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Strategies for Enhancing the Visibility and Role of Foreign Language Departments

Mark W. Roche

MY PAPER proposes ideas to help enhance the visibility and role of foreign language departments on our campuses. The suggestions have been formed around four goals, which partly overlap: first, becoming a department that offers intellectual opportunities to students and intellectual value to other departments and programs; second, using every possibility to publicize the importance of the department's area and accomplishments; third, assuming a leadership role on campus, that is, becoming a model for other departments in a formal sense; and, fourth, developing alliances both within and beyond the university.

One way to accomplish the first goal—offering intellectual value to others—is for departments to highlight in their courses and guest lectures the great works from their literary and intellectual traditions. Faculty members and students in other disciplines are still, despite attacks on the canon, often interested in Dante, Cervantes, Molière, and Dostoevsky. If foreign language teachers ignore these authors' works at the expense of works of lesser aesthetic value, foreign language departments will fail to engage a large number of potential constituents. The welcome introduction of new courses on business, culture, politics, and society need not mean that literature should no longer be taught. One of our central tasks should be to offer what is unique to our programs, including the interpretation and evaluation of literary works from our traditions. If we do not assume this role, then it is unlikely that anyone will.¹

Of course one shouldn't stop with great works of literature. A German scholar may well be able to offer cogent insights on Luther, Hegel, Marx, Wagner, Weber, Freud, and others. Thematic, historical, and contemporary culture courses in translation give a program greater intellectual visibility and sometimes attract students to language courses.² Very popular at Ohio State University were courses on classic works of German literary and cultural history and on the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich, the latter drawing primarily on film, history, and literature but also on architecture, art history, and music. Student interest in the course on Weimar and the Third Reich

suggests that one can attract and engage students whether one focuses on a culture's achievements or its problems.

One can collaborate with colleagues across the disciplines in many ways. Teaching language across the disciplines is one obvious area for collaboration, and many faculty members welcome the opportunity to work in the target language—either wholly or in part. Team-taught courses with colleagues outside one's department or sets of linked courses (which create learning communities of students) can also add to the department's role and visibility on campus. If the college or university offers a common core course that includes foreign language works, the department might offer to conduct faculty workshops on the texts. Foreign language departments can also take a leadership role—thanks to advances in language pedagogy—in articulating strategies for student-centered learning. Sharing appointments is another way to make a language unit valuable to other departments. At Notre Dame we resolved to share the Max Kade Distinguished Visiting Professorship with other humanities departments, inviting nominations from across the college. Such visits help underscore the value of German scholarship in other fields. Whenever the Department of German and Russian Languages and Literatures at Notre Dame brings job candidates to campus, it makes a great effort to weigh the views of scholars from other fields, and it creates a context wherein the candidates feel they would be joining not just a department but a wider community of area-studies and humanities scholars. New hires should have breadth and the ability to speak intelligently with scholars outside their fields. Ideally each one would have a neighboring strength in another discipline, which could

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help build bridges. Faculty members who have considerable breadth may want to arrange to have their courses cross-listed in other departments. One can encourage graduate students to avail themselves of opportunities to teach in neighboring departments, or one might invite a graduate student in another department to teach in one's own. A sense of intellectual community is enhanced when outside speakers are selected who can engage a wide audience. Also valuable in enriching a campus are film series, ideally with brief introductions by colleagues and discussion opportunities after the showings.

Special events, for example, conferences or dramatic productions, can contribute to the intellectual community. It is wise to organize conferences with a comparative or interdisciplinary dimension, so that scholars in other fields will be inclined to attend. To overcome the view that language programs are mere service units or that language study functions as a kind of extracurricular activity, a department might want to host intellectual celebrations of an author's birth or major publications or sponsor commemorations and assessments of significant historical events. Such activities encourage others to think of language programs in their historical contexts and ideally in the light of their connections to other disciplines. Language departments gain prominence only when they are perceived as part of a larger university effort toward understanding culture and addressing broader issues. In this regard language departments do not differ from other disciplines, which likewise gain greater visibility when their intellectual activities regenerate the university beyond their specific fields. A language and culture program can also be enhanced by a dramatic production of either a major work in translation, for which a faculty member who knows the critical literature might act as a consultant to the university theater, or a work in the original language, which could be the result of a one-credit workshop class.

