Preface

We begin by expressing our thanks to the faculty and chair of the Department of Modern and Classical Languages for the cordial welcome they provided for the reviewers and the careful organization of the review process. The faculty, students, and staff were most helpful and forthcoming in providing the information that we needed in order to conduct the review. We express our thanks to the chair, Dr. Fernando Reati and to all the members of the department for their helpfulness and kindness.

Strength and Weaknesses

The faculty and chair maintain an extremely collegial environment in which individuals appear to feel free to speak up and express their opinions. The junior faculty affirm the friendly nature of interactions in the unit and realize that such an atmosphere is unusual in the academic arena. In spite of a relatively heavy teaching load for a research university (2/3), the faculty maintain an active publishing profile—generating monographs in university presses and articles as appropriate to their fields: the literary scholars in monographs and articles, the linguists in refereed articles, the foreign language educators and applied linguists in refereed articles and edited volumes, and the translators in edited translations. It should be noted that the lecturers are active in publishing and grant generation. The faculty—tenure track/tenured and lecturers—are extremely dedicated teachers and have shown innovation in designing new courses that attract student interest and draw on collaboration with other units through cross-listing.

MCL has been innovative in establishing links with the Andrew Young School of Public Policy and the Business School to establish the joint degrees In Foreign Language and Master’s of International Business (MIB) and the Bachelor Arts in International Economics and Modern Languages (IEML). Collaboration between the faculty in MCL and the College of Education has been strong and has advanced the quality of teacher education in the state of Georgia.

In spite of the above strengths, there is a perception among the faculty that the unit is perceived more as a service unit for the college. There is evidence of support from the dean and the university provost in terms of recognition for the grants and the availability of new
lines, but many faculty perceive that they are viewed less as publishing scholars and researchers than as providing language teaching for the university. In an effort to transform the perception, individual faculty members are actively building alliances with colleagues in other units to let them know the breadth and depth of the unit’s achievements.

**Progress toward Goals and Objectives**

Substantial progress has been made towards achieving goals set after the last review. Three tenure-track faculty have been added in accordance with the recommendation, as well as six non-tenure track faculty. Plans for a new Humanities building have been drawn up but funding has not been identified. New space has been assigned to MCL in offices vacated by the Department of History, and this reassignment has been a morale booster to the faculty members who occupy the offices and to the GTAs who have a large, attractive space in which to work. The former GTA office has been converted into a much-needed faculty meeting space. There has been improvement in both the retention rates and graduation rates for graduate students. French has brought new emphasis to teacher education, while Spanish has increased opportunities for students to take linguistics courses—both efforts enhance the training of students heading toward careers in teaching. Class size has been reduced from 35 to 30 since the last review. Unfortunately, the recommendation to allow the faculty more time for research through a reduction in teaching load has not been realized due to increases in student SCH and the current budget crisis. It is indeed a credit to the unit and to the unit leadership that so many of the goals have been achieved. We will address this last issue later on in the document.

**Quality of Curriculum**

**Undergraduate Curriculum**

The quality of undergraduate and graduate instruction remains high, with faculty, even in sections which have lost faculty (such as French and German, or which are newly formed an expanding, such as Italian and Japanese, receive extremely positive reviews from the students and have their students achieve success on the competency assessments administered by the faculty. It is not uncommon for faculty in sections with only a few faculty or in some with a single faculty member to teach an overload. The German section lost a faculty member unexpectedly several years ago and the remaining two faculty taught four and five courses a semester along with independent study courses. Since then, a third faculty and second tenure-track faculty has been added. Together they have formed an active team of innovative teachers with new courses: Border Crossings in German Film, Truth About Fiction: the Arthurian Tradition, Martial Masculinities widely cross-listed to reach students in German and in a variety of other fields: English, Philosophy, Communication. We view their efforts as a model of cross-
disciplinary collaboration that could be replicated in other language sections. Similarly, the single lecturer in Italian has designed a variety of courses, has vastly expanded the Italian program, added a popular study abroad program, and received a major Atlantis grant of almost $500,000 matched by the Ca’Foscari University European counterpart to form a dual degree in which MCL and the Andrew Young School for Public Policy will cooperate. We endorse the recommendation of the Self-Study report to add a tenure track position in Italian with opportunities to teach in French for which the lecturer (Ph.D. Yale University) who has achieved these extraordinary results should be eligible to apply. Given the solid increase in Italian (30% over the past three years), there are sufficient students to sustain a B.A. in Italian. Should the current lecturer in Italian assume the tenure-track position, then it is critical that the lecturer be replaced to teach the 1000–2000 sequence and other language courses at the 3000-level. Without the replacement of the lecturer, the Italian program will lose instructional capacity.

