

Institutional Effectiveness Report
Academic Year 2011-2012
Modern Languages

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Mission and Goals

Vision Statement

The Modern Languages Program at Francis Marion University strives to provide the highest quality baccalaureate degree program offered at a small, comprehensive university in the southeastern United States. Accredited at the undergraduate level, more than half of our faculty holds a doctorate in the area in which they teach. Our small classroom environment promotes interaction among students and faculty. We strive to teach students to communicate effectively in the target languages and to develop an understanding and appreciation of foreign cultures and literatures.

Our exchange programs provide students with opportunities for hands-on experience within the target culture and a chance to improve language skills in an immersion environment. We use technology to enhance classroom instruction with interactive, culturally authentic materials.

Mission Statement

The Department of English, Modern Languages, and Philosophy offers a major in Modern Languages with tracks in French, German, and Spanish. Minors and collaterals are also offered in these languages. The department provides the resources for students to acquire proficiency in the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in French, German, and Spanish and to gain knowledge of the culture, the literature, and the civilization of countries where these languages are spoken. Career opportunities for foreign language majors include 1) teaching, 2) international business, 3) translation/interpretation, and 4) professions requiring a University degree with a background in the liberal arts. Modern language majors also frequently seek graduate degrees in foreign languages or related fields.

Objectives

1. Maintain a cohesive curriculum that prepares students for careers in languages-oriented fields, including post-graduate studies.
2. Maintain a cohesive curriculum that by its structure and flexibility prepares students for careers outside of language-oriented fields, including post-graduate studies.
3. Promote and support existing study abroad opportunities for modern language students during their college career.
4. Increase the spectrum of technology available for instruction.
5. Offer experiential learning opportunities through which students may expand their knowledge of foreign cultures and proficiency in the target languages, typically this means either short-term or full-semester courses taken for credit at partner institutions.

Assessment Activities

The Modern Languages program continues to assess itself by reviewing previous goals, evaluation procedures, and by examining staffing and material requirements in order to provide sufficient support for achieving the goals set forth in the Mission Statement. Accurate assessment allows the administration and faculty to set realistic and attainable goals for improvement and program enhancement. Assessment takes the form of an annual review of each faculty member conducted by the Department Chair; student satisfaction is measured by student evaluation data, collected and reported by the University, and student performance is assessed directly by the methods described below.

The Modern Languages Program assesses student performance in a variety of ways. Students completing a Modern Languages major at Francis Marion University must take comprehensive oral and/or written language exams. All elementary and intermediate Spanish students must take comprehensive written exams and oral interviews in order to successfully complete their courses.

French students must pass a nationally standardized Oral Proficiency Interview at the intermediate-advanced level in order to complete the French major.

All elementary and intermediate students of German must pass a series of increasingly difficult examinations in order to receive credit for their course work. Upper level students in all language tracks must compose research papers in the target languages. Outcomes of student participation in experiential learning activities such as study abroad are evaluated by personal interviews and by keeping detailed journals as well as the grades assigned by instructors at our partner institutions.

Although one of the smallest disciplines on campus (five full-time faculty, plus three adjunct faculty), the Modern Languages discipline continues to serve a small but vital portion of student demand. The most heavily populated language remains Spanish, with

French and German following. This reflects normal national trends, however, and should not be interpreted as a reflection on any one language or professor.

Majors

The most recent data (fall 2011) show that there were twenty-four (24) majors in the Modern Languages program. This is slightly less than in the two previous years, but still well about the number of majors just four years ago. The modern language discipline has maintained its viability.

Graduates

In the spring of 2012 three students received degrees in Modern Languages. Additionally, 16.1% of all graduates received the Bachelor of Arts diploma, which requires at least two (2) years of study in one foreign language. Except for the small number of students who test out of the language requirement, the program serves a significant portion of the student population needing a foreign language requirement for graduation. Also a number of students opt for the BA degree in BS/BA alternative programs such as history or psychology.

Improvements in Place

The greatest improvement and one that is vigorously being maintained has been the placement of students in foreign institutions through our international exchange program. Currently our French majors have been strongest here, visiting the University of Caen in northern France on a regular basis for semester-long studies. Additionally, students in German have benefitted from the summer program in German Language and Culture hosted by our exchange partner the University of Applied Sciences in Schmalkalden, Germany. (2013 marks the tenth anniversary of this program that has provided courses for FMU every summer since its inception.) Through a recent agreement with Coastal Carolina University, FMU and CCU students can participate in a combined international program between the offerings of both institutions.

Dr. Kiely of the Spanish program with input from faculty has updated the webpage for the Modern Languages program and maintains it.

Dr. Kiely also completely remodeled the program's bulletin board opposite the entrance to the offices. Emphasis of the bulletin board is on programs offered on campus, exchange and foreign studies opportunities and information concerning graduate programs as well as faculty highlights.

The electronic journal, *South Carolina Modern Language Review*, continues to receive and publish articles and book reviews in the discipline of modern language literature, linguistics, etc. outside of English. Dr. Zahnd serves as editor-in-chief with support from the Modern Languages faculty who serve as readers as well as conduits to outside readers.

The Spanish program was successful in recruiting a tenure-track Assistant Professor with a specialty in Medieval/Renaissance literature.

Planned Improvements

Because of the strength of our Spanish program and the relatively high number of majors within the discipline, the Modern Languages program in conjunction with FMU is still continuing to find an on-going and vital program with a Spanish-language institution, either in Spain or Latin America.