

Resolution to Establish a School of World Languages and Cultures in the College of Arts and Sciences

Whereas the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences put forward a proposal to establish a School of World Languages and Cultures (SWLC; attached) which would create a school by combining four language departments (Asian Languages and Literatures, Classics, German and Russian, and Romance Languages and Cultures) into a single school inside the College of Arts and Sciences; and

Whereas the University Manual states that “The establishment and elimination of academic units, enrollment units, instructional units, and degrees must be approved by the Board of Trustees, upon recommendation of the President and following appropriate governance protocols” (University Manual 204.1); and

Whereas the Faculty Senate established procedures for the establishment, reorganization, and elimination of a school within a college in October 2021 as a guideline for following the governance protocols called for in the University Manual (available [here](#)); and

Whereas the President of the Faculty Senate convened an ad hoc committee to review the proposal to establish the SWLC; and

Whereas the ad hoc committee reviewed the proposal, met with the proposers and the chairs of the affected departments; and

Whereas the ad hoc committee recommends that the Faculty Senate accept the proposal to establish the SWLC;

Therefore be it resolved that the Faculty Senate of the University of Vermont accepts the proposal to establish a School of World Languages and Cultures in the College of Arts and Sciences, eliminating four independent language departments.

MEMO

To: Thomas Borchert, President of the Faculty Senate
From: Catherine Paris (Co-Chair), R. Chase Cockrell (Co-Chair), Colby Kervick, Mildred Beltre, Anne Clark, Scott Van Keuren, Teri Cahill-Griffin, Louis Henry de Rosset, Bridget Levine-West
Date: 1/9/2023
Re: Review of the School of World Languages and Cultures Proposal by the College of Arts & Sciences

Executive Summary

As required by Senate *Procedures Related to the Establishment, Reorganization, and Elimination of Colleges and Schools*, we have reviewed a proposal submitted by Dean Falls for the creation of a School of World Languages and Cultures (SWLC) within the College of the Arts & Sciences. The School would move faculty, staff, and students from the Departments of Asian Languages and Literatures; Classics; German and Russian; and Romance Languages and Cultures into a unified *school* comprising six *programs*: Asian Languages and Literatures; Classics; French and Italian; German, Russian, and Hebrew; Linguistics; and Spanish. A director of the school, appointed by the Dean, will be selected from the participating faculty; current department chairs will become *program directors*, who will report to the *director*. A *language coordinator* will be appointed for each language within a program not taught by the program head. Faculty positions, ranks, and tenure would be transferred to the SWLC, as will all staff positions; future decisions on rank, promotion, and tenure will be handled by the programs in which the affected faculty are located. Current general funds from the affected departments, totaling approximately \$88,000, will be transferred to the SWLC and divided equally among the programs. Any proposed curricular changes would be voted on by the program that they would affect. With Board of Trustee approval, faculty and staff would be transitioned to the SWLC on July 1, 2023.

Our review of the SWLC proposal included the following actions:

- Study of the proposal and supporting materials
- Review of public comments received ($n=5$)
- Meeting with Dean Falls and Associate Dean McGowan
- Meeting with the Chairs of Romance Languages and Literature (who also represented Classics), German and Russian, and Asian Languages and Literature

At the conclusion of the review process, the ad hoc Committee voted (8 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstain) to recommend that the SWLC be implemented, with the strong suggestion that efforts be made to solicit participation from the American Sign Language program in the College of Education and Social Services.

Detailed Committee Report

UVM School of World Languages and Culture, Description and Rationale

For the past two years, a group of language chairs and faculty have been working with the CAS Dean's office to develop a proposal for a School of World Languages and Culture. Broadly speaking, the goals of the resulting proposal are to address difficulties faced by smaller departments, such as administrative inefficiencies and limited visibility on campus. Given the breadth of programs to be incorporated into the SWLC, the structure of a school has been deemed preferable to that of a department.

