Institutional Effectiveness Report

2020-2021

Program: Foreign Languages BA

College and Department: College of Arts & Sciences – Department of Foreign Languages

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Mission

The Department of Foreign Languages (DFL) is proud to offer foreign language courses, study abroad experiences, and co-curricular opportunities that prepare Tech graduates to compete in today's global marketplace. The major in foreign languages (with concentrations in French, German, or Spanish) cultivates foreign language proficiency and cultural understanding in our students to equip them for success in a wide variety of careers and for postgraduate studies. Students may also double major, earn a minor (in French, German, Spanish, or International Studies), or become an International Business and Cultures (IBAC) major, a joint degree between the College of Business and the College of Arts and Sciences. Through its teacher licensure program, the DFL also trains the next generation of foreign language teachers for K-12 classrooms across the state, region, and country.

Furthermore, the DFL offers numerous Culture and Civilization courses (taught in English) that support the intercultural education of TTU students. These courses allow students to fulfill Tech's general education: humanities elective while developing their analytic and presentational skills. Through our English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, the DFL supports Tech's diverse population of international students as they seek to attain sufficient linguistic competency in English in order to be successful in ENGL 1010 and subsequent coursework at Tennessee Tech. Furthermore, we organize symposia, film series, lectures, and cultural events in order to foster international awareness and cultural understanding within the Tech community.

The DFL is committed to developing, providing, and promoting study abroad experiences for majors and non-majors. Thanks to its recently redesigned FLST 1011 and 1013 courses, the DFL is now a major support for all Tech students seeking to learn languages abroad that are not regularly offered at Tech.

The ongoing mission of the Department of Foreign Languages is to foster the multilingual proficiency, intercultural understanding, and professionalization of Tennessee Tech students through our foreign language courses, our culture and civilization courses, and the cultural activities that we offer to our stakeholders throughout the year. In this way, we directly support TTU's Tech Tomorrow Strategic Plan by:

- developing, providing, and promoting experiences that emphasize diversity and build global awareness (Goal 1 - Education for Life)
- implementing and continually improving our technologically infused instruction at all levels in order to enhance foreign language and cultural learning (Goal 2 - Innovation in All We Do)

- creating distinctive programs that aim to improve our students' marketability in today's multicultural environment in a manner that is increasingly effective and efficient (Goal 3 - Exceptional Stewardship, Goal 4 - Engagement for Impact).

Working in concert with the national World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the DFL strives to provide quality education to our Majors in foreign languages and to our non-Majors. Our program learning outcomes align closely with these standards and stipulate that our students will be able to communicate effectively in oral and written modes in the target language, interpret culturally authentic texts, and exhibit intercultural competency.

Program Goals

PG 1: The Department will recruit and retain sufficient majors to maintain an average of 10 graduates per year.

PG 2: The Department will increase the overall number of the foreign language majors studying abroad and ensure that all licensure students comply with the Tennessee Teacher Licensure requirement that they have "interactions with peoples from cultures where the target language is spoken."

90% of teaching licensure majors in a foreign language will participate in a study abroad / cultural immersion experience and 80% of foreign language majors (non-licensure) will participate in a study abroad / cultural immersion experience.

PG 3: The Department will meet the demand for culture and civilization courses offered in English to provide TTU students the opportunity to learn about other cultures and to also give them more general education humanities courses in which to enroll. These courses have the potential to draw more students into our foreign language courses.

The Department of Foreign Languages will offer at least 3 culture and civilization courses per year.

