

University of Regina

**Academic Unit Review of
the Department of International Languages**

**Report of the Review Team
December 16, 2024**

Dr. John L. Plews

Professor & Director of the Canadian Summer School in Germany
Department of Languages & Cultures
Saint Mary's University

Dr. Wei Cai

Professor
School of Languages, Linguistics, Literatures and Cultures
University of Calgary

Dr. Paul Sinclair

Associate Professor
Faculty of Business Administration
University of Regina

December 16, 2024.

Dr. David Gregory
Interim Provost and Vice-President (Academic)
Administration Humanities Building 514
University of Regina
3737 Wascana Parkway
Regina SK S4S 0A2

Dear Dr. Gregory,

We are glad to submit the results of our critical examination of the Department of International Languages, which follows our site visit conducted on March 23 and 25, 2024. Our understanding is that the Unit Review had been postponed since 2017, with the last Review conducted in 2006. We apologize for the further delay in submitting the current Unit Review due to serious medical issues.

We were warmly received by and had engaging and transparent conversations with the then Provost & Vice-President Academic, the Associate Vice-President Academic, Associate Vice-President Research, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, the Associate Dean of Arts (Undergraduate), the Associate Dean (Academic) & Community Engagement, the Library Liaison for International Languages, two members of the Office of Global Mobility, the Head of the Department of History, the Head of the Department of International Languages, the Department's sole Professor of Chinese, the three Level-3 Instructors of Chinese, German, and Japanese, and the Sessional-Instructors in Chinese, Japanese, and Spanish, as well as five undergraduate students of German and Japanese, and recent alumni of Chinese and Japanese (former) degrees who were both working on campus. We had a full schedule.

The three members of the Review Team bring considerable experience of working in academic disciplines both in Canada and elsewhere that are directly related to the Department of International Languages. While we are aware that the value of foreign/second languages in the Anglophone world is often unrecognized, we were honestly shocked by the depth and duration of disregard and disrespect for teaching and learning languages and about other cultures at the University of Regina. Members of the Department spoke openly of their frustrations and disappointments as well as their dedication despite the dire circumstances imposed upon them. Students spoke enthusiastically about their instructors but knew very well they were not being offered the kind of learning experiences that peers in other programs were getting. Administrators

acknowledged the value of languages and cultures for the University, for Saskatchewan, and in their own careers, but seemed disconnected from working constructively with the Department and its current or potential students. There was an obvious foreboding among members and students of the Department, that it was to be closed despite their deep commitment. There was a certain laziness about how most members of the Administration made no secret of what they saw as a foregone conclusion to retire the Department out of existence after years of neglect and deprivation from the Administration itself.

Our Unit Review attempts to address the concerns that were brought up in the interviews we conducted during the site visit. We hope that it is clear in this Review that the Faculty of Arts cannot simply keep the status quo and let the Department die by natural attrition. An important decision must be made. Either the Department gets properly funded so that its real potential for the entire campus can be realized, or it is to be closed. The members of this Review Team all strongly agreed the latter option is self-destructive and therefore untenable. The only option is to do better. Management must act in a professional manner to provide one of its core and potentially most strategic disciplines with the resources it needs for revitalization. Our Review traces and analyzes how the University of Regina got International Languages into the current situation and provides concrete recommendations to help the University and Department recover, reinvent, and grow. We trust that all who read this Review will find it useful for the collaborative work ahead.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
Self-Study Priorities and Aspirations of the Department	5
Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges	6
The Internal Strengths of the Department.....	6
The Weaknesses Internal to the Department's Operations.....	7
Opportunities for the Department	9
The External Challenges or Threats	10
Structure of Programs, Contribution to Other Disciplines, & Staffing	11
Learning Needs & Goals, Study Abroad	15
University Mission.....	17
Recommendations.....	18

Recommendation 1: Work Together	18
Recommendation 2: Invest.....	19
Recommendation 3: Hire.....	20
Recommendation 4: Up the Credentials	22
Recommendation 5: Deliver Senior-Level Courses	23
Recommendation 6: Collaborate with Other Departments	23
Recommendation 7: Create a Student Cohort	24
Recommendation 8: Create Language Ambassadors	24
Recommendation 9: Market Language Standards.....	25

Executive Summary

Programming in the Department of International Languages has experienced a decline in enrollments, which has placed it under threat from a University Administration whose budgetary decision-making places value exclusively on numbers, with no room for differentiation between programs. Consequently, International Languages has undergone years of austerity measures imposed by Administration. These have included a severe reduction of faculty members and concomitant exclusion from a hiring policy, the consistent cancellation of courses (that students require for completion), the discontinuation of degrees and suspension of programs, an overreliance on sessional and part-time staff in vulnerable employment, the conscious downgrading of credentials, and an absence of meaningful program promotion, recruitment, and advising. From such cuts, the Administration has illogically expected International Languages to grow, if not thrive.

However, the courses and programs that International Languages offers are at the core of the mission and vision of the University of Regina and the Faculty of Arts. The Department's expert and dedicated instructors provide the very skills, knowledge, and attributes that students in Saskatchewan need if they are to overcome their geographic and cultural isolation and understand, communicate with, and take part in the diverse, dynamic, and multilingual world beyond their borders. By systematically depriving International Languages and making it difficult for students to complete its basic programs, let alone develop adequate proficiency in a foreign/second language and expertise in intercultural and global competence, the University is fundamentally denying students important future

career and life opportunities, failing to meet its own approved guidelines and goals for student success, and putting its reputation as a comprehensive university at risk.

The review committee members unanimously agree that the Administration must reverse course and urgently repair the damage it has done. The status quo or closure are not options since they would do further self-harm. The Department needs to be properly staffed and funded in order to harness its excellent potential for the benefit of the whole campus and local community. The University and Faculty of Arts must work constructively with the Department and invest money, time, and energy so that there are sufficient means active measures for a revitalization plan to have a genuine chance of success.