These are all strategies to make language and literature departments and area-studies departments intellectual partners, to allow them to contribute like any other program to the larger goals of the liberal arts, through their unique methodologies and subject matter.

Achieving the second goal—using every possibility to publicize the intellectual importance of a foreign language department's target areas and accomplishments—presupposes substantive intellectual work. Significant scholarly achievements often advertise themselves. Faculty members who host an NEH Summer Seminar or receive a major national grant such as NEH or an American Council of Learned Societies fellowship exhibit to others the value of their work in ways that transcend its importance for their subdisciplines. Similarly, faculty members in language programs might be encouraged to give talks not only to their particular professional organizations but also to groups that transcend their discipline. In addition, it is important to publish with peer-reviewed university

presses that are recognized outside one's field. One must also attend to whatever forums exist on campus for the recognition of scholarly achievements. Faculty members should take the small amount of time necessary to submit activities for inclusion in university lists of publications, honors, and the like. And faculty members, especially chairpersons, should regularly nominate the department's best people, whenever appropriate, for university awards for outstanding teaching or leadership or for national book prizes. Among the benefits of being a chairperson is that one is encouraged to cultivate a sometimes neglected virtue, taking joy in the success of others.

An annual newsletter provides a wonderful opportunity to highlight individual and collective accomplishments, ranging from scholarly publications to innovations in the curriculum. Ohio State's Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures sent its newsletter to other German departments across the nation, to all chairs and higher administrators at the university, and to friends and alumni of the department, including donors. Eventually the department added selected German scholars who were not currently administrators, as such scholars play a role in forming views of competitive programs and in sending students on to graduate study. A department can also mail a newsletter to selected legislators, whose support of the university and its programs may be crucial in budget negotiations. Including data that are significant across the disciplines is essential. If a department has high admissions standards, for example, or a strong placement record, such information should be publicized, as it gives comparative evidence of the department's success.

There are many such ways to highlight what a department already does well. All the language programs at Notre Dame now send individual brochures to incoming students. The brochures, sent in a collective mailing, encourage the study of foreign languages, indicate reasons for such study, and focus on both study-abroad programs and departmental strengths. The German program has included in its brochure quotes from students and recent alumni, who extol the virtues of the department's offerings, its study-abroad opportunities, and its community of learning. The chairperson also sends letters to outstanding students enrolled in lower-level German classes, inviting them to major in German.

Another simple and effective strategy is to create a list of scholars working in area studies. At Notre Dame we created a list of such colleagues, annotated with areas of interest, honors, and selected publications and course offerings. Beyond the core faculty of seven in German language and literature are twenty-four faculty members in English, government, history, law, liberal studies, music, philosophy, and theology. Such a list fosters a sense of camaraderie and makes a strong impression on prospective students, colleagues in other fields, and university administrators. It is now not uncommon to hear someone refer to the list and speak of German studies as a strength at Notre Dame.

A department might consider other avenues of communication. A large bright poster in a glass-enclosed case outside the departmental office at Notre Dame lists German studies colleagues, who gain thereby an emotional attachment to the department. Also in the shadowbox are pictures of Notre Dame students amid the mountains of Innsbruck, where the study-abroad program is situated. Other departments I have visited have a shadowbox with faculty publications, to underscore and make visible the intellectual achievements of their scholars. The departmental office can make available abundant handouts on the intrinsic and practical values of language and culture study, which might be of interest to parents as well as students. The department might offer information—both at the departmental office and at language placement exams—on such topics as the proximity of English to German, in order to help students transcend the notion that learning German is an insurmountable task.

An obvious strategy is to make lists and photos available on a Web page, along with other important departmental information, including reasons for the study of a given language or culture. A Web page is essential for recruiting graduating high school and college seniors. Ideally, it would have an interactive dimension for prospective students. A good Web page is no less essential for the recruitment, development, and collective identity of students at one's own university. Web pages should have links to language-related and culture-related sites, dictionaries and major reference works, language institutes, foreign language publications, resources for study and research abroad, political offices, cultural organizations, and tourist information.

