

Board Meeting
January 21, 2010

ESTABLISH THE DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH AND FRANCOPHONE STUDIES,
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES, CHICAGO

Action: Approve Establishment of the Department of French and Francophone Studies, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Funding: No New Funding Required

The Chancellor at Chicago with the advice of the Chicago Senate, the Graduate College, and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences recommends the establishment of the Department of French and Francophone Studies and the redesignation of the Department of Spanish, French, Italian and Portuguese as the Department of Hispanic and Italian Studies.

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is proposing the creation of a School of Literatures, Cultural Studies, and Linguistics (LCSL) comprising the departments and programs of Classics and Mediterranean Studies; Germanic Studies; the Sandi Port Errant Language and Culture Learning Center; Slavic and Baltic Languages and Literatures; Spanish, French, Italian and Portuguese (SFIP); TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages)/Linguistics; Moving Image Arts; and the Less Commonly Taught Languages of Chinese, Japanese, and Hindi-Urdu. As part of this new structure, French, currently a unit within the Department of Spanish, French, Italian and Portuguese, will once again form an independent department to be called the Department of French and Francophone Studies. As a consequence of the departure of the French

section as an independent department, the Department of Spanish, French, Italian and Portuguese will change its name to the Department of Hispanic and Italian Studies.

Years ago, the Department of French was merged into the Department of Spanish, French, Italian and Portuguese to save administrative costs. The unit, however, has continued to thrive through its strong undergraduate and graduate programs. Now that the School is to be established and the staffing for all units will be centralized, the administrative reason for the original merger no longer exists. The name change, from French to French and Francophone Studies, reflects changes in the field as well as faculty and student interest. Since the nineteenth century, there has been a steady and, within the last 30 years, an exponential increase in scholarly attention paid to the literary traditions and evolving cultural practices of French-speaking populations in Canada, Africa, the Caribbean, and southeast Asia. The curriculum reflects this: from the basic language sequence to advanced seminars, courses in this unit regularly focus on texts and films from Francophone regions of the world. It is therefore important for the department title to signal the growing prominence of Francophone studies as well as the continuing interest of French studies.

With French as its own separate entity, the Department of Spanish, French, Italian and Portuguese will be renamed as the Department of “Hispanic and Italian Studies.” The new departmental nomenclature reflects the composition and intellectual interests of the divisions that remain in the unit, and the department’s interdepartmental and interdisciplinary research and teaching focus. The name also now matches the way in which the Spanish graduate program appears in the catalog, i.e., as graduate programs in “Hispanic Studies.”

The Board action recommended in this item complies in all material respects with applicable State and federal laws, University of Illinois *Statutes, The General Rules Concerning University Organization and Procedure*, and Board of Trustees policies and directives.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs concurs with this recommendation. The University Senates Conference has indicated that no further Senate jurisdiction is involved.

The Interim President of the University recommends approval. This action is subject to further review and approval by the Illinois Board of Higher Education.