

MODERN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES PROGRAM CONCEPT PAPER

Submitted by the
Department of Modern Languages and Cultures
College of Liberal Arts

I. Proposed B.S. degree in Applied Modern Language and Culture

Department of Modern Languages & Cultures, College of Liberal Arts, RIT

II. Goals and Justification

Degree Program Abstract and Goals

The Department of Modern Languages and Cultures (MLC) proposes a B.S. degree in *Applied Modern Language and Culture* with tracks in Spanish, Japanese, Chinese, French, and German. The degree is not a traditional foreign language degree. This is a new degree proposed by MLC, not a revision of previous concept paper (B.S. in Modern Languages and Cultures). The current degree will train students to gain functional proficiency in the target language and a deep understanding of the target culture; at the same time, students will receive training on how to apply this knowledge in a technological or scientific field, or in business. The degree is offered as a double major from the freshman year, or can be completed as a stand-alone degree. Although any double-major combination is possible at RIT, this double-major explicitly complements majors in Computer Science, Engineering, and Business through courses addressing the needs of these students. Our goal is to educate students who actively apply their knowledge of language and culture in their discipline.

Justification

A National Trend in Double-Majoring and Some Roadblocks

Double-majors attract ambitious students with clear goals in their lives. The report by Pitt & Tepper (2012) clearly demonstrates the advantages to double-majoring: double-majoring students tend to be more creative and active in campus life. Upon graduation, they feel two majors significantly enhanced their critical thinking, argumentation, and professional skills. In almost all types of double-majors surveyed, students with double-majors earn higher incomes.

Despite these advantages, many institutions in the United States do not offer opportunities that allow students to effectively pursue double-majors. Part of the reason is general lack of communication between advisors for the two degrees hinders smooth progress toward both degrees. Furthermore, traditionally double-majors are declared during the students' sophomore year, and some during the junior year (Pitt & Tepper, 2012), which often leads to lengthening time toward graduation.

Double-major with Modern Language and Culture and Needs at RIT

Education in a modern (foreign) language and culture develops students' abilities to think critically and analytically and to communicate knowledge and understanding effectively (Charon et. al, 2009). It will equip students with cross-cultural literacy, which prepares them to live and work in a global society. It comes as no surprise that modern language is one of the areas in which students commonly double-major. Crucially, however, students who double-majored often report a lack of connection between their study of a modern language and their other major discipline (Hertel and Dings, 2014; Pitt & Tepper, 2012), indicating that the current format of modern (foreign) language education in the United States does not effectively address students' career plans. Furthermore while business and social sciences are popular for double-major with modern languages, double-majoring in a modern language and a technology degree in the United States remains uncommon presumably due to the lack of opportunities.

Students at RIT demonstrate strong needs to learn language and culture along with their major discipline. Approximately one thousand students currently pursue a minor or an immersion in a modern language other than English at RIT. Seventy percent of students surveyed take a language because they believe it will benefit their future career (Yamashita, Chavasse, Armengot, and Forbes, 2013). Despite the interest, the number of courses students can take in each language area through general education is limited to a handful of courses at most.

RIT as a Leader in Applied Modern Language and Culture Education

The proposed B.S. degree in *Applied Modern Language and Culture* will be one of the first programs in the nation to effectively address students' curricular needs in in-depth language and cultural training and their application to their technical or professional disciplines. This degree is not a traditional foreign language degree. While it will provide opportunities for students to pursue an in-depth study of language and culture with rigorous coursework and international experience, it will also enable students to apply the knowledge in their career-oriented disciplines such as Computer Science, Engineering, and Business, through applied language courses, capstone research seminars, and work abroad. Because the concept realized in this degree is groundbreaking and highly regarded, the activities involved in the development of the degree were selected as a project funded by the Department of Education in 2014 (\$369,884).

III. Description of the New Program

III.1 Overview

The B.S. in Applied Modern Language and Culture will have five language tracks: Spanish, Japanese, Chinese, French, and German. These languages are selected to respond to the interests and needs expressed by students nationally and locally at RIT. While it can be a stand-alone degree, it is designed to be effectively offered as part of a double-major especially in conjunction with Computer Science, Engineering, and Business. Students will be clearly informed during recruitment of the possibility of pursuing a double major with a modern language starting in their freshman year.

