

Global Learning through Language Quality Enhancement Plan

Prepared by:

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Section 1: Vision

Share your vision of how your proposed topic has the potential to transform an issue related to student learning at the institutional level. Consider your audience of the Mason community members – why should we embrace this topic and how will it enhance student learning at Mason?

The Global Learning through Language proposal focuses on the belief that the success and competitiveness of Mason students in an increasingly global economy relies upon available opportunities for enhanced foreign language acquisition. This can be achieved through increased funding for the department of Modern and Classical Languages, and through intensive language study programs with overseas partnerships. All students at Mason, regardless of degree program, will gain a competitive edge in the job market by obtaining increased language proficiency through better classroom instruction, variety of languages offered, and language immersion abroad.

Compared to other Washington Consortium schools, Mason has one of the least dynamic foreign language course offerings. We believe that this puts Mason students at a disadvantage. Student preparation for life after graduation and the overall learning experience of the Mason student will be enhanced by enhancing the variety and level of languages offered at the Fairfax campus.

Section 2: Congruence with Mission and Goals

Demonstrate how your proposed topic is consistent with Mason’s mission and 2014 Strategic Plan.

We believe that the Global Learning Proposal is congruent with Goal 5 of the 2014 Strategic Plan to *“Develop more fully as a global university, in outreach, research and education, to*

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promote increasing global competence among our students, while extending global and local awareness in the environmental area". Both aspects of our proposal, to increase the variety of languages offered on campus including the level at which they are offered, and to increase the variety of intensive foreign language study abroad programs, will enhance the global proficiency and awareness of Mason's student population. If Mason students are to become globally competitive and affect positive global change, it is imperative that Mason students possess the language skills necessary to engage in effective communication with other cultures. This will allow Mason to *"educate the new generation of leaders for the 21st century"* as stated in the Mission of the University.

Section 3: Student Learning Outcomes

Identify at least four measurable student learning outcomes that your proposed topic expects to address. Specifically, if your plan were to be adopted, what would students know and be able to do as a result?

It is our goal that at least 50 percent of Mason students will choose to enhance their learning experience by gaining a higher level of foreign language proficiency during their time at Mason.

The first measurable learning outcome will highlight the percentage of Mason students participating in the university's language program once new languages are offered. The amount of students that choose to enroll in new programs at the Fairfax campus can be used to indicate the previously unmet demand for language courses.

The second measurable learning outcome will be the degree to which Mason students are able to locate employment opportunities following graduation. Students will most likely receive more job offers based on their greater degree of language proficiency in less-commonly spoken languages.

The third measurable learning outcome would focus on the percentage of students that choose to take advantage of foreign language immersion programs abroad. If the number of students enrolled in these programs increases, it will show a renewed commitment to experiential learning. This will further prove students' desire to gain valuable knowledge in language and culture outside of the classroom.

The fourth measurable learning outcome would indicate a higher level of integration between international and domestic students through active interest in Living Learning Communities and participation with international student organizations and events. This integration will serve to

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promote diversity and tolerance between cultures and languages, and will similarly provide Mason students with experiences that are applicable to life post-graduation.

Section 4: Possible Avenues for Implementation

Describe how your proposed QEP topic relates to an issue where there is momentum building on campus or an issue that would be significantly strengthened through added attention and resources. Include your ideas about possible strategies for implementing this topic so that we could obtain meaningful results. Where possible, highlight opportunities to build on current institutional initiatives and resources.

While Mason maintains its reputation as one of the nation's most diverse campuses, many students are unsatisfied with the opportunities available with which to enhance this experience. Offering a wider variety of languages, and at higher levels of proficiency, would address the student body's growing demand for global competency in both language and cultural awareness.

Additional funding must be made available to the Department of Modern and Classical Languages. Attracting more qualified faculty to provide additional language instruction will be necessary in order to offer a wider variety of languages. Additional faculty will also enable Mason to offer higher level coursework in languages currently offered so that students can achieve advanced fluency in speaking, reading, and writing to maximize their language skills for the job market. Mason must also continue to build its partnerships with institutions abroad in order to encourage student involvement in language immersion programs.

A Foreign Language Communication Center would improve language options by offering language-learning software for students. The center could be staffed by international or domestic students who happen to be native speakers or proved fluency in a second language. This would give students another venue in which they could practice and refine their speaking skills. The two computer labs on the 2nd floor of Thompson Hall near the office of the Department of Modern and Classical Language could be outfitted with such software and converted for the purposes of the Communication Center.

A Living Learning Community could also be established in the residence halls for specific languages in which students would be immersed in both the language and culture.

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A faculty exchange program would also prove beneficial by bringing native speakers to the classroom. Mason could provide a faculty member to a university abroad to teach English, while a native-speaker remained in residence at Mason for a period of time to be determined.

Currently, there is no method for which students can officially identify their level of language proficiency for the purposes of resume writing and job searching. Placing a student's level of language proficiency on transcripts would allow students to officially prove their language skills to potential employers and graduate schools.