

Internal Academic Review 2004-2005
Department of German Language and Literature
Internal Academic Review Committee Report to Senate

Department of German Language and Literature

The Senate Internal Academic Review Committee (IARC) concurs with reviewers' comments on the high quality of the undergraduate and graduate programs offered by the Department of German Language and Literature. External Consultants describe the doctoral program as one of the largest in Canada and offered further accolades for the Unit's overall professional atmosphere. The research productivity of faculty, both individually and collectively, is impressive for such a small unit. The undergraduate program attracts an unusually high number and quality of applicants who reviewers suggested were likely the best in the country.

The Department of German Language and Literature by all accounts is flourishing. Nonetheless, the IARC and reviewers alike recognized that units of this size are continually challenged to balance the demands of teaching, research and service. Of particular concern to all reviewers was the need for the Department to ensure breadth in the course offerings available to both graduate and undergraduate students.

Major Recommendations

1. FACULTY: External Consultants and the Review Team unanimously recommend that in order for the Department to maintain the high quality of its undergraduate and graduate programs, its faculty complement must remain at six. To enhance its current efforts to disseminate German scholarship and research, the IARC suggests that the Department heed the external consultants' recommendation to expand its faculty and student exchange programs.

The IARC recommends that the Department of German Language and Literature and the Faculty of Arts and Science work together to maintain the current size of the Unit's faculty complement.

2. UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM: The IARC encourages the Department to seek partnerships with other Departments and Faculties to build additional breadth in the undergraduate program. The External Consultants suggest that the Unit continue to develop and introduce appealing cross-disciplinary gateway courses as well as new cross-disciplinary programs using the Business German minor as a model. The IARC commends the Unit for quickly responding to student and reviewer comments and encourages the Unit to continue its efforts to balance the study of the classical period of German Literature with studies focused on the modern era and language development. Moreover, in light of the Principal's Strategic Initiative and its possible impact on language departments, the IARC concurs with reviewers that these efforts would ultimately lead to higher student enrolment in minor, medial and major programs.

The IARC recommends that the Department of German Language and Literature consider reviewers' suggestions, which are aimed at increasing enrolment in minor, medial and major programs.

Other recommendation the Department may wish to consider:

1. The IARC suggests that the Department of German Language and Literature encourage graduate students to participate in professional development opportunities offered by the University such as Teaching Assistants courses/ programs offered by Queen's Centre for Teaching and Learning.

**Outcomes of the Internal Academic Review
of the Department of German Language and Literature**

*Joint response submitted by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science and
the Head of the Department of German Language and Literature*

Recommendation 1: Faculty

The Faculty Office concurs with the reviewers' recommendation that the Department be maintained at a minimum of six full-time tenure/tenure-track faculty members to protect the quality of the undergraduate and graduate programs and the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies (OCGS) certification of the latter.

Recommendation 2: Undergraduate Program

The Department has pursued a partnership with Film Studies and will introduce soon a new gateway course on the visual arts in German culture to increase undergraduate enrolments.

Other recommendations the Department may wish to consider:

Students take full advantage of the training opportunities afforded by the Centre and the Department Head will continue to encourage their professional development.

Follow-up on these recommendations and issues will take place in the annual budget and staffing strategy meetings between the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science and the Vice-Principal (Academic)

Queen's University at Kingston

*Internal Academic Review:
Department of German Language and Literature*

Report of the Review Team

April 6, 2005

Executive Summary

The main themes of this report are 1) the small size of the Department of German Language and Literature is a virtue and not liability; 2) Small departments can be good faculty citizens (by teaching service courses); 3. The department and the university need to do a better job in communicating the strength of this 'jewel in the crown'.

This is a strong department in all respects but vulnerable in many ways to any decrease in regular faculty member complement. It is critical that the complement of six regular faculty appointments be maintained.

Report

As stipulated in the Senate Policy on Internal Academic Review (30 April 1998) a Review Team was appointed by Vice-Principal (Academic) Suzanne Fortier. The mandate of the team was to compile a report on the Department of German Language and Literature based on the unit self-study, the appraisal of the external consultants, and comment from the broader university community. This is that report.

