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To: Su Swarat, Assistant Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness

From: Sheryl Fontaine, Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Subject: Dean's Summary and Evaluation, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures Program
Performance Review for the B.A. in French, B.A. in Japanese, and the B.A. and M.A. in Spanish

The Department of Modern Languages and Literatures includes degree programs in French (B.A.), Japanese (B.A.), Spanish (B.A. and M.A.), and TESOL (M.S.) as well as minors in French, Japanese, Spanish, Chinese, Portuguese, and Vietnamese. It further offers undergraduate and graduate certificates in TESOL and a certificate in Spanish for the Health Sciences. In addition, the department offers non degree instruction in Arabic, German, Italian, Korean, and Persian.

The academic range of the department ensures that it is able to meet the needs of its undergraduate majors and graduate students, as well as the broader needs of the CSUF student body for language instruction. However, the complex academic structure of the department can create challenges for shared governance and decision making in areas such as student support and advising, scheduling, budgeting and the equitable allocation of faculty time to achieve departmental goals.

Areas of Achievement

The Department of Modern Languages has strategically developed its curriculum by investing in new programs and certificates and revising existing ones in response to disciplinary changes and, in particular, to meet the needs of our local community.

The department's development of the Vietnamese Program and its collaborations with the Colleges of Communications and Health and Human Development to create the Spanish for Health and Human Services and the Hispanic Media certificates reflect its ongoing commitment to engagement with Orange County's language and ethnic communities.

The department has made deliberate strides to develop online courses and programs. The online Portuguese program in particular provides a service to the entire CSU system, as it makes instruction in this rarely taught language available to all CSU students.

Opportunities for Development

Although the department has considerable presence in General Education (G.E. C2), current changes in the GE program, increased emphasis on time to degree, and ever-increasing scheduling challenges for 5-unit 100 level classes make it imperative that the department consider ways to restructure its GE courses. In particular, the department should consider reducing its 5 unit courses to 3 units so that they better fit the unit expectations for GE Area C.2 and so that they avoid creating excess units for students in high unit majors. With new changes to GE, more alternatives to language courses are likely to be available in Area C.2. Continuing to offer 5 unit courses in this GE Area is may suppress enrollments in the near future.



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The department displays a great deal of commitment to its students, but is not always successful in meeting their advising needs. The department should consider developing a new advising structure that ensures that all students, regardless of the degree program, receive supportive and holistic advising. The department may wish to consider having one designated advisor who is fully trained on advising tools and resources. A designated advisor, when well used, will reduce the workload of the department chair and coordinators/faculty advisors as well as increase the likelihood that all students receive appropriate advising.

The external reviewers identified the need for curricular revision, particularly in Spanish (both B.A. and M.A.). The department should consider investing in programmatic curricular revision within the next 2-3 years in order to respond to both student needs and changing expectations in the discipline. The development of thematic courses, as suggested by the external review team, would not only meet the needs of the departments majors but could also increase the likelihood that students from coordinating fields (e.g. History, Sociology) would see these courses as appealing electives.

The department should consider reserving time for a 1-2 day strategic planning retreat in order to begin to address the need for revising/modernizing the curriculum and the structure of degree programs, creating new 3 unit 100 level language classes, addressing the scheduling of courses, developing a new advising structure, and developing a marketing and outreach plan.

The department should prioritize the revision of its website and other marketing materials with an eye to providing current and prospective students with completely accurate information that will encourage them to declare a major or minor in the department and will provide them with the advising and course selection information they need to be successful. In addition, thoughtful revisions, such as a single advisement appointment portal, may help the department build a departmental identity for students, rather than a completely major-focused identity.

Conclusion

The Department of Modern Languages and Literatures has successfully demonstrated its ability to respond in innovative ways to the needs of CSUF students and the local community. It has a clear sense of its identity and its mission and is well positioned to address curricular, programmatic, and student support needs through creative and targeted revisions and updates to its current practices.