

Program Review Peer Report  
Department of Languages, Linguistics, and Comparative Literature  
Florida Atlantic University

Visit Dates: Monday, March 11 - Wednesday, March 13, 2019

Names and Affiliations of Reviewers:

Dr. Felice Coles, Professor of Linguistics, University of Mississippi  
Dr. Angela Helmer, Chair and Associate Professor of Spanish, University of South Dakota  
Dr. Paul R. Peluso, Chair and Professor of Counselor Education, Florida Atlantic University

### **HISTORY OF IMPLEMENTATION**

The reviewers for the Department of Languages, Linguistics, and Comparative Literatures (LLCL) at Florida Atlantic University, Dr. Angela Helmer and Dr. Felice Coles, conducted a campus visit from March 11 to March 13, 2019. They, along with Dr. Paul Peluso (chair of Counselor Education at FAU) met with faculty, staff, administrators and students to ascertain these groups' perceptions and opinions of the efficacy of the LLCL Department and the university (An itinerary of the visit is attached in Appendix A). Previous to the visit, the external reviewers received LLCL's Self-Study Documents, which positively impressed, but also concerned them.

### **REVIEW OF SELF-STUDY DOCUMENTS**

In the Self-Study documents, the LLCL department identifies itself as a strong supporter of interdisciplinarity and multiculturalism; moreover, the very nature of language study is at the core of a strong liberal arts education.

LLCL offers a single BA degree in Languages, Linguistics, and Comparative Literature with four concentrations (French, Italian, Linguistics, and Spanish), eight minors (Arabic, Comparative Literature, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Linguistics, and Spanish), and an undergraduate Certificate in English as a Second Language. LLCL offers a single MA degree in Languages, Linguistics, and Comparative Literature with six concentrations (Comparative Literature, French, Teaching of French, Linguistics, Spanish, Teaching of Spanish), and it also offers a Graduate Certificate in English as a Second Language. LLCL is also part (as one of two departments) of the College's Ph.D. in Comparative Literature, offering a track in Cultures, Languages, and Literatures. LLCL supports several interdisciplinary certificate programs, such as Jewish Studies; Classical Studies; Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; Peace, Justice, and Human Rights; Film and Video certificate; Asian Studies; and Caribbean and Latin American Studies.

The LLCL Self-Study described the faculty's academic work and their service activities. LLCL faculty research work and level of productivity (publications, conference presentations) are commendable. The faculty members are well-respected in their disciplines. LLCL faculty are actively engaged in university community outreach, by organizing lectures, symposia, film festivals, conferences, and by offering a continuing education program in world languages and culture. Its visibility attracts prospective students and promotes contact with university donors.

In the following section both external reviewers analyze LLCL's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT Report), and they also provide recommendations.

## **STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS (SWOT) REPORT**

### **Strengths**

The faculty of LLCL are an asset to the university since they play a pivotal role in FAU's commitment to **diversity**. In 2015, diversity was identified as one of the platforms in "The Strategic Plan for the Race to Excellence" for Florida Atlantic University.<sup>1</sup> LLCL's faculty hail from Canada, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and the US, enriching FAU with their diverse backgrounds and worldviews. LLCL faculty members are not only diverse, but **multitalented**. Some of the faculty members teach in more than one language and in more than one discipline (Literature, Linguistics, Jewish Studies, Translation Studies, Caribbean Literature, etc.). Faculty members are **flexible** in that they do not hesitate to offer Directed Independent Studies in order to help students graduate on time. They contribute to FAU's mission as a Hispanic-serving institution by offering several classes tailored to heritage speakers of Spanish. The heritage track of Spanish is a strong origin point for the major and minor in Spanish and validates the use of heritage speakers' ethnic mother tongue.

LLCL faculty members are **unique**. FAU hosts the only Italian major in the state (via a concentration within a major), south of Tallahassee. The Italian program is small but energetic, as the faculty have dense and multiplex social connections with the Italian community. The Italian section has raised over \$500,000 in goods and services to dedicate to the university. The German section has a good enrollment in its online courses with its innovative course work, which was written, designed, and implemented by one of the German professors. FAU is a testing center for Business French. Faculty have been trained and are qualified to deliver Business French courses. Students who successfully pass the online exam offered by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Paris earn a French Government issued certificate of advanced users of specialized French.