The degree has three components that make it a unique program both in the region and among benchmarking institutions:

- 1) It provides extensive training in the target language and culture, and their application to a secondary discipline.
- 2) It includes a strong experiential learning component pursued through courses, international experience such as study abroad, co-op abroad, or co-op in a global company.
- 3) It has a clear focus on career education and student success in a global workforce.

III.2 Summary of the New Program Curriculum

The curriculum includes extensive training in language and culture as core requirements. Students progress in learning target language and culture throughout the four years.¹ They learn the culture associated with the target language notably through the analysis of texts, media, and the study of linguistics. The curriculum also includes applied language courses, i.e., *Language for Science and Technology* (e.g., German for Science and Technology) and *Language for Professional Purposes (Business)* (e.g., Chinese for Business), as well as capstone research seminars that embrace and integrate both disciplines in a project. The curriculum requires at least a semester of international experience, such as study abroad, or work abroad to replace the co-op of the partnering degree for those who qualify.

The curriculum (total credits 120) is structured as follows:

- 38 credits of study in the target language and culture including applied language courses (of which 8 credits are at the beginning level taken as general education for true beginners)
- 30 credits of free electives applied towards the partnering degree; or a secondary language or technical/professional minors for single-majors
- 52 credits of general education shared by the partnering degree
- At least one term of international experience, preferably during the junior year: study abroad, co-op abroad, or co-op in an international company in the United States

The learning outcomes for the major include (1) gaining deep understanding of the language, people, and culture of the chosen track (2) applying the knowledge of language and culture effectively in cross-cultural communication (3) integrating professional skills such as presentations and negotiations in international and cross-cultural settings (4) applying knowledge of technical language to their professional careers, and (5) thinking critically and analytically, and communicating effectively.

III.3. Uniqueness of the Degree

The degree in the current proposal is most likely the first of its kind. Currently there are three

¹ Students may start their language sequence at RIT either from the level of beginning I or from a higher level, depending on the previous knowledge of the language or training in high school or from another college. In the latter case they will have more room (up to 8 more credits) in General Education shared by the partnering degree.

universities (Northern Arizona, Rhode Island, and Valparaiso) we identified in the United States that offer double-majors with a language and engineering (and some with business). However their curricula, which is simply a combination of traditional engineering and language courses, do not integrate the language with the partnering degree as this program fully does through applied language courses, capstone research, study abroad, and work abroad. None offer a double-major with disciplines in Computer Science and Information Technology.

III.4. Length of Time for Graduation

To all freshman entering to this program, a curricular table (Table 1A), which is created in close consultation with advisors of the partnering degree, is presented during their scheduling for the first semester, in order to facilitate effective progress toward two degrees and a long-range planning for the term of international experience. Some exemplary double-majors with degrees such as those in Golisano (BS in Networking and Systems Administration, BS in Information Technology, in SCB (BS in International Business), and in CLA (BS in Economics, BS in Political Science) demonstrate that students may complete two degrees without extending time toward graduation, even with the inclusion of studying abroad for a semester. Flexibility built into the international experience and carefully dovetailed degrees in two disciplines made available from the freshman year reduce the possibility of extended time toward graduation in most double-majoring cases.

III.5. Cost for International Experience and Partnership with Overseas Universities

The program highly recommends a semester abroad during the Fall or Spring semester, in order to immerse students in the target culture as well as to give training for advanced language. MLC intends to apply for grants to such as FLAS (Foreign Language and Area Studies, Department of Education) federal grant to defray the cost of study abroad for those that have limited income. If it is extremely difficult for students to do the study abroad in Fall or Spring, financially or time wise, we accept summer study abroad or international experience through work abroad or a co-op in international companies in the US or Canada. Depending on the partnering degree, we maximize the use of Global campuses for abroad experience. Business students studying abroad at Beijing Jiaotong University might be an example. Students in Information Technology may progress their study at ACMT. We will also encourage students to use opportunities of studying abroad with partnership universities (ex. KIT for Japanese, Rennes/INSA for French, Dessau for German).

