

CARLETON UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON QUALITY ASSURANCE

Cyclical Review of the BA and MA in French

Executive Summary and Final Assessment

This Executive Summary and Final Assessment Report of the cyclical review of Carleton's BA and MA programs in French are provided pursuant to articles 4.2.5-4.2.6 of the provincial Quality Assurance Framework and articles 5.1.9.23-24 and 5.1.9.26-27 of Carleton's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The BA and MA programs in French are administered by the University's Department of French, an academic unit of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

As a consequence of the review, the program was categorised by the Carleton University Committee on Quality Assurance (CUCQA) as being of **good quality** (Carleton's IQAP 5.1.9.12).

The Review Committee was of the opinion that the Department of French continues to successfully fulfill a valuable mandate in terms both of language instruction and of literary and linguistic studies. The fulfillment of this mandate fits well in an Anglophone university with the internationalization strategy that is an important feature of Carleton's Strategic Integrated Plan as well, therefore, as with the overarching direction of the Plan: Sustainable Communities – Global Prosperity. In this sense, the Department has been able to develop a distinctive identity that sets it apart from comparable programs in Ontario and Canada by focusing its enrolment strategy towards Anglophone students. It is generally acknowledged that Carleton's French Department is in the ideal location in Canada for Anglophones to pursue advanced studies in French.

However, the Review Committee also identified seven broad issues that should be addressed:

- a) **Replacement of retired faculty:** the current number of faculty members may not be sufficient to guarantee coherent and cogent undergraduate and graduate programs;
- b) **Faculty applying for external research funding:** department members should participate more consistently in external grant competitions;
- c) **Opportunities for exposure to spoken French outside the classroom:** the review noted that the Department might want to reinstate the one-hour weekly tutorials that were discontinued several years ago; the Department should consider instituting more connections with the province of Quebec;

- d) **Enrolments in the BA program:** the Department should work more closely with Carleton's recruitment services;
- e) **Graduate funding:** the Department should consult with the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs (FGPA) so that financial support can be offered to students, thus enabling the Department to compete with other institutions, especially with respect to the graduate program at the University of Ottawa;
- f) **Enrolments in the MA program:** the Department should target teachers at the secondary school level who may be interested in completing an MA in French as well as Anglophone civil servants;
- g) **Completion rates/times to completion:** the Department should consider implementing stricter schedules for completing the various stages of the preparation and approval of the master's thesis; a 12-month program should be developed and promoted.

On 12th November 2014, CUCQA received and accepted an Action Plan detailing how these seven issues will be addressed. The Committee has requested a report on progress with respect to these issues. The report is due by June 30th, 2015.

Date: October 14th, 2014

To: Dr. John Shepherd, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (Academic); Chair,
Carleton University Committee on Quality Assurance

Cc: Dr. Peter Ricketts, Provost and Vice-President (Academic)
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From: Dr. Pascal Gin, Chair, Department of French

This report is the departmental response to the outcome of the cyclical program review of the Bachelor's and Master's programs in French as it is documented in the Carleton University Committee on Quality Assurance's memorandum dated August 19th 2014. It provides the Committee with a detailed response to the seven issues that were raised and summarizes the actions to be taken in an Action Plan appended to the report. Issues are addressed one by one in the order in which they were communicated to the Department.

General

1. Replacement of Retired Faculty

Due to the recent and unexpected impact of labour negotiations on faculty workloads and teaching assignments, the Department has had little choice but to reassess the best means to address pressing staffing needs. The retirement in July 2015 of two experienced full-time

instructors, and the stress it will place on the satisfactory delivery and supervision of language courses, is now compounded by the reduction of professorial teaching loads, having a serious impact on the delivery of all our undergraduate programs. At present, professorial teaching resources are already thinly stretched to cover the thirteen credits of non-language courses required each year to meet the demands of undergraduate programs. As a result, it has become necessary for the department to carefully rethink future staffing needs, which are quite likely to require securing a professorial position in order to maintain program offerings in French linguistics and literature. With this in mind, ongoing discussions at both the departmental and faculty levels have shifted in favour of one full-time replacement for July 2015 at the instructor level. This replacement must also address the erosion of teaching and administrative resources devoted to language courses. These resources will be seriously impacted by the decision not to renew one of the two aforementioned positions lost to retirement. They are now further diminished due to the workload reduction across the three remaining instructor positions. In this context, proper coordination of all language courses must be given priority. Accordingly, the position the Department will be seeking to replace at the level of Instructor will need to cover coordination and teaching duties in relatively equal proportions. In the fall of 2014 the Chair will formally submit a staffing request to address these needs.