LLCL faculty are actively engaged in research and scholarship. Between 2014 and 2017, they published eight books and 56 peer-reviewed articles, and they presented their academic work at 104 professional meetings/conferences. They have been the recipients of several fellowships and awards (Scholarly and Creative Activity Fellowship, Dora Maar Residency Fellowship, Camargo Foundation Fellowship, AATSP Outstanding Scholarly Publication Award, etc.). LLCL faculty are well **respected**. The Linguistics Program has national recognition of teaching/scholarship, and its faculty members are known for their excellent research and publications, as well as service to the profession. Hosting the Southeast Conference on Linguistics (SECOL) in May will highlight FAU as a robust and vibrant presence in the field of linguistics.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fau.edu/diversity-platform/>

Faculty members are **open** and **engaged**, reaching out to other departments and programs, and looking for ways to increase student, peer, and community participation. For example, they house the only PhD program in the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters, offering an inter/multi-disciplinary Ph.D. The faculty lead teacher workshops and study abroad groups, as well as online courses and community projects. The successful student retention rate of majors, especially in the Linguistics and Spanish programs, speaks to the **commitment** of the faculty.

The Linguistics specialization is the most solid one, both at the BA and MA levels, followed by Spanish. The smaller sections find admirably creative methods of delivering content to their students.

Not only the faculty, but also the staff members are **multicultural** and **plurilingual, dedicated, and efficient**. The administrative, secretarial, and intern staff work far beyond their hours and their salaries to support the department and to ensure that faculty, administration, and students get what they need. The multitalented staff find ways to help the department members thrive. Some of the staff members are also pursuing degrees at FAU.

Concerning the administration, both the current and the past chair of LLCL have been dedicated advocates of the faculty who strive to give every member a chance to excel. The chairs have worked tirelessly on the budget, on the scheduling of classes, on recruiting and supporting undergraduate and graduate students, and on producing the paperwork that keeps the upper administration running, aside from their regular research and teaching obligations, which include Directed Independent Studies.

The support staff at the Division of Research offer **guidance** and **assistance** to LLCL faculty with all types of research, from grant writing and designing investigations, to implementing experiments, and to writing the final reports. As a "Customer Service Unit," the members of the Division of Research help customize a research plan, identify goals, explore collaborative opportunities, and offer workshops for writing, critiquing,

The Graduate College, as a "Service College" with a teaching and research mission is focused on "graduate student success." Its job is to **support** academic departments' needs at the college level. The Graduate Program Student Association listens to the perceptions and opinions of graduate students. The motto of the Graduate College, as stated by the dean, is "Reach out; the Graduate College will find a way." The LLCL department depends on tuition waivers, fellowships, and scholarships to fund its graduate programs. With the newly-developed Ph.D. in Comparative Studies (see below), LLCL is poised to recruit and graduate some highly marketable graduate students.

As an interdisciplinary doctorate, the **Ph.D. in Comparative Studies** is designed to highlight the diverse skills of its students for many different careers. The director of the Ph.D. program pays attention to the market and promotes the degree as desirable to a variety of university employers: The core curriculum plus emphasis areas means that the students can teach in several topic areas. Both mobility and hireability are features of the Ph.D. in Comparative

Studies. With 51 students total, the Ph.D. in Comparative Studies is crucial to FAU's efforts of achieving R1 status. In addition, the synergy of students with LLCL faculty members enhances research and publication on both sides.

With respect to LLCL's students, the external reviewers found them to be **dedicated**. Students work with their target languages despite pressures of upper administration to graduate with or without their preferred degrees. For example, the German program enrolls 10% of all language students at LLCL, which is high for a less-commonly taught language with few heritage speakers in that geographical area. The online intermediate German course has a high retention rate, thanks to the persistence of the students.

LLCL's student body is also diverse, with a high percentage of Hispanic population in each of the programs offered in the department. With an LLCL degree, students are prepared to pursue **careers** in the hospitality industry, Homeland Security (especially linguistics majors and minors), engineering, sports, and automotive industries. Working toward global citizenship is a strength of the student population of the LLCL department.

#### Conclusions about Strengths

The LLCL department has a wealth of strengths. The faculty is exceptional in intellectual capacity, outstanding in teaching and dedicated to service. Helmed by a caring and tireless chair, the department provides students with a superior level of education. The Ph.D. in Comparative Studies, the Graduate School and the Division of Research all serve admirably. The support staff is efficient and friendly, and the students are passionate and excited about using world languages in their future academic and career pursuits. The LLCL department measures favorably in scholarship and prestige to other South Eastern Conference (SEC) universities.

#### Weaknesses

One of the main problems that faculty members identified and shared with the external reviewers was the **lack of program heads**. Faculty feel that when nobody is in charge, interest wanes in many meetings and responsibility decreases in seeing a project to completion. Several faculty members report that the sections don't meet regularly to decide on curriculum changes and textbook selections. There are no agendas to set and no minutes, as there is no supervision over what happens. This lack of communication sometimes causes duplication of work, because nobody knows what others are doing. At least the larger programs (Spanish and Linguistics) should have a program head.

Some faculty members feel that **full professors are not engaged**. The full professors seem to be less interested in departmental service than in their own research agendas and participate less in departmental activities, both required and voluntary, which does not contribute to a friendly, collegial climate in the department.

