

REPORT OF THE ACADEMIC REVIEW PANEL

DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH AND SPANISH, MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY 31 MARCH - 3 APRIL 2004

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This review of the Department of French and Spanish forms part of the continuing process of review initiated by the Senate in 2001 to support the university's objectives. The Review Panel consisted of the following:

Dr. Doreley Carolina Coll, Assistant Professor, Department of Modern Languages, University of Prince Edward Island;
Prof. Louise Dawe, Associate Professor, Department of History, Memorial University (Chairperson);
Dr. Patricia De Meo, Professor, Department of French, Dalhousie University;
Dr. Bernard Fournier, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Memorial University.

This report is a collective endeavour reflecting the agreement of all the Panel members. Throughout the review process, the Panel was supported by Joan Bessey, Academic Review Coordinator, who during the site visit willingly and efficiently provided additional materials and readjusted schedules at the last minute and who has since then responded to all requests from it. Valuable support was also provided by the staff at the Centre for Institutional Analysis and Planning.

1.2 The Panel met on 31 March with Dr. J. Strawbridge, the Director, Faculty Relations, representing Dr. M. Collins, the Acting Vice President (Academic), Dr. C. Jablonski, the Dean of Graduate Studies, and Dr. J. Black, the Associate Dean of Arts, to discuss the purpose of the review, the review process, and the strategic objectives of the University. At that time certain issues were identified for the Panel's consideration and advice. These included in particular the significantly increased enrolment in first-year French courses to meet the second language provisions of the B.A. degree regulations and the admission requirements for the Primary/Elementary B.Ed. programme, and the costs associated therewith. The need to attract more students to the undergraduate programmes in Spanish and the graduate programme in French was also identified as a matter of importance. More generally the Panel was asked to consider where the Department should be in seven years when it would next be reviewed.

1.3 On April 1 and 2 the Panel met with a number of interested parties and received written communications from others. The first morning began with Prof. Peter Ayres, the Head of the Department, who provided an overview of issues facing the Department and who conducted a tour of the main cluster of the Department's facilities. These included the Language Laboratories where the panel met Dr. Karin Thomeier, who provided it then, and in a session that afternoon, with information on the operation of the labs and on the areas presenting challenges. Later that morning the Panel heard from Dr. Neil Bishop. Like Dr. D.R. Gamble, who spoke with the Panel in the

afternoon, Dr. Bishop supplemented his remarks with a written memo. Dr. Virginia Harger-Grinling, a former Head of the Department, and Dr. Messod Salama, the only Spanish member of the Department for some years, met with the Panel before lunch while Dr. Myriam Osorio, who joined the Department this year as its second Spanish member, and Prof. Tony Chadwick spoke with it after. Stephanie Greene, a fourth-year Honours student and the President of the *Cercle français*, joined the Panel and Prof. Ayres for lunch. Fourteen undergraduate students, most of whom were taking first-year courses in French and Spanish, and, in a separate session, three graduate students in French concluded that day with their perspectives on their courses, their programmes and their instructors.

1.4 The next morning's session began with Ms. Paula Alexander, Administrative Staff Specialist, and Ms. Patricia Churchill, Intermediate Secretary. The Panel also met with four representatives of the contractual and per-course instructors (hereinafter referred to as contractuales) who teach French and two representatives from the Faculty of Education, Dr. Gary Jeffrey, Associate Dean (Undergraduate Programmes), and Dr. Elizabeth Murphy, Assistant Professor (French Methods). Dr. Magessa O'Reilly, the First-Year Coordinator, Ms. Chantal Jordaan, Director, Frecker Program, and Prof. Janis Black, the Undergraduate Advisor who made time to meet with the Panel at its request, discussed their particular responsibilities, undertakings, and challenges. Dr. Scott Jamieson's presentation concluded the session. Both he and Ms. Jordaan also presented written submissions. The Panel had lunch with Dr. Anne Thareau, Dr. James MacLean and Prof. Peter Ayres, the Department's Graduate Studies Committee, who provided oral and written information about a proposed M.A. programme. It also received written submissions from two members of the Department, Dr. Aileen Macdonald and Prof. Mireille Thomas, and from a student, Amy Lynch-Furlong, all of whom were unable to speak with it. Unfortunately there was no oral or written submission from those contractuales teaching Spanish. That afternoon the Panel presented its preliminary findings first of all to Dr. James Black and then to members of the Department, contractuales, staff and students, and received responses from them.

1.5 The Panel met both Thursday and Friday evenings and Saturday morning to discuss what it had heard and to begin drafting its report.

2.0 The Department

2.1 French has been central to the Faculty of Arts curriculum since the founding of Memorial University College in 1925. By the 1950's it had been joined by Spanish in the Department of Modern Languages. The two languages formed a separate department in the 1960's and became known as the Department of French and Spanish in the 1970's. Today the Department offers Honours, Major and Minor programmes in French, Major and Minor programmes in Spanish, and a M.A. programme in French. This past year there were 388 declared in the three undergraduate French programmes and 18 in the Spanish programmes with nine registered for the M.A. The Department also provides language instruction to other students within the university and, along with several services such as translation, to the community. Its regular faculty number 17. This figure

includes the Dean of Arts and the Associate Dean of Arts. Two of the remainder form the Spanish section. After experiencing declining enrolments in the 1990's, the Department is once again thriving.

2.2 The Review Panel was pleased to see the level of commitment and the success of the members of the Department of French and Spanish at Memorial. Nearly all the permanent members are actively involved in research activities. As the self-study pointed out, the strengths of the Department lie in translating, critical editing, bibliographical studies, textual analysis, and second-language teaching. Individual members pursue specific interests in, for instance, emblematics, human rights and psychoanalysis as they relate to French-language literature, and Sephardic songs. Three members of the Department have had the published results of their research acknowledged in the form of APFUCC prizes; one of these was a finalist for the Governor-General's award in translation. Over time four members of the Department have had their research activities supported by SSHRC grants while five others have received research and travel funds from internal sources.

