**Engaging Students with the Francophone World, its Cultures and Communities:**  
* A Two-Year Plan  
Proposal for MIU Stage 3, Department of French and Italian

**Abstract**

The mission of our French program is to enhance the learning experience of every undergraduate enrolled in UW-Madison French classes by connecting them to distinct francophone cultures from the Americas, Africa, Asia and Europe. Having pioneered innovative computer technology for the classroom, members of our department are currently revamping our beginning language courses so that all students can benefit from contacts with individuals, organizations and communities in different corners of the francophone world. Recent increases in enrollment in French classes and a growing number of French majors, due to curricular reform, have underscored the need to develop three areas of our program. 1) Revise our bridge course F228 and offer two new gateway courses at the 200 level. The latter courses, which have been approved but lack staffing, are for non-speakers of French and will introduce them to the broad variety of francophone communities. 2) Extend the use of electronic media in our 300-500 level courses and offer two more 300-level courses, designed for a new Certificate in French for the Professions that will train students' communication skills for professions in the Life Sciences, Engineering and Business. 3) Offer more courses in our highest-demand area, francophone cultures outside Europe, that will give students in-depth training in the cultures and history of French-speaking regions of the Caribbean and North Africa. These areas can be fully developed by current faculty only with the help of the three faculty lines and three TAships requested from the MIU.

**Summary**

Since 2007 the French section of our department has implemented important changes in our undergraduate curriculum and pedagogical methods that have increased the number of students taking French courses, as the data below indicates, and also the number of French majors. However, since our bridge classes French 228 and 227 (language courses that act as bridges to 300-level culture and literature courses) are now filled to the maximum, each having been reduced by one section per fall through budget limitations, many students since 2008 have had their access limited to the key courses French 311 (composition and conversation) and 347-8 (civilization and culture), which serve both majors and non-majors. Lack of available faculty has also prevented us from implementing several of the curricular changes outlined below: substantial reductions to our permanent French teaching personnel have forced us to concentrate our remaining faculty in courses required for majors. As a result, several of the new courses we created (at the 200 level and above) have not yet been offered. We plan to overcome these obstacles by pushing ahead with the revitalizing of our program. A key element in the success of that plan is, however, new faculty: specifically the three new faculty lines that we are requesting through MIU funding over the next two years.

The mission of the department's French section is to enhance the learning experience of every undergraduate enrolled in UW-Madison French classes by connecting them to richly distinct francophone cultures from around the world. The
official language of 33 countries and the first or second language of over 20 African countries, French is spoken as a primary language by some 220 million people in the Americas, Africa, Asia and Europe. Accomplishing our department’s mission entails deepening students’ understanding of the historical and linguistic ties between many of these cultures and their own and preparing them to interact directly with these cultures. Part of this preparation is the creation of electronic tools for use in the classroom, which we have developed intensively over the past five years: we have already embarked on further internet-assisted instruction for both language and culture courses. Two immediate goals that we have set are a) increasing the contacts with students in French-speaking countries for undergraduates in all our courses (beginning language classes through those for the major), and b) offering a broader array of courses from the 200 to 500 levels that engage undergraduates with different francophone communities and histories, especially those of Haiti and Africa. Before explaining how we will achieve these goals, which correspond to each of the two years of our hiring plan, we shall briefly outline how changes to our curriculum have increased enrollments but have also necessitated reallocating faculty to the point where further increases are now unlikely and key areas in our program lack instructors.