The department and the university in general rely on professional advisors to guide students through course selection for timely degree completion. Undergraduates with less than 45 hours of course work are advised exclusively by university advisors who **may not have the same**

**enthusiasm** for —or knowledge of— languages, literatures, linguistics or cultures that faculty members do, thus they limit the opportunity of attracting students to LLCL. Students reap intellectual and social benefits from engaging with faculty in mentoring relationships. Students and faculty alike mentioned that professional advisors at the university level have rarely seen LLCL as anything but a service provider and not a content provider. The push is entirely toward STEM fields, leaving the social sciences and humanities to fend for themselves.

Another problem that seemed to weigh on faculty members is **salary compression and/or salary inversion**. Long-term professors with tenured years of time in rank earn only as much as incoming assistant professors (about \$65,000, according to department members). This situation is discouraging for faculty members who have offered their services to the university for a longer time and it does not contribute to a healthy atmosphere among colleagues in the department.

LLCL hires approximately ten **adjuncts** per semester (see p. 51 of LLCL's Self-Study Report). No adjuncts were available for this external review; adjuncts may not feel welcome or loyal towards the department knowing that they are disposable and/or underappreciated.

FAU strives to become an R1 university, yet the faculty **teaching loads are high**, leaving little room for research activity. An internal study by the LLCL department found that tenured professors have 62% teaching, 24% research and 14% service in their full-time loads. Pre-tenured professors have 60% teaching, 32% research and 7% service in their full-time employment schedules. The high teaching load is not reflective of the R1 designation that FAU desires.

Astonishingly, the LLCL department **does not have a full-time secretary**. Considering the size of the department, this situation seems untenable. The external reviewers were told that the part-time secretary and intern work just as much as full-time employees. Taking advantage of their goodwill and dedication is not a laudable practice and reflects poorly on the university.

Every faculty member shared with the external reviewers that they despised **the unsuitable and dangerous reliance on data from the "metrics" as the only measure of student success**. No definition of "success" is given, other than "graduating in four years." Not one administrator had any qualitative data from actual students as to their own perceptions or opinions on their "success." No checks on validity or reliability have ever been revealed on the methodology of the metrics, and no methods other than quantitative have ever been mentioned (if used at all) to evaluate student success. In short, **the "student" has been removed from "student success."**

Another aspect that faculty brought to the external reviewers' attention was the **lack of communication with the higher administration**. The faculty feel that the administration simply hands down dictates without listening to the LLCL faculty on what the members need or want to contribute to "student success." The faculty are held responsible when the goal of a particular metric is not reached, without collaborating on options or variable pathways to

faculty, staff, or student success. The higher administration **does not appear to value faculty or staff satisfaction in job performance**. Two examples highlight this lack: on the first day of the evaluation, an administrator simply handed a list of demands to us for the report, without asking for any input or ascertaining our perceptions of what needed to be done. He simply dictated a deadline, implying that because we were "late" to campus, we were required to have a shorter deadline for producing the report (we must emphasize that we agreed to visit campus on the dates that the university proposed). Likewise, another higher administrator would not hear of any critique of the BGS, stating that complaints of student unhappiness were "grossly exaggerated."

There seems to be lack of understanding from the side of the administration on how LLCL works. Insistence on classes with more than 10 students is not feasible for the LLCL department, which offers many opportunities to students looking to internationalize their careers, but this diversity of offerings will not translate into enormous classes. The LLCL has a renowned linguistics program, which provides specialty courses that appeal to humanities and social science students. A rigorous and well-planned curriculum is not appropriate to large, lecture-style classes. According to faculty members, LLCL is perceived by the administration as a service department, and not necessarily as an integral part of the university.

One of the points that impressed us negatively was the **120-hour "forced graduation,"** with a Bachelor's of General Studies. If FAU students have not completed their degree in four years, once they reach 120 credit hours, they will "be graduated" with a Bachelor of General Studies degree, which is most likely not what they signed up for when they enrolled at FAU and declared their major(s). This practice or manipulation has negative consequences not only for students (an unwanted degree) but also for departments: if students graduate with a General Studies BA not of their choosing, the number of majors in the department decreases and as a result, the department's productivity also decreases. Modern languages have traditionally been a second major that complements other majors, so that this measure has a negative impact on LLCL. Administrators informed us that the BGS is intended for students who are unable to graduate because perhaps something is happening in their lives, and so advisors strongly encourage them to graduate. Administrators also told us that there is no data to support whether students have been forced, and, in their opinion, things have been grossly exaggerated. The same administrators mentioned that oftentimes students do not know what they want and switch majors, etc., and that when they reach 60 credit hours, students should know if they want to double major. Administrators believe that students can always graduate and come back for a second BA. As they informed us, state pressure has forced them to adapt, and so university advisors deter students from taking a second major or even from taking minors.