Members of the Committee were:

Ron Anderson, Department of Mechanical and Materials Engineering (Chair), faculty member outside of Arts and Science

Jasmine Bahrami, Department of Biology, undergraduate student

Krista Laugesen, Department of Chemistry, graduate student

George Logan, Department of English, faculty member in Arts and Science

Jonathan Rose, Department of Political Studies, faculty member in Arts and Science

Teri Shearer, School of Business, faculty member outside of Arts and Science

Erin Webster, Faculty of Arts and Science, staff member

A notice concerning the establishment of the Review Team was placed in the *Queen's Gazette* on October 12, 2004, and members of the University community were invited to send comments to the Review Team. None was received.

The external consultants, Dr. Dagmar C.G. Lorenz of the University of Illinois at Chicago and Dr. David G. John of the University of Waterloo, visited Queen's on November 11 and 12, 2004. Their report is included as an appendix.

Following is the response of the Review Team to each of the criteria specified in Appendix B of the *Senate Policy on Internal Academic Review (IAR)*.

Objectives

The Senate IAR policy states that:

“The program should be consistent with Queen's mission and the academic plans of the unit including its teaching and research strengths, the relation of the unit with other academic units and the standards, educational goals and learning objectives of the degree”.

For reference, Queen's mission statement (approved by Senate on January 25, 1996) is:

The University will build on the strength that is Queen's - students, faculty, staff and alumni - to be among the best of internationally known universities in Canada, recognized for:
the exceptional quality of undergraduate and graduate students and programs in the arts, sciences and professions;
the intellectual power and value of research and scholarship by faculty members and students;
the exemplary service of the University and that of its graduates to the community and the nation and the community of nations.

There are, in a sense, three programs under consideration here – the undergraduate program, the master's program and the doctoral program.

The consultants have high praise for the postgraduate programs and refer to the doctoral program as “the jewel in the crown” of the department. They indicate that “Queen's has one of the largest graduate programs in the country (comparing well with UBC, Alberta, Waterloo, Toronto, McGill, and Montreal, the ‘big six’ in German, the only ones in Canada with both MA and PhD)” with the closest comparison being with the University of Waterloo where there are two more (40% more to put the figure in perspective) full-time faculty members than at Queen's. The Review Team agrees that the Department meets the objectives at the postgraduate level.

The consultants also have high regard for the undergraduate program and note that Queen's Department of German Language and Literature undergraduate program “attracts an unusually high number and quality of applicants, likely the best in the province.” However, they express concern over the fact that the department has the

lowest enrolment (majors, minors and medials) of any department in Arts and Science at Queen's and that this results in fiscal difficulties within the Department. The consultants argue that "there must be administrative support for the general re-structuring of faculty requirements to aim for more breadth, for example through the introduction of a breadth requirement including the languages/cultures, humanities, social sciences and science" and that this would lead to more enrolment in German and other language programs. There is the potential that this would alleviate the enrolments in the "big six" departments that "are creaking under the burden of excessive enrolments". The Review Team supports the concept of increasing the requirement for breadth in the undergraduate Arts and Science programs and believes that this would be to the benefit of all programs in the Faculty. GRMN 121, *German Film I: Expressionism in Weimar*, is one way that German could increase its enrollment in first year offerings to undergraduate students in other departments.

Admission Requirements

On this issue, the Senate IAR policy states:

"The admission requirements (preparation and achievement) should be appropriate and effective for the learning objectives of the institution and the program to ensure the appropriate quality of student applicants.

"In no case should admission requirements be lower than the published minimum standards for the University. Indicators of student demand including applications, registrations, projected enrolment levels, and of the quality of students must be considered. Where admission is competitive, actual admission requirements may be higher than the published minimum standards".

The consultants' report is silent on this issue. The Review Team is convinced that the Department satisfies this requirement easily because admission standards are upheld at the undergraduate level by the Faculty of Arts and Science and at the postgraduate level by the School of Graduate Studies and Research.