The Spanish program offers a rich and varied program at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. The faculty offer courses in language, literature, critical theory, linguistics, and translation/interpretation. It was a wise decision to drop the concentrations and to permit students to combine courses from several areas to make the scheduling of classes more flexible. It is useful for the literature students to take one or more linguistics courses as well as a pedagogy course to enhance their teaching effectiveness and marketability.

There are two areas of real strength that combine the strength in Spanish with the strengths in French and German: the undergraduate and graduate components in foreign language education and the ranked certificate program in translation and interpretation. Georgia State University is known throughout the state by the work done by a senior faculty member, retiring this year, in establishing state standards for foreign language education, and for establishing courses in methodology and in the foundations of student characteristics. She has been joined by a colleague who is a specialist in technology for the foreign language classroom and who has made huge strides in increasing recruitment to the field of foreign language teaching and to the MCL programs in languages through outreach to the high schools and community colleges in the region. He was selected as the outstanding leader in foreign language education in the state of Georgia by the state-wide language association. They are joined by a third colleague who works with the other two in teaching methodology and in supervision. It is critical that the retiring colleague be replaced if the current cohort of students is to be observed and mentored while they are in the K-12 schools. A second program that is both distinctive and exemplary is the certificate program in Translation and Interpretation. The designer/implementer/advisor of the program has created a curriculum that has been made an official training site by the Georgia Commission of Interpreters. The rigor of the program is assured by the series of theory courses and practice with working translators and interpreters. The language skills of the incoming students is assessed by colleagues in MCL in listening, reading, writing, and speaking.
to be sure that they are at a suitable level to succeed in the program. These two programs: foreign language education and the certificate program in Translation and Interpretation function as free-standing or as an enhancement to the undergraduate and graduate programs in MCL.

In response to a retirement of a very active senior colleague in French and to the challenges faced by a reduced number of French faculty, we are recommending that a tenure track faculty be added in the area of Francophone studies: West Africa/ Maghreb or the Caribbean. Such a hire will serve both the B.A. in foreign language education by providing a faculty member who focuses upon the francophone world—a critical component of all French elementary and intermediate textbooks. It is an area that draws majors: see the French curriculum at Arizona State University, the University of Arizona, Indiana University, the University of Texas-Austin, the Pennsylvania State University. Those French programs that have added the Francophone component (Canada, Belgium, Africa, the Caribbean) have seen a steady enrollment of French students. Such a hire could also teach a course in Diaspora Studies or Post-Colonialism that could serve both undergraduates and graduates in the Spanish B.A./M.A. We respect the request by the French faculty to add a lecturer in the area of French for Business to take on the courses taught by the senior retiring faculty member. It is our thinking that doing both of these hires at the same time will greatly enhance the enrollments in both graduate and undergraduate programs and preserve the IEML and the collaboration with the Andrew Young School.