Student Learning Outcomes

SLO 1: By their senior year, foreign language majors will be able to demonstrate their proficiency in the five goal areas as defined by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL): Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. (Foreign Language Proficiency) More specifically, students demonstrate the ability to:

- Create comprehensible oral output (i.e., their thoughts, ideas, and opinions) in the target language (Intermediate-Mid level minimum as described by ACTFL)
- Create comprehensible written output (i.e., their thoughts, ideas, and opinions) in the target language (Intermediate-Mid level minimum as described by ACTFL)
- Analyze and evaluate authentic material in the target language in its written and spoken forms (Intermediate-Mid level minimum as described by ACTFL)

- Analyze, apply, and evaluate assumptions, concepts, and theories to provide valid responses, conclusions, or recommendations
- Compare and evaluate the relationship between the products, practices, and perspectives of the cultures of the target language and the student
- Apply and justify the use of the language beyond a school setting, including in a professional setting

SLO 2: Senior foreign language majors will demonstrate their ability to research and analyze topics related to the target language and international culture under scrutiny using print, internet, audio, and other multimedia sources; organize materials into a coherent and well-written research paper in the target language with correct citations; and present the results of their research in the target language in a manner that is comprehensible and discipline appropriate. Students will also competently answer questions posed by their audience. (Research and Critical Thinking Skills)

Students will score 75% or better on the research paper and the oral presentation of the capstone course to meet this learning outcome.

SLO 3: Foreign language majors seeking teaching licensure will demonstrate content and pedagogical knowledge and skills by meeting or exceeding a passing score on the respective performance-based subject-specific assessment as set by the State Board of Education.

A departmentally developed curriculum map can be found in Appendix 1 that shows the connections between courses and student learning outcomes.

Assessment Methods

PG 1: Number of Graduates

Programs that graduate less than an average of 10 majors over a period of 5 years can be classified as low producing and risk elimination. Our aspirational target performance would be an average of 13 graduates over a 5 year period because that figure would indicate the growth and strength of our programs.

Threshold of acceptability:

- Target Performance: an average of 13 graduates over 5-year period
- Minimum Performance: an average of 8 graduates over 5-year period

The DFL tracks the number of majors each semester, where our current majors are in their academic pipeline, and the number of graduates each semester. This information is recorded in the annual departmental report, which is disseminated and discussed at the first department meeting each year. The faculty then use this report to brainstorm new recruitment and retention strategies for the academic year.

PG 2: Study Abroad/Cultural Immersion Programs

Tracking of students who study abroad or participate in some form of cultural immersion takes place each semester during advising. The Department documents students' study abroad status (completed, in progress, or planned) once or twice per year depending on whether their status has changed. All licensure students in foreign languages are strongly encouraged to study abroad and the foreign language majors are also highly encouraged to do so.

The Department's goal is to maintain an average of 80% of all foreign language majors and 90% of licensure students in foreign languages participating in a study abroad experience in each three-year cycle. Results are reported in the five-year Academic Audit report. Additionally, students comment on the effectiveness of their language learning experience, including study abroad, in a self-reflective essay in their electronic portfolios (capstone requirement) and in their exit interview with the departmental chair.

Threshold of acceptability (over three-year period)

- Target Performance: average of 80% of all foreign language majors, 90% of licensure students participating
- Minimum Performance: average of 50% of all foreign language majors, 60% of licensure students participating

The DFL annually tracks the study abroad experiences of our students, whether they are a foreign language major or pursuing teaching licensure, and records this information on a spread sheet that also indicates the progress of our majors while in the DFL. These trends allow us to more efficiently identify and advise students who are ready to study abroad.

PG 3: Culture and Civilization Courses

In 2014, the Provost's office expressed the need for more general education: fine arts/humanities courses to be offered to TTU students. As such, the department has made an effort to increase its the number of culture and civilization courses it offers to meet this need--FLST 2520: The Cultures and Peoples of North Africa, FREN 2510: French Culture and Civilization, GERM 2520: German Culture and Civilization, SPAN 2510: Spanish Culture and Civilization, and SPAN 2550: Latin American Culture and Civilization. Significant efforts have also been made to create online and hybrid versions of these courses to meet student need.

