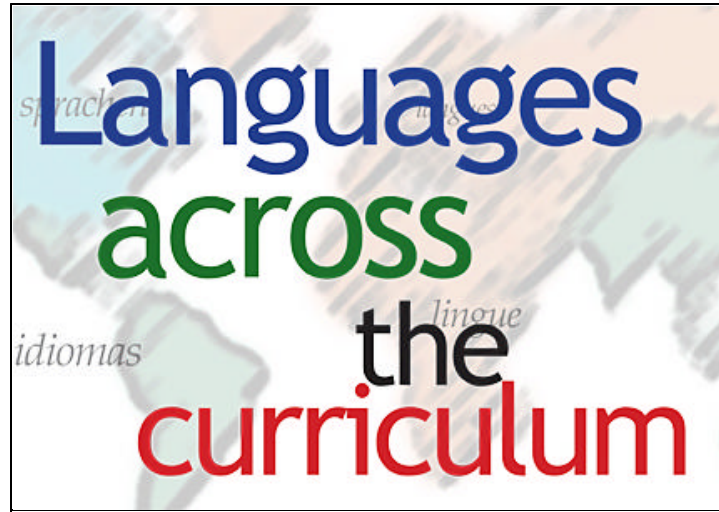


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Languages across the curriculum**By Kezia McKeague**

News Editor

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The university's commitment to foreign language study now has the potential to extend to departments across campus. An interdisciplinary program called Languages Across the Curriculum allows students to apply their linguistic knowledge in courses ranging from political science to biology.

Candelas Gala, chair of the Romance languages department and the LAC committee, said the goal of the initiative is to help "internationalize the campus" through the use of primary and secondary sources in their original languages.

"We felt that with a strong language requirement it made sense for students to see how a language they've spent several semesters studying applies to other disciplines," Gala said.

Since its inception three years ago, the program has sponsored a small number of courses with optional LAC components. Participating students meet for an extra hour a week with the professor and receive one hour of credit. How the credit counts towards a major depends on the individual department.

These LAC courses do not focus on grammar instruction, but instead regard language as a tool of intellectual inquiry. "We're looking for content, not accuracy in the language," Gala said.

At a discussion on LAC at the Teaching and Learning Center three weeks ago, Gala told professors that the long-term goal is to integrate multiple languages with as many disciplines as possible.

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The breadth of the program will depend on student and faculty interest, which the committee is working to generate. Besides Gala, the committee includes Peter Siavelis, an associate professor of political science, Miles Silman, an assistant professor of biology, and Antonio Vitti, a professor of Italian.

Gala said that Paul Escott, dean of the college, approached her department three years ago with the idea of language study taking place throughout the university's curriculum. She had already been studying the various models used at other universities, so they organized a faculty workshop with specialists on this type of program.

Escott explained his support of LAC in terms of the value he places on knowledge of other languages and cultures.

"With more of our students studying abroad, we have an increasing number of undergraduates who are developing real fluency in a language that they study," Escott said. "We want these students to have an opportunity to use their language abilities here on campus once they return. What could be better than to be able to use the foreign language in connection with a course in one's major?"

Gala said that LAC components can be taught by the professor of the course or by a language professor in a collaboration between departments.

According to Escott, the university has supported faculty with stipends to develop LAC courses through a grant from the Andrew Mellon Foundation. Gala said that professors who teach three LAC components will receive a course reduction.

Gala emphasized that students at all language levels can participate in LAC.

When she taught a first-year seminar last semester on the lives of Federico García Lorca, Salvador Dalí and Luis Buñuel, the group participating in the LAC component had differing levels of Spanish.

Sophomore AnneRose Menachery had spent the least amount of time studying Spanish — she was taking her second semester of it at the same time as the seminar. She said, however, that Gala assigned different amounts of work according to student levels.

"Everybody was able to participate," Menachery said of the discussions, which were all held in Spanish.

Sophomore Jennifer Barker also said she enjoyed the added dimension to the seminar. "I'd recommend that other professors do it," she said.

So far, Mary Friedman, an associate professor of Spanish, and Judy Kem, an associate professor of French, have also added LAC components to first-year seminars.

Friedman, who is meeting with two students outside of her regular seminar on Gabriel García Márquez this semester, described her experience with LAC as "spontaneous, illuminating and an awful lot of fun."

She said the LAC students have read some of Márquez's work in the original Spanish—as well as in English at times so to be able to comment on the strengths and

weaknesses of the translation.

"It's a special treat to work in such small groups, and there's a nice spin-off to the rest of the class," Friedman said.

Gala hopes, however, to extend LAC to courses besides literature taught by professors outside the Romance languages department. Multilingual inquiry, she said, provides a basis for comparative understanding not available when students and faculty are limited to the use of resources in only one language.

"Language conveys a point of view," Gala said. "The New York Times and the Spanish newspaper El País, for example, can give very different renditions of the same event."

Besides newspapers, materials used in LAC courses could include journals, television programs and films as well as primary sources.

According to Gala, Silman is going to try to conceive of an LAC approach to his program in Peru, where he takes students to do biology research. Several other departments have also expressed interest.

Siavelis, who speaks Spanish, said he tried to add a LAC component to his class on Latin American government and politics last year, but there was a lack of student interest.

He hopes, however, to find enough interest the next time he teaches the course.

Faculty from the Bowman Gray School of Medicine have also approached Gala about the need for doctors to speak Spanish. She has since written a proposal to extend the university's study abroad program in Querétaro, Mexico, with a language offering for medicine students and pre-med undergraduates.

For Gala, the LAC program has the potential to enrich interdisciplinary interaction on campus.

"The strength of our departments is a good thing, but, from my point of view, is an obstacle to interdisciplinary education," she said. "Education is not compartmentalized in that manner."

Her long-term goal is for LAC to become "a presence on campus in the same way as programs like Latin American studies and women's studies."

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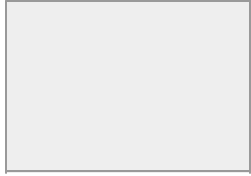
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