We were asked by Dean Adamson to consider whether all programs are viable. The B.I.S. in Italian, Chinese, and Japanese seem to be strong. Japanese is vibrant because of the energetic work and collaboration with the community, including schools and the Georgia Language Association, and with the Center for Asian Studies. The external evaluators believe that there are missed opportunities in not further developing Chinese—given the growth of Chinese language classes in the K-12 arena nationally and the importance of Chinese in the global arena. If MCL and the Center for Asian Studies are serious about seeking a Confucius Institute and expanding offerings in Chinese, then it is essential to add a tenure track faculty in Chinese—someone who is familiar with the vast landscape for building capacity in Chinese Studies: Confucius Institute, Chinese Flagship Program, Startalk—all resources that one may seek to expand both the student pipeline from the high schools and private secondary schools and to build student interest and competence at GSU. Available also are Chinese universities who wish to send graduate students to help teach in American institutions. The Chinese Flagship program nationally has individuals available who might serve as resources if you decide to embark on this expansion. We would suggest that such a consultant be brought in as you plan the expansion of the Chinese program in MCL and across the Liberal Arts Curriculum: history, politics, religion, philosophy.
While the external team of evaluators applauds the recommendation to increase the number of credit hours in lower division language from three to four hours, we do not think it should be done at the expense of raising the cap from thirty to forty students. One of the improvements since the last report was the reduction from a cap of 35 to 30 students. Since the recommendation of the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages is for classes of 22 or fewer, we think it unwise to raise the cap. Efficiencies could be met by using a hybrid model, where the routine written exercises, reading, and use of realia from the media would be addressed online, and face-to-face sessions would be used for interactive oral activities. Ohio State University, the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, and Arizona State University have employed this strategy to maximize in-class interaction without sacrificing skills in writing, reading, and listening.

We recommend that a more flexible enrollment system be adopted, one in which a series of large, popular classes offset courses with fewer students. Certain cross-listed classes taught in English: international film, issues of migration and border literature, the European Union could be offset by smaller classes in the target language. This is especially important for the more difficult, less commonly taught languages: Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, where smaller class size is critical for increasing opportunities for each student to speak.

Finally, strategic choices will need to be made in prioritizing those languages that continue to struggle to meet minimum threshold levels. Classics, Russian, Korean, and Portuguese rely on part-time, contract instructors and so do not have the continuity and growth that is seen in other languages. Perhaps alliances with centers and programs outside MCL (the Linguistics Department, Classical Studies, the Center for Asian Studies, Russian History faculty) could be made to help maintain these languages. Classical Studies relies on the Latin and Greek classes to sustain the BIS, although these classes show low enrollments. Russian, Korean, and Portuguese have uneven enrollments. Given the demands on the other, more robust language programs, priorities in staffing and in class offerings must be set. Classical Studies attracts large numbers of talented students at other institutions through intra- and intercollegial collaboration. Classical studies courses make a sound related field for MCL students.

Graduate Curriculum

The increase in the minimum number of students for a graduate class to be authorized has created unintended anxiety among the graduate students in MCL. In a meeting with graduate students, the external evaluators heard that certain graduate students had been delayed in their progress to degree by the cancellation of courses. In response to the concerns, we are recommending a new configuration of the graduate programs. The quality of the graduate programs in MCL is very high, however, they struggle because of current recruitment tactics
and a faculty who is carrying a heavy load to meet the mandated minimum enrollments of 12 students.

For this reason we are making a recommendation to realign the three M.A. programs in Spanish, French, and German along the following lines: **3 cross-cutting core courses will be offered in English** to a combined cohort in all three programs. One of the courses might be in **critical theory**, the second in **linguistics**, and the third in **a seminar of cross-cutting interest**:

- Border Literature
- The Rhetoric of Place
- Fascism and Resistance in WWII
- Environmental Literature

The **remaining courses** plus the thesis/portfolio would be in Spanish/German/French. We have spoken to both faculty and graduate students about this format and had some constructive advice as to how this new format might be carried out. It will be up to the faculty in consultation with the graduate students to conceptualize and implement such an idea if there is further positive feedback on the design.

A second idea for assisting the faculty in meeting the target of 12 per course will be to **implement the already planned five-year B.A./M.A. degree**. Students who enter with advanced placement credit or those who have advanced competence in language would easily be able to progress through such a program in a timely fashion. In addition, the students would be eligible in their fifth year to serve as graduate teaching assistants. Such a degree possibility would assist MCL in retaining some of its better students for the master’s degree prior to pursuing further graduate studies or a career path. MCL might collaborate with the Honors program in recruiting talented students for the five-year B.A./M.A.