International Languages ought to be at the heart of a vibrant network of scholars, students, and community partners.

We therefore recommend the Administration and Department take immediate steps across various aspects of university and program management as part of a concerted plan to make International Languages a visible and truly valued entity. These include (1) recognizing International Languages as central to the University's mission and giving the current Certificates time and sufficient courses to produce graduates, (2) promoting programming adequately with improved recruitment and advising, the delivery of necessary courses, and access to study abroad, (3) creating a staggered hiring plan that starts as soon as possible with a senior hire for Head and continues in an integrated manner in collaboration with allied disciplines to create synergy across programs in the Faculty of Arts and beyond, (4) rebranding credentials and develop a cross-disciplinary Certificate or Degree anchored in the Department, (5) making sure advanced language courses are provided (by funded study abroad if necessary), (6) working across disciplines and campus to offer senior-level courses and guarantee advanced cognitive learning outcomes, (7) building a broad cross-campus cohort of students with a clear identity linked to the Department, (8) developing a Language Ambassadors capstone course, and (9) adopting marketable international language benchmarks.

Self-Study Priorities and Aspirations of the Department

It is clear from the Self-Study, as well as from the interviews with faculty members and instructors, that the Department of International Languages has been severely weakened by several external and internal factors. This has made it difficult for the Department to create a vision and set priorities for itself. The Department acknowledges that decreasing enrollment is an issue and that the degree programs of the past are not feasible. It rightly indicated that the four new Language Certificates need time to develop and turn numbers

around. There is support for a “Certificate in International Languages.” However, the latter is a compromise, largely imposed upon the Department to herd students into a singular credential and with little regard for the quality of curriculum and learning outcomes.

Department members unanimously expressed a strong desire to both raise awareness of and rethink their purpose and contribution collectively, but with more constructive support than they have received from Administration over the years. In this regard, it saw the External Review as an independent source of ideas and direction and as a foundation for rebranding and redeveloping the Department to better suit the needs of the University’s students and the population of Saskatchewan. Certainly, Department members prioritized supporting the four second/foreign languages already being taught for the benefit of the local population. They wished to contribute to the University curriculum with electives with substantive content in international cultures. They aspired to establish a degree program again, perhaps in a combined area of “International Languages,” by building on the Certificates, so that students would become specialists in language acquisition and (inter-)cultural interpretation. Members were ready to explore collaborating with other departments at the University of Regina, the Department of Languages, Literature and Cultural Studies at the University of Saskatchewan, or even other universities in neighbouring provinces, to deliver courses or degree by consortium. Evidently, the foremost concern of the Department was not to become only a service department due to persistent short shrift from Administration, but to offer a thoughtful academic credential that utilizes Department expertise and offers students necessary and meaningful learning experiences.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges

The Internal Strengths of the Department include (1) the people, (2) the exigency of the discipline (especially given the location), and (3) its affordability or value for money.

International Languages is a rare commodity in today’s academic workplace in that it is a highly collegial department with considerable good will among members and having an institution-wide reputation for being genuinely friendly. This strength bodes well for the collaborative development of future programming. Both current students and alumni have high praise for the professors and instructors, emphasizing their likeability, teaching expertise, dedication to students and the discipline, and accessibility. In large part this explains the student successes across the various language areas, such as national recognition through the Japanese speech competition or relevant professional success of former students of Chinese and German. Although the Department itself has begun to

increase its visibility (with posters, a welcome night, and follow-up recruitment and retention drives), much more could be done by the Faculty and the University to harness the genuine good will of this special community of friendly multilingual people to sell International Languages and the University.

Indeed, given Regina's geographic isolation and the ever-increasing need for global cooperation and understanding, members of International Languages fulfill a very important role on campus and in the province by finding ways for the University's students to have exposure to and develop skills in other languages and cultures. They occupy a unique position and there is strength in their combined ability to promote learning second languages not as an end in itself but as the only way to open doors, broaden horizons, and realize elaborate understandings of other cultures that simply are not accessible through one's first language alone. This has been correctly recognized by faculty colleagues in the Faculty of Arts who have moved languages to Arts core curriculum and believe a foreign language should be mandatory at a comprehensive university.

In terms of resources, International Languages has been an inexpensive department. Given that it has experienced decades of cuts with former professors not being replaced, that there is currently only one professor and three level-three instructors, and that programming requires no equipment or labs and so forth, it has been a cheap department for the University to run. It would still be relatively cheap even if some or all prior professorial complement were restored. While course enrollment numbers and the number of courses delivered have decreased in most recent years (partly due to cuts), past program graduation numbers were actually good before the University made cuts: these ranged from between 17 to 31 students across programs in a given year in recent time; 9 graduated in Chinese as recently as 2015. This represented a good return based on the University's minimal to zero investment.

The Weaknesses Internal to the Department's Operations concern (1) enrollment, (2) the cancellation of courses, (3) the low proficiency target of language certificates, and (4) the depletion of faculty.

In recent years, low enrollment has become an increasing problem especially in upper-level courses. Administration has responded by cancelling these courses (while some Department members have offered them extra to load to help the students). The cancellation of upper-level courses only exacerbates the problem of low enrollment, program declaration, and retention since there were few upper-level courses on offer to begin with and all of the cancelled courses are necessary for completing the certificates or degrees. Further, it was often mentioned during the interviews that students did not declare their interest in languages until late and that the Faculty of Arts has known for a

long time that it needs to “clean up” advising but has failed to do so. This is a disservice to the students and the Department. But students are not stupid: they see where options are taken from them and their pathways to success are constrained by their own University. Indeed, the cancellation of courses and poor advising have undermined the ability of students in International Languages to progress through their degree and graduate from the University in a timely fashion, if at all. This creates a poor perception among current and potential students, and without advanced-level language or expert cultural content courses (which faculty members want to deliver) the students will opt not to continue with languages or choose to study elsewhere. Furthermore, the removal of cultural content courses makes it impossible for the Department to attract students from neighbouring disciplines seeking relevant electives and so shore up in-house enrollment. However, while the weakness of low enrollment is a real problem internal to the Department, care must be taken here not to blame the starved for their own starvation: low enrollment is not the Department’s doing. It is in some part due to the poor perception of the value of languages in Canadian culture broadly. It is in large part the result of a historical and still entrenched pattern of top-down institutional decision-making that is reactive, unthinking, and even self-harming that ultimately deters students from choosing a language certificate and sustains rather than fixes the enrollment vulnerability of International Languages. Whatever next: the Administration’s temporary suspension of programs at a time when enrollment and program declaration need to be encouraged?