Several faculty members mentioned that the **"corporate thinking"** of the Study Abroad Office has led to inflexibility in how programs are directed and implemented. The Italian and German programs, which need the influx of students the most, have been particularly oppressed by the obstacles set from the Study Abroad Office: another level of administrative work to enroll the students has been set in place, so that the faculty have little autonomy in collaborating with

foreign institutions and student enrollment. All the administrative details must now be sent to the Study Abroad Office before being finalized. This extra level of delay and bureaucracy is frustrating to the entirely capable faculty, who have been working diligently for years.

Another aspect seen in a negative light is the dependence on the **Navitas Program**. Low-performing, paying students are mainstreamed into regular classes to make up their deficits in learning, which **disrupts the class and retards progress**. As a for-profit venture, *Navitas* drains the goodwill and the energy of the professors and students for nobody's gain except its own.

Both faculty and students pointed out the **lack of health insurance** for graduate students. This concern was voiced by every faculty member recruiting graduate students and by every graduate student working in the LLCL. Equally disadvantageous for recruitment are the low stipends that the university offers. The student employees do not earn a living wage by working for the LLCL department. The stipends have not been adjusted in the last 15 years, and Graduate Assistants have no guarantee of summer teaching. The high-cost area and the lack of student services are a hindrance to finding quality students.

#### Conclusions about Weaknesses

The weaknesses sapping the strength of the LLCL department is due mostly to the oppression and despair imposed by outside forces. The faculty, working hard to create and maintain all types of language, linguistics, culture and literature classes for students, feel beleaguered by the lack of respect and insistence on using statistics that do not measure accurately their efforts in providing students a quality education involving world languages. Low morale and worry that aiming for R1 status will translate into even more research on top of a heavy teaching load is weighing down the faculty.

#### Opportunities

Several current opportunities present themselves. **The Division of Research** is poised to help faculty members start, invigorate, or continue their research agendas. Inviting Karen Scarpinato to department meetings to highlight the research help that the Division offers is of immediate benefit to department faculty as they look toward R1 status.

**The Graduate College** is also willing to find tuition waivers as recruiting tools for excellent prospective students. The LLCL can take advantage of the eager support of the Graduate College in attracting and retaining graduate students.

**Leadership roles** in professional organizations are another opportunity that currently awaits the faculty. The Florida Foreign Language Association, the Southeastern Conference on Linguistics, the South Atlantic Modern Language Association, etc., all have elected, appointed, or offered voluntary leadership roles on a rolling basis. The LLCL faculty members who are willing to recruit graduate students, develop professionally, and highlight the activities of FAU should be encouraged to seek positions in these organizations.

**Microcredentialing** (that is, attaching a notation of credentials on transcripts) is a good way for the LLCL department to demonstrate its value to career-minded students. FAU is a testing center for Business French, and a fully online Business French class can lead to a French exam certifying Business French as a field of expertise. Likewise, the faculty have the chance to propose the French business certificate from the Chamber of Commerce. Similarly, the Spanish faculty continue the process of creating Business Spanish online, in order to lead to standardized testing for Business Spanish certification (Mexico or Spain).

**ACTFL<sup>2</sup> OPI** testing results posted on transcripts is another opportunity to enhance the value of studying world languages at FAU. The LLCL department is exploring the possibility of paying the fees for student ACTFL OPI testing to record on their transcripts. This extra notation may be useful for those who wish to pursue bilingual opportunities (for example, the upcoming court interpreting workshop).<sup>3</sup>

**Minimesters**, as intensive courses in which students can complete a full year of language (at elementary and intermediate level) in only one semester, will be helpful in propelling students to use their world language opportunities in their futures without extra full semesters to add to their years at FAU.

**Fully online language minors**, sequences, and individual courses, while not ideal for beginning language courses, are useful in the upper-division content courses in culture, literature and linguistics for supporting majors and minors. The LLCL department needs to take advantage of the technological expertise of its faculty (such as in German, Italian) that will allow students with limited time frames to pursue language opportunities for their future studies and careers. In creating online courses, FAU will not have to resort to TED talks or MOOCs, which vary widely in quality and content.

Other opportunities will develop in the long run, such as **promoting world languages** university-wide. Modern languages are applicable to business, medicine, law, hospitality and travel, and tourism industries, but more awareness of the value of the LLCL departmental offerings is needed. Even if only one "Introduction to Linguistics" class is offered every semester, students receive from that class an awareness of the intrinsic value of communication in any career.

Promoting **study abroad** gives students more options to find their interests in modern languages, so as to encourage their global participation in the arts, sciences, business,<sup>4</sup> law, medicine, and other fields.

