

**Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies
CGS&P Resolution 2006-07B
Resolution for the Establishment of a Master of Arts Degree
in Foreign Languages, Cultures and Literatures**

Approved by GCC	September 28, 2006
Second Reading CGSP	December 6, 2006
First reading by University Council:	February 5, 2007
Approved by University Council:	February 19, 2007
Approved by the President:	February 19, 2007
Approved by the Board of Visitors:	March 26, 2007
Effective Date:	Fall 2008

WHEREAS, institutions of learning, the government, the business community, and the military have all indicated the necessity of having more individuals capable of navigating linguistic and cultural differences in a world made increasingly smaller by globalization; and

WHEREAS, there is strong demand among students and employers for graduate-level programs in foreign languages and cultures; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Virginia has only two universities with graduate-level programs in foreign languages; and none which allow students to combine the study of languages other than Spanish and French; and

WHEREAS, the proposal supports the strategic goals of the University which calls for more graduate programs in the humanities and increased internationalization, and makes Virginia Tech's degree program profile more consistent with peer institutions which all have graduate programs in foreign languages; and

WHEREAS, the proposed program will strengthen the History Department's Area Studies Master of Arts in which the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures already collaborates; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Master of an Arts Degree in Foreign Languages, Cultures and Literatures be approved and the proposal forwarded to the President, the Board of Visitors, and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) for approval.

Master of Arts Degree in Foreign Languages, Cultures and Literatures Proposal Summary

Our students' ability to navigate cultural and linguistic differences will shape our future as a country. The United States and the state of Virginia have both recognized the vital importance of the study of foreign languages. The United States Congress designated 2005 as "The Year of Languages" and proclaimed 2006 "The Year of Study Abroad." Recognizing International Study Week, Governor Warner declared, "teaching international curriculum in our schools and communities, as well as participation in foreign exchange programs, enhances the continued growth, success and enrichment of Virginia's population, encourages domestic appreciation for international cultures and helps create goodwill for the United States throughout the world" (November 2005).

The proposal supports the strategic goals of the University in two keys ways. First, the M.A. in Foreign Languages, Cultures and Literatures (FLCL) will increase the number and breadth of graduate programs in the humanities, fine arts, and social sciences. Second, the FLCL M.A. will enhance the depth of international graduate programs at Virginia Tech to a level comparable to that of our peer institutions (International Strategic Directions Plan: "Goal VI: Goals and Objectives for Graduate Education"). Among our 24 peer institutions, all but two offer a graduate program in foreign languages, and nearly all offer a PhD. The proposed M.A. program will develop an international scope for language use and cultural knowledge within the contexts of international research, scholarship, teaching, and business. Our program will attract and help retain faculty with strong research profiles and will broaden the international resources of Virginia Tech graduate education.

Proposed Graduate Curriculum

The degree will require 30 semester hours plus a comprehensive exam or a thesis. Three complementary tracks address multiple career objectives:

Hispanic Studies. This track offers the opportunity to combine the study of literature and culture with applied language for professional fields and international research.

French and Francophone Studies. This track provides a solid foundation in the literature, culture, and language of France and French-speaking areas of the world (such as parts of Canada, Africa, the Caribbean, the Middle East, southeast Asia, and the Pacific). Students will find numerous opportunities for interdisciplinary study and research, including courses in cultural studies, film and business French.

Multilingual Studies. A combination track with a focus in either Spanish or French and a minor in a second language such as German, Latin,

ancient Greek, Russian, French, or Spanish. This flexible combination meets students' needs in diverse academic, professional and research careers, and provides the potential for future degree concentrations in languages besides French and Spanish.

The Multilingual Studies track is unique in Virginia. It addresses the reality that many people who study foreign language, study more than one language.

Relation to Other Programs

The FLCL M.A. will contribute positively to existing graduate programs on campus. We have already begun establishing formal ties with Africana Studies, School of Education (EDCI), and the Alliance for Social, Political, Ethical, and Cultural Thought (ASPECT). Certain of our courses may be cross-listed with these programs. In addition, ASPECT plans to require language competency of its PhD. students.

We are already an active partner in the History Department's Area Studies M.A. Program, an interdisciplinary program in History, Foreign Languages and Literatures, and Geography. The current and the past coordinators of this program have been from FLL. Our faculty already advise and teach Area Studies students who take a minimum of nine hours in our Department. However, these students have a relatively small number of graduate courses to take in FLL. The FLCL MA will enhance their curricular choices and further strengthen in Area Studies.

Justification for the Proposed Program

The Master of Arts in Foreign Languages, Cultures, and Literatures (FLCL) is designed to meet the growing needs of students seeking professional and academic careers in contexts that require a specialized knowledge of Spanish and/or French culture. The core of the program provides a solid foundation in Hispanic, French, and Francophone culture, literature, and language as well as course work in areas such as cultural studies, cinema, art history, and business. The program will serve the interests of students seeking an interdisciplinary approach. It stresses the acquisition and development of analytical abilities based on a range of critical approaches. These skills will prepare students to work independently in a variety of settings. The students may be beginning or experienced teachers of secondary-level Spanish and French; potential doctoral students in French or Spanish at other universities; or future professionals working in international environments.

The Needs of the Commonwealth

In the proclamation for International Study Week in November 2005, former governor Mark Warner articulated well why Virginia needs to develop further the

study of foreign languages and cultures. He stated, “It is important that Virginia’s preparatory schools, colleges and universities include international language and cultural lessons in their curriculum so that more students graduate with expertise in foreign languages, cultures and government policies and are able to meet the growing complexities of international business, foreign relations and domestic security.” The proposed M.A. program will provide students with advanced-level language skills for personal enrichment and professional development. It will also help with the education of teachers of Spanish and French. According to the Virginia Department of Education, foreign language teachers have been in short supply, ranking seventh in the list of critical shortage areas in 2004-2005 and fifth in the 2006-2007 list.

Evidence of Occupational Demand

According to the 2006-07 Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH), many school districts in the U.S. currently have difficulty hiring qualified teachers in some subject areas—most often mathematics, science, bilingual education, and foreign languages. Our program will provide additional teacher training in a key area of national and in-state demand. In the next ten years, 38% of Virginia’s teachers will be eligible for retirement. This will exacerbate the current shortage of teachers of foreign languages. The Virginia Employment Commission projects that approximately 29,000 teachers will be needed by the year 2012.

Spanish will be particularly important for working with the increasing Hispanic population of the U.S. and for training people to work with Spanish-speaking countries in our hemisphere.

French is the primary language other than English recommended by the UN Employment Information and Assistance Unit of the Bureau of International Organization Affairs for positions with international organizations. The role of French is reflected in a typical bi-weekly listing of international jobs distributed by the US State Department (8/29/06): 135 required or preferred French, 49 Spanish, 25 a UN language (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish), 6 Arabic, 6 Russian, 2 German, 2 Italian, and 2 Chinese.

Employment of interpreters and translators is projected to increase faster than the average for all occupations over the 2004-14 period, reflecting strong growth in the industries employing interpreters and translators (OOH 2006-07). Higher demand for interpreters and translators in recent years has been the result of the broadening of international ties and the increase in the number of foreign language speakers in the United States. Both of these trends are expected to continue, contributing to relatively rapid growth in the number of jobs for interpreters and translators. Demand will remain strong for translators of the languages referred to as “PFIGS”—Portuguese, French, Italian, German, and Spanish.