An indirect way to raise awareness of the value of a field is by nominating for honorary degrees persons who are engaged in activities related to the department's area of study. This requires energy and work but is well worth the effort, especially as such nominations offer opportunities for rich conversations with the recipients of the degrees. But departments needn't always look for such luminaries. Simply conducting an orientation seminar for incoming first-year students, hosting a fireside chat for students in the dorms, or encouraging faculty members to attend a cookout for first-year students and their parents place the department's intellectual pursuits in the consciousness of others. Some opportunities for publicity are universally applicable, others depend on local culture. Both avenues must be pursued if a department wants to emphasize the importance of its area of study, its accomplishments, and its potential.

The third strategy is less directly supportive of language programs, but no less significant. It involves assuming a leadership role both within the discipline and independently of the discipline, that is, becoming excellent in a formal sense and a model for other departments, not just language departments. Often an administrator will support a department because it covers a field that is intrinsi-

cally valuable, but equally often he or she supports the department, independently of its focus or field, simply because whatever it does, it does well. In 1994 the German Department at Ohio State was designated one of five privileged departments in the College of Humanities and a potential recipient of selective excellence funding. This elevation of the department was partly the result of the intellectual achievements of its faculty members and students but also partly the result of a series of innovative strategies that made it a model for other units. Let me give you a few examples.

The department took advantage of its budgetary flexibility in several ways. It eliminated two of its own faculty lines at a time when it was overstaffed vis-à-vis enrollments. It thereby increased the level of nonsalary support for each continuing faculty member. Further, it reduced the size of its incoming graduate class but elevated the overall quality of its incoming students by admitting fewer applicants and offering them more generous funding. Most of the funding from the faculty lines was converted into graduate student fellowships, which allowed Ohio State to compete with better-endowed schools. With a smaller faculty and student body, the department also rotated some master's degree classes, offering them biennially and thereby obtaining better enrollment figures, and assigned language classes to every faculty member. This adjustment was the result not only of the department's moving to a smaller pool of TAs but also of its consciously embracing the ideal of the integrated faculty member, who teaches at all levels and in more than one area. The department also saved money for other purposes by converting a full-term visiting professorship into a short-term visiting position. Instead of spending an extraordinary amount on a visitor who might fly in once a week for a night or two to teach a course for ten weeks, the department brought in a visitor for an intensive two-week stay. The short visit cost less than a full-term visiting professor, the flexibility of arrangements allowed the department to obtain its first-choice visitor each year, and the intensity of the visit permitted full engagement with the faculty members during his or her stay. With the advance of computer technology, which resulted in most faculty members' typing their own correspondence and documents, the department also chose not to replace a retiring staff member, converting those dollars partly to work-study assistance and primarily to new academic initiatives. Innovations of this kind inspire the confidence of administrations independently of a department's intellectual focus.

At a large university like Ohio State, students do not easily gain a sense of intellectual community. A program such as German, however, is small enough that the atmosphere of a liberal arts college can be cultivated within a large research university. The department therefore introduced or expanded numerous activities to help foster this environment: a weekly *Kaffeestunde*, or coffee hour, so that undergraduates could practice their German and

meet informally with faculty members; more showings of German films and television broadcasts, and presentations on life at German universities and on budget travel in Europe. At many research universities, visiting lectures are directed solely to faculty members and graduate students. The German department at Ohio State, however, encouraged additional presentations to undergraduates and invited scholars whose primary purpose would be to engage undergraduates. All majors were assigned mailboxes in the departmental office, giving them a kind of departmental home. The department also obtained funding for a Max Kade German House, allowing it to renovate a beautiful turn-of-the-century home on the edge of campus. In addition to providing a second departmental home and a residence for a small group of undergraduate students, the German House contributes to the revitalization of the area around campus and so serves the broader community and wider university goals.

At Notre Dame, dormitories are not structured according to disciplinary interests, so to create something analogous, the department reconfigured the departmental lounge to make it more attractive to majors. As a result, the lounge has become a common locale for majors, which has the benefit of increasing informal contact with faculty members. Using the computers placed there, students can read e-mail, view the Web, or look at German television broadcasts. At no expense to the department, week-old German newspapers from the university library are now available to students.