Florida has a demonstrated lack of Spanish teachers in the K-12 system. In Florida, if future teachers speak languages that may be taught in the high schools, these prospective teachers

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.circuit5.org/programs-services/2019-florida-court-interpreter-conference/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.enterpriseflorida.com/wp-content/uploads/International-Business-Facts-About-Florida.pdf>



can achieve certification without overwhelming training. The LLCL department, with its excellent cadre of applied linguists, may offer **pedagogy** classes leading to certification.

### **Missed Opportunities**

The Business School has rejected collaboration with the LLCL department, stating that any hours taking a language are removed from business courses. The number of hours available to dedicate to LLCL department offerings is limited for business majors.

**Global engagement** of world languages in all careers is not being highlighted. Spanish is no longer a foreign language in the United States and should be valued as a major or a minor for students seeking careers using world languages.

The LLCL department is missing **departmental advising**. When professional university and college advisors see students with fewer than 45 hours, and the members of the LLCL department do not have the chance to make recommendations for majors, minors, or careers until after 45 hours of course work, the students miss crucial information about incorporating world languages into their degrees. Streamlining the advising process must be balanced against information giving.

**Connecting with heritage learners** should be one important goal of the LLCL department. As the university has gained the status of a "Hispanic Serving Institution," more heritage learners need to be drawn into studying their heritage languages, either linguistically or culturally.

**Participating in administration of national organizations** has not been emphasized. ACTFL, SCOLT, SECOL and other organizations constantly look for volunteers. The LLCL department members need to make the most of these opportunities to be on national professional committees and volunteer projects.

### **Conclusions about Opportunities**

The possibilities awaiting the LLCL department can be grasped immediately with some effort and encouragement by the administration, and the long-term benefits of will enhance the reputation of the entire university.

### **Threats**

Every single faculty member in the department mentioned that the "metrics" were **harmful** to the efficient and dedicated progress of the department. The **punitive** system of the metric analysis program decreases morale and pushes students away from pursuing careers involving languages that require more time to learn and to perfect. The system insists, with no apparent qualitative or ethnographic data, that student "success" is measured only by graduation rate and expected income level upon graduation. The upper administration is **insensitive** to the facts of second language acquisition and insists that it is better to accept the system as it stands rather than to try to educate the uninformed on the reality of how languages are learned. Said one professor, "The metrics really did a number on us because the state was so interested in the graduation rate that they forgot about us."

**Punitive measures** for funding within the University State System is a direct threat to the LLCL department. According to some arcane method of calculation, funding to struggling departments is removed because they are not top performers. This penalty is exactly the opposite of what should happen: departments need support to improve, not punishment and handicaps in order to accomplish their goals. **Scapegoating** the LLCL department is not an appropriate response to not reaching the arbitrary and insensible goals dictated by the metrics. The administration's notions of "get used to it" and "find ways to make the metrics work for you" are likewise not helpful.

A degree in which 120 credits is the maximum allowed for graduation does not favor the LLCL department, in which **proficiency levels**<sup>5</sup> required by the workforce is not achievable with 30 contact hours. Research<sup>6</sup> has shown that 120 credits total is adequate for some majors, but rarely for modern languages. "Forced graduation" to meet the metrics was a term that many faculty members used with disgust and fear. Despite the **myth** that students can always return for a second Bachelor's degree after they are forced to graduate with 120 hours, no data has been collected (or shared) to suggest that this is a preferable outcome for LLCL majors and minors.

University advisors push students to **declare a major** right away, which puts a strain on exploration during the first year of college. Advisors also **discourage** students from pursuing a second major, because it adds time and credits to the completion of the degree. However, traditionally a great number of LLCL students have a language or linguistics as their second major. The message that students are getting from university advisors is that "language is a luxury" that will delay their graduation. This unwarranted message is a direct threat to the survival of LLCL.

"Forced graduation" hinders potential students from taking sufficient classes to foster proficiency in the languages offered by the LLCL department. While the initial idea, as explained by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, was to force sixth-year seniors to graduate, now the "metrics" have focused on requiring graduation of every student in four years, which **disadvantages** students in the LLCL department. Insisting that student "success" demands a four-year graduation regardless of student needs or desires is a threat to the proper function of the department.

**Minimum class sizes** are unfortunate: larger classes in languages may equate to cost-saving but do not equate to good educational practice. Requiring "double digits" for classes will squeeze out French, German and Italian. Insisting on an eight- or ten-student minimum does not foster respect or healthy modern world languages with limited heritages in Florida and leads to the mistaken notion that they are dispensable if only small populations use them.