Threshold of acceptability

- Target Performance: 5 cult/civ courses per year
- Minimum Performance: 2 cult/civ courses per year

SLOs 1 and 2: Foreign Language Proficiency and Research and Critical Thinking Skills

The Capstone Research Paper and/or Presentation for foreign language majors and the Teaching Licensure Senior Capstone presentation for Secondary Education majors pursuing licensure in a foreign language represent the culmination of the students' program of study. The paper and presentation assess the students' ability to write and speak in the target language at an appropriate level for graduate studies and for careers requiring language and cultural skills. Additionally, the Senior Capstone and the Teaching Licensure Senior Capstone courses assess their ability to analyze and think critically.

Threshold of acceptability

- Target Performance: 100% average of Capstone students scoring above 75 on presentation rubric
- Minimum Performance: 80% average of Capstone students scoring above 75 on presentation rubric

SLO 3: Teaching licensure

The edTPA is a performance-based, subject specific assessment that measures teaching-based skills related to planning, instruction, and assessment. Students in the foreign language program must complete the World Languages performance task. The edTPA is professionally scored by Pearson, and the Tennessee State Board of Education sets candidate cut scores.

Threshold of acceptability

- Target Performance: The total mean score for licensure students taking the World Languages edTPA exceeds Tech's cut score (AY 20/21=35)
- Minimum Performance: The total mean score for licensure students taking the World Languages edTPA is at least Tech's cut score (AY 20/21=35)

Results

PG 1: Number of Graduates

Enrollments for Foreign Languages, Fall

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Change 2016-2020
First Major	19	16	13	23	29	+10
First and Second Majors	47	44	40	47	38	-9

Foreign Language Degrees Conferred

2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	5-year average
6	14	7	9	5	8.2

The five-year average is currently 8.2, which is above our minimum performance threshold of 8. Due to the ongoing pandemic, several majors delayed their graduation plans although they had been on track to graduate in 2020-2021.

PG 2: Study Abroad/Cultural Immersion Programs

The following table lists the number of licensure students and the total number of all foreign language majors who have completed a study abroad experience, who have participated in a faculty-led trip, or in a TNCIS (Tennessee Consortium for International Study) program.

Licensure Students

	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Number of Licensure Graduates	1	-	-	-	-
Number of Licensure Students Who Studied Abroad / Immersion Experience	1	-	-	-	-
Percentage of Licensure, Foreign Language Students Who Studied Abroad / Immersion	100%	-	-	-	-

The department did not meet its minimum threshold performance goal of 90% of licensure-seeking majors participating in study abroad opportunities for 2020-2021. Although the department did have one licensure-seeking major on the verge of graduation, the student ultimately dropped their pursuit of licensure and switched to a pure option 1 major. The pandemic influenced this decision.

All Foreign Language Majors

	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
All Foreign Language Graduates*	6	14	7	9	5
Number of FL Graduates Who Studied Abroad / Immersion	5	10	3	5	2
% of FL Graduates Who Studied Abroad / Immersion	83.3%	71.4%	42.9%	55.6%	40%

*Includes licensure and non-licensure students studying foreign languages

The department did not meet its minimum performance threshold of 50% of all foreign language majors during 2020-2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all scheduled international exchanges have been cancelled since March 2020. A number of our majors had completed paperwork to participate in international programs for the summer of 2020, yet the pandemic cancelled these plans, which negatively impacted this metric. As of the summer of 2021, there is still no clear message from our Study Abroad office about when our international programs can resume.

PG 3: Culture and Civilization Courses

	2016-2017	**2017-2018**	**2018-2019**	**2019-2020**	**2020-2021**
Total # of Culture and Civilization Courses	6	6	2	2	3

For 2020-2021, the department exceeded its minimum performance threshold of 2. After the 2018-2019 decrease, the total number has held steady and is rising slowly. With a recent hire of a Lecturer in Fall of 2020, the French program has enough flexibility to offer one section of FLST 2510 and FREN 2510 during the academic year, which improved this data point.