New developments along these lines may be announced to students through an annual letter to returning majors or by way of an e-mail newsletter that contains occasional updates for majors and information about language-related cultural events on campus and in the community. A department should also have regular meetings with majors, including visits from successful recent graduates and sessions that encourage students to apply for Fulbright awards and other postgraduate opportunities. Such meetings make students aware of possibilities they might not know about, and any awards bestowed can bring the department good press. It did not hurt the prestige of the German program at Notre Dame, for example, that four graduating seniors won Fulbright awards to Germany and Austria in spring 1998. At the graduate level such awards often unburden departmental budgets, as fewer continuing graduate students need to be supported by departmental graduate lines.

Another way in which smaller programs can easily flourish is through regular informal meals between faculty members and students, whether in the student dining halls or at the professors' homes, especially when such events are encouraged and partially subsidized by the university, as they are at Notre Dame. Close engagement of this kind often triggers independent scholarly projects by undergraduates and thus an increase in honors theses, which raises the department's academic reputation and almost always results in good experiences for the students.

Ohio State introduced an intensive summer experience in Dresden for students who had previously had only two quarters of German. The new program included an intensive language course equivalent to the third and fourth quarters of German and a culture course on Germany, taught in English. Because the program was not designed, as was the full-year program, for a small number of students with advanced skills, the department had no difficulties finding qualified students. Many students, having experienced the country firsthand and having invested in intensive study of the language, continued their work in German, which eventually increased the number of departmental majors. One could imagine marketing the program also to incoming students, first, to attract them to the institution and second, to allow them to move more quickly into upper-division courses. Providing early experiences abroad helps attract students to the foreign language major. Notre Dame graduated twenty-one German majors in spring 1998, most of whom had spent their sophomore year in Innsbruck. To offer students the largest number of possible experiences abroad, Ohio State also introduced a summer apprenticeship program, placing a small number of advanced students with firms in Dresden, including the Dresden newspapers. Summer internships give students another perspective on the target country and help cover their summer earning needs. Such students return excited about the target language, and they may be able to skip a rung on the language and culture ladder.

Departments can also ask majors to complete annual questionnaires that address academic matters, extracurricular events, communications, and departmental office space and services. Departments might also conduct an exit interview with every student who drops a course in the department or stops taking the language. It could then follow up during the subsequent semester with e-mail messages to selected students, informing them about the next semester's offerings and encouraging them to return to the department. Such personal service, symbolic in a way of the close intellectual dialogue students can have with professors in a small department, makes a great difference to students. Not only do they leave the exit interviews feeling good about their decision and the program but the chairperson gains some insight into students' reasons for leaving programs.

Very welcome at Notre Dame was the introduction of a convocation for graduating seniors and their families. The strongest aspect of the event is its social dimension, the opportunity for parents to visit with faculty members and students, but a brief student presentation to the audience gives it an intellectual dimension as well. At the convocation various awards are presented as well as certificates for majors and gifts of books to all graduates.

To recruit graduate students, Ohio State allocated funds to fly them in for short visits at university expense. Most students the German department brought to campus chose to attend Ohio State. One year the department

invited six students to campus; five agreed to visit, and five enrolled. Prospective students also received at least two personalized letters from graduate faculty members whose areas of interest overlapped with their own. To help attract these students, the department fully revised its curriculum and examination structure, trying to find the balance between breadth, which had been over-stressed in the past, and focused research opportunities, which tend to be overemphasized in many competing programs today. The department also introduced a doctoral colloquium to aid the more advanced students in their work on the dissertation, contribute to their sense of intellectual community, and further prepare them for the profession. In addition, a departmental grant-in-aid program for graduate students was created, which offered practice in writing grant applications and, most important, provided support for students' research.