2.3 The permanent members of the Department have also contributed significantly in other ways. The Department hosted two conferences in the past decade. Three members of the Department are involved with the Women's Studies, Medieval Studies, and M.Phil. in Humanities programmes. The Department pointed to its contribution to the University in the form of the Dean of Arts, the Associate Dean of Arts and the President of MUNFA. Over the years its members have also contributed significantly to committees of the Faculty of Arts, Graduate Studies, and Senate as well as to Senate itself.

2.4 Two very important contributions which the Department has made to the University are the founding of GREF (*Groupe de recherche en études franco-terreneuviennes*) by one of its members and the Departmental seminar. The former, which involves collaboration and exchanges with other departments and the Library, is attempting to reactivate the field of Franco-Newfoundland studies. The latter provides a forum not only for the presentation of their research results by faculty and students but also for interdisciplinary panel discussions. The Review Panel hopes that these two endeavours will continue to develop and prosper.

2.5 The involvement in different exchange programmes (the Frecker Programme in Saint-Pierre in collaboration with the Francoforum, La Coruña Summer Programme in Spain, the Canadian Third Year in Nice Programme in France) enriches the Department as do the lecturers from Bordeaux.

2.6 Outside of the University members of the Department have maintained a high profile in the academic and wider communities. They have performed or are performing various forms of editorial activity on seven journals; have evaluated SSHRC and other major grant applications; and have held, are holding, or will hold executive positions in various regional and national organizations. Two members have acted at different times as Departmental liaison with the Department of Education. Various members have provided translation services to that Department, to the courts and to meetings. Some present or recently retired members are linked to the *Association communautaire*

francophone de Saint-Jean. Courses have been provided to civil servants. The Department is also the home of the Honorary Consul of France.

2.7 The *Cercle français*, led by the students, has animated the social life of the Department. Their activities inside and outside the University are frequently open to the Francophone community in St. John's.

2.8 These points have been specifically mentioned here to illustrate how the Review Panel was made fully aware of the strengths of this Department. In particular the Review Panel was struck by the service role played by the Department of French and Spanish inside and outside the university. The issue of first-year courses and the constituency for them which will be discussed below is certainly a good example. In addition the Department helps students to meet the second language requirements for the B.A., to gain entry into the Primary/Elementary B.Ed. programme, to acquire Italian if they are Music students, and to obtain a Minor if they are Business students. Students from all faculties and schools can, furthermore, take their electives in French and Spanish.

2.9 Those contributions are essential, but it is also clear that they drain a lot of energy from the Department. The Faculty and University must come up with the appropriate resources to permit the Department to continue to perform these services. Permanent and temporary instructors, as well as staff members, feel that that is not always the case and lobby at different levels to change this reality. The Review Panel agrees that more resources will be needed in the future if the Department is to continue to fulfil its service role.

2.10 A department forms a community of faculty, staff members and students. While they pursue different goals within the university, one should assume that all those goals can be reached if an adequate environment is provided by the department. The Review Panel was impressed by the various exchange programmes successfully put in place, the quality of the research done by its faculty members each year, and the enthusiasm of its contractuales for their teaching. However, the Review Panel was astounded to hear so frequently faculty and staff members comment bitterly and disappointingly about personal relations in the Department to the point that it was afraid that such a situation would affect students. While some students were aware of tensions, the Panel heard no complaints from them; on the contrary, they were all, especially those in their last years of study, enthusiastic about their Department. In a way, this suggests that the problem should not be exaggerated. Conflicts arise regularly in any organisation, but especially within the university. Nevertheless, as outsiders the Panel had the impression that something must be done to improve the overall climate among regular members, contractuales, and staff members.

2.11 Some members of the Department pointed out that a few years ago a recently retired member with expertise in team building in sports tried unsuccessfully to improve the situation. The fact that he was a regular member of the Department at that time could explain this failure. Other initiatives, like those promoted by the *Cercle français*, help to create a new team spirit in the Department and must be encouraged. However, the Review Panel thinks that the Department should evaluate the possibility that someone with an external perspective could assist the Department in establishing a

better collegial working relationship. It could help to highlight the current strengths of this Department and the devotion of its members.

Recommendation 1: **That an outside conciliator should be appointed to assist the Department in establishing a work covenant (collegial working relationship).**

3.0 Undergraduate Programme in French

3.1 First-year French Courses: A Critical Situation

3.1.1 Enrolments in first-year French courses have tended to fluctuate with those in the Faculty of Arts as a whole. The recent increased enrolment of B.A. students at Memorial has led to a parallel increase in the number of students wishing to enrol in a first-year French course in order to satisfy the second language requirement. Indeed, the number of students taking first-year French has increased from 1,596 in 1998-99 to 2,759 in 2002-03, an increase of 72.9%. The number of sections of first-year French has increased from 55 in 1998-99 to 88 in 2002-03, an increase of 60%. While this dramatic increase in enrolment has been occurring, the regular French faculty complement has decreased from 18 in 1996-1997 to 13 and the number of contractual and per-course instructors has increased respectively from 2 to 7 and from 1 to 11. The Department has therefore had to increase class size to a level many faculty consider unacceptable, 38-40 per section. Furthermore, the Dean of Arts has informed the Department that it must decrease the number of sections of first-year French next year while accommodating the same number of students.