Curriculum

On Curriculum, the Senate IAR policy states:

"The structure and curriculum of the program should be appropriate for its learning objectives".

Again, the consultants were impressed with the postgraduate curriculum in the Department, saying that "The German graduate programs offer their Canadian as well as their international students a rich and well-designed academic curriculum".

At the undergraduate level, the consultants were concerned that efforts being made to increase enrolment were detrimental to the productivity of the Department because of the

extra effort required to offer them. They particularly listed the “double-decker courses which admit both German and English students and teach literature in the original German and concurrently in translation” as being “a wholly impractical situation which undermines the use of German and leaves the German majors and minors embittered.”

They also noted that “It also fails to attract enough new students to make much of a difference and it imposes an increased work load on instructors”.

The Review Team is sympathetic to these observations by the consultants but also mindful that service courses offer small departments with few program concentrators an important means of integration within the faculty.

Teaching

With regard to teaching, the Senate IAR policy states:

“The mode of delivery (including, where applicable, distance or on-line delivery) and standards of instruction should be appropriate and effective to meet the program’s learning objectives”.

The consultants again emphasized the excellent instruction available for the postgraduate students through courses and research supervision. The teaching of undergraduate courses was much more in question because of the very heavy reliance on teaching fellows and three adjunct professors for the delivery of the lower level language and business German courses. However, the consultants recognize the necessity of this teaching arrangement: “It is unusual in Canada for regular faculty not to be involved directly in lower level language teaching, but we understand that this is necessary in this department so that upper level undergraduate and graduate courses can be properly staffed by regular professors.” The consultants also stress the importance of teaching to PhD candidates’ professional development. There is an excellent language program coordinator who has a contract position within the department.

The Review Team agrees with the assessment of the consultants with regard to teaching in the Department.

Evaluation of Student Progress

Here, the Senate IAR policy states:

“The methods used for the evaluation of student progress, and where possible, consideration of the effectiveness of these methods should be appropriate for the program. The level of achievement of students should be considered and be consistent with the educational goals for the program and the degree, and the institutional standards”.

The consultants are silent on undergraduate student progress, and the Review Team is convinced that the evaluations of student progress at the undergraduate and graduate levels are consistent and appropriate. However, the consultants note that “German PhD students’ record of completion is far beyond acceptable limits and we agree that this should be addressed firmly”. According to the Self-Study (p. 60), the department now requires annual reporting on plans and achievements by PhD students to address this issue.

Equity

According to the Senate IAR policy:

“The program should be consistent with the equity goals of the University. Programs must avoid direct, indirect and systemic discrimination, particularly against members of disadvantaged groups”.

Here again the consultants were silent but the Review Team, working from the self-study document, is confident that the Department is cognizant of the equity goals of the University and works within them.

Human Resources

The Senate IAR policy states:

“It should be demonstrated that the quality and academic expertise of the faculty in the area of the program are appropriate and effective to meet the demands of the program. Where appropriate, the use of support staff and of teaching and laboratory assistants should be indicated”.

The consultants were very impressed with the quality of the faculty members in the Department of German Language and Literature. The Review Team agrees wholeheartedly with their assessment. In particular, the research record of the six tenured or tenure-track faculty members, individually and collectively, is highly impressive. This point was stressed by the consultants and is clearly confirmed by the faculty curricula vitae.

Physical and Information Resources

Regarding Physical and Information Resources, the Senate IAR policy states:

“A summary of appropriateness and effectiveness of the utilization of program-specific resources should be provided, such as: laboratories, information technology services and library facilities (including unique and special collections)”.

Given the nature of research in the discipline, library holdings are the most important physical resource for the Department. The consultants agree with the faculty members that the library holdings are adequate and are adapting to the research interests of new faculty members. The Review Team is in agreement on this point.