A third solution for recruiting more students to the MCL graduate courses is to **offer students enrolled in Business or Economics or other professional graduate programs the opportunity to receive a certificate in Spanish/French/German/Italian/Japanese or Chinese** should sufficient courses become available. The certificate could be comprised of fifteen hours and would enhance the job possibilities of the graduate student. It may be advisable to set a proficiency level for incoming students.

In the previous program review, it was suggested that the Spanish faculty offer a Ph.D. in Hispanic Studies. For various reasons, we **recommend that the degree be postponed at this time**. First, it is a difficult economic climate for proposing a Ph.D. Second, in talking with the faculty and in reviewing the proposal, we did not see that there was a clear vision of the distinctive quality of this degree. Should the degree proposal move forward, we would suggest that two or three areas of emphasis be outlined at the outset of the proposal. For example, if one maps the current publications of the faculty, the interest areas could be: a) conflict and power; b) Imagined and Creative Places; c) Migration, Identity, and Cultural Representation, etc.
We would like to make some suggestions for enhanced recruitment. It seemed to the reviewers that not enough focused recruitment was taking place at the graduate level. More aggressive recruiting should occur at the Georgia Language Association. To highlight the quality of your program, you might encourage a session each year that will showcase the research of your graduate students in teaching literature, furthering a linguistic concept, or conveying cultural concepts in the classroom. A second means of stepping up recruitment efforts would be to highlight the strengths of the graduate programs—those distinctive traits of the programs—in the website: the links between Business and MCL; the opportunities to participate in exchanges with other universities, collaboration between MCL international film experts and film studies in other units; linkages between MCL and Philosophy/English/History/Economics at the Andrew Young School for Public Policy; courses internships in the schools for those who pursue certification; the certificate in Translation and Interpretation. We also recommend recruitment visits to the campus to explore opportunities that exist in MCL, in the centers that collaborate with MCL, and in student services—particularly financial aid.

Quality of the Students

The external reviewers were very impressed by the quality of graduate students we met. A group of seven graduate students in Spanish, French, and German spent an hour with us. They were extremely articulate in expressing their goals, their reasons for coming to GSU, and their satisfaction with the program. They praised the faculty for the quality of mentoring and the quality of instruction. No similar meeting with undergraduate students was set up, although the reviewers engaged in some informal conversation with undergraduate students in the halls. One particular advanced Italian student made a very positive impression in terms of focus, engagement with the program, and communicative skills.

Scores of incoming graduate students on the Graduate Record Examination have improved over the last three years. The average SAT scores of the undergraduate students are at about 1100, above the scores required in the College of Arts and Sciences. The faculty praise the overall quality of the undergraduate students but acknowledge that there is a range of ability as is appropriate for a large, urban university.

Quality of the Faculty

The faculty is productive in producing books and refereed articles. Faculty productivity has increased since the time of the last review with an increase from five to eight books published in a three-year period, and an increase from 48 to 58 articles in a three year period. The venues for publication are appropriate. Given that the teaching load is one course higher (2/3) than in
most research universities, the faculty is to be commended on its productivity. However, the implementation of a formal process to **apply for paid sabbatical every seven years** would greatly enhance the productivity rate.

While it is commendable that the course load of untenured faculty is kept at 2/2 during the first three years at GSU, we would recommend that **efforts be made to grant a research semester during the pre-tenure period.** In addition, some **formal system of mentoring during the pre-tenure years** would give the junior faculty greater confidence in coming up for tenure. We would suggest a formal annual progress-to-tenure assessment with input from faculty from the personnel committee to provide greater clarity to the untenured faculty member as he/she advances toward tenure. We applaud the College of Arts and Sciences for beginning to offer Pre-Tenure Workshops—another important piece of faculty development; grant workshops would also be useful.

