

Modern Languages French Program Review Progress Report

October 12, 2023

This report reflects the discussion of the External Review's recommendations between the College of Arts Dean and the Modern Languages Head on May 18, 2023.

Recommendation 2-1: *We support the efforts of French faculty to create a new course, FREN 214, that is intended to assist students who have completed FREN 102 who wish to take 2nd year courses in French.*

Action

This recommendation is currently in abeyance because we do not have the enrollment to proceed with adding a second-year course at this time. We hope to revisit the issue in a year or two when our enrollments have improved. The Dean recommended that we make the placement test compulsory for students of French 215 and 216 to take in the first week of the semester, to ensure that students are well supported based on their prior knowledge.

Recommendation 2-2: *The French program should continue to expand its efforts to foster conversational opportunities for students (and faculty) outside of regularly scheduled classes and seminars. While efforts should be made to ensure that much of this conversation should take place in French, a few English language social opportunities should also be encouraged as well in order to accommodate beginning students and prospective students.*

Action

MOLA returned to setting up activities such as the 'Café-croissant', 'soirée culturelle' and the student-led French Club in 2022-2023. Two student volunteers will help coordinate the cultural activities in French. We continue to reach out to the students and help establish conversation groups. The department will also reach out to le Conseil jeunesse in Vancouver to set up conversation groups in French. Attendance at the activities has been unpredictable, but we will host more pizza parties, etc. beginning in fall 2023. We are also reaching out to the local high schools and have set up scholarships for immersion students to attend UFV.

Recommendation 3-1: *The French program should retool FREN 225 to enhance opportunities for collaborative leadership on the part of students and add this to the stated learning outcomes for the course.*

Action

The FREN 225 learning outcomes have been edited in 2020 to include 'collaborative leadership'.

Recommendation 3-2: *The French program should explore the feasibility of creating at least one practicum course, which may or may not be modelled on SPAN 280, 281, 380, or 381.*

Action

At the MOLA retreat in August, French faculty discussed this with MOLA's Spanish faculty who have already mounted practicum courses. We will be studying these types of initiatives this year and consulting with the Associate Dean of Students to learn how best to integrate this into our French program.

Recommendation 4.1: *The administration of UFV should lobby the BC Ministry of Education for the inception of a combined or concurrent BA / Bed in French.*

Action

The department and the College of Arts will continue to explore the prospect of a closer working relationship between TEP and French to address the current shortage of French teachers in BC.

Recommendation 4-2: *Develop combined majors, specifically French and Indigenous studies, and/or French and Spanish and/or French and Japanese (Asian Studies), etc.*

Action

MOLA members discussed this during the MOLA retreat in August 2023. MOLA is very keen to explore such ideas further, e.g., a combined French Major-Spanish Minor or Double Minor in Spanish and French, a combined degree in French and Indigenous Studies, French and Asian Studies or even a BA in Languages, where a learner could study three languages to the 300 level through language courses, but two in more detail (i.e., culture, literature, linguistics, practicum courses, etc.). We will continue to look at this proposal in the next two years. The biggest obstacle is to decide how much study is necessary to achieve a reasonable level of competency without doing a minor.

Recommendation 4-3: *Students in the program might benefit from greater integration of the DELF (international French proficiency test) at all levels of the program, and appropriately articulated credit for DELF certificates could be considered.*

Action

The department offers regular DELF exam prep sessions for third and fourth-year students entering the PDP program at SFU. Seminars incorporate DELF oral comprehension exercises in all second-year classes. These prep sessions will be offered in future to first-year students as well. All MOLA regular French faculty will be certified to test for the DELF certificates. Costs involved in training and team development will be explored with the dean's office.

Recommendation 5-1: *Make a semester in Quebec or abroad compulsory or more strongly encouraged.*

Action

MOLA continues to work on this initiative. We've had several discussions with UFV International and are making progress, albeit slowly. The department has reached out to several other universities in Canada (UQAM, Cégep de Chicoutimi, Université Sainte Anne, and others) and is currently in discussions with UQAM to explore that possibility. We had a meeting with the coordinator of exchange at UQAM in January 2023, but unfortunately in May 2023 it was reported that they had run into 'logistical problems' and plans are currently in limbo. We continue discussions with European universities (Lille, Montpellier, and others) to attempt to set up some exchange opportunities. The department will also review and promote programs like EXPLORE and ODYSSEY to offer opportunities for language study to our students.

Recommendation 5-2: *The third year of the French major should be made more flexible by requiring only two or three specific French courses rather than five and allowing substitutions of other 3rd year French courses for the remaining 8-12 credits.*

Action

This is still under consideration by the MOLA faculty. We want to promote flexibility, but not at the expense of the integrity of the program. We are re-examining the upper-level prerequisite structure to see how we can best make it more flexible for our students; our main priority is the re-working of French 430.

Recommendation 5-3: *Special topics shell courses at the 3rd year level should be created at the third-year level in order to enable continued flexibility and continued curricular innovation.*

Action

French faculty are developing a third-year shell course to increase flexibility. We have designed a fourth-year special topics course, FREN 460, which is still before CACC.

Recommendation 5-4: *The 4th-year linguistics course (FREN 430) should be modified to allow for more variety in content. We would recommend turning it into a special topics course.*

Action

FREN 430 has been redesigned following discussions amongst faculty and focuses on teaching applied linguistics to develop pedagogical strategies and methodologies.

Recommendation 6-1: *Hire a full-time faculty member with a background in linguistics to teach 50% French and 50% another language.*

Action

The department will discuss its next request, which could be a cross-appointment in French and another language or linguistics. A new faculty was hired for Spanish since then and they are teaching the 2 sections of Linguistics 101 currently offered each year.

Recommendation 6-2: *The current shared administrative assistant position should be converted into a full-time position dedicated 100% to MOLA.*

Action

This recommendation has been implemented.

Recommendation 6.3: *Sessionals should be notified of future available work at least one semester in advance whenever possible. When this is not possible, factors affecting workload decisions and likelihood of changes in workload should be shared with sessionals to allow for effective planning.*

Action

The department has worked to put this into effect.

Recommendation 6-4: *Offer, whenever possible, both FREN 101 and FREN 102 in the summer session.*

Action

MOLA did offer FREN 101 and 102 in spring / summer 2023. Enrollments were acceptable and seem to be on the rise. We will have a better picture and more data to rely on after few trials and will survey FREN 102 students in Winter 2024 to see if there is sufficient demand to offer FREN 102 in Spring of 2024.

Recommendation 6-5: *The French faculty should increase their research activities. Our suggestion would also be to team up within MOLA or across departments in order to present strong research projects, whenever possible.*

Action

Despite a seven-course load, MOLA French faculty continue to be active researchers. But, if UFV really wants to encourage research, then it needs to greatly increase the number and availability of research releases for faculty who already teach a heavy load.