SLOs 1 and 2: Foreign Language Proficiency and Research and Critical Thinking Skills

	2016-2017	**2017-2018**	**2018-2019**	**2019-2020**	**2020-2021**
Total # of Capstone Students	7	14	8	10	5
# that met minimum performance threshold of 75%	7	14	8	8	4
# that did not meet minimum performance threshold of 75%	0	0	0	2	1
% of Students meeting minimum performance threshold of 75%	100%	100%	100%	75%	80%

For 2020-2021, the department met its minimum performance threshold of 75%. However, the personal and professional challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic presented to our students, faculty, and staff, negatively impacted student performance. For example, the one student that did not meet the minimum threshold had committed to a study abroad program for the summer of 2020, which was cancelled. The international experience would have greatly improved their linguistic proficiency.

The department will attempt to develop more effective, remote stewardship measures moving forward to support our students during the on-going pandemic. Such measures could include peer mentoring, online co-curricular events, and remediation opportunities led by faculty.

SLO 3: Teaching licensure

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21		
	TTU	TTU	TTU	TTU	TTU	State	National
N=	1	3	1	1	2	22	530
Planning	3.5	3	3	2.8	3.4	3.2	3.0
Instruction	2.6	2.3	2.4	2	2.3	2.5	2.4
Assessment	3.3	2.9	3	3	3.8	3.2	2.8
Total Mean Score	40	35.3	36	33	40	37.5	35

The total mean score for Tech students on the World Languages edTPA for 2020/2021 was 40, which exceeds Tech's cut score (AY 20/21=35). This means the department achieved its target threshold for 2020/2021.

Modifications for Improvement

PG 1: Number of Graduates

The department continues to explore innovative ways to attract and retain majors. To raise awareness of the department's free placement exam and retroactive credit policy, the interim chair designed an informative poster to initiate conversations with prospective students and their parents at recruiting events like Preview Day. This poster design proved so effective that the department purchased hard plastic signs based on the original poster that have been on display on campus since the summer of 2021.

With the hire of Dr. Elena Kazakova, Lecturer in French, our French program has been able to offer more lower-level courses, which we hope will mean attract more students to the minor and major in French moving forward. Additionally, given that the regular lecturer course load in our unit is 4 per semester (one more than the regular professor course load), the French program can more frequently offer its two general education courses (FLST 2520 The Cultures and Peoples of North America, FREN 2510 French Culture and Civilization) which could also attract more potential majors.

Regarding the retention of majors, the department has begun the process of reviewing its curriculum, including its capstone course requirements, based on student and alumni feedback. After the hire of Dr. Kazakova, the French program began an informal review of their curriculum. This undertaking included meeting with French majors and minors to determine the kinds of courses they would like the program to offer. As a result, the French program is offering FREN 4810 Advanced Conversation in French in the Fall of 2021, which will cover more contemporary topics and issues in Francophone culture that would not fit easily into other upper level courses already offered.

In 2020-2021, the faculty piloted some strategies to prioritize safe, effective instruction and stewardship. Video equipment was added to every classroom in Oakley Hall, which allows faculty to record instruction so that students could review it remotely and repeatedly. Additionally, faculty increased their virtual availability with students by holding regular office hours online and by appointment. Tutoring opportunities for each language offered by the department were also made available online through the Tech's library. In the summer of 2020, the interim chair requested that a

new departmental email address be created (languages@tntech.edu) to improve communication between the department's administration and the students. In Fall 2020, the department used the new email address to organize a COVID mask design contest among majors and minors, in an effort to foster engagement and a sense of community.

Despite these efforts, situational factors beyond the classroom continue to have deleterious effects on our students, which further impact their performance in all their classes. The transition to online instruction and other modalities (across the entire campus) place an extra intellectual, emotional, and, for some, financial strain on our students. The challenges of 2020-2021 led several majors to fall behind in their foreign language courses and other classes. Some chose to withdraw from the university for the semester, which will have a major impact on their ability to complete their degrees in a timely manner.