Another successful initiative at Ohio State was the introduction of a graduate student teaching apprenticeship program, where graduate students work with a faculty member in an advanced undergraduate language, literature, culture, or film class, studying the material as well as the pedagogical principles employed and taking over at least one class session in the course of the quarter. Students may arrange to work with material in which they are becoming experts or with material not frequently offered at the graduate level but of interest to them. The apprenticeship gives them added experience as they develop their teaching portfolios. As part of this initiative the department introduced a regular course in literature pedagogy, a neglected area in the profession but one that invites attention. The apprenticeship program fosters close interaction between faculty members and graduate students even during terms when faculty members are not directly involved in the teaching of graduate courses, and it helps break down a common schism between research mentors and teaching mentors. The apprenticeship, by the way, does not require extra funding, as it represents course work that is independent of the student's assignment as a teaching or research associate.

At Ohio State the German department also kept its eyes on the wider university community. It offered more than its share of broader humanities courses as well as new contributions to the honors program, including a course on the Faust theme. The department also mentored students in service and leadership by placing them on virtually all departmental committees, and it recognized their contributions. Each year eight of the many thousands of graduate students at Ohio State receive the Graduate Student Leadership Award. One year the German department garnered twenty-five percent of these awards. Important in helping the department's reputation at Ohio State was the role that our faculty members played in university citizenship, serving on numerous college and university committees. The participation of faculty members in wider university governance contributes indirectly to

the visibility of a program. It is important for senior colleagues to take a leadership role both in national disciplinary organizations and intellectual forums and in university governance and local discussions. The former without the latter makes a department invisible on its own campus; the latter without the former diminishes its credibility. If a department can't extend itself in this way, it should at least avoid self-destructive tendencies. A department is invariably judged collectively; if it overtakes the dean with internal wrangling, it is not making a very persuasive case for additional resources. Administrators want to invest in a unit that uses its funds to pursue collective goals and whose members work well together and spend valuable faculty hours on teaching and research.

A department can excel in self-governance, developing, for example, an exemplary pattern of administration; an exemplary document on promotion, tenure, and merit pay; or an exemplary system of peer evaluation of teaching. Having a chairperson who is articulate on behalf of the department and on wider university issues adds greatly to the department's visibility and stature. Also central is to have thorough procedures for faculty development and to forward positive tenure recommendations only when they meet the highest expectations of the university's other disciplines. Tenure and promotion review gives the university administration a window onto departmental standards and practices. A department that mentors its faculty, that offers detailed evaluation of service and teaching and cogent analyses of strengths and weaknesses in research, and that makes well-grounded recommendations can be recognized on these occasions. Conducting professional searches is important and offers departments that are not already visible nationally an opportunity to make a favorable impression on hundreds of future faculty members.

Part of what makes a department a model is its ability to confront difficult issues. At Ohio State some faculty members were very good teachers but less active in research. The department addressed this issue by unanimously passing a document on variable teaching assignments, which led to some faculty members' teaching fewer than five courses, some more than five courses. The document rewarded extraordinary researchers by giving them more balanced teaching assignments, allowed for mechanisms to help those who sought to become more active researchers (while still allowing for accountability), and ensured that for those who taught more courses a greater percentage of their potential merit increase would derive from accomplishments in the classroom. It seems wise, especially during a transition period, to recognize the diverse contributions made by faculty members to the university and to give them the opportunity to be rewarded for their strongest possible contributions. Related to this effort, the department also introduced detailed annual reviews of tenured faculty members.

A department can contribute to the wider community in ways that have little or nothing to do with languages and literatures but that enrich the broader enterprise. If a department brings in someone to talk to colleagues about strategies in approaching book publishers, for example, it might offer a general session for faculty members in other departments as well. Or a recent PhD who was successful outside the academy might be invited back to talk to graduate students across the humanities. Another area of potential leadership would be for a department to organize summer reading and discussion groups on books dealing with a range of disciplinary topics or with theoretical or practical issues pertaining to higher education.

As I have mentioned, faculty members should identify with the university and not just the discipline. One aspect of this is publishing not only in the target language but also in English, so that our contributions are accessible to our primary constituency, the American academic community. Foreign language departments might privilege scholars who can publish both in English, for the community at home, and in the target language, where many of the influential disciplinary debates take place. Over twenty years ago Jeffrey Sammons wisely drew to the attention of Germanists their relative invisibility in the American academy. The situation has improved in some ways, as more scholars write in English and participate in interdisciplinary debates. At the same time, many foreign language scholars still write only in the language of their profession (in this sense Germanists are not unique), and many still work on topics of only parochial interest. Certainly new insights arise more readily among specialists, but the value of these insights is lost if we as researchers cannot place them within the broader landscape of intellectual inquiry. To satisfy this more ambitious goal, we need breadth of knowledge, clarity of expression, and a culture of dialogue. If the university asks newly promoted or newly hired full or endowed professors to give inaugural addresses, these talks must be substantive, well crafted, and appealing to a wider audience. Little can hurt, or enhance, a department's reputation more than such scholarly encounters at its own institution.