While the four Language Certificates have not been in existence long enough to assess adequately whether they will be successful in terms of enrollment statistics (for which no clear bar or investment plan have been set), one critical weakness has already emerged, namely, the low second language proficiency. The problem of low proficiency seems even more critical in the proposed Certificate in International Languages. The Certificates were created by subtracting expertise from the former degree programs, which did have good proficiency outcomes. Due to this impoverished curriculum design and the cancellation or absence of advanced-level language courses, students do not receive (and know they do not achieve) the level of proficiency they desire and require. Students graduating with a Language Certificate will not be able use the language sufficiently or get a job with the low language proficiency they attain. To become proficient second language users, graduating University of Regina students must seek further programming elsewhere or employment in English in foreign-language immersion overseas. The University is selling students of International Languages short by knowingly having replaced an adequate with an inadequate credential. The Certificates will not thrive without integrating the higher proficiency outcomes of advanced language courses, the very courses Administration routinely cancels. Administration needs to break its destructive, sabotaging habit and learn to work constructively with International Languages to build it up for the academic

good of the University's students: if students see a progression of courses that are actually delivered and provide them with the skills development they desire, they will opt for and remain in International Languages.

The final internal weakness is the depleted number of faculty members in the Department. Former Professors of German and Spanish were not replaced upon retirement. Other professors and instructors in Chinese, German, and Japanese are to retire very soon with no plan from Administration to replace them or, rather, an implicit plan not to replace them. Budget restrictions, low enrollment, and human resource demands elsewhere in the Faculty of Arts were all cited as justification for not hiring – and ignoring the longstanding need to hire – in International Languages. The depletion and downgrading of faculty has negatively impacted curriculum development, research output, and administrative service to the University and community. Administration did not consider its own decisive role in the sustained loss of professors and instructors and its affect on enrollment or their responsibility to students to ensure adequately professional staffing to maintain and develop one of their programs. In drawing attention to the reduced human resources of International Languages, we again wish to take care not to blame the starved for the starvation; there has been an alarming, years-long, and highly unprofessional negligence by the Administration, which will be addressed in the section on Staffing below.

Opportunities for the Department to leverage in order to support its growth potential include (1) realizing its natural alignment with the strategic plans and mission statements of the University and Faculty of Arts and (2) making use of the Certificate in International Languages as a foundation on which to build a quality degree credential anchored in the Department.

There is growth potential for International Languages in recognizing and building on how the Department's core disciplinary contributions directly and closely align with the goals and guidelines of the University's *Strategic Plan 2020 to 2025: All Our Relations* and the implementation plan of the *Faculty of Arts: Vision and Directions towards 2025*. Especially relevant in this regard are the numerous calls to global, international, intercultural, and diverse knowledge, points of view, dimensions, worldviews, and citizenship for the sake of “developing well-rounded individuals who can communicate.” It would serve the whole University very well in meeting the aims of these approved and guiding documents if it were to recognize and act upon the close connection of International Languages and use them as intended to invest rather than ignore and undermine such an obviously pertinent academic discipline. In this regard, the Faculty and University have amply failed: there is no sign that the University has made any effort to tap into potential students by helping them understand the value of languages. Instead it has defunded and wound down languages in the lazy and unprincipled manner of leaving it to retire out of existence.

To recognize and act, the Department, Faculty, and University must rather promote Languages and invest in rebuilding the curriculum and staff to deliver it. All three levels can work together to tie an awareness-building promotional campaign and any rebranding to messages already outlined in the strategic plan: *together*, they need to communicate and deliver on the value and importance of engaging with other cultures in their own languages for greater global understanding and reconciliation between cultures. Obvious audiences for such promotion are local heritage-language students and international students, who already have awareness of the value of languages. But the University must also make the monolingual student majority aware of the lifechanging opportunities afforded by languages if it is to meet its own globally minded goals with any genuine heft or integrity.

Keeping in mind the genuine promotion of the University's mission, the generalist "Certificate in International Languages" can extend, not replace, the four Language Certificates by being transformed into an anchoring degree for/by the Department. That is, the promotion of languages could attract students to a Language Certificate – as a micro-credential – that they could use as an initial step into a more professional degree in international languages and cultures. The Faculty could develop a strategy in program delivery and student advising so that students in neighbouring disciplines could combine courses leading to a degree in International Languages and Cultures into their overall degree pathways and so easily double up credentials. There are several logical fits for such an attractive double degree strategy, including International Studies, International Business, Indigenous Languages, French, and History. While much of the curriculum of International Languages speaks to the University's strategic plan and five areas of focus, new cross-cultural courses on a number of appropriate global themes would underscore the contribution of International Languages in its own right as well as to other programs. For example, the Department could develop a course across all four language and culture areas on past and present experiences and issues of reconciliation since one and all are colonial languages, languages of violence, conflict, settlement, occupation, etc. Such a common degree program with interdisciplinary and interdepartmental connections will create a visible and broad student cohort that is good for enrollment, retention, and further recruitment. While staffing and funding are critical to development, study abroad options and online courses could be integrated into any plan for the sake of cost effectiveness.

The External Challenges or Threats to International Languages are evidently (1) the false logic of administrative decision-making and (2) funding.