3.1.2 In order to meet this requirement, the Department is considering first-year French courses with enrolments of 60 for students wishing to satisfy the language requirement. During one of the three weekly contact hours, the class would be split into two sections in order to allow for some oral practice. Doing this would allow the Department to lower slightly the class size (to 20 - 25) in the course intended for prospective majors. Several faculty members pointed out, however, that most students have not yet chosen a major at the time they select their first-year courses, and that the first-year course can be decisive in encouraging or discouraging potential majors. Beginning French courses with 60 students may in fact discourage some potential majors. All faculty members agreed that it was not pedagogically desirable to have first-year language classes with 60 students; however, some were prepared to accept the necessity of doing this given the proposed reduction in part-time faculty budget provided by the Dean's office.

3.1.3 It is obvious that the Department finds the question of first-year language teaching very challenging; it is a Herculean task to provide meaningful language instruction to large numbers of first-year students while the faculty complement is largely unstable due to the reliance on contractuales.

3.1.4 A number of problems stem from this situation and were brought to the Panel's attention during the site visit:

- 3.1.4.1 The Department questions whether the second language requirement is meaningful given that the already large class sizes reduce the opportunities for interaction. Research in second language acquisition confirms this view; current research shows the need to combine focus on form [i.e. grammar] in the context of meaningful communication tasks, whether they are speaking, writing, reading or listening.
- 3.1.4.2 Some regular faculty members expressed concern about the level of French proficiency of some contractuales, and therefore about the quality of instruction that may be offered to students.
- 3.1.4.3 Some contractuales have little experience teaching at the university level, and regular faculty expressed concern that as a consequence, the level of instruction might not be appropriate for university. No workshops are offered for contractuales' professional development as language teachers prior to the beginning of the academic year, nor is there a mechanism in place for classroom visits to provide formative feedback to instructors. It should be noted that the contractuales' contracts cover only the months when they are actually teaching, which precludes professional development unless they do so on their own time.
- 3.1.4.4 The Department feels that it has a tenuous control over the first-year courses, since they are almost exclusively taught by contractuales, although coordination is provided by one regular faculty member.
- 3.1.4.5 Contractuales have low morale. (See sections 6.7 to 6.10 below for amplification of this point.)
- 3.1.4.6 It is perceived that many students opt to take the beginners' level course in hopes of obtaining a high mark with little effort; there exists an online diagnostic test but the Department is not allowed to require the test nor to deny access to the beginners' level to students whose level of proficiency already exceeds it.

Recommendation 2:

That the Department seek clarification from the Faculty of Arts regarding the expectations of the second language requirement as far as developing language proficiency in oral/aural skills as well as in reading/writing and cultural awareness. Once this is done, that the Department examine its proposed new first-year course, along with its existing first-year courses and any other

proposed solutions in order to determine whether the class **size/format/method** of delivery **can** allow for the achievement of the expectations of the second language requirement.

- Recommendation 3: That the Faculty of Arts provide adequate resources to the Department so that it may provide courses allowing students to satisfy the second language requirement in a meaningful way.
- Recommendation 4: That there be evaluation of contractually's language proficiency as a means of determining the appropriate levels at which they may teach.
- Recommendation 5: That the current online diagnostic test (or an alternative one) be made compulsory so that students are streamed into the appropriate first-year course. This recommendation includes giving the Department the right to be the final arbiter of the appropriate first-year course for students.
- Recommendation 6: That contractually be given professional development assistance by workshops, especially at the beginning of the year, as well as in-class observation with formative feedback, in order to help them achieve the Department's goals.
- Recommendation 7: That there be consultation concerning textbook choice, not only with the faculty, but also with contractually and that furthermore both faculty and contractually have a vote on such decisions.
- Recommendation 8: That the Department consider recommending to the Faculty of Arts a waiver of the second language requirement for students having completed Grade **12** core French. Similarly, that a waiver of Spanish **1000** be awarded to students having completed one year of high school Spanish and a waiver of Spanish **1001** be awarded to students having completed two years of high school Spanish. Furthermore, that all such waivers should be automatic and that students should be so informed. Students wishing to obtain university credit for courses completed in high school should be informed of the challenge for credit procedures.

3.2 French Language Courses above First-Year

3.2.1 The French section offers language courses at all levels, and the Department is to be commended for recognizing that language proficiency develops over time and needs ongoing work.

3.2.2 There is strong coordination of the three first-year language courses in French, ensuring consistency of content between sections of the same course and logical progression from level to level within the first year. However, the Review Panel heard concerns expressed from faculty members about lack of coordination between language courses at the second, third and fourth-year levels. Some of these courses have more than one section, but faculty teaching them appear to make unilateral decisions about course content. Panel members were shown final exams, for example, from two concurrent sections of French 3100; the content of these exams was wildly divergent.

3.2.3 Several faculty members expressed the need for the Department to articulate clearly the objectives and content for each of the language courses from beginners' level through the most advanced fourth-year course. This would allow for students to make coherent progression from course to course and year to year. The Department apparently decided a few years ago to uncouple the two third-year language classes (3100 and 3101). Some faculty members expressed concerns at French 3100 losing the designation of pre-requisite for 3101.

3.2.4 Students expressed the need for more oral components in the language courses at the second-year level and beyond. They also expressed the need for an advanced language course focusing on speaking rather than writing. The students' perception of this need was corroborated by a faculty member from Education who noted that incoming B.Ed. students often lacked confidence in their speaking ability.

3.2.5 Students coming into their first year at Memorial having taken French immersion are advised to register in French 215912160. Many of them opt, however, to take the second-year sequence 210012101 as it focuses more on grammar, and the students see this as a need they have. The presence of the two choices for immersion graduates is perhaps not as well-known to them as would be desirable.

