

Program Response to Program Review Team Report
Department of Foreign Languages
May 1, 2020

Strengths

The Program Review Team was impressed by many aspects of the department. We are pleased that they commended the Department of Foreign Languages for the following:

1. Collegiality and unity of purpose.
2. Cultural-sensitive and well-qualified faculty.
3. Excellent advising.
4. Support and inclusion of adjunct faculty into the department's activities.
5. A well-designed curriculum grounded on innovation and flexibility: steady development of new electives that match faculty and student interests and needs.
6. Commitment to student success and career preparation: new degrees in Localization and Translation, an internship program, and access to formal credentials for the job market.
7. The formation of an Industry Advisory Board to ensure that the professional programs and curriculum within the FL department are of the highest quality, and to provide guidance in the transition of students to professionals.
8. Solid Concurrent Enrollment program and the Bridge Program for Advanced Language Learning.
9. Successful achievement of thresholds in Learning Outcomes 1-3: speaking and listening proficiency, writing ability, and writing in different styles.

Recommendations

1. Classroom technology:

Program Response: We agree that, to be at the forefront, classroom technology needs to be updated as often as possible; and that, to meet the needs of students in the Localization and Translation programs, the Department needs to have licenses of a variety of software besides SDL Trados. The Department has typically used course fees and capital improvement funds to address technology and software demands. In fact, this year we completed a ~\$90,000 major renovation of our language lab and converted it into a highest-quality Collaborative Learning Classroom (there are only two or three classrooms of this type on campus). This space is now dedicated to interactive and collaborative learning between instructor and students. We have also upgraded/preplaced classroom computers and other technology as needed. As for Localization and Translation software, the Department prides itself on having 30 licenses of SDL Trados 2017, the number 1 in the top 10 translation software, yet the costliest (~\$25,000).

Action Plan: We will continue to upgrade/replace hardware in the classroom computers and other technology as needed. As for translation and localization software, we plan to use course fees and capital improvement funds to install the latest update, Trados 2019. We also plan to work closely with the Industry Advisory Board and ask for recommendations of translation technology options: there is software on the market at a lower price; there are open source tools;

and some companies offer free University Programs and/or highly discounted educational licenses.

2. Department website and credit purchasing:

Program response: We agree that there is a need to simplify the process to buy credits. We also agree that the department website has been outdated, cluttered, and disorganized for a long time. However, a new website was launched on March 19, 2020 shortly after the program review team visited the department. The new website has a clean design that makes browsing easy for users, and aligns with WSU branding guidelines: <https://www.weber.edu/ForeignLanguages>.

Action plan: We will make a conscious effort to maintain an up-to-date website. We will revisit the process to buy credits and reach out to the Office of the Registrar to discuss online payment options to make it easier for students and staff. We plan to have online payment in place by the end of next academic year (2020-2021).

3. Adjunct faculty supervision:

Program response: We agree with adjunct faculty and acknowledge the value of conducting teaching observations on a more regular, rotating basis and that the feedback be provided in writing. Because of this, the Adjunct Coordinator position was created two years ago with support from the Dean's Office. This is a three-year term position held by a full-time faculty who is permitted to have one course release in their teaching load. The adjunct coordinator has typically done teaching observations during the fall semester so that feedback is given to adjuncts when there is still time to implement changes in teaching if needed.

Action plan: We will make a conscious effort to continue conducting teaching observations routinely and in a timely manner to provide guiding and mentoring as much as possible, without being intrusive; as well as adequate support for activities which implement the program's mission.

4. Assessment of Learning Outcomes 4 and 5:

Program response: We agree that LO 4 and 5 show lower assessment scores than the first three.

LO 4: Write an analysis of a literary or cultural work in the language.

LO 5: Describe and explain aspects of the culture(s) of the language being studied.

Action plan: We will revise the current rubric and modify it to allow faculty and students to understand what constitutes an appropriate artifact for these Learning Outcomes. We will also develop guidelines to train faculty on how to ensure their students know how to select appropriate artifacts of each type. In addition, the Department Assessment Committee will be tasked to work on the development of an e-Portfolio with the purpose of having students use it throughout their academic career to ensure that they collect artifacts as they produce them.

5. Revitalization of Study Abroad:

Program response: We agree that, even though study abroad is an important department initiative, the numbers seem relatively low. During the last decade, other departments and centers on campus have discovered the value of this high impact practice, making student recruitment more competitive. Financial support is also a challenge as \$500-\$1,000 (average amount of Department Study Abroad scholarships) is not enough for WSU students to defray the cost of Study Abroad programs, which are usually around \$3,000 for a 4-week program.

Action plan: We will study best practices and successful strategies for increasing study abroad participation and will make a conscious effort to strengthen our ties with the Office of Study Abroad as well as to establish collaboration with other WSU Departments to integrate our discipline into their international programs. Study Abroad will be one of the priorities in the Department Strategic Plan (see recommendation #7) and we will focus on increasing accessibility (new and different ways to get students abroad), increasing scholarships and pursuing more flexible funding, and combating misperceptions (i.e. study abroad is too expensive, or it's just not for people like me).

6. Revision of Mission Statement:

Program Response: We agree that scholarship is not mentioned in the current version of the mission statement and that there is room for improvement.

Action plan: By the end of next academic year (2020-2021), we will revise the mission statement so that it specifically addresses 1) the types of degrees we offer, such as the new degrees in Translation and Localization; and 2) the SoTL (Scholarship of Teaching and Learning) which is the kind of scholarship that the department excels in and values.

7. Strategic Plan:

Program Response: We agree that a strategic plan is necessary to identify the department's strengths and to inform our priorities and goals.

Action plan: We will revisit the department strategic plan that is already in place to ensure that it contains goals, metrics and thresholds for success, a reasonable timeline, required resources, and responsible parties for accomplishing the goals. In this strategic plan, we will address the challenges identified by the program review team such as enrollments, study abroad, and small program support (Chinese, French, German, and Japanese).