The students praised the quality of teaching by the faculty. Teaching evaluations also indicate satisfaction with the quality of instruction. Several of the teachers have won teaching awards at GSU or in the state of Georgia. While student evaluations are used to assess teaching ability, there does not seem to be a system of peer evaluation. **We recommend that formal peer evaluation be used as an additional measure of evaluating the quality of teaching.**

**Resource Adequacy**

Given that this review takes place in a period of extreme fiscal challenge, the unit both acknowledges the support given in the past and makes modest requests in moving forward. However, the replacement of retiring faculty members in the area of Foreign Language Education and the proposed new tenure-track faculty in Italian with ability to teach in French or another language are crucial to move forward on the new M.A.T. program, the teaching track of the B.A./M.A. and the B.A. in International Economics and Modern Languages. In the Self-Study, mention is made of adding a lecturer with training for International Business and a tenure-track position in Francophone literature/culture. We recommend that to help in attracting advanced majors and M.A. students to the French program you expand the Francophone offerings to include West Africa, the Maghreb, the Caribbean, Canada and the linkages with European Union studies to include (perhaps cross-listed) courses in the political, economic, and intellectual history of France.

One of the most distinctive parts of the curriculum in MCL is the collaboration with the Business School through the joint degree in Foreign Language and Master’s of International Business and the Bachelor Arts in International Economics and Modern Languages in the Andrew Young School of Public Policy. These programs contribute to advancing the internationalization
mission of the university through collaboration between professional schools and the liberal arts education.

There are strains in terms of faculty resources. Many faculty are teaching overloads in order to meet the enrollment needs and to keep their students moving through the major. We have identified in this report areas for modest faculty investment to allow the faculty to meet their research demands while continuing to serve the students.

The Self-Study Report indicates that the faculty consider the library resources adequate to meet most of their research needs, especially with the prompt service provided by Interlibrary Loan. The faculty agreed that in general they were able to locate the research resources they needed. The faculty also praised the Language Resource Center and the resources available within and outside of the department to meet the needs in technology. The reviewers were impressed by the dedication of the staff in meeting the needs of the faculty in the area of the Language Resource Center, advising, technology, student support, and finances. The staff spoke to the collegial nature of the department and to the concern that the faculty felt for the professional advancement of the staff members. Such a warm, collegial relationship between staff, faculty, and students is admirable.

Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives identified in the Self-Study Report seem appropriate. We have affirmed the strategies for increasing enrollments in M.A. programs: the implementation of the M.A.T, which uses the existing courses of the current M.A. with teaching emphasis; the 5-year B.A./M.A in Spanish, the elimination of concentration requirements, but we express reservations above about the implementation of the Ph.D. program in Hispanic Studies. We endorse the use of technology to improve instruction and to achieve efficiencies, but we are concerned about the raise in the cap for lower division Spanish classes. Our review endorses the emphasis on interdisciplinary outreach and the collaboration with other units. The move to create a collaborative degree in European Studies with History and Political Studies is timely and has been adopted at peer institutions. Finally we have outlined some ways to achieve the unit goal to expand some language programs and to review the centrality and viability of others.

Conclusion

The Department of Modern and Classical Languages is a vibrant and talented unit that plays a vital role in enhancing the university’s mission to create global citizens focused on finding solutions to some of the world’s critical issues. Through collaboration with the centers and institutes, other academic units, and the community, MCL plays a central role in the College of
Arts and Sciences. The unit uses its resources wisely but merits investment as budget permits in some central areas that we have mentioned above:

- Francophone Literatures and Cultures
- Italian
- Teacher Education
- Faculty Development
- Chinese
- Business French

We thank Provost Palm, Associate Vice Provost Finn, Dean Adamson, Dr. Reati and all the individuals who met with us for giving us the opportunity to learn more about Georgia State University and the Department of Modern and Classical Languages.

Reviewers:

Abril Trigo, Ohio State University
Erec Koch, University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Deborah N. Losse, Arizona State University