On behalf of my colleagues, I would like to acknowledge the work of the committee, committee chair John Hoag, and Vice-provost Mark Gromko.

Though strictly speaking outside of the (seven-year) scope of the review, the committee considered the history of language programs at BGSU. We are pleased that committee members closely examined the department’s mission statement. We feel that it is key to this review and planning.

The committee’s report summarizes its review of data on the department’s resources, personnel, and students. Connections with other departments and interdisciplinary programs are noted. This overview is a satisfactory basis for formulating recommendations.

Two observations deserve comment:

The self-study compared falling SCH rates in both the College of Arts & Sciences and the department. The report’s synchronic look at FTEs may be related to the long-term, national decline in humanities enrollments. The self-study also posits a correlation between the drop in German and Russian majors and the sharp decline in out-of-state students during the last decade.

The presentation on assessment in the self-study is indeed weak. It might help to clarify that references to (oral proficiency) may be shorthand for ACTFL proficiency guidelines, which apply to writing, listening, speaking, reading, and cultural knowledge and skills.

**Strengths**

The committee report justly notes the department’s involvement in co-curricular, study abroad, and interdisciplinary activities. The committee’s acknowledgment of GREAL faculty members’ commitment is appreciated.
Weaknesses
The report states that “one problem that all language departments face is that their programs are small and therefore relatively expensive.” We agree that at many institutions of higher learning in the U.S. language and culture programs include courses that enroll far less students than in other disciplines. Considerations such as existing higher state subsidies for language study, low salaries in the discipline, and professional guidelines on class size were probably beyond the scope of the committee’s review, which centers on internal academic matters.

The department desires to furnish language and culture learning opportunities to more BGSU undergraduates. Faculty members are cognizant of the role instructional improvement may play in attracting more students. While re-committing to continued development efforts, the department would like to draw attention to university curricular factors that may influence language and culture enrollments.

The self-study attributes at least some of the language and culture enrollment declines to university decisions since the mid-1980s. The two most significant decisions were to 1) table indefinitely the projected increased requirement for pre-college language study from two to four years\(^1\) and 2) split undergraduate culture study into domestic and foreign spheres. Enrollments grew in disciplines offering courses to fulfill the Cultural Diversity in the U.S. General Education requirement and fell in foreign language and culture courses. The number of majors in, for example, Ethnic Studies and Women’s Studies, has been stable or on the decline, as in the languages.

The past several years have seen such units as GREAL, Romance Languages, Ethnic Studies, and Women’s Studies grow closer. GREAL faculty have shown an interest in comparative culture studies and faculty in these cousin disciplines have devoted increasing attention to international aspects of their fields.

External reviewers’ report
The department was pleased to host Dr. Maria Lekic and Dr. Maria Regina Kecht. Their observations and recommendations regarding management of faculty time, available resources, faculty development, relations with other units, the MA German program, and planning are valuable. The external reviewers were generous with their time and energy, agreeing to a busy schedule of meetings and co-curricular events.

The department can satisfy the reviewers’ recommendation for more intensive marketing of the MA German program. The groundwork has been laid. In twelve months, between fall 1999 and fall 2000, the department 1) produced two professional videos on the AYA Austria program, 2) installed a professionally-designed website and purchased commercial links to it, 3) redid the program brochure and poster and published it in color, 4) carried out campus recruiting visits in the region, 5) sponsored a display at the German Studies Association conference in Houston, and 6) hosted “Austria Week” in October 2000. 2001–2002 AYA Austria enrollments, highest in a decade, may be attributable to these efforts. The department would like to meet the recommendation of greater selectivity.

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\(^1\) “The [1989–91] task force drafted a plan that projected a university requirement of four years of pre-college study of one language for admission and a parallel level advancement in the General Education requirement. Today, the university admissions requirement remains two units (years) of high-school language study” (self-study, p. 13).
The tension between the reviewers’ recommendations for release time for faculty development and scholarship and the PRC’s recommendations in these areas must be resolved. External and internal funding sources present possible solutions.

Program Review Committee’s findings

The department, once again, appreciates committee members’ careful reading of the mission statement and acknowledgment of faculty members’ commitment to their work. GREAL can agree in principle on the need to balance flexibility of offerings with improvement in the existing Chinese, German, Japanese, and Russian programs.

We look forward to the outcomes of initial discussions between the President’s Office, the Provost’s Office, and various colleges of the university’s international interests. We think that these interests could be better defined and coordinated, an observation made in 1999 by the International Studies Program’s external reviewers. The committee report was not able precisely to reference “university international interests and programs” and existing processes for identifying interests. We agree with the PRC’s position, though, that GREAL curricula and other activities must “fit” the greater university context. In the past decade the department has on the whole not benefited from other university international initiatives. However, in the past two years we can optimistically point to development of the International Business program in CBA and Computer Science interests in education abroad (in Austria).