3.2.6 The Language Labs exist as a drop-in resource, where students can come at times that best suit them to do supplementary computer-based practice work or listening practice. Attendance at the labs is currently uneven. Senior students are hired to staff the labs. These students provide, along with other functions, some instructional assistance with pronunciation in the aural lab and with grammar in the computer lab. French classroom instructors, however, do not normally attend lab sessions. Some universities ask that students commit to a specific weekly lab time and also provide language monitors who can help students work through the material. Others assign a portion of the final grade to lab work.

3.2.7 There was some criticism, from a student and from a faculty member, of the nature of the reading requirements in French 2601/2602. The student, an immersion graduate, was disappointed at doing only intensive reading of short works rather than being asked to do more extensive reading. The faculty member regretted that the Department no longer offered a survey of French literature at the second-year level. The Panel received copies of exams used in the 2601/2602 series and is impressed with the training students obviously receive in doing intensive and critical reading. These are skills that will serve the students very well in upper-level literature classes.

- Recommendation 9: That the Department establish core content areas for each of the language courses from the first to the fourth year, and that the sequencing of these courses be carefully planned. That, furthermore, appropriate pre-requisites be set for each course.
- Recommendation 10: That the Department set goals and standards for all multi-section courses and that there be coordination of multi-section courses beyond the first year.
- Recommendation 11: That the Department consider introducing an oral component into the French language courses at the second, third and fourth-year levels.
- Recommendation 12: That the Department consider creating an advanced oral French course at the third or fourth-year level.
- Recommendation 13: That the Department consider creating lab sections in which students register so that they commit themselves to going to the lab at a certain hour each week. Awarding a percentage of the course mark to lab work **might** improve attendance at the lab.
- Recommendation 14: That the Department advise incoming students from immersion programmes to consider taking 210012101 rather than 215912140 if they plan to take a Major.
- Recommendation 15: That the Department consider increasing the expectations of reading in French 2601/2602. Without sacrificing the benefits of training in intensive reading, it might be possible to ask students to do some extensive reading as well.

3.3 The Major, Minor and Honours Programmes

3.3.1 The Panel heard very favourable comments from current and former students about the Major, Minor and Honours programmes and about the faculty members.

3.3.2 The French section offers a very adequate range of courses in language, literature and culture from which students can choose in their undergraduate programme. The anticipated retirements in the near future of several people active in teaching upper-level literature will make it difficult for the Major programme to continue to be as broadly based, and for provision of supervision of Honours essays, if the Department does not receive replacements for these faculty members.

3.3.3 The Department has recently approved a proposal which will designate certain courses as core requirements for the Major and Minor. The Panel sees this as a very positive initiative, and hopes that the core courses will include not only language courses, but also literature and/or culture. Establishing core requirements will need to be supplemented by regular academic advising by the Departmental Undergraduate Advisor; it is widely recognized that effective academic advising can be vitally important for student success and satisfaction. One student in particular stressed the importance of receiving good and accurate advice.

3.3.4 The Department is to be commended for the very successful study-abroad options it offers to its students taking French. There is every sign that the Frecker programme succeeds in all respects: increasing student proficiency in French, as well as promoting cultural understanding and increased motivation to study French. Similarly, the year-abroad programme in Nice via the consortium appears to be very successful and appreciated as does the language assistant programme in Bordeaux.

3.3.5 Graduates of the Memorial French programme seem in fact so enthusiastic about their experience that the Department might wish to attempt to establish an undergraduate scholarship fund based upon donations from graduates. Even small financial awards can be helpful and meaningful to undergraduate students.

Recommendation 16: **That the Department be invited to determine core courses in French, aside from language classes, to be required of major, honours and minor students.**

Recommendation 17: **That the Department encourage all major, honours and minor students to meet with the Departmental Undergraduate Advisor at least once a year in order to plan their programme.**

3.4 New Initiatives

3.4.1 The Department has been discussing the possibility of creating a diploma programme in translation, and indeed has a core group of faculty members who could provide excellent training in translation. The Panel encourages the Department to pursue this option. The other new programme presented to the Panel is a B.A. in International Communication. Again, this initiative sounds very promising, and the Department is encouraged to pursue this idea. Both these proposals offer career-oriented educational opportunities and would appeal to students who wish a liberal Arts education with less of a literary focus.

3.4.2 Many language departments offer literature courses in English translation to serve the interests of non-majors. As a member of the Department pointed out, these can be very valuable ways of contributing to the university community. Naturally, such classes are not intended to count as credits towards fulfilling the requirements of the French Major, Honours or Minor programmes.

Recommendation 18: **That the Department be encouraged to propose a diploma programme in translation.**

Recommendation 19: **That the Department pursue the idea of a B.A. in International Communication.**

Recommendation 20: **That the Department be encouraged to develop courses in French literature in translation to serve the needs of allied departments.**

4.0 M.A. Programme

4.1 The French section is fortunate to have faculty members who are well-qualified to work with students doing master's level work. Unfortunately, not all faculty members whose CV would lead one to expect involvement with the graduate programme are in fact involved in it, for several reasons. As a result, there is an imbalance in workload in the Department, with a small core of faculty members who are ensuring the vitality and very existence of the M.A. programme.

4.2 The number of students enrolled in the M.A. has remained rather low over some years, despite efforts made by the Department to recruit students from outside Newfoundland. Consequently, the Department does not feel optimistic about its ability to increase enrolments in the M.A. programme. The Review Panel believes that this is not necessarily the case, however, as students from across Canada travel to English-speaking provinces in order to do graduate work in French. The French section at Memorial has high quality faculty members who should be able to attract students from other provinces.