**Ensuring growth in our program and student access to key courses**

After the revision of our undergraduate program in spring 2007, overall enrollments in French courses increased during the two subsequent fall semesters, by 9.1% in 2007 and by 9.9% in 2008.\(^1\) (To put these figures in perspective, the total number of enrolled students in French for fall 2008, 1,374 students, is 77% of the number of students taught by instructors in Spanish that same semester, yet the number of instructors of French that semester was 52% of the number of Spanish instructors. So the ratio of student to instructor is higher in French, 25.44 to 1, than in Spanish, 17.08 to 1.) After increasing in 2007-08 and in 2008-09, French enrollments dropped in fall 09. Two main factors in this reduction are the fact that our highest number of majors (recorded up to that point) graduated in spring 09 (89 majors) and also that the number of sections of F203 had been reduced by two in 2008, while our bridge course to culture classes, F228, and the literature course F271 (which is a prerequisite to our major) had each been reduced from six sections to five in fall 2009. These enforced budget reductions have meant that fewer students can now move quickly into our culture, literature and advanced language courses. Nevertheless, the students already in those advanced courses after the start of fall 08 helped mark an increase in our number of graduating majors by 15.5% from 2007 to 2010.\(^2\) The increase in graduating French majors over the last two years stands out when one compares it to decreasing numbers of graduating majors during that period in German, Spanish, English, History (see table 2). Spanish is the only world language with a higher total number of majors than French at the UW. French is listed 21st out of the top 30 L&S majors (from spring 09-fall 10) and with Spanish is one of only two world languages appearing on the list. According to what departmental advisors report, one of the main attractions of our major (in addition to the quality of instruction from elementary levels up) is that students realize that they can graduate in four years. 85.9% of French majors from 2000 to 2010 graduated in four

\(^1\) See table 1 in Appendices.

\(^2\) See table 2 in Appendices.
years or less. Ensuring that our students can graduate within four years has been one of the priorities when designing our program. Because more than three quarters of our majors are joint-majors, we have taken care not to add on additional semesters to their requirements that would slow their time to degree. However, in the wake of multiple retirements or resignations by faculty and academic staff (we have lost a full third of the French section of our department since 1999), we currently face serious difficulties in offering enough elective courses at the upper level to ensure timely progress through the major program and to meet undergraduates’ demand for a variety of course offerings.

Although most of the curricular changes to our revised undergraduate program are now in place, two of the new courses that we designed in 2007 (French 248, “Ethnic Studies in the French / Francophone World,” and Literature in Translation 365, “French / Francophone Literature in Translation”) still wait to be offered because our current faculty are stretched thin between staffing other basic courses in our language and culture sequence and staffing required courses for our major. Both of these courses are keys to giving undergraduates who lack language skills in French an understanding of the problems faced by, and also the accomplishments made by, different francophone communities outside Europe. The addition of F248 (which will fulfill the Ethnic Studies requirement and LitTrans 365 will bring an estimated increase of a hundred students each semester. They will also encourage some of those students to develop French language skills in other courses. As indicated below, current faculty would teach these courses, if they could be replaced in the required major courses they teach regularly (F311 and F322). The three faculty lines that we are requesting from MIU funds – each accompanied by a 50% TAship – will allow us to fulfill two important goals: to fully staff our revised undergraduate course sequence, and to continue to broaden our students’ access to instruction in francophone cultures. The faculty hired, who would be qualified to teach at all levels of our curriculum, would be specialists in the following fields:

**Faculty line 1:**
a tenure-track specialist of French language and francophone cultures to join our current 1st and 2nd year language co-ordination team. This team is comprised of one faculty member and two senior lecturers whose other responsibilities do not allow them to enact a redesign of F228, which has been in its present form for 15 years. A new faculty member will help in such a redesign, plus help integrate more electronic media in elementary and intermediate language classes.

**Faculty line 2:**
a tenure-track specialist of French and francophone film. He or she would create a new film course and have proficiency in electronic media to enhance the virtual links we’ve made with francophone communities in our 300-500 level classes.

**Faculty line 3:**
a tenure-track specialist of Haitian and other Caribbean francophone cultures (in Martinique, Guadeloupe and French Guiana). This specialist will broaden our teaching of cultural diversity in the francophone world and give undergraduates the training in these various cultures that would increase career opportunities for double majors in French, and students earning our new Certificate for the
Professions.

What follows are details of how the three additional faculty members and the accompanying TAships would supplement the curricular and pedagogical initiatives that our department has already begun. These initiatives will be developed over two years.

