because of our involvement in the Visual Culture Minor; with other language and culture departments' Chairs; with Medieval Studies due to the hire of Ann Marie Rasmussen who is a medievalist; and with departments that have an interest in linguistics, exploring new program possibilities).

The department has invested considerable effort into **marketing and recruitment**. Graduate recruitment letters were sent to departments across Canada (including new MA posters, and letters with personal quotes by current students). The new PhD Cotutelle with the University of Mannheim (Germany) acquired its first two students. The department has increased its recruitment efforts at the undergraduate level through visits to local schools (e.g. Concordia German Language School), and through increasing our visibility on campus (e.g. by participating in the Study Abroad Fair, and in an Engineering event for local high school students). The departmental website has been improved as a recruitment and communication tool. The department has converted its website to WCMS and added a number of features: profiles of all faculty members and students; news and events listings for all activities taking place in the department; a blog featuring reports on guest lectures and opinion pieces, written primarily by graduate students; and a Twitter feed and Facebook account to keep students, alumni, and friends informed about what is going on in the department.

2) Proposed amended implementation schedule due to circumstances that have altered the original implementation plan and/or make actions no longer appropriate:

The **Multilingualism Conference** was postponed to 2017 due to input wanted by the new Diefenbaker Memorial Chair for German Literary Studies. The previous Diefenbaker Chair (John Smith) vacated the position in 2013; recruitment for the position took place in 2014, and new hire Professor Ann Marie Rasmussen (previously at Duke University) started at UW in January 2015. The REES (Russian and East European Studies) Major was discontinued, since the 2-year definite-term position for Russian ended in 2014, and no replacement was made. No progress was made on the proposed Canada Research Chair in Multilingualism Studies, or on links with international units (e.g. 2plus2 with China); these are tied to resources and decisions at the university level.

3) New initiatives that were not contemplated during the program review progress:

The department started a German Language Summer School for second-year German that was held successfully in 2014 and 2015 at Mannheim (Germany). The Croatian Visiting Lecturer funded by the Croatian government was secured for 5 years until 2017/18 through a Memorandum of Agreement. Some entry graduate scholarships to top up graduate funding for the German program could be secured through fundraising. The department competed for and successfully received two Ontario Universities Online grants in 2014 to develop a third-year German online course in collaboration with Guelph, and online modules for German Studies. The department has started to implement alt-ac/post-ac modules for career awareness in regular workshops for our graduate students, and in UG/MA/PhD courses as part of a Faculty of Arts pilot project. A large number of faculty and graduate students in the department are working together on a research project on German in Waterloo region largely funded by the Waterloo Centre for German Studies. This project has provided important professionalization, research, and writing activity for our graduate students (over 100 interviews conducted and transcribed, and a book publication in progress).