2. Applying for External Research Funding

Three steps are being and will be taken to appropriately focus faculty efforts in securing research funding beyond standard SSHRC competitions. First, the Chair will request a detailed cross-sectorial breakdown of primary and secondary research interests (covering periods, regions, discipline-specific sub-areas of specialization as well as themes and issues of societal relevance) from each faculty member. This data will then be tabulated so as to provide the Research Office with an expanded research profile of the unit and its members. The Chair will then liaise with faculty members in a timely fashion to communicate relevant funding opportunities identified by the Faculty Research Office. Targeted information sessions with the research facilitator could also be organized annually to ensure efficient communication of funding opportunities. The Department will also strive to promote working conditions conducive to completing grant applications. As outlined by many faculty members who submitted SSHRC applications - a good number of whom having done so over at least two competition cycles – the undertaking is made particularly challenging by the level of administrative commitment required of faculty members year-round at the committee level in a small unit such as ours. Efforts will therefore be made to reduce, as much as possible, the number of committee meetings scheduled between the end of the winter term and the beginning of the fall term.

Bachelor's Program

3. Increasing Opportunities for Exposure to Spoken French outside the Classroom

The three initiatives for which additional information on implementation is sought will be

addressed one by one.

With respect to the fourth-year seminar held in Québec City, we will aim to increase enrolments by means of yearly information sessions, a dedicated webpage, targeting upper-year Minor students and coordinating efforts with the International Students Services Office to promote the seminar to International French-speaking. The possibility of adding a one-term Québec immersion component to our programs will be explored through cooperation with the Registrar's Office. We will assess the possibility of making set patterns of spring and summer courses offered at a chosen Québec institution available, through Letters of Permission, to students doing a Major in French. As outlined in the departmental response, past attempts at bilateral agreements did not yield satisfactory results due in part to differences in fee structures between Ontario and Québec and lack of interest in reciprocal agreements.

As for the expansion of opportunities for weekly conversational practice, this cannot be undertaken without additional fiscal TA funding, which is unlikely to be made available on a regular basis. The department will nonetheless aim to maximize student participation in the sustainable out-of-classroom opportunities it is already offering (such as the activities run by the Club Francophone, involvement in the student-run journal *Mot Dit*, and the opportunities for social engagement around French Movie nights). We view the establishment of a formal departmental students' association, planned for 2015-2016, as a crucial step toward promoting student engagement. In an effort to better communicate opportunities offered to students, we will also keep track of the many course related initiatives taken individually by faculty members (movie screenings, site visits, etc.) Finally, the department will mandate both the TA coordinator and the Language Courses Committee to look into the current group discussion format to identify changes that would strengthen student participation.

4. Increasing Enrolments in the Bachelor's Program

Historically, Francophone communities in Eastern Ontario have had little impact on student numbers for our undergraduate programs. Previous recruitment activities aimed at these very communities generated very little interest overall and indicated a very limited potential for recruitment. Efforts for the purpose of increasing undergraduate enrolment in the Bachelor's Program will therefore need to target an Anglophone student population, which remains our main pool of undergraduate majors. Direct departmental involvement in undergraduate recruitment strategies yields the most tangible results when aimed at the local level. While we will continue to rely on the expertise and campaigns of university recruitment services for provincial and national positioning, we intend to focus most of our efforts on the surrounding community. Our approach will be two-pronged. First, we will commit to programming a number of community outreach activities over each term. The program will pull together the regular film screenings scheduled as part of French Movie Night, the weekly activities held by the Club Francophone (to which more targeted resources are being devoted) and at least one major outreach-focused event (such as the exhibit 'Le français au Canada d'un océan à l'autre' that the

Department brought to Carleton in the Fall of 2014). Second, we will be putting in place a communication strategy to reach out to secondary schools in order to promote our program of activities to Anglophone students (grades 11 and 12) in the Ottawa area. The overall objective is to increase the department's visibility at the high school community level by means other than traditional open-house information sessions held once or twice a year. The execution of this plan will require that the Department seek the assistance of recruitment services to secure a comprehensive and up-to-date database of relevant secondary school contacts in the Ottawa region. In addition, in order to fully benefit from these efforts, the Department will need to develop, in concert with recruitment services, a promotional strategy aimed at communicating to prospective students the concrete added value of all the extra-curricular activities integrated into our undergraduate programs.

Above and beyond cooperation regarding our efforts focused at the community level and given the importance of social media, the Department needs to collaborate with recruitment services on a thorough revision of our departmental brochure. Our departmental website also needs to be overhauled, particularly in an effort to integrate more testimonials and appropriate graphic elements. For the conception and execution of the latter revisions, we will need to rely on expertise made available to units, most probably at the faculty level.

Master's Program

5. Increasing Graduate Funding

We have already initiated discussions with FGPA in order to address the question of maximum possible funding that we can offer to students for inclusion in publicity and recruitment materials. We will continue to engage in these discussions for the forthcoming recruitment cycle, notably with respect to tracking the competitiveness of our offers at the Master's level. Steps identified in #2 of the present report will also help increase graduate student funding.