Year 1: Connecting students to the French-speaking world

By hiring faculty lines 1 and 2 we will be able to complete the revamping of on-line resources in our language sequence F101-F228. Specifically, we will build upon the Memorandum of Understanding that our university has with two academies in France, Aix-Marseille and Bordeaux, allowing us make on-line and collaborations between undergraduate students in France and our F203-204 students. For instance, students on both sides of the Atlantic will be paired on the basis of shared interests (e.g. art, politics, music) to engage in online chat or Skype interactions that can be recorded and shared through Torkbox. These will lead to collaborative projects done in class, such as surveys in each country on one topic, creating interactive bulletin boards to address current cultural issues, creating Wikis and similar learner-centered means of information sharing through PB Works. The T.A. attached to faculty line 1 would work with the course chairs of F101-2 and F203-4 to help students in these classes use such technology. Both the T.A. and the faculty person for line 1 would be trained in such skills by Jan Miernowski, who has developed interactive software for 300-level French courses (see below).

The faculty member hired for line 1 would assist our current language-co-ordination team in redesigning F228. With more diverse cultural content in this course, it will encourage students to follow the existing "Language and Culture track" in our major, whereby students take two optional advanced courses on francophone culture (instead of literature courses). The redesigned F228 will also be a pathway to courses on migrant cultures and francophone worlds (F449 and F465) that are intended for non-majors as well as pre-majors. Professors Aliko Songolo and Névine El-Nossery can teach such courses if released from commitments to F322 (through hiring faculty lines 2 and 3).

With the new faculty hires in place, professors Steven Winspur and Névine El-Nossery would be able to teach our recently created gateway course F240 (Immigration and Expression) in the fall semester and the new F248 (Ethnic Studies in the French/Francophone World) in the spring.

The current language-co-ordination team will develop a section of F101/102 called French for Spanish speakers, which would allow such students to have accelerated training in one semester that combines the 101 and 102 curriculum. The second TA ship, attached to faculty line 2, will assist in the implementing of this course and work closely with the other T.A. in the implementation of electronic media in all sections of F101-204.

In conjunction with the Language Institute and with, Bruno Browning the Director of Language Support Services in Van Hise Hall, our department has begun planning for more digital connections to beginning language classes, through WisCEL. A current MIU proposal made to the Engineering School contains the chance for language departments to compete for support for three pilot projects using electronic media in classrooms. Our department looks forward to applying for such a project and developing parts of our F101-204 courses that could use the WisCEL space more broadly.
To accommodate a growing demand from students across campus for the equivalent of a minor in French we plan to create a *Certificate in French for the Professions*. This will take the place of our current French Business Certificate (available only to students in the School of Business). The new Certificate will provide a curriculum dedicated to improving students’ linguistic abilities in French and cultural competencies in different francophone regions. It will appeal to a larger audience than the Business Certificate, drawing undergraduates who major not just in business but also in engineering, medicine, pre-law and the sciences. It will be especially attractive to students in UW-Madison schools beyond L&S that have an international component or major, such as International Agriculture and Life Sciences, Engineering and Business.3 The core courses for the certificate will include an advanced modern civilization courses (e.g. F348) and intermediate and advanced language courses (F311, 312, 313 and 314). The content of the advanced language courses will center on themes of special interest to the certificate’s target audience while also helping students to develop skills in professional communication in those areas. We see many of these students in French classes during their first few years at UW-Madison; however, without any concrete goal such as a certificate, most tend not to continue beyond intermediate French. Nevertheless, many of them remain globally minded and the *Certificate in French for the Professions* would allow them to deepen that global interest and have those efforts reflected on their student record. Current members of the French teaching personnel like Anne Vila, Andrew Irving and Ritt Deitz will work on designing a new version of F312 (Advanced Oral and Written Expression) that includes units on such themes as the evolving relationship between biomedical thought and society in France, the culture and science of food and wine production, French/ Francophone Nobel prize winners and leaders in science, and the culture of strikes and organized labor in France. To assist in developing the course and other aspects of the certificate for students majoring in the Life Sciences, we will collaborate with campus partners like Caitilyn Allen (Professor of Plant Pathology and co-director of Madison-Montpellier exchange in the area of environmental science) and Richard Keller (Medical History and the History of Science).