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<sup>5</sup> [http://casemed.case.edu/registrar/pdfs/Scale\\_ILR.pdf](http://casemed.case.edu/registrar/pdfs/Scale_ILR.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.state.gov/m/fsi/sls/c78549.htm>

**Insistence on R1 research goals** coupled with high teaching loads is not feasible. If the push is to make FAU a Research 1 institution, then the high teaching load of the department does not align with this goal. Faculty members find it **difficult** to produce quality research while teaching at least three (and quite frequently more) classes, including online and independent studies. Directed Independent Studies are a necessity for students who wish to pursue less commonly taught languages but also put burdens on the faculty to teach more classes than their full-time regular course loads.

**Comparison** with top-tier Florida State Universities is not helpful in establishing and directing the LLCL department in becoming efficient and distinguished. Apparently, competition for state funds is fierce, and FAU regularly **comes up short** when compared to the University of Florida and Florida State University. As a result of this competition, rather than looking toward its strengths, the LLCL department is forced to consider ways to compete with current R1 institutions.

**Lack of respect** and lack of funding of non-STEM research is an insult to the LLCL department. While the focus of FAU centers on STEM fields, the LLCL department quietly goes about its business of helping students compete in the global marketplace by offering a variety of world languages. It is **hard to motivate** faculty for research when their efforts are discounted as unnecessary in a “service department.” Creativity, curiosity, empathy, and synthesis are skills learned from the study of humanities<sup>7</sup>, which should signal that LLCL department members are working toward helping students prepare for their careers and their lives.

**Top-down decision making** of administration **with no departmental input** threatens the morale of the department. Many faculty members reiterated that all the decisions of the administration were enacted without consideration to the facts and opinions raised by the faculty, staff, and students. The administration does not appear to listen to the faculty, instead laying blame on the victims of poor decision-making by the administration. Case in point: when the Italian section approached the Business School for collaborative projects with the Boca Raton community, the Italian professors were soundly rebuffed. The opinion of one administrator was "Well, that's never happened to me, so they must have done something wrong."

On paper, FAU is “committed” to global engagement, but in reality, there is **no support** from the Provost’s office to fight against university-wide threats to the department. The university leadership is encouraging when they speak to the faculty, but the lack of support does not reflect a sustained commitment.

The one-size-fits-all "Pillars-and-Platform" Model envisioned by the new president may work for some departments, but the LLCL department is complex and layered, and trying to "fit" into an **unwieldy platform** diminishes the power and the usefulness of the department.

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<sup>7</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2017/10/18/why-we-still-need-to-study-the-humanities-in-a-stem-world/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.77954c05ea2b](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2017/10/18/why-we-still-need-to-study-the-humanities-in-a-stem-world/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.77954c05ea2b))

The metrics, the BGS, and the Pillars and Platforms Model are designed to **polish the reputation** of the administration, not support the LLCL students. Heretofore, **no data** has been collected (or shared, if it has been collected) via questionnaire or interview from any LLCL student with whom we've talked to suggest that anybody in the administration is interested in what the students think about their successes and/or failures using the languages offered by the LLCL department.

### Conclusions about Threats

The most anxiety and damage is caused by upper administration unaware of what a language and linguistics department really does at a future R1 institution. Reliance on "metrics" and a lack of understanding of the hours of study required to reach proficiency is troubling. Focusing on STEM to the exclusion of humanities is a concern.

### Recommendations

**Hire a full-time secretary or administrative assistant.** It is true that Teaching Assistants help during the hours when the secretary is not in the office, but for privacy reasons, they cannot handle students' records, which limits administrative help. Such a large department that houses several languages and linguistics needs at least one full-time professional secretary.

**Maintain a 36-hour major requirement.** In the Foreign Service Institute's experience with Language Learning<sup>8</sup> for professional working proficiency, 600-2,200 class hours (depending on the category of language) are recommended. For a major requiring 12 courses of Spanish (45 hours per course), only 540 class hours are achieved. Lowering the major to 10 courses yields only 450 class hours achieved, which is inadequate for many career choices. Reducing major requirements yields a lower quality degree and is not recommended.

**Implement student mentoring,** distributed among all faculty as part of their service loads. Mentoring is a good opportunity to develop a better rapport with language students and advise them properly with respect to courses to take, internships, scholarships, awards, and other opportunities. The university advisors are more impersonal because they work with students in all departments. A college advisor is perhaps a closer relationship, but LLCL faculty have a better chance of positively impacting student retention.

**Reinstate Program Heads.** A faculty member in charge of shepherding curriculum revisions through the system, paying attention to student recruitment and retention, and working with the chair on committee assignments and projects creates a sense of continuity and institutional history. The program head would be able to keep meeting agendas and minutes, statistics on student majors and minors, and hold the paperwork for committee work and projects. This position could rotate as a three- or five-year term among the tenured faculty.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.state.gov/m/fsi/sls/c78549.htm>

**Improve communication within the department** by having program heads disseminate information. Currently, as the sections meet, there are no meeting minutes and every single member who talks to the chair, the deans and other administrators may or may not share information. Assigning program heads would allow better circulation of information and serve as repositories for departmental history and current work.