Financial Resources

Here, the Senate IAR policy states:

“There should be evidence of appropriateness and effectiveness of the utilization of financial resources for the program. This should include consideration of any additional funds from internal sources and from government or other external sources”.

The consultants found the financial resources of the Department to be troublesome. They observe that – “Time and energy are often taken up by designing stop-gap measures to address personnel and fiscal shortages, and note that “. . . [two members of the Department] were seconded to senior administrative positions, indeed for a total of more than ten years, which continues in one case, the department was given no comparable compensation for its loss. It is unfair to a department to take some of its best faculty and thereby leave it academically and fiscally vulnerable.” They even make a recommendation that the “internal funding formula” be amended to be more favourable to the Department.

The Review Team agrees that the Department has been financially hard-pressed, especially by having faculty members seconded to administrative positions, but also notes that they have made very effective use of adjunct faculty members to help fulfill departmental teaching commitments. The productivity of the regular faculty members in research and the excellent reputation of the Department in all respects speaks well of its ability to satisfy the intent of the Senate IAR policy.

Societal Context

With regard to Societal Context, the Senate IAR Policy states:

“Irrespective of the specific subject of study, a university education aims to instill the essential attributes of an educated individual including good judgment and the capacity for critical thought. While from this perspective, specific societal need, for example in the sense of job skill training, may not be a factor in assessing the academic worth of a program, there are situations in which it is appropriate to include a more specific focus on societal factors. For example, programs that are funded from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities will be required to meet Ministry guidelines in this respect. Convincing evidence with respect to student demand and societal need should be considered and information on duplicate or similar programs at other institutions should be provided.

“In addition, in the case of professional programs, their compliance with the regulatory requirements of the profession must be assessed. In assessing student demand it may be necessary to consider the probable availability of positions on graduation, the likelihood of attracting out-of-province or international students, the equity implications of a program, or the possible duplication of the program at other institutions”.

Queen’s mission, as encapsulated in the slogan currently gracing its stationery, is to prepare “leaders and citizens for a global society.” It is hard to see how the University could make a serious claim to fulfilling, or even attempting to fulfill, that mission without having strong programs in the major world languages. German is one of the most important of these languages, in both cultural and commercial terms. It is unlikely that the Department will ever be, in terms of student:faculty ratio, one of the more cost-effective departments at Queen’s—though its cost-effectiveness might, as noted above, be improved if breadth requirements were introduced into the University’s curricula. That the Department takes seriously its responsibilities vis-à-vis the societal context is clear from the broadening, in recent years, of course offerings from the traditional courses in German literature and standard German language to include course in German culture more generally, as well as Business German.

As proof that this department is operating in a “societal context” the Review Team points to their excellent record for placement of graduates and their distinction in having a different focus from other German departments in Ontario.

Learning and Program Outcomes

Here, the Senate IAR Policy says:

“In assessing learning and program outcomes it is important to keep in mind that, by its nature, the most important aspect of a university education is the aim of producing an educated individual. The characteristics of such a person are, of course, essential in varying degrees to a variety of occupations as well as to being a valuable member of society. Within this broader context it is also appropriate to consider more specific indicators of learning and program outcomes.

“The indicators used in assessing a program should be defined and provide evidence of quality of faculty, student demand (applications and registrations), student quality, the outcomes of the program (graduation rate, length of studies, job placement, external scholarships and awards for graduating students, and the results of professional certification or licensing examinations) and achievement of its learning objectives. (The indicators used to assess achievement of learning objectives, i.e. learning outcomes, are invariably best developed by the unit whose program is under review.) Data on indicators should be collected over an extended time period rather than simply once every review cycle, and the results should be discussed in the self study as a means to enhance program quality and student satisfaction”.

Here the comments of the consultants are directed towards increasing the number of students enrolled in German. They say, in response to the aim of producing an educated individual, “This we understand to include a reasonable amount of breadth, and here is how the German department can best serve the faculty. The best chance at a broad educational base is in first year. It would be wise for the German department to put greater emphasis on the faculty’s gateway courses, choosing topics, media, the level of difficulty and staffing carefully, to attract larger student numbers in year one. These numbers will not only contribute to the educational breadth of many undergraduate, they may well result in more students becoming German majors as well, and help the Department carry a greater load of general undergraduate teaching at Queen’s.”