The greatest threat to the sustainability of International Languages at the University of Regina is the negative, illogical, unhelpful, and willfully neglectful attitude of the Administration. This was all the more remarkable given the personal histories shared by members of the Administration interviewed: they were each shining examples of how

individual lives and careers can flourish because of second language skills. Yet their managerial actions would expressly deny the University's current students of the same route to future success. There was a considerable disconnect between the Administration's stated and lived understanding of the value of languages and the historical series of decisions to discontinue degrees, cancel courses, wind down credentials, not replace professors or retire their positions out of existence, exclude from a four-year hiring initiative, reduce or cut instructors, favour recruitment into programs students already knew about, suspend programs, etc. The Administrative strategy has mounted to expecting enrollment and interest in Languages to turn around based on no investment and even depletion of resources. It is illogical to expect anything to thrive by starving it. Administration decisions can only help improve enrollment in Languages if they attend seriously to the positives and potential of the Department and if Administration takes on a supportive, creative, and informed style of leadership that invests in Languages and its students. Indeed, a good place for the Faculty of Arts to start would be to pay attention to the kinds of enthusiastic but otherwise ignored students the Review Committee met during the site visit. The Administration has willfully ignored this actual and potential client base for too long.

Since funding is led by student credit hours as enrollment, funding is also a significant challenge for International Languages when faced with persistent cuts. Long-term budgeting is very unclear. Yet there is a strong desire for feasible and sustained financial support in order to build programming. A strategy of finding synergies with other units could assist. But there is a need for differentiation based on value beyond only numbers in budgetary decision-making without which growth will not be realistically supported by the University, and the health of the reputation of the institution will diminish in the long term locally, regionally, and nationally. The Faculty and the University risk killing off Languages at their own peril in terms of remaining a comprehensive institution and the ability to contribute authentically to several significant strategic goals.

Structure of Programs, Contribution to Other Disciplines, & Staffing

The current Language Certificates in Chinese, German, Japanese, and Spanish each follow the same format. They require only six courses in language and culture, which equates 18 program credits. A further 12 program credits are obtained from four electives.

The Certificate is a watered-down specialization compared to other credentials at the University, making it a potentially weak qualification. It was obviously designed based on reducing courses and the human resources needed to deliver them (i.e., optimum revenue for minimal expenditure) rather than on the quality of the overall learning outcomes and

attainment of particular language proficiency or interpretive skills. While students were satisfied with the skills they were building in first-year courses, they were frustrated by the lack of intermediate and advanced courses being delivered across all language areas. They referred to being held “in limbo” by the University’s cuts even to the basic programs advertised. Professors and instructors were meeting the challenges this posed semester by semester in order to help the students; there was no long-term structural commitment by the Administration to the very Certificates it had imposed.

The University should certainly provide adequate resources to the basic certificates and, preferably, consider revising the certificates to 24 program credits (either with six or 12 credits from electives) in order to provide a more meaningful education experience for the students. The additional credits would enable the University to deliver the advanced-level language courses that students wanted and needed, or further cross-cultural courses. Certainly, there should be new courses to interest the Department’s own students and other students. For example, in addition to the forementioned course on the topic of reconciliation, a second course similar to Interpretation I in Chinese could be offered to make intercultural comparisons between and practical assessments of the professional cultures of the four language-cultures and Canadian understandings of community, work, and citizenship. Such courses would make either the individual Certificates or the proposed generalist Certificate (or Degree) in International Languages attractive for international students as well as students from new immigrant communities locally.¹ A further useful new course for students and the Department alike would be a Language Ambassador capstone course in which students would be trained to articulate their own professional development, skills, knowledge, and attributes as second-language users to communicate this better to potential employers. They would also act as ambassadors and peer recruiters for International Languages by making formal presentations on the value of languages and the personal journey from monolingualism to multilingualism to schools and community organizations or at popups off campus as an experiential / service-learning course component.

It would not take extraordinary investment of effort or funding to restructure the Certificates as a primary credential that could be extended into an overarching Certificate or, preferably, Degree in International Languages and Cultures anchored in the Department. That degree could focus on plurilingualism, cross-cultural interpretation, intercultural competence, and global citizenship. Students would take two languages, one

¹ The University could investigate whether there would be interest in the Tagalog- and Hindi-speaking communities of Regina for a revised or similar course to the Chinese Interpretation course focusing on integration and heritage identity maintenance. This could serve as a foundation for developing genuine relations with these communities and possibly new academic streams.

of which must be learned to an advanced level. The advanced level could be taken through study abroad if necessary. New cross-cultural courses would be offered by the Department and program guidelines could direct students to specific electives in relevant areas such as Applied Linguistics, History, Indigenous Languages, Comparative Literature, Religion, Anthropology, International Studies, etc. Likewise, these neighbouring disciplines would likely want their students to take electives from the new courses in International Languages. Especially the minor stream in Intercultural Leadership in International Studies ought to be better synthesized with International Languages, or a further stream could be developed with International Languages, leading to combined or double credential. The same goes for other disciplines where language skills are necessary in the real world but are largely overlooked on campus, for example, International Business, History, among others. Such a strategy of creating a higher-impact and inter-disciplinary learning experience for a broader cohort of students across the Faculty or Faculties would help retention and make the Department more sustainable, and it would put an end to institutional self-sabotage, enabling the Faculty of Arts and the University to meet its stated goals of being a comprehensive institution and internationalizing the knowledge of the student body with credibility.