The department notes and will attend to the PRC’s observations regarding assessment, the German MA curriculum, cooperation with A & S plans for International Studies, faculty workload, and faculty development for distance and web-based instruction. We agree that these are areas vital to the department’s programs.

PRC recommendations

1. The department welcomes the opportunity to prioritize elements of its short- and long-range plans. We would propose accomplishing this, at least in preliminary fashion, before the start of the next academic year rather than by year’s end.

2. GREAL would welcome a discussion of study abroad budgeting and continued (as planned) review of its GA allocation. We agree that the aggregate number of stipends ought to be considered in light of the department’s scholarly and teaching mission.

Management of study abroad budgets must be considered in light of the provost’s spring 1997 announcement that tuition subsidies to the programs would be phased out. The dean of CEISP delivered that decision to program directors and chairs in person. It was tantamount to calling for closure of programs abroad. The current state of indecision regarding the future of international affairs in CEISP is an unfavorable context in which to discuss study abroad budgeting.

In this regard we would like to point out that the number of MA stipends has supported a graduate program large enough to attract, for example, Austrian Fulbright students, at least one per year. It is also related to the fact that two scholarly journals, Modern Austrian Literature and Slovene Studies, are housed in the department. The assistant to the latter journal received the 2001 GSS research
assistant award. Thus the department is already employing GAs to further scholarly projects and enhance its international prominence.

Further, in the past eighteen months alone, the department has received grant awards for one summer GA stipend (from a foundation to support MAL), two half out-of-state graduate tuition payments (from IREX to support Russian exchangees who come with stipends), and a stipend for an Austrian Fulbright student. Stipends have been requested in unsuccessful applications to the Department of Defense NSEP competition. Thus the department attempts to attract external graduate student support, using as a partial basis its existing, internal support.

Given the deplorably low MA stipend levels at BGSU, the MA program in German would not exist without the first year abroad. It is the primary attraction to out-of-state students. BGSU’s German MA program cannot compete with other German graduate programs on the basis of stipend amounts alone. Each year it loses promising graduate applicants to universities that provide higher stipends.

3. The department welcomes the recommendation of an additional faculty member in Japanese, which would be the first since the program’s inception twenty-five years ago. In our view, as it has been expressed in personnel requests coordinated with Asian Studies in 2000 and 2001, the program requires a tenure track position. An instructorship will probably not serve program development well.

4. GREAL and Romance Languages have already started this work. The proposed committee would only slow it down. Involving the Development Office in fundraising to renovate the Language Laboratory implies a significant faculty time commitment. The department has prioritized scholarships for undergraduates.

5. The department has a differential workload policy. In principle it opposes releasing tenure-track faculty members from scholarship, but would like to discuss the implications with the dean. It would be preferable to institute a policy sooner than fall 2002 because of existing probationary timelines.

6. The department should put maximum effort into meeting this recommendation regarding assessment and, in particular, application of assessment results.
   In our opinion, this recommendation may exaggerate the strength of the connection between assessment and the position of language and culture programs at BGSU. We believe that we share this responsibility (to “make the case that the languages contribute in a meaningful way to the university mission”) with the university’s academic leadership. We look forward to cooperating with the College of Arts & Sciences and the Provost’s Office on imaginative ways of encouraging foreign language and culture study among undergraduates.
   University admissions and college group requirements bear on course enrollments. A student may take four years of sciences in high school and is yet required to complete a science group requirement in A & S. A student takes four years of a language in high school and has completed his or her A & S group II requirement.

8. The department will welcome the formation of an international council. It was an active participant in Dean Andrew Kerek’s shortlived A & S international committee. We trust that further discussion will help define the PRC’s meaning of “international education.” The phrase may mean study abroad, on-campus study of international affairs, or other programming?

9. The department’s experience in distance education, PSEOP and internal, has been mixed, but we welcome the PRC’s recommendation in this area. A number of developments in 2000–2001 are pointing in the direction of greater department involvement in distance education and technological enhancements to instruction. We agree with the PRC that, given proper faculty development, increased efforts in these areas will improve learning.

The department would once again like to thank all who took part in this program review for their time and careful consideration of GREAL’s diverse activities, plans, and prospects. At a time of general depression in the humanities, the committee’s report seems to indicate heartening support for strengthening them at BGSU.