The Review Team agrees that the Department needs to concentrate on increasing enrollment and that the requirement for more breadth across the departments in the Faculty of Arts and Science would prove beneficial to all departments.

Remarks on the Consultants’ Recommendations

The consultants’ report contains many recommendations to Queen’s administration and to the Department. The Review Team is in general agreement with most of the recommendations but has remarks to make regarding some of them.

Following is the consultants’ list of recommendations with our comments in italics.

To the Administration

1. Prevent further reduction of regular faculty in German language and literature to safeguard PhD and Master’s programs. – *agreed*
2. Maintain full time faculty strength at a minimum of six, with adequate compensation for individuals seconded to senior administrative posts. **This is our strongest recommendation in this document.** – *agreed; and we believe that adequate compensation is likely already in place in order to secure the adjunct teaching positions that are providing much of the undergraduate instruction.*
3. In conjunction with the department’s own initiatives (see “To the Department” below), consider bringing faculty numbers up to 7 by 2 junior hires, one prior to the Reeve retirement, one thereafter, in order to preserve and strengthen this high-quality, research intensive faculty. – *this would be desirable but not at the expense of more heavily loaded departments in Arts and Science. The fact is that most departments at Queen’s can show a need for additional faculty members. A compelling argument for an additional faculty member could be made if the Department’s graduate programs were in danger of not receiving OCGS approval, but that seems not to be the case. We therefore cannot endorse the hiring of new faculty members given the demands made on other departments.*
4. Communicate clearly the role the Department is expected to assume within the college and university. – *agreed but this is likely already the case.*

5. Consider Faculty of Arts and Science language/culture, humanities, social science and science breadth requirements, and adjust the internal funding formula so that enrolments in them carry significant weight. – *the breadth requirement is a good idea but the creation of an internal funding formula that can adapt to the change is questionable. When and if Arts and Science adopts cross-disciplinary courses, German should be well poised to play an important role in those courses.*

To the Department

Graduate Program

1. Re-apply for a QNS with a clear focus derived from the departmental stock-taking. – *agreed but the availability of another QNS may be questionable if no existing position is available for bridging.*
2. Explore ways to enhance the graduate programs and faculty by recruiting a faculty member through the DAAD (German Academic Exchange) or similar visiting program to bring a visiting scholar on a semester basis. – *this is a good idea but will likely be of marginal benefit to the graduate program since visitors are not in place long enough to take on supervisory roles.*
3. Delete third MA option, “eight half-courses and an oral examination” – *agreed*
4. Consider changing the second option of a 50-page thesis to a 30-page publishable article. – *agreed*
5. Program objectives should at least mention possible careers outside academia as well, e.g. publishing, translation, and corporate and diplomatic sector. – *agreed*
6. Comprehensive exam should also reflect theoretical, cultural, and film texts in keeping with new faculty interests. – *agreed*
7. Provide more training for new TFs through a comprehensive week-long workshop. Students expressed the desire for more contact with TFs in other languages. How about a workshop component for all prospective TFs organized collaboratively by all language program supervisors and linguistics? – *this is not fully supported by the Review Team. There are programs in place at the International Centre and the IDC that could be used. A full week of training would stretch scarce training resources.*
8. Get RAs involved in professors’ research to add to the teaching component of graduate studies experience in research techniques. This would also partially address the absence of a formal “methods” course. – *as graduate students in humanities are not typically involved in their supervisors research projects and since the faculty is already heavily loaded, the Review Team does not fully endorse this recommendation for all faculty members. It’s implementation may create a hindrance for some faculty members in maintaining excellent research productivity. However, other faculty members have expressed interest in involving graduate students in their research as RA’s.*
9. Encourage graduate student teaching when appropriate on more advanced levels, perhaps through a formal “internship” or “apprenticeship” for course credit. –