Reducing teaching loads for every activity is a difficult task, so faculty should not wait for teaching load reductions before acquiring more activities to promote and maintain the department. While assistant professors should be protected from too much service, **full professors need to take on more administrative duties** and associate professors need to train to be full professors. At the beginning of every semester, the chair may pass around the recurring service work as well as any particular duties for that semester for professors to volunteer for those tasks that they prefer. After every professor has chosen at least one recurring committee and one particular task, then the chair may assign the leftover duties in a round-robin fashion to all faculty members. Everyone ought to bear the burden of service, and if a list of activities and committees were chosen/assigned at the beginning of the year or the beginning of the semester, the members could plan their work loads. In addition, the chair could receive requests for less service in a semester that a faculty member finds particularly heavy.

**Introduce differential teaching loads.** Some faculty members may prefer to spend more time teaching than doing research or vice-versa. Developing such a plan with clear expectations and assessments may lead to greater productivity. During their annual reviews, the faculty may indicate in which concentration they would like to be evaluated most heavily.

**Adjunct positions are better converted into instructor positions** in order to foster collegiality and a sense of common goals. Permanent teaching staff support the regular faculty as tenure-track and tenured professors move toward R1 research goals.

**Bring the *Southern Journal of Linguistics* to the LLCL department.** The Linguistics Program faculty is well known around the nation and several members regularly participate in the Southeastern Conference of Linguistics. Taking over the journal would require minimal transition and would be a boost to the prestige and power of FAU. A journal housed at FAU increases visibility of the department and serves as a clearinghouse for research activity from scholars around the world. Graduate students could shadow the editor in order to learn about the world of academic publishing.

Increase recruiting efforts for majors and minors. **Open houses** for the department, receptions, high school visits, free lectures, exhibits (of photography or study abroad visits, for example) are inexpensive ways to highlight the value of world languages and the Humanities in general. Inviting administrators to community activities (the Italian section is particularly adept at outreach), offering research lectures (call them "Working Papers in QQQ") for the department, the College and the public, and hosting cultural activities (on holidays, for example) would show that the LLCL department is engaged in internationalizing the university in a variety of ways.

**Advertise** these department offerings, extra-curricular activities, etc. campus-wide. Is there a university-wide calendar of events? The LLCL department needs to be on this calendar regularly.

**Promote** the Ph.D. in Comparative Studies for more than literature. The "Studies" in Comparative Studies may also be used for linguistics, culture, film, etc. A discussion with a current graduate student revealed that Caribbean studies is a trending field, and for linguistics, comparative studies in the Caribbean is a good opportunity to invest in Creole Linguistics, involving the LLCL linguistics program.

**Create a Department Newsletter** highlighting and celebrating the accomplishments of students, alumni and faculty. As a tab on the department web site or a quick mailout to a community of supporters, the newsletter would gather attention about its activities and achievements.

**Invite** members of the Division of Research and the Graduate School to department meetings to discuss research initiatives, recruitment opportunities, upcoming events that may impact the department.

The faculty need to engage in **more pointed communication** with the administration. Rather than the passive recipients of demands, the LLCL department should express its concerns not just via the chair, but in individual or section meetings with members of the administration up and down the hierarchy. Armed with **data** and with persuasion, the LLCL faculty need to take charge of their own empowerment by informing less informed administrators about current research and best practices for modern languages and linguistics.

**Request data** to support the demands on faculty and students. If the "metrics" committee meets every week to discuss data, this information needs to be disseminated to faculty, or faculty members need to attend meetings or request information from said meetings. Gaps, inconsistencies, incorrect information can be combatted when the data is made available.

Define "success" with student input in "student success." A departmental ad hoc committee needs to **set criteria for what determines "success"** in terms of students using their LLCL majors and minors for their future academic and employment endeavors.

**Gather data for the Bachelors of General Studies.** Currently, no qualitative data exists in the department to indicate that the BGS is in fact a benefit to students other than to push them out of the university "on time." The LLCL department needs to have a running tally and interview data of students who took language classes but who could not fit in a major or minor due to the "120 hours and out" rule.

The department should **formulate its own clearly stated R1 goals.** If FAU expects to attain R1 status, then a realistic plan should be in place that takes into account teaching, research, and

service loads of faculty, as well as resources that the faculty receive for research activities. A well-designed plan should highlight what the LLCL department is able to do and will do to align with university goals.

If FAU wants to attract graduate students and remain competitive, it should consider **increasing stipends and offering health care benefits**.

**Encourage** LLCL faculty to design and implement their own online courses, rather than promoting MOOCs or other third-party tools (which vary widely in content and quality). The faculty is both adept and creative in finding instructional materials and tools for their majors and minors. MOOCs and the like should never be allowed to replace beginning and intermediate language classes.