In seeking to have a role on campus, the department must know the rules of the institution. If efforts in development will define a department's ability to move toward excellence, the department must prepare outstanding documents that explain its mission and strengths and outline a range of funding opportunities for donors. Those departments that prepare the best materials for the dean or the development office or that actively seek out donors, whether individuals, firms, or foundations, are more likely to receive external support. If teaching is the central mission of the college, the department must offer courses that appeal to students and challenge them intellectually and existentially, and it must work creatively to evaluate teaching and nurture good practices. If film is being highlighted as a new initiative on campus,

it makes sense to hire or cultivate colleagues who can contribute to this area. Departments can also build on neighboring strengths. At Notre Dame medieval studies, philosophy, and theology are among the programs that are most highly ranked internationally. By recruiting scholars who are attracted by these fields, the German department can contribute to these strengths. Of course departments should set agendas of their own and seek thereby to influence the university's priorities, but they must also recognize the appropriate balance.

Taking a leadership role among the language programs is also important. One must be abreast of developments regarding computerized placement tests and curricular materials and methods in beginning language courses. Foreign language teachers should convey to colleagues in related fields the intellectual depth of language pedagogy by having strong and coherent presentations that can attract and invigorate a larger audience. Foreign language departments must work to find ways to integrate at all levels the teaching of language, literature, and culture and to help bridge the gap in the difficult transition from intermediate to advanced courses and from communicative skills to mastery of expression. In my first year at Notre Dame, the German program sponsored a year-long series of lectures, symposia, and workshops on topics relevant to foreign language education, including the communicative approach, oral proficiency, technology in the foreign language classroom, and testing and assessment. By opening up most of the sessions to non-German speakers, the department provided a service to the wider academic community.

A department also needs to be aware of university issues that may affect a language program. Three examples may suffice. At some universities students may select only one major. At other institutions German is frequently chosen as part of a double major along with related fields, such as English, government, or philosophy, or with less obvious disciplines, such as biology or physics. If the university permits only one major, generally the language programs will suffer. Foreign language departments may want to advance arguments in favor of permitting double majors. At other institutions departments may need to push for the tracking of double majors. Another obvious issue is the question of a language requirement. Colleagues in the languages should be aware of the strong philosophical and practical arguments both for and against a language requirement. Some institutions are very interested in national assessment measures. Departments can respond to this by introducing Goethe Institut proficiency exams for all advanced students or oral proficiency testing for all majors. Such testing offers students a goal and gives departments credibility with the administration to the extent that students compete well on internationally recognized exams. Notre Dame is currently experimenting with such exams.

The development and expansion of study-abroad programs and exchange programs is another way to highlight

the international experience. Successful study-abroad experiences are among the most important aspects of a successful language program, and faculty members need to ensure that the office on campus that oversees such programs receives sufficient feedback from faculty colleagues. In addition, foreign language departments can foster enrollment in such programs by offering first-year students special university seminars that encourage the experience of foreign cultures. As part of its efforts toward internationalization, Notre Dame is currently offering summer funding for the development of such courses, which may spark the students to learn a language and eventually to study abroad. It may also be wise to offer a retreat or workshop for students returning from abroad; at Notre Dame a professor of anthropology recently led a very successful retreat for the students who returned from Innsbruck. Advantages arise not only in sending our students abroad, but also in receiving foreign students, who can add to the language culture of a department, offer presentations to undergraduates, and, by taking courses in other departments, increase the awareness of scholarly endeavors in the target country.