4.3 The Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies informed the Review Panel that the French section had not made full use of its fellowship allocation for the past number of years. The Panel was told that the yearly allocation was \$20,000 and that the Department had set a limit of \$6500 per student, which would not be a limit imposed by Graduate Studies. It would seem obvious that offering significant fellowships would be an effective way of attracting M.A. students.

4.4 Due to the low numbers of M.A. students, the French section is unable to offer graduate-level courses, which require a minimum enrolment of four students. They have instead been required to cross-list 4000-level and graduate-level courses, but they must ensure that the M.A. students have additional and more demanding work. This solution has proven to be unsatisfactory both from the student and the faculty perspective. Students feel that they are hampered in their intellectual and

linguistic development by being in combined undergraduate-graduate courses, and faculty tend to concur. As a result, some faculty members effectively teach the graduate students separately but with no workload credit for doing so. Other faculty members find this "piggy-backing" solution untenable and have ceased their involvement with the graduate programme.

4.5 This situation is further compounded by another factor. The stipulated entrance requirement for the M.A. is an Honours degree in French. However, it has happened that students lacking Honours degrees have been admitted directly to the M.A. Since the work these students would have had to do to obtain Honours equivalency is fourth-year level, and since M.A. students are in these same fourth-year level courses, the M.A. applicants have successfully argued that they might as well do these courses as master's students rather than as fourth-year students. The distinction between undergraduate and graduate has thus become quite blurred and the admission standards have been lowered.

4.6 It is the view of the Panel that the above factors are jeopardizing the M.A. programme. The Panel recognizes that there is a core group of faculty members who have shown extraordinary commitment to the M.A., and we applaud them. Nonetheless, the Panel believes that the Department as a whole needs to support this programme more fully. It can be an important component of the Department's efforts and is deserving of the Department's full support.

4.7 The Graduate Committee showed the Review Panel a first draft of a proposal for a new M.A. programme it intends to submit to the Department. This proposed new M.A. programme aims to serve the needs of local teachers of French, and is multidisciplinary in nature. This non-thesis M.A. would include coursework in French, Linguistics and Education. Since practicing teachers when they pursue graduate programmes often have different educational goals from those intending an academic career, it makes eminent sense to design a programme that is tailor-made to serve these needs. The Panel sees great potential in this initiative.

4.8 The Department has been discussing the possibility of creating a graduate diploma programme in translation, and indeed has a core group of faculty members who could provide excellent training in translation. The Panel encourages the Department to pursue this option.

4.9 The Panel notes that the librarian's report confirms that the library can well support the M.A. programme.

Recommendation 21: **That the Department seek funding to create up-to-date and visually attractive promotional materials about its graduate programme.**

Recommendation 22: **That the Department promote its M.A. programme nationally and in the eastern United States. The Department can and should point to the excellence of its faculty scholars.**

- Recommendation 23: That the Department be vigilant about graduate admissions criteria, ensuring that the students admitted to the **M.A.** hold a **B.A.** Honours degree in French or its equivalent.
- Recommendation 24: That faculty members teach graduate students in separate graduate courses as part of their course load when feasible (**i.e.** when there are four students or more). Failing that number of students, the Panel believes that independent study options are preferable to cross-listing graduate and fourth-year courses. Faculty should have the option of taking remuneration for such independent study supervision in the form of a research stipend or credit towards future course release.
- Recommendation 25: That the Department be encouraged in its initiative for an interdisciplinary coursework **M.A.** calling upon the resources of the Departments of French and Spanish, and Linguistics, and the Faculty of Education and aiming to serve the needs of French teachers in the school system.
- Recommendation 26. That the Department be encouraged in its effort to propose a graduate diploma in translation which might lead in the future to an **M.A.** option.

5.0 The Spanish Programme

5.1 The Spanish curriculum as described in the Calendar seems appropriate for an institution wishing to give its undergraduate students the opportunity to begin the study of an important world language and the literature its speakers have produced. However, there is a notable absence of fourth-year courses which are important for a Major programme. The Panel believes the Department should encourage courses in the areas of Film & Literature, Hispanic Literature by Women Writers, Gender and Literature, Translation, and Spanish for Business, none of which are presently taught but all of which would be valuable adjuncts to the present curriculum. These courses could be offered in one semester with pre-requisites as deemed necessary. With the presence of a second faculty member the Spanish section might now consider the advisability of offering these courses.

5.2 With the signing of the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between Canada, the US and Mexico, courses in translation and Business Spanish have attracted many students from other Departments in the university community, such as Political Science and Business Administration. In particular the advantages of studying Spanish should be pointed out to those students registered in the various Business programmes. Canada is just about to sign another

commercial treaty with the countries of the MERCOSUR agreement. This should only add to the potential students for the programmes.

Recommendation 27: That the Department encourage the Spanish section to develop new courses that would reflect more appropriately the interests and needs of present students.

5.3 Study abroad opportunities are very desirable and necessary in the field of languages. They tend to increase students' interest in the discipline while, at the same time, they help to form a much more confident and trained group for the upper-level courses. The exchange program at La Coruña is an excellent learning opportunity for the students. The popularity of the programme might attract more minors and majors. The Department should encourage the initiative for an exchange with the University of Matanzas in Cuba. The Cuban exchange could open the door to students from other departments and areas of the University with an interest in Latin America. Furthermore, Cuba would be a more affordable place to travel to and live in making it attractive to those students who find La Coruña expensive. The Panel feels the promotional brochure for La Coruña could be improved by adding colour and using better quality paper and more pictures.