The Department has also entered into an initial conversation with FGPA regarding funding package structure as it relates to fee waivers for international students. Since our M.A. student body is increasingly international, a new recruitment initiative at the University of Ottawa risks having a negative impact on our recruitment efforts. The "differential tuition fee exemption" the University of Ottawa now offers (as of the 2014-2015 academic year) allows international students wishing to study in French to pay the same tuition fee rate as Canadian students (<http://international.uottawa.ca/en/tuition-fees-and-scholarships-0>). If the possibility of parity with this initiative cannot be entertained, the uneven playing field it sets up must be taken into consideration.

6. Increasing Enrolments

With regard to initiatives to increase enrolments in the M.A. program, the Department commits

to offering one literature course and one linguistics course in the evening each term, in order to allow individuals holding down a day job to pursue their studies at the Master's level. This model would allow for completion over two years of part-time study.

We have initiated discussions with FGPA regarding the Faculty's English language requirement for admission. The French Department is, to our knowledge, the only unit at Carleton that functions entirely in a language other than English. The academic integrity of the MA program in French and Francophone Studies is based entirely on the student's French language proficiency. As an Anglophone institution, however, the University must ensure a certain level of competency in English to allow students to navigate administration and to benefit from all university services. Since our programs are delivered in French and department business is conducted in French, however, requiring students to have the same level of proficiency in English as other programs has discouraged students from even applying to our M.A. We fully recognize the need for a certain level of competency in English, but we are proposing that it need not be as high as for programs delivered in English.

As per the departmental response dated June 27, 2014, a working group is being created to report on the following priorities: identifying actions to be taken to communicate more broadly and effectively the 'Francophone rebranding' undertaken in 2010-2011; identifying the assistance required from FGPA's recruitment services to promote the program to an Anglophone audience and to members of the teaching profession. This working group will report back to the Graduate Committee in early 2015.

7. Improving Completion Rates in the 12-month Option

Regarding the improvement of completion rates in the 12-month option, the program change from 4.5cr to 4.0cr is moving ahead to match similar programs in Ontario and will be in place for September 2015. Stricter schedules for completion of the various stages of the program have been implemented and will be closely monitored by the Graduate program's Administrative Assistant. They will also be communicated to all students in a document outlining the stages and deadlines for each program option.

Recommendation	Action to be executed	Responsibility	Timelines
1. Replacement of retired faculty	Submitting a staffing request for a position at the Instructor level	-Chair	-November 2014
2. Applying for External Research Funding	2.1 Generating a cross-sectorial list of all research interests	-Chair	-Fall 2014
	2.2 Identifying funding opportunities	-Faculty Research Office	-Winter 2015
	2.3 Communicating opportunities and organizing information sessions if deemed necessary	-Chair	-Winter 2015
	2.4 Ensuring administrative duties over the spring and summer months do not unreasonably impede grant applications	-Chair	-Winter 2015
3. Increasing Opportunities for Exposure to Spoken French outside the Classroom	3.1 Québec City Seminar : -Liaising with ISSO -Promoting the seminar through departmental social media	-Chair -Advertising and Conference Committee	-Fall 2014 -Winter 2015
	3.2 One-term immersion at a Québec University: -Canvassing prospective institutions and courses -Liaising with the RO for implementation of an LOP based-exchange structure	-Programs and Planning Committee - Programs and Planning Committee	-Fall 2014 -Winter 2015
	3.3 Expanded opportunities for conversational practice -Reassessing the format and delivery of all TA-assisted out-of-classroom services -Putting in place a departmental Student Association	-Language Courses Committee, TA coordinator -Chair, Undergraduate Supervisor	-Winter 2015 -Fall 2014 – Winter 2015

4. Increasing Enrolments in the Bachelor's Program	4.1 Programming and communicating community outreach activities	-Publicity and Conference Committee	-Fall 2014 – Winter 2015
	4.2 Developing a promotional strategy with recruitment services (local outreach, departmental brochures, website)	-Chair and Undergraduate Supervisor	- Fall 2014 – Winter 2015
5. Increasing Graduate Funding	Discussions with FGPA	Graduate Supervisor, Chair	-Fall 2014
6. Increasing Enrolments	6.1 Course scheduling	-Graduate Studies Committee	-Winter 2015
	6.2 Reassessing the English Language requirement	-Graduate Supervisor, Chair	-Fall 2014
	6.3 Developing a promotional strategy (Francophone studies rebranding, Anglophones and members of the teaching profession) with FGPA's assistance	-Graduate Studies Committee	-Fall 2014- Winter 2015
7. Improving completion rates in the 12-month option	7.1 Implementing program changes (from 4.5 to 4 credits)	-Graduate Supervisor	-September 2014
	7.2 Implementing stricter schedules for completion	-Graduate Supervisor, Graduate Assistant Administrator	-September 2014