IV. Fit with RIT Academic Portfolio Blueprint and Strategic Directions

The current degree is consistent with the 2015-25 Strategic Plan and the Academic Blueprint for New Degrees. The learning of language and culture in our program will develop students' deep understanding of and appreciation for diverse cultures and make them excel in inclusiveness. The degree contributes to internationalizing the curriculum, and it enhances students' experiential learning, two key elements in the Strategic Plan and the Academic Blueprint. The integration of language within technical and professional fields, as realized in applied language courses such as *Language for Science and Technology* or *Language for Professional Purposes*, and in work abroad, will facilitate students' active application of language and culture in their career and

strengthen student success. The degree inherently includes experiential and innovative learning, as our language courses strongly emphasize a communicative approach and the program incorporates study abroad and work abroad. Activities in the capstone research course will foster innovation, research, and creativity on the part of students and faculty. Finally the double-majoring and collaborative design of applied language courses maximally utilizes RIT's organizational agility between academic units and enables students to gain a set of multiple skills not attainable in other institutions.

The degree will attract ambitious students with high aptitude who would like to gain knowledge and skills that are not easily attainable elsewhere. It will enhance the enrollment of existing majors as well, because of its effective system of assisting students in the pursuit of double-majors and by offering experiential learning through study abroad and work abroad.

V. Synergy with Other Programs

Applied language courses, whose development was funded by the Department of Education grant, will be collaboratively developed by the faculty in MLC and those in the fields of engineering, information science and technology, and business. Miller chairs of International Education in the colleges of GCCIS and CAST, and a senior faculty member in SCB, who also has international experience through his discipline, have begun to work with faculty in MLC to create those courses.

Effectively pursuing double-majors requires close communication with partnering degrees on curricular design. Discussions with potential partnering degrees for double-majors already begun include Departments of Information Science and Technology, Game Design (GCCIS), International Business at the Saunders College of Business (SCB), and College of Engineering (KGOE), and most programs in College of Liberal Arts (CLA). All these units showed strong support for the partnership. With most exemplary cases in all four colleges, co-curricular double-major curricula (Table 1As) have been drafted and they confirm the on-time graduation by double-majoring with those degrees. Double-majoring with other disciplines such as health science, hospitality, and imaging arts, has been suggested and MLC looks forward to engaging in conversation for potential partnership with those units.

For the study abroad component, MLC will work closely with the Study Abroad Office and the Office of International Education to ensure that students will effectively make progress in their study of language and culture at the advanced level while abroad. For students who qualify for work abroad, the faculty in MLC will work closely with the Office of Cooperative Education and Career Services to identify co-op opportunities in the target country. The faculty members of MLC have started a discussion to expand work abroad contacts with the Office of Cooperative Education and Career Services to facilitate work abroad. Both offices have been contacted and expressed their strong support for the current proposal.

VI. Administrative Structure for the New Program

Each language track will have a designated language program coordinator who will oversee the

Individual Advisement Plans (IAP). The program language coordinator, along with the chair, will maintain regular communication with the departments of the partnering degrees to ensure smooth progress toward completion of the degree. A staff member in MLC will assist program language coordinators to communicate with departments of students' partnering degrees on curricular matters. The staff member will also work closely with the Office of Cooperative Education and Career Services and the departments of students' partnering degrees to assist students in finding work abroad.

VII. Enrollment Management Expectations, Placement, and Sustainment

The Excel concept paper cost estimate form shows additional information on the costs and revenues associated with this new degree. The projection in the first two years reflects the new student enrollment in two language tracks; the number from the third year reflects expansion to five tracks. The analysis shows a new faculty hire each in year 1 (2017), year 3 (2019), year 4 (2020), and year 5 (2021). Given these and other program start-up costs, the program shows a deficit in year 1, but that turns to a surplus in year 2. By year 5, the program shows a total surplus of \$493,436.22 (see Table 1).