The faculty person for line 2 will design a new course on francophone film for both majors and non-majors. It will be distinct from the course on French film taught in Comm. Arts since it will be entirely devoted to the many films made outside France about important events in North African, Quebecois or Indochinese history during the periods of French colonization. These films will also introduce undergraduates to parts of the world where types of French-speaking communities different from those in Europe have evolved. The faculty person for line 2 will also teach a section of F227 or 228 and a section of the high-demand classes F311 (Composition) and F322 (Introduction to Literature) which are required for the major. Filling the faculty line 2 will allow current faculty who teach our regularly offered French film course (F465) to also take turns staffing these chronic bottleneck courses. Over the last five years we have depended on available lectureship funds in certain semesters to staff a second section of F311, but in many semesters this has not been possible and students have had to delay taking the class until the following semester.

\[3\] International Business students, because of the demands of that particular program, are most often not able to complete a full French major. The new certificate, however, should be more manageable for them.
The faculty person for line 2 will also assist our French House director, Andrew Irving, in opening up the cultural events (conferences, workshops, artistic performances) taking place at the French House to more varied francophone perspectives. The French House is an innovative learning community that plays an integral role in the department’s overall mission. With roughly 30 residents and another 30-40 daily student guests, it offers a language immersion environment that is unmatched on campus. Students who participate in the French conversation class benefit from a minimum of four weekly hours of language practice face-to-face with a native speaker, and the French House residents live in an almost completely French-speaking environment which brings them as close as possible to a true study abroad experience without leaving campus. Two weekly conversation groups organized by Dr. Irving, as well as the House’s cultural events, benefit the entire campus. As a way of making some of the informal services provided by the French House available on a more formal basis to the campus and community, and to give further support to the linguistic needs of our majors and new certificate students, we plan to create a tutoring and writing center in French. The House’s residents are often called upon to provide this service and we would like to set up an official “drop-in” center staffed by advanced undergraduates and graduate students. The staff members would be trained and supervised by the French House Director, in order to maintain professionalism and academic integrity.

Year 2: Expanding Student Understanding of Francophone Identities

Francophone studies is our highest demand area amongst undergraduate students taking our culture and literature courses. The two professors who currently teach in this area (plus another faculty member who has a joint appointment with African Languages and Literatures) cannot meet this demand. The third faculty line that we are requesting would alleviate this problem and also bring to campus a specialist of francophone Caribbean creoles, a field of growing importance given the current interest in Haitian culture, in creolephone literature from that island as well as from Guadeloupe and Martinique. It would also allow our majors and French certificate students to gain training in Caribbean cultures and history, which is especially useful for those of them working in education, health sciences or political science and who wish to work in schools, NGOs or relief organizations in countries with needs such as Haiti.

The new faculty member will be included in a roster of colleagues able to teach a new course that we will create on “Regional Identities in France and the Americas,” covering migrant cultures in France as well as the different francophone communities in Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick, Louisiana and the Caribbean. This course will be designed both for majors and for students in the Certificate in French for the Professions. The arrival of the third faculty line would also free up Nevine El-Nossery, who teaches most of our francophone literature and culture classes, to create a new FIGS course on Francophone Women Writers in translation (linked to courses in Women’s Studies and History). Women’s writing is one of Prof. El-Nossery’s specialties and the few courses in the area that she has taught with us are always full to capacity. This new FIGS course would expand our department’s efforts to participate in this high-impact program: we have regularly taken part in the FIGS program since its inception in fall 2005, through
successful offerings on topics such as “Sex and Gender in 20th-Century French Literature” and “Searching for a French Identity.”