Recommendation 28: That the Department be encouraged in its efforts to establish a study abroad programme in Cuba

5.4 While in other parts of Canada departments are faced with the problem of declining enrolments in French and explosive enrolments in Spanish, at Memorial the percentage of students taking Spanish is a low 10% of the Department's overall population. The number of Spanish students increased from 341 in 1998-99 to 346 in 2002-03, an increase of only 5 students. The Panel was told that this low enrolment resulted from the isolation of Newfoundland which did not promote the development of a Hispanic community, the lack of Spanish in the provincial education curriculum and hence the absence of Spanish from the list of teachable subjects considered by the Faculty of Education, and the sequential mode of delivery of the courses. While some members of the Department praised the rigour of the Spanish programme, other faculty members felt that the low numbers in Spanish had more to do with an antiquated methodology, curriculum, and mode of delivery.

5.5 With the second language requirement an increase in Spanish enrolments might have been expected. At the same time in other parts of Atlantic Canada having similar historical and social factors to those in Newfoundland the growth of Spanish is very healthy. At seven Maritime universities - St. Thomas, Mount Allison, Dalhousie, St. Mary's, Mount St. Vincent, St. Francis Xavier, and Acadia - numbers in Spanish Studies have increased from 54% to 103% in the last decade. In Prince Edward Island, four years ago there were 48 students enrolled in the Spanish programme at the university. Today there are 180 students. Prince Edward Island does not offer Spanish in the high schools. Since the Panel learned that there are five high schools in St. John's which offer Spanish, this should have encouraged higher enrolments in the Spanish programme at

Memorial. Offering them a waiver or the opportunity to challenge for credit as suggested in Recommendation 8 above should also be an incentive for these high school students to continue their studies in Spanish.

5.6 The sequential nature of the programme need not lead to low numbers of majors and minors. It is true that students need to plan further in advance and be aware at an earlier stage of their programme that they want to minor or major in Spanish. At the University of Prince Edward Island, however, where only one faculty member and two sessional instructors teach Spanish, the programme has 3 majors and 14 minors. The students have to complete 14 credits in Spanish to get their Major, two of which must be done at another university. At Memorial students in Spanish are required to complete only 12 courses for their Major. To bring the Spanish Major into line with that in French the Department should consider increasing the required number of courses to 14. The additional full time faculty member should permit the scheduling of two 3000 level courses per semester to allow students to complete their programmes in a timely manner. The Department should also encourage its majors to include in their programmes courses which have an 80% Spanish or Latin American content from other departments such as Political Science, and consider including some of them in the courses required for the Major. With these changes, the exchange program at La Coruña, the proposed exchange in Cuba, and the resources from the university community, the Spanish programmes should be able to increase their enrolment to higher levels.

Recommendation 29: That the Department consider requiring 14 courses for the Spanish Major.

Recommendation 30: That the Spanish section encourage its majors to enrich their programme with complementary courses from other departments.

5.7 The formation of a Spanish students' club with links to the Hispanic community in St John's could encourage participation in and add visibility to the programme. As an ad hoc to the club, films could be shown each semester in the evening giving the community and the students a chance to mingle. Older films not always of the highest quality based on literary texts have been used to support classroom instruction. Showing some of the highly acclaimed and more modern films from Latin America and Spain would attract a large audience from the university and the community. A number of other social activities could be incorporated as part of the club. The *Cercle français* enjoys great popularity with the students and staff. The Spanish area should be encouraged to develop a similar cultural club.

Recommendation 31: That the Department encourage the formation of a Spanish Students' Club with links to the Hispanic community.

5.8 The subject of accessible and reliable multi-media equipment was raised. It was pointed out that in most cases the equipment is old and does not work properly. The Department should encourage the efforts to introduce Hispanic culture into the classroom via reliable multi-media

equipment. The teaching and acquisition of a second language is greatly enhanced if classrooms are equipped with the technology needed to deliver these courses. The University does not expect a Chemistry or Physics class to operate without the support of a well equipped classroom and lab. The same rationale should be applied to the teaching of a second language. Thus the University should provide the Department of French and Spanish with multi-media classrooms.

Recommendation 32: That the Department be encouraged to expand its efforts to introduce Hispanic culture into the classroom via multi-media presentations.

5.9 The Spanish programme should be commended for its efforts in the usage of the Language Laboratories. Syllabi from two instructors indicated they each gave a percentage to lab work in their marking schemes for the Introductory course. These two sections of Introductory Spanish are very close in course content, pedagogy, and weight of marks. It is essential that this uniformity in content, texts used, weight of assignments, and exams be maintained in all multi-section courses.

5.10 The Panel also received syllabi from one instructor teaching upper level courses. They show a very well planned and impressive selection of the subject matter: challenging yet not impossible for the students to achieve.

6.0 Faculty

6.1 Regular faculty members teach five courses over two semesters which is the norm within the Faculty of Arts. As pointed out above, most graduate teaching usually cannot be included in that course load. For that reason in particular very few faculty are involved in graduate teaching; most of their teaching is at the undergraduate level from the second to the fourth year. Undergraduate students would thus appear to have more opportunity of being exposed to the scholarly expertise of Department members than would graduate students. Furthermore two of the more active teachers in the graduate programme will be the earliest retirements. If the Department wishes to maintain an active graduate programme in accordance with the University's priorities, this will need to be considered when appointments are made.

6.2 In that regard employment equity might continue to be a consideration in such appointments. Two of the newest members of the Department are female. Of the 17 members of the Department, including the Dean and the Associate Dean of Arts, however, six, or just over a third, are female.

6.3 Of the 15 regular members currently teaching, six are over 50. At the other end of the spectrum, the two youngest members are between 35 and 39. The Department expects two colleagues to retire by 2005-2006 and a further eight, including one member of the Spanish section, by 2014.

6.4 This report has already pointed out how the immediate retirements will impact the graduate and upper-level undergraduate French programmes. It has also supported the initiatives which the Department has put forward and made suggestions of its own. The Department, however, needs to consider where it wants to be in seven years, to develop a plan to help it to prioritise these proposals and to achieve its objectives, and to determine its needs for new faculty in accordance with it.