Fiscal Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Avg Enrollment: Students (FT + PT)	6	12	26	39	47	130
Part-time Faculty expense	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Full-time faculty expense	\$ 112,147.96	\$ 114,390.92	\$ 233,357.48	\$ 357,036.95	\$ 485,570.25	\$ 1,302,503.56
Total Expenses	\$ 252,373.34	\$ 241,937.67	\$ 465,653.54	\$ 627,080.97	\$ 794,767.79	\$ 2,381,813.32
Revenue (Net of Aid)	\$ 147,291.72	\$ 295,747.05	\$ 682,146.67	\$ 1,071,824.93	\$ 1,288,204.01	\$ 3,485,214.39
CONTRIBUTION MARGIN Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ (105,081.62)	\$ 53,809.38	\$ 216,493.13	\$ 444,743.96	\$ 493,436.22	\$ 1,103,401.07

Table 1. Report summary from RIT Concept Paper Cost Estimate Form.

Note that this analysis is based on new students, and it does not include incremental students who may be attracted to RIT due to a possible double major with AMLC. Estimation of students for a unique degree concept is always a challenge. In a comparable program, at University of Rhode Island in 2013, there were 146 students majoring in one of the following four languages as the first major: Chinese, Spanish, German, and French. Additionally 394 students were majoring as a second major in those languages, with International Engineering or International Business as a first major. In addition, a much greater percentage of these double majors are women compared to their non-double-majoring engineering students, which indicates the current degree will most likely contribute to gender diversity on campus.

In addition to attracting diverse students in STEM and business fields, the degree will serve as a valuable retention tool. While there is little data to perform precise numerical assessment, the sheer number of students currently minoring and having an immersion in modern languages at RIT (approximately one thousand) indicates the interest of students in language and culture. Unfortunately, the current budget model for concept papers does not allow for consideration of retention as an important revenue generating aspect of a proposed program.

Note that even with the current estimate, this program can be provided at low cost while creating a surplus for RIT. Most of our courses are currently offered through the general education

program, and therefore there is some capacity to absorb new students into those courses, thereby making the modest costs associated with educating these new students very low.

VIII. Impact on Resources

Five tracks of language will begin to be offered in two phases; two tracks (Spanish and Japanese) will start in 2016, and by 2018 tracks in Chinese, French, and German will start. Currently, the Spanish Program has two tenure-line faculty members, and the Japanese Program has one tenure-line faculty member and two lecturers. There are two tenure-lines in French, one in Chinese, and one lecturer in German. The majority of the courses for the degree requirement in each language are already offered. For major students, we will add five new upper-level courses in each of the five tracks, including the applied language courses and capstone seminar as presented above. We will need additional lines to offer these new courses while continuing to provide courses for general education, immersions, and minors. Also needed is a 0.5 staff member line. This staff member will assist the department chair and program coordinators in managing the program and supporting work abroad.

IX. Conclusion

The B.S. degree in Applied Modern Language and Culture provides intensive, focused, international education to students in today's multilingual and multicultural global society. It is innovative, unique, and cost-effective. It is consistent with RIT's mission and student demand, and offers a dynamic international dimension to current and future programs at RIT. This degree will be a strong and successful addition to RIT's degree portfolio.

References

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Appendix A: Summary of Community Input and Response to Input

(to be added later)

From: Edward A Lincoln <ealfad@rit.edu>
Subject: Additional enrollment projection for AMLC
Date: February 27, 2015 at 9:50:49 AM EST
To: Jacqueline Taylor <jrtatg@rit.edu>, Hiroko Yamashita <hxygsl@rit.edu>
Cc: "James G. Miller (EMCS VP)" <jgm6527@rit.edu>, Daniel Shelley <drsadm@rit.edu>, James Winebrake <jjwgpt@rit.edu>, Babak Elahi <bxegsl@rit.edu>

Jackie,

As we discussed yesterday on the phone earlier this afternoon, I am providing you with a second enrollment projection for concept paper in Applied Modern Languages and Culture. This second set assumes the additional of three additional language tracks in the third year of the program. Based on that assumption, the new student enrollment projection is as follows:

Year 1 – 6 new students
Year 2 – 6 new students
Year 3 – 15 new students
Year 4 – 15 new students
Year 5 – 15 new students

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Ed

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**BS in Modern Languages and Cultures
SUMMARY REPORT**

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Note : This sheet is password protected to maintain the formulas.