

MODERN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES PROGRAM CONCEPT PAPER DRAFT

“Among the demands brought about by internationalization are the value of learning languages and the importance of knowing world cultures.” (Teagle 10)

I. Proposed B.S. degree in Modern Languages & Cultures

Department of Modern Languages & Cultures

College of Liberal Arts, RIT

II. Degree Program Abstract

The Department of Modern Languages and Cultures proposes a B.S. degree with tracks in specific languages, beginning with Spanish and Japanese, and gradually adding tracks in the other languages in high student demand. The degree will include extensive preparation in the target language, learning culture through the language, study abroad, a Professional Core in a technical or cultural field, and a generous number of electives, to facilitate double majors and minors. The degree is designed to offer students the best of RIT by enabling them to pair the study of language and its target culture with the sophisticated technical and professional disciplines taught here. This outcome is achieved through the degree program’s Professional Core and the built in flexibility to add additional majors and minors. The degree is distinct from the conventional foreign language teacher education degrees offered at area colleges in that it prepares students to use their linguistic and cultural preparation in any number of highly specialized areas including technical fields, medical professions, business and hospitality, journalism and new media.

III. Description of the New Program

a. 1. Overview

The major in Modern Languages and Cultures will have tracks in particular languages from which students will choose based on their primary interest. We will begin with a track in Spanish and a track in Japanese. This degree has four components that make it a unique program in the region or among benchmarking institutions : 1) extensive training in the target language provided on campus and abroad; 2) a choice between the Professional Core in a technical field such as engineering, IT, Science, business, to prepare students for placement in industry, or a Cultural Core, which allows students to deepen their understanding in a cultural, artistic or media field; 3) a curriculum that requires and accommodates study abroad credits from one or two semesters in an accredited language program in a country or countries where the target language is spoken; and 4) a generous number of credit hours in electives, which will facilitate double majoring and minoring within the College of Liberal Arts or within the Institute.

a. 2. Justification

The Department of Modern Languages and Cultures already offers three years of courses in nine foreign languages, with the second largest number of concentrators and minors (1,200 every quarter) in the College of Liberal Arts. Students come to us from area colleges to take advanced courses in languages that their school does not offer. Our proposed major program will combine specialization in a language including its culture with study in other departments. This program will prepare students to be educated, concerned, and active citizens of our global multicultural society who will have a competitive edge over monolingual college graduates and will make important professional contributions in their future careers.

Adding a modern language major with tracks in specific languages will be particularly in tune with RIT's mission to internationalize its curriculum. It will serve a sizeable number of students who have expressed great interest in majoring in language study at RIT, and will offer a creative combination of fields of study to accommodate many and varied interests and career paths not available at other area schools.

The Spanish track is well positioned to thrive on the growing local, national and international interest in Spanish language and Hispanic cultures. Latinos are the largest ethnic group in the United States, 16.3 % of the population (50,477,594 people) according to the 2010 U.S. Census, with more than 30 million Spanish speakers living in the United States (MLA Language Map). Spanish is spoken in 20 countries, in addition to the United States, with a 2006 estimate of 438,979,000 Spanish speakers worldwide (Moreno Fernández 38). It is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world and the second most widely spoken language in the United States. It is also one of the six official languages of the United Nations. Today's Hispanic countries have lively, active cultures with a rich cultural history, important contributions in many fields, and a keen eye to the future. It is a sector of the national and international economy, business, politics, and the arts that we cannot ignore. RIT Spanish majors will be able to combine professional training in a technical, scientific, or cultural field, with top-notch training in language, communication, and culture, giving them a great advantage in the marketplace over traditional Liberal Arts Spanish majors. Study abroad in any of the 20 Spanish-speaking countries is a significant part of the degree, giving students international experience in the global society in which as graduates they will live and work.

Japan is a leader in technology and business, as represented in large companies like Toyota, Honda, Mitsubishi and Cannon. It is the third largest world economy. Japan is also a major trade partner with the United States, a major investor in U.S. business, and a major player in all aspects of today's world. Japanese is spoken by over 130 million people. Japan is also a country whose culture is highly valued and respected. Japan embraces both old and new culture: while places noted in *The Tale of Genji* are still preserved and appreciated in Kyoto, the country also boasts a variety of expressions of modern pop culture such as *anime* and video games.