Over the last five years our department has built a reputation in the midwest of welcoming contemporary francophone authors to campus and the one area from which our students regularly ask for speakers to come from is the Caribbean. The scholar in faculty line 3 would greatly help us in attracting authors such as Patrick Chamoiseau (Martinique) or Dany Laferrière (Haiti) to come and discuss their works with undergraduates. Novelists and poets from French-speaking Canada (Robert Dickson, Monique Proulx), francophone writers originally from Iraq (Naïm Kattan) and Djibouti (Abdourahman Waberi), or immigrant writers from France (Mabrouck Rachedi, Yasser Abdel Latif) have visited our F271, 322 and 433 classes where students have read extracts from their works prior to the visit, and have prepared questions for the writers. Students tell us that it is class conversations with the authors, then listening to the public readings by the authors of their works, that not only bring literary works alive for them but also give depth and human richness to their understanding of the cultures from which the authors come.

The T.A. linked to faculty line 3 would be involved in an on-going project under the guidance of Jan Miernowski which will convert one of our bottleneck courses for majors, F347 (Introduction to Medieval, Renaissance, and Early Modern Civilization) to a new model. Currently the course has two faculty-taught sections of combined lecture and discussion but we have begun technological innovations for the course that will turn it into a large faculty-taught lecture with two discussion sections. To do so, Prof. Miernowski has designed an online Critical Reader in this year’s F347 sections: eleven pairs of students, working under the guidance of advanced graduate students, are developing interactive questions and date on aspects of pre-1800 French culture. The Critical Reader is a pedagogical tool that helps students carefully cull key information in web documents and parse literary texts. One undergraduate in F347 this semester reported that “It’s like Powerpoint, only way better” since instead of giving a vast quantity of information it leads students to actively organize key facts in a meaningful way. (This new software was developed out of the award-winning program created by a team in our department for the fully online interactive multimedia course Lit Trans 360: details available at http://frit.lss.wisc.edu/RenLit/.) The new T.A.s that will accompany faculty lines 1 and 3 will help Miernowski and teams of undergraduates implement Critical Readers in other courses: namely, the combined French 101-102 for Spanish speakers, and the new course mentioned above on “Regional Identities in France and the Americas.” The T.A. for faculty line 3 would also teach one of the discussion sections of F347.

The recently-introduced research course for undergraduates (F555, Research Possibilities in French Studies) has given seniors in our department an introduction to more than twelve different bodies of research (produced in books or articles) conducted by members of our faculty working in literary analysis, the study of French cinema, literary history, cultural and intellectual history, and educational theory. By opening this class to juniors we will be able to encourage more students to spend part of their senior year writing senior honors theses (F681-2) on research topics under the direction of a faculty member whom they encounter in F555. Each semester we currently have four or
five students writing research essays in F699 (Independent Study course) but channeling such students earlier into F555 will let them benefit from the research expertise of our faculty. This expertise was recognized in the recent National Research Council assessment of doctoral programs as ranking within the top 15% of all departments in North America, a ranking that has been interpreted by Ph.D.s.org (http://graduate-school.phds.org/about/quality_scores) as placing us third or fourth out of the nation’s best French programs. It is the top ranking of all UW humanities departments.

Budget
The cost to the MIU is for three assistant professors and three full-time (50%) TAs. The average annual cost of a tenure-track hire is estimated at $60,000-$90,000 in salary including fringe benefits. A 50% senior TA costs $16,264 + $4,798 in fringe benefits (total $21,062).
3 assistant professors = $120,000-$180,000
3 TAs = $63,186
Total annual cost = between $183,186 and $243,186

Diversity
The proposed plan aims to expose all students to cultural and ethnic differences within the francophone world. We also intend to target one particular group of students, Hispanics, through “French for Spanish Speakers.” Building upon our current practices of identifying and hiring faculty members who incorporate the perspectives of minorities, including women and LGBTQ people, we will actively recruit faculty and TAs from diverse ethnic backgrounds. We expect to find a particularly diverse group of candidates for faculty line 3, given the Haitian and Caribbean orientation of the position.