Although the department had rolled out a number of new and expanded events in previous years, new opportunities for impact must be identified as the pandemic continues to affect university life. The DFL will explore ways to hold its annual "meet and greet" event safely on campus, in an effort to connect all foreign language majors—and if possible, minors, honor society members, and majors in the International Business and Culture program. Similarly, we will need to develop ways to hold small events each semester to celebrate and congratulate our graduating students.

PG 2: Study Abroad/Cultural Immersion Programs

The department strongly encourages foreign language majors to participate in a Study Abroad experience. This past year, the DFL successfully used its newly acquired digital signage to promote study abroad opportunities to our stakeholders.

The pandemic continues to presents major challenge to this program goal, given that Tech's international education programs remain closed. Tennessee Tech cancelled all planned study abroad programs for summer 2020, fall 2020, and spring 2021. Although this was a necessary inconvenience for safety reasons, the cancellations will have a major negative impact on this particular program goal and potentially other program goals moving forward. If majors and minors can no longer complete intensive, immersive language courses abroad, then we will expect to see students taking longer to complete required courses as well as lower linguistic and cultural proficiency levels. The department will hold remediation opportunities for students to counteract this loss of international experience, but there is no true substitute for these experiences.

PG 3: Culture and Civilization Courses

With the hire of Mrs. Maria-Cristina Humita, Lecturer of Spanish, our Spanish program is finally taking steps towards offering two SPAN general education courses in the coming semesters. Due to retirements and demands for more Spanish-language courses, it has been nearly 10 years since SPAN 2510 Spanish Culture and Civilization and SPAN 2550 Latin American Culture and Civilization have been regularly offered by our department. The DFL will continue to develop and offer fully online versions of Culture and Civilization courses for each language. When possible, the department will offer culture and civilization courses online over the summer to meet a growing preference among students for online courses.

SLOs 1 and 2: Foreign Language Proficiency and Student Research and Critical Thinking Skills

The Senior Capstone course is required for all foreign language majors, and faculty feedback is regularly requested and discussed each academic year at the August and April departmental meetings as well as any time feedback is necessary. During the 2020/2021 AY, faculty provided feedback on the new presentational rubric developed and adopted for all capstone courses. Faculty remarked that the new rubric allowed them to provide more constructive feedback on formative assessments throughout the capstone course—especially regarding proficiency and critical thinking skills.

However, faculty are in the process of re-evaluating the structure of the capstone course. In a spring 2021 department meeting, faculty expressed concern that current and past majors have been so intimidated by the forms of sustained research required in the capstone course that they have dropped the major entirely or they have delayed the capstone course until they eventually dropped out of Tennessee Tech. Indeed, some faculty remarked that although the research project and presentation assessments in the capstone course help faculty evaluate critical thinking and linguistic proficiency, perhaps these aspects of the capstone are not preparing students for professions or careers besides academia. Therefore, in fall 2021, faculty will begin developing and piloting different major assessments for capstone students. Special attention will be paid to the requirements of critical thinking and linguistic proficiency; however, the summative assessments in the course will no long need to take the form of an academic research paper and presentation.

Appendices

1. Foreign Language BA Curriculum Maps

Appendix 1: Foreign Language Curriculum Maps

German

Learning Outcomes (I=Introduce, R=Reinforce, M=Mastery, A=Assessment Opportunity)	**REQUIRED COURSES Foreign Language, German Option 1, Option 2 & German with Licensure, B.A.**									
	2010 Intermediate German II	2020 Intermediate German II	3010 Written Comm in German	3020 Oral Comm in German	3112 German Civ/Cult	3150 Intro German Lit	4810 Special Topics	Upper Division	Upper Division	4920/4925 Capstone
Oral Communication Create comprehensible output in the target language (spoken) (Intermediate-Mid level minimum as described by ACTFL)	I	I	R	R, A	R	R	M	M	M	M, A
Written Communication Create comprehensible output in the target language (written) (Intermediate-Mid level minimum as described by ACTFL)	I	I	R, A	R	R	R	M	M	M	M, A
Interpretive Communication Analyze and evaluate authentic material in the target language in its written and spoken	I	I	R, A	R, A	R	R	M	M	M	M, A