A department should attend to its discipline-specific concerns, and it should learn to manage these concerns well. At the same time, departments should take a leadership role in areas that are not discipline specific—that are therefore, in a sense, more immediately relevant to other units. If the department can succeed in generic ways, others will gain confidence in its ability to contribute in discipline-specific ways as well.

The fourth strategy is to build alliances. A foreign language department might begin by forming alliances with high schools. Here I am thinking primarily of better articulation of methods and curricular materials between high schools and colleges. This effort can involve any number of variously ambitious projects. Workshops on language pedagogy designed for teachers at both levels can be introduced through local or state professional organizations. Colleges can update and modernize placement exams in the light of the skills being taught in the high schools, in order to better place students and encourage them to continue. A college might send additional graduate student trainees into the feeder high schools, and it might offer additional evening and summer classes for high school teachers who want their skills to remain fresh. Local high school students can be invited to a language and culture day at the university, and competitions can be conducted that inspire students with enthusiasm both about their language skills and about the institution they are likely to attend. These events, which high school students and teachers enjoy immensely, can be especially successful at state institutions that know their future clientele. Activities may range from culture bowls and language exams to culinary competitions and theatrical

skits. Collaborative research projects that involve tracking students in high schools and at college can also aid the articulation between high school and college language instruction. Special review courses permit students with high school language instruction to move more rapidly through elementary and intermediate classes. Such offerings enable the colleges to use their teaching resources more efficiently and keep students from being bored with undue repetition.

An extension of this reflection involves advertising foreign language programs to high school students. It should not be difficult to obtain from the admissions office a list of admitted students with high school foreign language study or with a foreign language as their intended major. Personalized letters to students during the decision period would likely be welcomed by the admissions staff, which is always seeking ways to increase its yield. One department I know takes this a step further and seeks out every first-year student at the university who has previous experience in the target language; an adviser gives the student general counseling in the humanities and on issues of adjustment to college as well as specific information on departmental offerings and programs. If such meetings are conducted well and in the student's best interest, they establish a priceless connection between the student and the department.

Alliances can also be built with colleagues in other departments who study the target country from their own disciplinary perspectives: art historians, geographers, historians, musicologists, philosophers, political scientists, sociologists, and others. The German department at Ohio State decided to formalize such relationships in several ways, including having members from outside the department act as full members on dissertation committees and inviting colleagues to give guest lectures. In addition, to encourage and reward interdisciplinary activity, the department established the Outstanding Colleague Award, which is given at most biennially to a faculty member in another discipline who provides especially meritorious service to the German department. Such service could take the form of team-teaching; formal instruction of the department's students; service on honors thesis, candidacy examination, and dissertation committees; informal collegial mentoring and exchange of ideas; or any other activities that enhance the mission of the department.

If enrollment issues become a problem, the department needs to offer courses other than language courses. When I negotiated expanding faculty lines in German from five to seven with the former dean at Notre Dame, I promised that every new hire would also be capable of, and interested in, teaching broader humanities courses, so that there would be no danger of the department's ever being overstaffed. Having colleagues who can contribute in this way to the college mission allows the department to keep faculty lines or argue for new ones, and it conveys the

sense that we are not only service instructors but also engaged in a common intellectual enterprise with other colleagues in the arts, the humanities, and the social sciences. A university cannot flourish without strong scholars in language and literature, and it needs to create opportunities for such faculty lines without overtaxing student-faculty ratios in the more popular majors.

Alliances might also be developed with professional schools. International business programs need to have students who are strong in the language and culture of other countries. An area where one might not suspect an ally is American studies. Clearly, students can better grasp their own country through travel and comparison. Foreign language departments might work with programs in American studies to require, or at least strongly encourage, American studies majors to study abroad. Even students with restricted language skills can take seminars at the foreign university in American studies, which are often offered in English, and gain familiarity with the foreign university and with alternative perspectives on the United States.

A department should also seek to work well with nonacademic units, such as the placement office. The department must ensure that the placement office knows that area studies majors have developed the basic skills required for success in any enterprise: the ability to analyze a complex problem, research analogous situations, formulate clear questions, listen carefully and attentively, imagine alternative solutions, prepare a cogent argument, and express it eloquently.