Measurable outcomes
Through the plan described above, we will increase the total number of faculty-taught undergraduate credit-hours in courses for non-majors (F228, 240, 271, 312-313) by at least 25% and for courses that apply to the major by 20%.
Two current faculty / permanent academic staff will be free each semester to direct UW study abroad programs in France and Francophone regions and to offer gateway courses for non-majors (FIGS, 240, 248). We will monitor the enrollment of these courses as they attract students to the new Certificate in French for the Professions.
We will reduce waitlists for our chronic bottleneck courses F311, 321-322 and 347.
The time before students first declare a French major or sign up for the new Certificate will be reduced thanks to staffing of early gateway courses, more courses at the 300 and 400 levels, and the offering of new courses for the Certificate.
We will track the number of students who move from our revamped F228 and language sequence into the existing language and culture track for majors.

Appendices
Please see the attached tables on pages 9 and 10 of this report.

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4 The third or fourth ranking depends on whether we are considered a big or a small program.
| Term | Fall 01-02 | Spring 01-02 | Fall 02-03 | Spring 02-03 | Fall 03-04 | Spring 03-04 | Fall 04-05 | Spring 04-05 | Fall 05-06 | Spring 05-06 | Fall 06-07 | Spring 06-07 | Fall 07-08 | Spring 07-08 | Fall 08-09 | Spring 08-09 | Fall 09-10 | Spring 09-10 | Fall 10-11 |
|------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| ENGLISH | 5172       | 4538         | 5030       | 4413         | 4845       | 4515         | 5014       | 4716         | 5183       | 4324         | 5215       | 4142         | 5026       | 3989         | 4698       | 4348         | 4383       | 4152         | 4901       |
| FRENCH | 1186       | 1073         | 1105       | 915          | 1139       | 1024         | 1229       | 865          | 1282       | 1026         | 1146       | 1134         | 1250       | 1091         | 1374       | 1130         | 1182       | 926          | 1086       |
| GERMAN | 872        | 918          | 779        | 765          | 900        | 851          | 855        | 730          | 1249       | 896          | 1102       | 944          | 1035       | 863          | 1151       | 916          | 1203       | 930          | 1265       |
| HISTORY | 6281       | 7554         | 6540       | 6281         | 6381       | 6831         | 7409       | 7077         | 7177       | 6547         | 7061       | 7292         | 7054       | 7122         | 6892       | 6959         | 6963       | 6446         | 6913       |
| ITALIAN | 443        | 704          | 526        | 584          | 534        | 577          | 555        | 542          | 569        | 589          | 541        | 582          | 496        | 561          | 586        | 476          | 534        | 548          | 437        |
| PORTUG | 181        | 181          | 165        | 159          | 210        | 139          | 217        | 198          | 201        | 229          | 220        | 249          | 187        | 229          | 277        | 234          | 186        | 246          | 187        |
MEMORANDUM  

December 1, 2010

To:  Provost Paul DeLuca

From:  Gary Sandefur, Dean

Re:  MIU Round 3 proposals

We are pleased to submit proposals from the College of Letters and Science for MIU Round 3. We solicited two page pre-proposals and received over 40. We reviewed these pre-proposals in the Academic Planning Council and in Senior Staff. Based on these reviews, we invited 15 submissions of full proposals. These proposals were reviewed by Senior Staff and we decided to forward these 15 to you for consideration. All are worthy of funding and would help meet critical needs in the University.

The proposals are grouped into three tiers in order of their importance in meeting the goals of the MIU, with tier 1 being the most important. Importance is based somewhat on the quality of the proposals but primarily on undergraduate educational needs. We also took into account losses in faculty numbers prior to the MIU and the success or lack thereof of departments in previous rounds of the competition.

Tier 1: Communication Arts, English, French and Italian, School of Journalism and Mass Communications, Philosophy, Political Science

Tier 2: Anthropology, Chemistry, Math, Sociology, Statistics

Tier 3: Communicative Disorders, Religious Studies, Service Learning, Undergraduate Research Scholars

We did not carefully assess the budgets of the proposals since we assumed that this would be done by the office of the Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance.

xc:  Associate Vice Chancellor Aaron Brower
Associate Dean Nancy Westphal-Johnson
Academic Associate Deans
Associate Dean Anne Gunther
Sheila Voss, Office of the Provost

Office of the Dean

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