

To: WSU Foreign Languages Faculty and Staff

From: Dean Madonne Miner

Re: Dean's Response to Language's Self-Study, Reviewers' Report, and Language's Response to the Review

Date: May 7, 2015

Thank you all for your many contributions to WSU's Foreign Language Department Review process. All Language faculty members participated in various stages of this review, and I am grateful to you for your thoughtfulness and thoroughness in addressing concerns of importance to the department and to the College. I want to convey special thanks to Craig Bergeson for serving as internal team leader, and to the four individuals (Blair Bateman, Fernando Rubio, Michael Wutz, and Valerie Herzog) who served as reviewers.

Having read the review documents, I want to comment on items that I believe merit highlighting (and, in some cases, further attention and discussion).

1. The department's Self Study is detailed and objective in its representation of departmental accomplishments, challenges, needs, etc. The quality of this Self Study meant that the Review Team could produce a helpful, specific review. I agree with observations in these two documents, as well as with those in the department's Response to the Review.
2. In its Response to the Review, the department seriously considers and replies to Recommendations from reviewers. In every case, I concur with the department. I also applaud the department for spelling out Action Plans to be used to ensure that recommendations are implemented.
3. Among the department's strengths is its ability to discuss issues as a full group and then "pilot" changes in a controlled way. For example: The Review suggests that Languages offer hybrid lower-division courses in languages other than Spanish. The department agrees that doing so might help boost enrollments. But before jumping head-first into the hybrid pool, the department is going to develop guidelines for such courses. From my perspective, the department consistently shows wisdom in monitoring the pace of change.
4. Two recommendations that may go hand-in-hand involve increasing faculty investment in learning outcomes and increasing student investment in portfolios. As faculty members become more overt about learning outcomes, they may be able to build more enthusiasm among students about the value of preparing a portfolio of exemplary work.
5. I support the proposed study of the effects of having changed lower-division courses from 4 to 3 credits. There was considerable discussion before this change was put into effect. We now have some years' experience with the 3-credit model. It makes sense to evaluate the effects of the change. I especially like the idea of doing a study that

compares the proficiency levels of WSU LANG 2020 students to those of 2020 students at other Utah universities.

6. Both the Review and the Department's Response discuss the importance of planning strategically for maintenance and growth of language programs. Especially with the existence of dual-immersion programs in local public schools, the Department will need to consider how to allocate faculty resources to take advantage of likely enrollment demand (especially in Chinese) when these public school students reach college age. In addition, I encourage the Department to think seriously about what role American Sign Language might have in the curriculum. It's clear there is demand for ASL course-work; recent indications are that the ATC's are not going to respond to this demand.

Overall: I want to compliment WSU's Foreign Language Department for its active, engaged, and effective faculty; its thoughtfulness in pursuing both new and community-engaged offerings so as to bring a range of students in its courses; its increasingly strong assessment processes; its study abroad offerings; and its success in functioning as a team committed to the best education possible for majors, minors, and General Education students.

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