Alliances can also be developed with the local community. This may involve talks to civic organizations, church groups, or area schools on issues relating to the target country, or it may entail collaborating with the municipal library on displays about German American relations. Another strategy is to take classes to the local art museum, which gives students an initial orientation to the museum, shows interdisciplinary initiative, and highlights the department's own programs for the museum staff. In addition, a department might recommend news stories to the university and local press on events related to its program or target country. Most universities are eager to receive information about departmental achievements and recognitions, and most have an office that keeps on file the names of faculty members who can comment to the press on developing events in various countries. Faculty members might also write articles for the university alumni magazine or book reviews or op-ed pieces for the local newspaper.

Finally, alumni groups might be cultivated, partly because they contain eager students, partly because these groups can also help the language program advance its agenda. I once had the enjoyable experience of hosting some one hundred alumni and friends on a trip to Germany. The alumni office orchestrated all the details. I

simply gave six lectures on aspects of German culture and engaged the guests in conversation. A colleague who hosted a similar trip eventually discovered in his group one of Notre Dame's most generous future donors, who several years later contributed \$5 million to endow the Nanovic Institute for European Studies.

There is no simple formula for increasing a language department's role and visibility, but a wide range of options and strategies are possible, many of them dependent on local institutional culture. Two principles, however, would seem to hold. First, intellectual concerns, which are primary, should drive the question of visibility; nonetheless, it would be strategically foolish not to highlight the department's achievements. Second, at the time of hiring or review, even as the department focuses on teaching and research, it should also attend to service and leadership. It should seek and reward scholars who view service not as a perfunctory obligation but as a means of making their institution a better community of learning. New ideas and innovative programs can make a great difference in the life of a university.

Notes

¹The question of literature in our curricula invites further reflection. Many undergraduate students continue in German for reasons that have little or nothing to do with literature. They may continue because of an interest in German history and politics, German society and business, or German culture in its broadest sense. Not to offer such students classes in areas outside of literature strikes me as both unconscionable and counterproductive.

At the same time, we should recognize that the lack of interest in literature is not universal. I know far too many graduate students and recent PhDs who have left the profession because graduate course offerings and professional trends underscore a professional lack of interest in literature, which conflicts with their own rationale for pursuing a PhD and wanting to teach German. At one graduate program I reviewed, a semiclandestine canon reading group had been formed to compensate for the paucity of offerings in literature and in major works of literature, which the students viewed as important both for their own edification and for future job prospects in smaller departments. At Notre Dame, where the upper-division courses have until recently consisted almost entirely of canonical literature, the number of majors is very high. Literature continues to attract them.

At least four reasons having little to do with literature itself have contributed to student indifference to literature. First, some colleagues who teach literature do so with a teacher-centered methodology. The faculty member delivers information to students in a less than engaging and dialogical manner. Teaching methodology, not necessarily subject matter, is at issue here. Second, some colleagues who teach literature are more interested in production and reception aesthetics or in literary and cultural theory than in artwork aesthetics. Lack of student interest in course offerings along these lines may arise insofar as contextual studies and theoretical claims are not linked in any meaningful way to textual interpretation. Moreover, when the nonliterary approach to literature, which draws on information that the students may not have prepared or mastered, is combined with a teacher-centered style, it only exacerbates the

problem. (Of course a successful integration of intrinsic and extrinsic materials can break down this opposition of literature and non-literature and can generate student interest in the study of both literature and its broader context, which is ideal.) Third, the lack of interest in artwork aesthetics on the part of some colleagues may work in tandem with an inability or unwillingness to reflect with students on the specific value of literature within a broader liberal arts curriculum. The value of literature for the student, especially in an age of technology, must be articulated and modeled; it cannot be assumed. Finally, some faculty members teach literature with little regard for an integrated curriculum or for student interest in acquiring advanced language skills. As a result, students switch from literature courses to courses in business and culture, which are certain to foster more fully their linguistic competence and their awareness of contemporary culture.

²At Notre Dame the Arabic program has adopted the innovative strategy of moving its first-semester language course to the spring, to attract students who are not ready to move on to a new language in their first semester of college. To encourage interest in Arabic, the faculty is offering a course in Arabic culture in the fall as well as broader events related to Arabic culture.

Work Cited

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