#### Conclusions about Recommendations

The recommendations of this committee are suggestions that have arisen as we have talked with a variety of faculty, staff, students and administrators in FAU. We advocate for the continued excellence of the LLCL department and advise the members to “speak truth to power,” using their time, resources and talents for the betterment of all. While some recommendations may be accomplished in the short term, we recognize that some of these recommendations may not be feasible at this time, but we want to note them anyway for future reference.

#### Acknowledgments

Finally, we would like to thank the members of the LLCL department, especially Dr. Marcella Munson, for hosting us and providing us the opportunity to meet many fine colleagues. We express our gratitude to everyone who took time out of their busy schedules to meet with us. We look forward to the continued excellence of the LLCL department.

## Appendix: LLCL APR External Review Site Visit Itinerary

### **Monday, March 11, 2019**

Dr. Angela Helmer arrives at FLL @ 2:19 PM (United Flight 2188), and will be met at the airport by Marcella Munson. We will gather luggage, and then get coffee and a light snack before meeting Dr. Coles as she arrives from her flight.

Dr. Felice A. Coles arrives at FLL @ 3:29 PM (American Airlines Flight 523 from Charlotte), and will be met at the airport by Marcella Munson.

Both external reviewers will then be taken to the Renaissance (Boca Raton) by Marcella Munson.

### **Cell phone number for Marcella Munson: 561-235-6725.**

6:00 PM Dinner at the Farmer's Table (Marcella Munson, Myriam Ruthenberg) 7:30 PM Return to the Renaissance for the evening

### **Tuesday, March 12, 2019**

7:30 – 8:30 AM 8:30 – 9:00 AM 9:00 – 10:00 AM 10:00 – 10:30 AM

10:30 – 11:00 AM 11:15 – 11:30 AM 11:15 – 11:45 AM

11:45 – 12:15 PM

12:15 – 1:00 PM 1:00 – 2:00 PM

2:00 – 2:30 PM 2:30 – 3:00 PM

3:00 PM 3:00 – 3:30 PM

3:30 – 4:00 PM

Breakfast at the Renaissance (Carla Calargé, Viktor Kharlamov)

Driving tour of campus (Carla Calargé, Viktor Kharlamov)

Meeting with LLCL faculty (CU 321A)

Coffee break at Living Room Theatres Café or Starbucks (depending on location of next meeting)

Meeting with Dr. Russ Ivy, Senior Associate Provost for Academic Affairs Short break

Meeting with Dr. Edward Pratt, Dean of Undergraduate Studies (AH 205)

Meeting with Dr. Khaled Sobhan, Interim Dean, Graduate College (AH 205)

Catered working lunch (delivered to AH 205)

Meeting with Dr. Michael Horswell, Dean, Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters (AH 217C)

Meeting with Dr. Karin Scarpinato, Executive Associate Vice President for Research (AH 205)

Meeting with Dr. Adam Bradford, Director, Ph.D. in Comparative Studies and Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters (AH 205)

Catered coffee service setup in AH 205



Meeting with Dr. Nancy Poulson, Director of Graduate Studies, LLCL (AH 205)

Meeting with Dr. Myriam Ruthenberg, Director of Undergraduate Studies, LLCL (AH 205)

4:00 – 4:30 PM 5:00 PM 6:00 PM 7:30 PM

Meeting with Dr. Marcella Munson, Chair, LLCL Return to Renaissance Inn (Marcella Munson) Dinner (restaurant TBD) (Ilaria Serra, Yolanda Gamboa) Return to hotel for the evening (Ilaria Serra)

**Wednesday, March 13, 2019**

7:30 – 8:00 AM 8:00 AM

8:30 – 9:00 AM

9:00 – 9:30 AM 9:30 – 10:30 AM 10:30 AM 11:00 – 12:00 PM 12:30 – 1:00 PM 1:00 – 2:00 PM

2:15 PM

Breakfast at the Renaissance (reviewers are on their own)

Pickup from Renaissance; checkout and collect baggage; leave in Dr. Munson's van Transit to FAU campus (Marcella Munson)

Meeting with lower-division language coordinators (AH 205)

Meeting with LLCL GTAs (MA, PhD) Open time for reviewers to begin drafting report Coffee service Open time for reviewers to continue drafting report Exit meeting with Dr. Russ Ivy, Senior Associate Provost for Academic Affairs Lunch at Living Room Theatres Café, Boca Raton campus Begin drive to FLL Airport (Marcella Munson)

Dr. Felice Coles departs at 7:07 PM on American Airlines Flight 2010 (to Charlotte) Dr. Angela Helmer departs at 5:00 PM on Delta Flight 1117 (to Atlanta)