Recommendation 33: That the Department establish a committee to draft a mission statement, a vision of how its members see themselves in seven years, and a strategic plan. The Department should reach a consensus on this.

6.5 Even though Newfoundland and Labrador is the province with the smallest French population in Canada, it has a rich French history and an unique element with the presence of the French community of Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon off its south coast. Those factors should encourage the Department to have a specialisation in French Newfoundland studies. The Review Panel supports its effort to hire a Faculty member in this area. Further collaboration with other Departments in this field begun with the creation of the *Groupe d'etudes franco-terreneuviennes* should be expanded. A Web site collecting various information has been put in place and is growing. Those initiatives should be encouraged and publicised within the community.

Recommendation 34: That when the Department has hired a specialist in French Newfoundland studies it explore opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration with colleagues in Departments such as History, Linguistics and Folklore as appropriate.

6.6 The current Head of the Department and the First Year Coordinator received much praise for their work and their dealings with those in the Department on an individual and collective basis. There were, however, some suggestions for change. One member felt that the Department could operate just as effectively without its Steering Committee especially as it lacked representation from the Spanish section. The desirability of integrating contractuales and per-course appointees into the decision-making of the Department especially relating to the first-year courses will be discussed below. Prompt faculty responses to requests particularly from the support staff would also improve the administration of the Department. The Department might also be more systematic in its collection of statistics and information about its graduates, for instance. The latter in particular could assist the Department in its recruitment of students.

6.7 As has already been indicated on several occasions in this report, contractuales play an important role in the first-year and, to a certain extent, the second-year teaching within the Department of French and Spanish. In the Winter 2004 semester only four of 29 sections of first-year French and two of six sections of first-year Spanish were being offered by tenured or tenure-track faculty. Even more disturbing to some of the permanent members of the Department was the fact that 11 of 13 second-year French courses were being taught by non-permanent instructors. This past

semester the Department had eight contractual and 12 per-course appointees. Of these nine, or less than half, were under 40 while 12 of those appointees are current or retired high school teachers.

6.8 This reality is a direct consequence of the service role the Department provides to the University especially in teaching as outlined in section 2.8 above. Obviously, the regular faculty members cannot provide all the required sections each semester without jeopardizing the offering of upper-level courses. It is, however, at a point where some contractuels can be considered “regular” members of the Department as they are hired each year.

6.9 Unfortunately the hiring process does not reflect this reality. Contractuels felt that the Department should be in a position to offer more contracts in the Spring when planning for the Fall semester had been completed. The Panel recognises that actual enrolment figures must be available before all such hirings can be finalised. It believes, however, that the Department should consider the possibility of introducing a smoother mechanism for the hiring of contractuels. Furthermore the Department should recognise the crucial role these instructors play, their devotion to teaching, and their desire for professional development by considering the possibility of creating some 12-month positions as professional language teachers, a suggestion which was also made by the contractuels themselves. Although administrative and/or budget constraints may create obstacles to this idea, it should be seriously considered by the Department because of the specific nature of first-year teaching.

6.10 The Department also needs to consider other ways in which it can improve the low morale it reported among contractuels and which they themselves reflected. The latter contended that their small offices which up to three of them were required to share indicated the low esteem in which they were held and adversely impacted their ability to provide effective individual instruction and advice to students and to conduct end of semester interviews. More significantly, they pointed out that while they were sometimes invited to Departmental meetings, they did not have a vote. Furthermore many such meetings were closed to them. It was not clear to the Panel, however, if or to what extent these instructors were included in the lengthy discussions which have taken place about the first-year French courses. Lack of participation might not only increase job insecurity for the contractuels but also inhibit mutual understanding between them and the regular faculty about the relationship between the first-year courses and the rest of the undergraduate programme, something which the self study admitted was a problem.

Recommendation 35: **That the Department explore the option of creating some 12-month renewable positions as professional language teachers. Such instructors would teach from September to April as well as teaching two courses in either the Intersession or the Summer session. This would allow for one month per year for professional development as well as one month vacation. Failing this, that the Department endeavour to inform contractual faculty in the Spring whether or not they would be re-hired in the Fall.**

Recommendation 36: **That contractuels should be represented at Departmental meetings, and their representative(s) should have a vote at such meetings on programme issues.**

7.0 **Staff**

7.1 The Department now has a support staff of two - a Departmental Secretary and an Administrative Staff Specialist. It lost a second secretarial position in 1999. The workload for the staff has, however, significantly increased as a result of growing numbers of regular, contractual and per-course faculty, expanding student enrolments, and new programmes. In 1996-1997 the Department had 1,875 enrolments in 118 sections; in 2002-2003 the figures were 3,600 and 126 respectively. Although the number of regular teaching faculty has decreased, the increasing use of non-regular appointees has meant that the overall faculty numbers have grown. As a result the staff can no longer provide all the services to the faculty which they once did, a matter of frustration to those faculty members who also addressed this issue. Unraveling the red tape associated with the employment of two instructors from France and the participation of Memorial students in the new programmes at Nice, Bordeaux, and La Coruiia, and liaising with the coordinator at Nice, among other things, have added to the staffs responsibilities. As neither of the two current support staff speaks French or Spanish this must add to their difficulties in dealing with these individuals and programmes. The Administrative Staff Specialist also has responsibility for two other budgets, those for the Frecker and La Coruiia programmes, besides that of the Department. It is not surprising, therefore, that these two individuals indicated that they believed their workload was heavier than those in similar positions in the Faculty of Arts, that they did a considerable amount of overtime including working at home and at the weekend, and that they were experiencing stress to the point where it was causing health problems.