Staffing is fundamental to any program renewal. Regarding International Languages, the record of the Faculty and the University could not be more woeful. Retired language professors have not been replaced with the positions going to other departments, meaning language courses and programs were struck or suspended. The Administration has let the full-time tenured faculty complement shrink to such a dismal extent that the role of Head of Department has become too burdensome if not impossible to fill internally, causing an absence of appropriate disciplinary leadership.² The German and Spanish programs have each had to rely on one tenured Instructor and one sessional instructor, respectively. Japanese is likewise delivered only by instructors. Almost all the instructors have to have other jobs, including online at other universities, meaning their attention and commitment is divided. In years past, the various language programs (especially Chinese and German) were networked with several professors in other departments teaching related courses or being cross-appointed (e.g., Chinese and History). This exceptional network would advise students on their academic pathways, serving students from and sending students to International Languages. But those professors retired with no thought from the Faculty of Arts to fill the resulting gaps in interconnected curricula, and all the departments involved – especially History, International Studies, and Fine Arts – are poorer for the loss of cross-enrollments and the cancelation of courses in International Languages. Such

² We note, however, the enthusiastic, committed, and excellent service of Dr Ian Coulson from the Department of Earth Sciences while acting as Head of Department for International Languages.

circumstances beg the questions as to why the Faculty of Arts has been so dozy regarding forward planning for hiring and why International Languages has been treated with such persistent negative exceptionalism when compared to other programs.

No program can be sustained, let alone be redeveloped or thrive, with below minimum staffing often with precarious employment contracts. There have been too many cuts to faculty and there has been an overreliance on sessionals. While sessionals are indeed valuable, only a sustained, tenured professoriate can give a lifetime perspective, make broader and deeper connections to a larger mission educationally, provide administrative service, bring current research into courses, and take ownership of programming. Only tenured Professors and tenured Instructors can design new curriculum, develop study abroad exchanges, forge a cross-departmental network, etc. That this University's Administration needs to be told something so basic to managing a university reflects the degree of mismanagement and negligence in hiring and staffing observed.

Hiring is the most fundamental manner by which to stabilize and sustain credentials. The Faculty of Arts must do better by including International Languages in its hiring strategy for the planned 20 new professors. The plan ought to be comprehensive, hiring directly into the Department – especially for Head of Department – and in combination with other departments, with targeted hires staggered over the five years and linked to substantive program development goals. That is, new hirings should be cross-appointments straddling and feeding both International Languages and several other disciplinary specializations within the Faculty and beyond (e.g., Applied Linguistics, History, Heritage Studies, Public Humanities, Comparative Literature, Global Religion, Anthropology, International Studies, Critical Indigenous Studies, International Business). This would consciously recreate the excellent, omnidirectionally beneficial model of a critical mass networked about International Languages that was so successful for the Faculty of Arts in the past. It would work well for the entire Faculty by serving curriculum development for several programs, and it would likely find considerable financial support from local heritage clubs, the Japan Foundation, and the German Academic Exchange Service, for example, should the University choose to be proactive. Certainly, the Faculty should seriously consider beginning by seeking to hire a new senior Associate Professor or Full Professor with tenure as Head of Department (most likely in Chinese or German) to take on the vital program promotion and curriculum development and oversee further direct and cross-appointed hires in other areas. After hiring a new Head, new Assistant Professors can gradually be sought in cross-disciplinary areas, for example, Chinese and History, German and Applied Linguistics, Japanese and Business or Popular Culture Studies, Spanish and Comparative Literature, and so forth. It would be important to make the cross-appointments in International Languages rather than in other departments, thus gradually assembling a

new focused professorial cohort anchored in one place to avoid the risk of scattering them too much across the Faculty. Such a strategy would come with minimum risk financially since, even if it were to fail to increase program enrollments in Languages after a targeted number of years, cross-appointed professors could easily transfer to the other departments. Finally, as part of this plan, Sessionals excelling as instructors should have the chance to move to and up the Instructor levels to guarantee stability for these dedicated employees and the programs alike. They would provide continuity as new professorial hires are integrated gradually into the Department and Faculty and programs are rebuilt.

Learning Needs & Goals, Study Abroad

The current students and alumni interviewed during the site visit were articulate, dedicated, and self-motivated. They chose languages for several common reasons. These included a heritage / family background, romance and friendships, an interest in other cultures, building on a language requirement in another discipline (e.g., History) or electives (e.g., Business, Computer Sciences), the fun and freedom of learning languages, the desire to be multilingual, opportunities for travel to learn and use the language, teaching English as a Second Language overseas in the future, future employment using the language, the competitive edge that a language provides on the job market, and imagined future selves. Some intended to continue with languages at the graduate level; the alumni had. Indeed, the alumni we met were exactly the kind of exemplary successful students that the Faculty of Arts should cherish but sadly can no longer produce because of the diminished credentials!

Current students expressed that they were receiving a good base for their studies, but all indicated how they had to supplement the limited Certificate offerings and were struggling to make up for the consistent course cancellations and lack of specialist advanced courses with their own private study to meet their learning goals of fluency and linguistic self-confidence. They were aware they were being shortchanged by the University since the Certificates did not cultivate fluency, but they demonstrated a resourcefulness and vision that could, frankly, benefit the Faculty of Arts. Students expressed a strong desire for courses in advanced-level language, translation theory, reading a variety of texts, interpreting how contemporary international media make people see themselves and the world around them, anime and manga, and international business cultures. They wanted a field school or to access study abroad more easily. They pointed out how the student teaching assistantships had been cut, diminishing their experience and skills development. They wanted experiential learning and opportunities for co-op internships or

service-learning. It was important for them to stay on time to complete their degree, but the cancellation of courses made this difficult. They all would have preferred a minor or a major credential over the Certificate.

The Certificates in International Languages had been introduced as a micro-credential to replace more substantial credentials without prior market research to indicate whether this was what students wanted or needed. While it might be too soon to see whether the new Certificates are successful in driving decent enrollment, the evidence from the students interviewed was that it was not meeting their needs and goals. It is therefore hard to imagine the Certificates could drive enrollment if they were not meeting students' needs. The students who were enrolled but interested in learning language to an advanced proficiency were supplementing their studies, doing advanced study elsewhere post degree, or simply intending to transfer away from the University of Regina to other institutions. They made it clear that some of their peers had dropped languages because of the cancellations. The Faculty of Arts leadership and the University were losing the opportunity to work with these students and yet they could learn by listening to them. Indeed, they were clear as to what the Faculty of Arts could do for curriculum and advertising / recruitment: (1) provide pathways with sufficient courses, especially in language acquisition; (2) speak to students (and faculty members) across campus about the value of languages and how there is an excellent fit with disciplines even outside the Arts; (3) explain how the commitment to learning languages pays off with many life opportunities and benefits; (4) help students to declare early; (5) support the development of student networks and cohorts outside of class; (6) make study abroad opportunities accessible; and (7) advertise languages in schools and not just the disciplines school students already know about. Distinguished alumni would be excellent role models in advertising possible future selves to current and potential students; they might also assist the University in finding international co-op placements for credit-bearing experiences for students at the advanced level.