On average, over two hundred students are enrolled in Japanese at RIT, and many sign up to two minors in Japanese to gain additional proficiency. Many RIT students with a technology background such as Game Design, Computer Science, and Engineering, take Japanese, which enhances their marketability in the job market. In fact, Toyota hires more students from RIT than from any other university, and almost every year several graduates with a Japanese minor find employment in Japan. RIT has deep ties to Japan, and its long-standing study abroad program with Kanazawa Institute of Technology sends 13 to 15 students to Kanazawa every summer. Faculty of KIT and RIT visit each other's institutions to learn curriculum, teaching innovations, and to exchange research. RIT also has a new faculty-led study abroad program, the RIT-Kyoto Program, which can accelerate students' mastery of Japanese.

Graduates of the currently proposed program will be well prepared to go on to a wide variety of jobs either in the U.S. or abroad or to graduate programs such as the language flagship schools or any number of other graduate programs in languages or in technical fields.

b. Summary of the New Program Curriculum

The curriculum includes extensive training in language, study abroad, and the choice of core courses either in a technical field or in cultural studies. The students start with the beginning

level of language, progress throughout the four years in its proficiency. In the post-beginning level, students learn the culture of the target linguistic community through the analysis of texts, media, and linguistics of the language, among others. The students that choose the Professional Core adds a significant cluster in a technical field, and those that choose the Culture Core take a cluster of culture courses offered in CLA. The curriculum structure is as follows:

- 41 credits of study in the target language (of which 11 credits of Beginning and part of Intermediate level come from general education).
- 15 credits (or more) in either the Professional Core or Cultural Core. The Professional Core is in a technical discipline (a cluster of thematically related courses which may be minors or new combinations of courses). The Cultural Core is a cluster of five courses that centers on cultural, artistic, or media studies.
- 3 credits of program electives.
- 12 credits of Institute electives.
- 62 credits of general education (of which 11 credits are Beginning and part of Intermediate level classes of the target language).

For all students, one semester of study abroad is required, and two semesters are strongly encouraged. Out of 122 credits required for graduation, up to 39 credits in language, culture, and Gen Ed may be received from study abroad at a pre-approved educational institution in the target country. In order to prepare RIT students for study abroad, the current program requires two years of course work in language and culture on the RIT campus, so that their study abroad experience is built on a solid base (Foreign 8)

The learning outcomes for the major, adapted from the recommendations in the Teagle report, include preparing students in the following through the study of the language and its linguistic community: (1) to engage with people across a range of languages, histories, traditions, and ways of seeing, (2) to experience people and places that are different and distant from those of their families or home communities, (3) to write clearly, (4) to speak articulately, (5) to read closely, (6) to evaluate and present evidence accurately, (7) to apply reasoning correctly, (8) to engage with artistic creation and expression imaginatively, (9) to work both independently and collaboratively, (10) to apply moral reasoning to ethical problems.

The curriculum for the major will “develop students’ abilities to think critically and analytically and to communicate knowledge and understanding effectively” (Teagle 2). In addition, it will allow students to “develop historical and comparative perspectives by studying the development of societies, cultures, literatures, and philosophies over time and across multiple disciplinary approaches (through the language)” (Teagle 2). All language tracks will equip students with cross-cultural literacy, preparing them to live and work in a global society through the study of both language and its culture. The curriculum prepares students to understand and communicate in different registers and in culturally specific contexts. The program enables students to become educated, culturally sensitive users of the target language in multiple situations through extensive exposure to a wide range of language use, including literary language in its specific linguistic and historical contexts.

IV. Fit with RIT Mission and Strategic Directions

The degree in Modern Languages achieves the strategic plan goals of the Institute and of the College of Liberal Arts, particularly in the areas of **(1) student success, (2) global society, (3) diversity, and (4) strengthening International Education.** A student in this degree will

participate in rigorous study of language and culture to prepare him or her to work and live in a global society. By gaining a deep understanding of languages and cultures, the student will value the diversity of our multicultural society and be able to communicate and engage in that society. By studying abroad, he or she will be immersed in the target language and culture and will learn to be a member of that society, and will further improve his or her proficiency in the language.

RIT's commitment to International Education and to enabling more students to study abroad are a perfect fit with the learning outcomes of the degree program in Modern Languages and Cultures. In a complex global society that mandates deep, culturally informed approaches to internationalization, opportunities for sustained study of languages and cultures are essential. This degree program will offer RIT students the opportunity to acquire the linguistic and cultural literacies that will give them a competitive edge.