- agreed and the course SGS-901* "Teaching and Learning in Higher Education" is available to graduate students for just this purpose.*
10. Continue to encourage students to apply for DAAD, Fulbright and other fellowships to study in Germany and Austria. – *agreed*
 11. Be strict about support deadlines. – *this could either be in relation to ensuring that graduate students are aware of the limited time for which funding is available or to encourage them to meet the deadlines for scholarship applications. In either case it seems like a good idea.*
 12. Encourage the use of German in graduate seminars. – *agreed. This would seem to be essential to the graduate program.*
 13. Consider reducing the number of faculty involved in thesis committees. – *agreed.*

Undergraduate Program

1. Organize a departmental retreat to formulate a mandate and vision for the next five years and strategies on how to realize them. Follow this up by the creation of a sub-committee of two or three to work out the practical details of implementation, and monthly departmental meetings to discuss them until implemented. Create a timetable for implementation and blend it in over the next several years. **This is our strongest recommendation for the Department.** – *agreed.*
2. Try to reduce the number of sessional appointments in the language teaching area to bring more graduate students on board and give them wider opportunities in the classroom. – *this would be problematic in two ways. Firstly, graduate students need to concentrate on their research in order to complete their programs in a timely fashion. Teaching duties, although giving valuable experience, take a great deal of time away from research. Secondly, the sessional appointments in the Department are long-standing and it would be difficult and perhaps unfair to dismiss these people who are giving very good service to the program.*
3. Abandon the "double-decker" course concept. – *agreed.*
4. Develop and continue to offer current gateway courses, and perhaps develop new ones with attractive interdisciplinary topics and excellent instructors. – *agreed.*
5. With the advice and assistance of Associate Dean Lessard, approach other academic units to partner gateway courses of mutual interest. – *agreed.*
6. Develop the Business German minor by scheduling it in conjunction with the business school and capping the sequence with the *ZDfdB* diploma. – *agreed.*
7. Aim to increase the number of majors, minors and medials. – *agreed but with the understanding that the Department has already been making efforts in this direction.*
8. More German should be used in upper level courses. – *agreed with the understanding that faculty members are responsible for determining the best approach to teaching courses that they are assigned and that some may be more comfortable lecturing in English.*
9. Less emphasis should be placed on the classical period and perhaps on literature in general. – *agreed. This seems to be in line with the shift in faculty members' interests.*

10. More emphasis should be placed on language, German culture, and practical German usage – *agreed. This is a corollary of the point above.*
11. Grading practices should be reviewed from time to time to ensure general consistency within the department and in relation to other departments in the faculty. – *agreed. It is especially important to ensure that students applying for external scholarships are not disadvantaged by professors who consistently give marks below departmental or discipline norms.*
12. Review staffing of lower level language courses by part time instructors and graduate student TFs. – *this is really a suggestion that senior professors take on teaching of introductory German courses. The Review Team does not see this as a good idea. It will take valuable research time away from the senior faculty members, give senior undergraduate students less experienced instructors, and there is no guarantee that it will attract more undergraduates into the program.*
13. Consider a strengthening of the contractual position of the language program coordinator and trainer. – *the consultants appear to be worried that a valuable member of the Department will be lost unless the position is changed from its current status as a term adjunct. There is no tenure-track position available and, if there were, the Department would fill it through a competition. The incumbent would be eligible to compete but, for the time being, the position is properly staffed.*

Concluding Remarks

We conclude with the statement that both the consultants' and review team's view is that it is highly important to maintain the 6-regular-member faculty complement in the department. This is crucial for the maintenance of their graduate program as one of the best in the country. It is also important to see to it that German is not disproportionately drawn upon for extra-departmental administrators.

The Review team commends the Department on doing an excellent job, both on the research front and, with impressive imagination and industry, in broadening the attractiveness of the course offerings and thus making constructive efforts to increase the number of undergraduate students they teach.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Review Team,

Ronald J. Anderson (Chair)