Many of the students' suggestions would not cost the University much and even make better economic use of existing advertising and recruitment budgets. The Department itself is resource-strapped because it has been resource-stripped. There is a clear need for investment across all aspects of International Languages. This begs the question why University Advancement has not engaged in an area of obvious need and equally obvious attractive advertising potential? A similar question must be asked of the University of Regina's Global Mobility Office.

Indeed, study abroad was mentioned frequently as a key component of student learning in International Languages, all the more so given the cancellation of advanced language courses. Study abroad enables students to see the world differently and develop their

language abilities while earning course credits. Each language area indicated such activity through study tours and field school courses with overseas partners, participation in nationally organized language immersion programs, and international exchanges. However, the Office of Global Mobility could work more closely with the Department and Faculty to develop, promote, and fund study abroad opportunities for students already in International Languages and as a means to attract new students. Former study abroad participants should be employed to make presentations to peers about their experiences and learning. Global Mobility should make use of the innovation money available to it to identify or create appropriate first- or second-year field schools for the Spring Session for all students. This would help boost the figure of approximately 100 students going overseas per annum, a noticeably low number for an institution the size of the University of Regina. This is an area where International Languages could help the institution's comparative national standing.

University Mission

By the standards of their own mission and vision statements as set out in the University's *Strategic Plan 2020 to 2025: All Our Relations* and the implementation plan, *Faculty of Arts: Vision and Direction towards 2025*, the University and the Faculty have categorically failed the students of International Languages. The first focus area of the *Strategic Plan* claims that "An empowering education provides our students with the skills and self-confidence required to navigate the world around them throughout their time at the University and beyond" and that in seeking student success the University is to "Provide our students with the skill set they need to succeed on their chosen path." The decisions made by the Faculty of Arts and the University for over a decade have in fact significantly disempowered the students of International Languages: A deep analysis reveals Administration decisions at the heart of a decline as students have been and continue to be denied the skills they need to succeed on their chosen path by faculty not being replaced, courses been cancelled, programs being suspended, and credentials being watered down. There are clear commitments in the *Strategic Plan* and *Implementation Plan* to see students through programming, and the Faculty of Arts is in clear contravention of both.

The University and the Faculty of Arts must do better by standing by and investing in their own stated mission to support the "pursuit of local and global contributions to knowledge," "to develop well-rounded individuals who can communicate effectively" and possess "a diversity of outlook," and, most fundamentally, to "design opportunities that allow students to move from certificates to undergraduate degrees to Master's to Ph.D." This is especially pertinent given that "Internationalization" is a core element of the

University's first focus area, namely, to "recognize and incorporate international points of view," "integrat[e] international, intercultural, and global dimensions into our discovery efforts," "push the boundaries of discovery by creating globally aware citizens through [...] the incorporation of local and global worldviews into our teaching and research," and "Encourage, support, and promote internationalization through the integration of diverse worldviews into discovery, through research, teaching, and partnerships."

There is a risk to the University in terms of numbers, integrity, and reputation that comes with the evident constructive dismissal of languages: students will go elsewhere; it is not serving the community; it will no longer be a comprehensive university.

The University and the Faculty of Arts must stop targeting International Languages with thoughtless austerity measures and instead recognize it as a unique and important asset for the entire university community and beyond. If the University and Faculty sincerely mean to "Prioritize [...] student success," they must start by making sure International Languages has the means to educate students toward that success by providing sufficient faculty, adequate courses, and a quality curriculum! There certainly should be more intercultural or multilingual integration on campus than less of it. The University and Faculty can work with a revitalized International Languages to communicate how learning a language opens doors and broadens horizons one's life long. There needs to be a long-term vision for the personal intercultural development of the students, and this must include a properly resourced Department of International Languages.

Recommendations

The first three recommendations are for the consideration of the Faculty of Arts and the University Administration. The remaining recommendations are primarily but not exclusively aimed at the Department.

Recommendation 1: Work Together. The University of Regina and the Faculty of Arts must work constructively with the Department of International Languages and the students who choose languages as their chosen pathway and recognize International Languages as central to the Faculty's development and mission.

- Administration can address the catastrophic effect of poor decision-making from the past by making reparations now. It is possible to change both attitude and actions to support International Languages rather than sabotaging it.
- This is especially important since to move students away from isolationism and toward world knowledges, and specifically into languages, it is first necessary to have a

primary awareness of other cultures. Since schools in Saskatchewan do not achieve this, the University has a singularly important role to play in this regard.

- The courses in languages and cultures are thus core to the University's mission to help the students focus on the broader world: Students learn to think critically about the world and with empathy in language and culture courses. The University will fail in its goal to internationalize student knowledge without working constructively with International Languages.
- Therefore, the University and Faculty must give sufficient time (at least five to eight years) to track the success of the Language Certificates and any trends as promotion, recruitment, and advertising are conducted, staffing is stabilized or improved, and the curriculum is developed.

Recommendation 2: Invest. The University of Regina and the Faculty of Arts must invest financial, human, and cultural capital in the Department of International Languages for promotion, recruitment, supporting course delivery, and enabling access to study abroad.