Goals

The goals for the SWLC, as articulated in the proposal, are to:

- raise visibility of language study on campus;
- combine resources to advocate for languages;
- widen research and teaching networks;
- streamline administrative loads;
- increase student recruitment;
- strengthen existing learning areas;
- increase language students' awareness of career paths open to them; and
- advance fundraising efforts for language study at UVM

We note that some members of the ad-hoc committee were unconvinced that the formation of the SWLC is likely to advance these goals, especially with respect to raising the visibility of languages on campus, increasing student recruitment, and streamlining administrative loads. We do however expect that the formation of the SWLC will enhance the viability of smaller programs through distributing their

administrative load throughout the school, thereby lessening the current service demands on their faculty.

School Structure

The SWLC will create a new administrative structure in CAS. The Dean will appoint a Director from among the faculty whose departments are being incorporated into the school. Individual units within the school will be referred to as programs. These programs will be Asian Languages and Literatures; Classics; French and Italian; German, Russian, and Hebrew; Linguistics; and Spanish. Each program will be overseen by a program director, who will be responsible for the curriculum of associated majors and minors. These program directors will be selected from their respective programs in a manner similar to that by which department chairs are currently selected. In addition to the director, each language within a program will be assigned a language coordinator if the program director's expertise lies outside that language. Language coordinators will be responsible for addressing student issues, proposing hiring plans, and assisting the program director with curricular changes. While program directors will receive a stipend and a course release, the duties of a language coordinator will be regarded as part of the normal faculty service load; if a tenure-track faculty member is not available to act as a language coordinator, a non-tenure-track faculty member will be compensated to do so.

Impact

With respect to impact on students, the proposal asserts that the SWLC will provide enhanced visibility through "coordinated efforts with admissions, clear messaging to CAS and UVM audiences, and stronger community partnerships to attract prospective students." Additionally, the SWLC will develop a focus on professional development such that the students are well prepared for subsequent employment or graduate school.

With respect to the staff, all positions will be maintained; simultaneously new strategies will be developed to combine staff resources to increase the efficiency of administrative processes. A yet-to-be-created staff committee will formalize the plan to define and achieve these efficiencies.

With respect to the faculty, the proposal asserts that there will be no "change in or threat to conditions of employment."

Budget

The number of course releases will remain as it is currently, with nine releases total. They will

be allocated such that the Director of the SWLC will receive three course releases and the program directors will each receive one. The budgetary changes are minimal and limited savings would be expected. Each program will receive a lower stipend than they currently receive under the department system, with the remainder going to the school itself, to be overseen by the director.

Information Learned from Comparisons to Other Institutions

In the Fall of 2021, a planning group compiled information about similar organizational structures for the academic study of language, including schools and multi-language departments, from ten academic institutions ranging broadly in size, structure, and resources. The planning group determined that the school structure was appropriate for UVM languages, informed to a significant extent by the recent formation of the School of the Arts in CAS.

Evaluation Metrics to be Used with the UVM SWLC

The school's success will be evaluated by the Dean's office in CAS according to three primary indicators: 1) student credit hour major/minor strength; 2) increase in philanthropic support; and 3) increase in visibility for languages. Quantitative metrics to rate these areas were not provided.

Summary of Committee Actions

The Ad-Hoc Review Committee for the SWLC proposal was charged by Senate President Thomas Borchert. The committee first met on November 14th to discuss the proposal, review submitted comments and develop an action plan and questions for the authors of the proposal. On November 30th, the committee and President Borchert met with CAS Dean Falls and Associate Dean McGowan to communicate our questions and concerns. Subsequently, on Dec. 9th, the committee and President Borchert met with John Yin, Asian Languages and Literature, Joseph Acquisto, Romance Languages and Literature (also representing the Classics department), and Helga Schreckenberger, German and Russian. In this meeting, the department chairs communicated the opinions and concerns of their faculty to the committee. The committee and President Borchert again met on Dec. 12th; upon discussion it was determined that we had insufficient information to make a recommendation about the proposal and therefore requested an additional meeting with Associate Dean McGowan, which was scheduled for Dec. 16th. Following the conversation with AD McGowan, the committee voted 8-0-0 (one member was absent) in favor of recommending the formation of the SWLC.

Final Recommendations

We recommend that the Faculty Senate approve the School of World Languages and

Cultures; further, we recommend that efforts be made to offer affiliation to the American Sign Language program in the College of Education and Social Services.