Finally, the current degree will contribute to retention. As shown in the current language programs (1,000 students a quarter), many students in technology fields at RIT appreciate the learning of language and culture. If students change majors within RIT or transfer to RIT, the number of electives in the current proposal and courses applicable to the Professional Core, may allow students to graduate from RIT within the normal time frame.

V. Synergy with Other Programs

An integral part of the proposed major in Modern Languages and Cultures is the required combination of language study with the study of other disciplines, in the Professional Core/Cultural Core, in electives, and double majors, with built-in flexibility for student choice. The major in Modern Languages and Cultures combines very well with virtually all of the majors and minors offered in the College of Liberal Arts and with a large number of majors and minors offered in the Institute.

In discussions with faculty from other departments of CLA and across the Institute, we have found that there is great support for the study of modern languages, especially in combination with study in their departments. It will enhance students' preparation for a career, and will be a major part of the internationalization of the RIT curriculum. Already several of the CLA departments have shown interest in double-majoring with the current program. Department chairs of programs in COB have expressed an interest in exploring double-majors with the current program, or in collaborating on creating clusters of business courses for the Professional Core. The Computer Science program has expressed interest in forming a cluster of five courses especially for this major, as one of the possible Professional Core clusters.

VI. Administrative Structure for the New Program

The language tracks of Spanish and Japanese will each designate a program coordinator. The program coordinators, along with the chair, will monitor students' progress and maintain regular communication with the departments that offer relevant courses to ensure that those courses are regularly offered.

VII. Enrollment Management Expectations, Placement, and Sustainment

Enrollment Management Expectations and Sustainment (EMES) report of the current program is as follows:

“Based on our analysis, the proposal has the following challenges: A small percentage (approximately 0.6%) of the 2011-12 College Bound juniors indicated an interest in studying foreign languages as a college major. In addition, there is considerable regional and national

competition for those students, especially from traditional liberal arts colleges and universities. Enrollments in similar programs at institutions similar to RIT (Carnegie Mellon, Case Western, Virginia Tech) are small; ranging from 14 to 28.

However, the proposed program also has the following strengths: By combining a foreign language with other disciplines, there is a specific appeal to prospective students seeking to combine foreign language with another discipline. Additionally, there are multiple disciplines available that can be combined with the study of a language, thereby expanding the potential appeal of the program. Finally, the interdisciplinary nature of the program creates an added appeal and additional outcomes for graduates of the program beyond those traditionally associated with degrees in foreign language.

Based on our review, it is expected that the total steady-state enrollment in the proposed program would be small; perhaps 15 to 20.”

The EMEC notes that the enrollment would be 15 to 20; fortunately, the current program is designed to build directly on the existing courses and faculty and can be built economically. The report also notes the small percentage of college bound juniors indicating an interest in majoring in a foreign language and regional and national competitions. However, as the report also states, this program is not a traditional liberal arts major. The combination of study abroad, a Professional or Cultural Core in a variety of fields, and generous room for double-majors makes the proposed program unique, unlike regional or peer benchmarking universities. Students will be able to prepare for a career in international business, business in Latino areas or Japanese areas of the U.S., urban studies, public policy, third-world studies, archaeology, environmental studies, hotel & restaurant management, criminal justice, medical professions, humanitarian aid, art history, museum curating, public relations, journalism, advertising, political science, economics, and many other programs that RIT offers. We will continue to explore combinations with multiple disciplines available on campus, in order to strengthen its uniqueness and to constantly expand enrollment.

VIII. Impact on Resources

Currently, the Spanish Program in the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures has two tenure-line faculty members, and the Japanese Program has one tenure-line faculty member and two lecturers. Thus there are enough faculty members to initiate the program. In the second year from the beginning of the program, when students start to take program-specific upper-level courses, additional faculty must be added. Two lecturers in Spanish and one tenure-track faculty member in Japanese are to be hired by the beginning of the second year (2015 or 2016). If the program is successful and meets the projected enrollment figure, additional tracks in French and German will be added (expected 2016). An additional line in each of those languages will be necessary by 2018.

IX. Conclusion

This degree provides intensive, focused international education to students in today's multilingual and multicultural global society. It is innovative, unique, and cost-effective. It meets the RIT mission and student demand, and offers a dynamic international dimension to the programs RIT will offer for the future.

X. Summary of Community Input and Response to Input (This section is to be added after the public vetting and before review by the Provost)

Works Cited

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