- Program enrollment would doubtless be stronger in International Languages if there were more promotion of and recruitment into the four languages across campus and in schools and heritage communities. Promotion needs to raise awareness of the personal, educational, and career benefits of learning and using another language, and should employ exemplary alumni as leaders as well as engage former study abroad participants and use social media to break stereotypes and tap into interest in popular culture.
- Advertising must be consistent, that is, not once but every year and across the year, and practical by being focused on student experience, courses, study abroad options, and scholarships. Advertising can take place through student societies, for example, the Business student society, emphasizing how the limited number of credit hours required for the Certificates can be easily completed concurrently with other programming.
- At the same time, the University must invest financially to make sure that the programs it advertises are fully available to students.
- The promotion of and financial assistance for study abroad for students enrolled in language programs is essential for helping them complete the Certificates with an appropriate level of language proficiency. This would be a revenue stream in the instances where the study abroad or field schools were offered by the University.
- CCE revenue in the Faculty of Arts should be redistributing fairly. For example, money raised by Asian languages should go to International Languages and not to fund English courses.

Recommendation 3: Hire. The University of Regina and the Faculty of Arts must invest in and consciously plan to hire adequate and appropriate professors and instructors in the Department of International Languages, starting with a new Head of Department to lead a revitalization.

- There is an urgent need to hire soon because human resource planning for International Languages has long been neglected by the Faculty and the University. There used to be at least six faculty members (across Chinese, German, and Spanish), and these positions have been transferred to other disciplines which has exacerbated the need. Hiring needs to be well planned, step-by-step, networked across the Faculty and University, and evaluated. A new set of professors will create a revitalized program that is relevant to the real needs of University of Regina students and be aligned with the University's mission. It will recreate the former network that used to exist about International Languages and that had been a successful model for optimizing human resources in the Faculty.
- Hiring should begin with a senior Associate or Full Professor with tenure as a new Head of Department, preferably to start in summer 2025. This position should be entirely or primarily assigned to the Department (i.e., with the ability to teach cross-listed courses) in order to rebuild the Department and lead the work on further hiring, recruitment, assessment, and a new anchoring degree. A senior hire may well mean a higher salary, but this individual will also stay fewer years until retirement, and they will come with the experience and knowledge necessary to rebuild, hire, and mentor new younger colleagues. Mentoring experience should be considered when selecting candidates.
- The first hire (i.e., for Head) should be for either Chinese or German. There is an existing Professor in Chinese who is about to retire, and the need in German is especially urgent since the Level-3 Instructor is the sole faculty member of the program and is also about to retire. Either of these two language area disciplines have the potential to foster immediate teaching and research collaborations with other departments.
- The Faculty of Arts should approach Education to discuss the relevance to International Languages and possible contribution or cross-appointment of the new hire there in second language acquisition.
- A new Assistant Professor should be hired in the other language area (i.e., Chinese if the Head is in German, or vice versa) in 2026. Preferably, this professor will be primarily assigned to the Department but may be cross-appointed with an allied discipline and should have the ability to teach cross-listed courses.

- The Faculty and University should commit to credible staffing stability by replacing any professor or instructor who leaves or retires. This could include three- or five-year Limited Term Appointments with the option of moving unadvertised to a tenure track position across all languages and especially for Japanese or Spanish.
- A third and a fourth hire, a second and third Assistant Professor, should be hired in 2027 and 2028. These professors will also be primarily assigned to the Department but should be cross-appointed with allied disciplines and have the ability to teach cross-listed courses.
- All appointments should have a degree of cross-appointment but be assigned to International Languages in order to create a critical base in the Department. Desired hires should be relevant to disciplines such as History, Anthropology, Religion, Comparative Literature, Linguistics, Business, etc., foreseeing appropriate curriculum development for International Languages and the allied disciplines. For Chinese and History, it will be important to find someone to take over teaching the successful cross-listed course on “China since Mao.” For Spanish, a discussion should be initiated with Indigenous Languages to explore the relevance of a professor who researches indigenous Latin America.
- Appointments in the Department should be connected with any of the following research and teaching areas: language acquisition, intercultural competence, translation and interpretation, international business communication, human relations and human conflict and reconciliation, cultural interpretation, contemporary culture, area studies history and politics, and applied linguistics or sociolinguistics. They should have specializations and experience related both to language teaching and cultural studies approaches.
- The Faculty of Arts should make a strategic priority regarding the other hires in other departments, making sure that they consider connections to International Languages and connections to the greater world outside of Saskatchewan. There is great potential benefit in compatibility and synergy with cross-appointments to restock and restart both International Languages and other departments through a purposely established network of new hires. The Faculty of Arts has the opportunity to act wisely through investing in human resources in International Languages rather than illogically expecting growth from austerity.
- The hiring plan should also commit to permanence for the current long-term Sessionals. Options can be explored for these committed teachers to move to Instructor-level positions. They will provide stability and continuity in the language programs and with greater job security they could help with planning and growing the programs. The University needs to commit itself to people who have committed to it.

Recommendation 4: Up the Credentials. The Department of International Languages should rethink and rebrand the four Language Certificates at junior and senior levels as complimentary credentials and introduce a new generalist Certificate or Degree in International Languages and Cultures.

- The Department should maintain the delivery of all four Language Certificates as foundational junior micro-credentials, and it should provide a senior version that clearly incorporates advanced-level language proficiency.
- The Department and Faculty should work together to identify areas where students could easily double up credentials, such as combining a Certificate with International Studies, History, or Business and advertise as such. Indeed, an Intercultural Competence stream or International Cultures stream within International Studies could be very attractive.
- However, the current Certificates should be considered as a first junior credential which can be ladder up into a senior Certificate with advanced-level language, or, first, as a generalist Certificate and, ultimately, as a Degree program in “International Languages and Cultures.” These would build on the four language Certificates to offer greater expertise in language acquisition and cultural knowledge, interpretation, and experience of the Chinese-, German-, Japanese-, and Spanish-speaking worlds. A generalist Certificate or Degree in “International Languages and Cultures” with an international cultural focus would include the cognitive courses required to help students think differently about the world, as per the University’s and Faculty’s mission.
- A degree in International Languages would have two languages but there must be one in the Department while others could also be in French or an Indigenous Language.
- A foundation course could be provided by Linguistics, such as a language acquisition and learning course at the 100- or 200-level. This could be followed by a 300-level course in Psychology or Education or Pragmatics on intercultural competence. The Department should offer a 400-level capping course, such as a Language Ambassadors course (see below).
- To achieve this extension of the Certificates, the Department should receive active and concrete support from the Faculty and seek collaboration with other departments. There are several allied professors in the Faculty and across campus (e.g., in Anthropology, History, Business, etc.) with whom the Department can partner.
- The proposed advanced version of the Language Certificates as well as the generalist Certificate or Degree ought to incorporate study abroad.