forms (Intermediate-Mid level minimum as described by ACTFL)										
Intercultural Competency Compare and evaluate the relationship between the products, practices, and perspectives of the cultures of the target language and the student	I	I	R	R	R	R, A	M	M	M	M, A
Communities Apply and justify the use of the language beyond a school setting, including in a professional setting	I	I	R	R	R	R	M	M	M	M, A
Critical Thinking Analyze, apply, and evaluate assumptions, concepts, and theories to provide a valid response, conclusion, or recommendation	I	I	R	R	R	M,A	M,A	M,A	M,A	M,A

Spanish

Learning Outcomes (I=Introduce, R=Reinforce, M=Mastery, A=Assessment Opportunity)	**REQUIRED COURSES Foreign Language, Spanish Option 1, Option 2 & Spanish with Licensure, B.A.**									
	2010	2020	3010 Oral Comm in French	3020 Written Comm in Spanish	4010/4020 Intro Lit of Spain/ Latin America	4110/4120 Cult/Civ of Spain/ Latin America	Upper Division	Upper Division	Upper Division	4920 Capstone
Oral Communication Create comprehensible output in the target language (spoken) (Intermediate-Mid level minimum as described by ACTFL)	I	I	R	R, A	R	R	M	M	M	M, A
Written Communication Create comprehensible output in the target language (written) (Intermediate-Mid level minimum as described by ACTFL)	I	I	R, A	R	R	R	M	M	M	M, A
Interpretive Communication Analyze and evaluate authentic material in the target language in its written and spoken forms	I	I	R, A	R, A	R	R	M	M	M	M, A

(Intermediate-Mid level minimum as described by ACTFL)										
Intercultural Competency Compare and evaluate the relationship between the products, practices, and perspectives of the cultures of the target language and the student	I	I	R	R	R	R, A	M	M	M	M, A
Communities Apply and justify the use of the language beyond a school setting, including in a professional setting	I	I	R	R	R	R	M	M	M	M, A
Critical Thinking Analyze, apply, and evaluate assumptions, concepts, and theories to provide a valid response, conclusion, or recommendation	I	I	R	R	R	M,A	M,A	M,A	M,A	M,A

French

Learning Outcomes (I=Introduce, R=Reinforce, M=Mastery, A=Assessment Opportunity)	**REQUIRED COURSES Foreign Language, French Option 1, Option 2 & French with Licensure, B.A.**									
	2010 Intermediate French I	2020 Intermediate French II	3010 Written Comm in French	3020 Oral Comm in French	3100 French Phonetics	3110 Survey French Lit I	3120 Survey French Lit II	3112 Cult/Civ of France	Upper Division	4920 Capstone
Oral Communication Create comprehensible output in the target language (spoken) (Intermediate-Mid level minimum as described by ACTFL)	I	I	R	R, A	R	R	R	M	M	M, A
Written Communication Create comprehensible output in the target language (written) (Intermediate-Mid level minimum as described by ACTFL)	I	I	R, A	R	R	R	R	M	M	M, A
Interpretive Communication Analyze and evaluate authentic material in the target language in its written and spoken forms (Intermediate-Mid level minimum as described by ACTFL)	I	I	R, A	R, A	R	R	M	M	M	M, A

Intercultural Competency Compare and evaluate the relationship between the products, practices, and perspectives of the cultures of the target language and the student	I	I	R	R	R	R, A	M	M	M	M, A
Communities Apply and justify the use of the language beyond a school setting, including in a professional setting	I	I	R	R	R	R	M	M	M	M, A
Critical Thinking Analyze, apply, and evaluate assumptions, concepts, and theories to provide a valid response, conclusion, or recommendation	I	I	R	R	R	M,A	M,A	M,A	M,A	M,A