Recommendation 5: Deliver Senior-Level Courses. With commitment and investment from the University of Regina and the Faculty of Arts, the Department of International Languages should find various ways to facilitate the delivery of senior-level courses, including advanced-level languages courses.

- While the University and Faculty must guarantee the delivery of at least some upper-level courses in International Languages in order for students to reach an advanced stage of language and cultural learning and complete their certificates, the Department can adopt a number of strategies to optimize the provision of resources.
- For example, the Department could develop courses on cultural themes that cross any number of the language areas.
- It can also collaborate with allied disciplines to develop and share courses on relevant topics. A fine example here is the course in Chinese and History on “China after Mao.” Similar courses should be considered on topics related to German history, Latin American history and politics, Asian religions, International Business cultures and communication, cultures of European colonialism, Japanese popular culture, etc.
- Study abroad and field school options at any level but especially the upper-intermediate or advanced levels will surely be an essential and effective part of any strategy to optimized access to senior courses and guarantee higher language proficiency outcomes for students. Such options could be offered by the Department, or the Department could identify and promote such courses and programs offered by other Canadian universities or partners in China, Germany, Japan, Mexico, or Spain.
- The Department should explore offering online courses jointly coordinated with the University of Saskatchewan or via a consortium of regional universities. This is possible because regional universities offer the same four languages taught at the University of Regina. This will create some guarantee for course delivery and also open up resources to be shared between the universities.

Recommendation 6: Collaborate with Other Departments. The Department of International Languages needs to collaborate formally with other departments in the Faculty of Arts and across campus in order to develop mutually beneficial courses across disciplines.

- In order to strengthen the current Certificates and create a new generalist Certificate or Degree, the Department must collaborate with allied disciplines in the Faculty and beyond on course delivery and development. Collaboration will create synergy among programs.
- The Faculty could facilitate talks and the development of proposals between International Languages and International Studies, History, Applied Linguistics,

Business, and so forth (i.e., the same departments that need to be engaged in a comprehensive hiring strategy).

- Collaborative courses would preferably be at the upper level and will address culture-oriented and/or intercultural learning goals in both the language areas and the allied discipline for mutual benefit.
- Curriculum development across all programs should focus on contemporary culture, popular culture, conflict and reconciliation, area studies in history, politics, and religion, language acquisition, intercultural competence, international business culture and communication, and connections with the local communities as part of global communities. Preferably, not all such courses should be language specific but rather appeal to students across two or more of the four language areas as well as to students in the allied disciplines.
- The course on truth and reconciliation in the cultures of the four language areas could serve as an example and starting point.

Recommendation 7: Create a Student Cohort. The Department of Languages should create a broad cohort of students in the department and connected to other disciplines and relevant local communities.

- It is well known that students are retained by programming where they have a sense of belonging and can make an academic identity for themselves. International Languages should seek to create a student space that would contribute to cohort-building from across all Certificates. This space should be open access, provide information on courses and study abroad, offer various media for students to use, have drop-in times to consult student assistants, and even address food security by offering refreshments and snacks while students hang out. Members of all kinds of heritage communities could be invited to showcase their culture and local services in this space. The space could be dedicated to changing cultural exhibitions and show off student projects. Events ought to be arranged by students as part of for-credit service-learning so as to create meaningful ties with and not burden the local heritage communities. The Faculty, University, and Offices of Advancement and Global Mobility should fund this space until local sponsors can be found.

Recommendation 8: Create Language Ambassadors. The Department of International Languages should create a capstone Language Ambassadors course common for all language streams.

- A capstone course common for all students graduating with Certificates from International Languages would help consolidate their professional development, provide an attractive and useful final disciplinary experience, and make sensible use of

human resources. Students would be trained as Language Ambassadors for International Languages by working on identifying and deeply understanding their own language and intercultural skills as job market preparation and raising awareness of the value of languages (as lived in their own education experiences) through peer presentations in local schools and communities and to other student groups on campus. The latter would be of experiential / service-learning for the students and a component of the promotion and recruitment strategy of the Department.

- Such courses were successfully developed through and documented by the *Routes into Languages* initiative in the UK (see the Northeast chapter).
- Students from French and Indigenous Languages could also be attracted to this course as an elective.

Recommendation 9: Market Language Standards. The Department of Languages should introduce formal, internationally recognized language standards as targeted and advertised outcomes.

- The introduction of language standards and benchmarks for all courses, for example, linked to the Common European Framework of Reference and equivalents, will provide students with clear, professional, and internationally recognized indications of the proficiency expected and attained in the Certificates. This would help make a clear distinction between junior and advanced certificates should the Department take that direction.
- These standards can be advertised to potential students as appropriate targets and be used by graduating students to market themselves to graduate programs and/or future employers.
- These targets could be linked to external examinations offered by international cultural organizations such as the Goethe Institut, the Japan Foundation, or the Instituto Cervantes, which could serve as an extracurricular credential.

Respectfully submitted by

Dr. John L. Plews, Professor & Director of the Canadian Summer School in Germany,
Department of Languages & Cultures, Saint Mary's University (Review Team Chair)

Dr. Wei Cai, Professor, School of Languages, Linguistics, Literatures and Cultures,
University of Calgary

Dr. Paul Sinclair, Associate Professor, Faculty of Business Administration, University of
Regina