7.2 The Department has used work term students to help fill this gap. This, however, has not been a satisfactory solution as such students are not always available and when they are, they require constant supervision. The support staff believes, and the Panel concurs, that another permanent position would allow the staff to provide better service and perform more efficiently.

7.3 The Department is also having difficulty meeting the minimum requirements for the provision of computer equipment under the collective agreement. Regular faculty often have to make do with outdated and unreliable computers and software; contractual and per-course instructors have to share computers. In addition the photocopier is barely meeting departmental demand while the network faculty printers need replacing. Updating this equipment might help to alleviate some of the pressure on the support staff.

Recommendation 37: **That the Department Head communicate to the faculty members the job descriptions of the two support staff as well as the prioritisation of their duties.**

- Recommendation **38**: That another office staff member should be appointed who ideally would have a basic knowledge of French and Spanish.
- Recommendation **39**: That the current support staff should be given release time in order to learn French **and/or** Spanish.
- Recommendation **40**: That the University should update the Department's equipment.

8.0 Space

8.1 Office space in particular is a matter of concern to all associated with the Department of French and Spanish. As already mentioned, it was raised by the contractual and per-course appointees; the support staff pointed out that they have only one office which receives a high volume of traffic; permanent faculty including the Head reiterated the point made in the self study that SN-4053 must serve many functions besides being a seminar room. In addition while most faculty offices are in the Science Building, they are not all clustered near the Departmental office. Furthermore, offices for faculty and graduate students are located in two other building while the office of the *Cercle français* is in a third. The Panel agrees with the Department that cramped quarters, dispersal and multi-purposing do not promote departmental identity, coherence and harmony.

- Recommendation **41**: That the Department ask the University to review the provision of space to it with a view to increasing the amount of office space and providing a **common/lounge** space.

8.2 In addition to office and meeting space, classroom space was also an issue. Faculty were assigned classrooms throughout the university. More important, however, to faculty, especially those interested in new methodologies of language instruction, was the equipment within those classrooms. The importance of modern technology was specifically discussed above with reference to Spanish classroom instruction. Audio-visual equipment delivered to French and Spanish classes was frequently outdated and did not work properly. Access to the new hi-tech classrooms was at best severely restricted.

- Recommendation **42**: That the Department ask the University to provide classrooms for French and Spanish instruction that enable faculty to teach **making** use of technology (**e.g.** internet access) and that up-to-date audio-visual equipment in good working order be available for use in the classroom. This would include laptop computers, data projectors, VCRs and **DVDs** as well as audio equipment.

8.3 The Department shares the facilities of the Audio and Multi-Media Language Laboratories with two other departments. The former can accommodate 35 students; the latter, 42. This puts a

limit on the number of students in a section who can be accommodated as a unit within the labs. This may explain why French students do not have a set weekly class in the labs and do not make as much use of them as do Spanish students for whom the weekly lab session is still a requirement. In addition student performance in the labs is not always adequately monitored especially by instructors; course delivery has been hampered by the lack of financial and personnel resources to develop new software; equipment needs updating at least to the level of that at Sir Wilfrid Grenfell College ; and the organization of the labs needs consideration. Attention to these issues should allow the labs to provide better service and encourage students to make more and better use of them.

Recommendation 43: **That the Department consult with the Language Labs Director for advice on the need to upgrade equipment in order to provide the University with a list of requirements.**

9.0 Budget

9.1 The Department reported that its operating budget had remained constant at \$25,918 since 1999 until 2004 when it received an additional \$650. The Department's budget for extra teaching, however, had increased significantly from \$37,959 in 1996-1997 to \$366,746 in 2002-2003. This was the result of a decline in permanent faculty, an increase in student enrolments, and hence the increase in contractual and per-course appointees. The Department is exploring ways of decreasing this amount. This report has recognized, nevertheless, that if the Department is to continue its service functions in particular it should receive the funds necessary to do so. The Panel has also recognized that additional spending appears necessary in other areas such as the purchase of new equipment to enhance the delivery of the Department's programmes.

9.2 There is a separate budget for each of the Frecker and La Coruña programmes. Students attending the former receive a bursary, the result of provincial government support which has been provided annually thus far. The Department should explore means of providing students in its La Coruña and year-abroad in Nice programmes with some form of financial support. This might be done by charging the participants full Memorial tuition fees and letting them have the difference between those fees and the ones charged by the host university plus any administrative costs, if this total is less, as a bursary.

Recommendation 44: **That the Department look into the feasibility and desirability of having participants in study abroad options pay Memorial fees. Once the fees of the host university and administrative costs have been paid any funds remaining should go to the students as a bursary.**

10.0 Conclusion

10.1 The Department has proposed several initiatives which the Panel endorses. These include the diploma in translation and the BA in International Communications at the undergraduate level, the offering of courses in French by other Departments, the multi-disciplinary M.A. at the graduate level, and the expansion of teaching and research in the area of French Newfoundland Studies. The latter two proposals would increase the Department's cooperation with other departments while helping to fulfill the University's goals of expanding graduate programmes and conducting research relating to the province. The Panel feels confident that enrolments, majors and minors in Spanish will grow now that an additional member has been appointed. It encourages the continuation of study abroad programmes in both French and Spanish and the development of new ones as a means not only of increasing the number of majors and minors in both languages but also of offering Memorial students the opportunity to immerse themselves in a different culture using a different language. The Panel supports the acquisition of new equipment for the Department, the Language Labs and classroom teaching so that language instruction can be provided more effectively. It urges the Department to develop a mission statement and a vision for itself and to draw up a strategic plan based on them. It believes, however, that the Department must first deal with its internal tensions and divisions as these appear not only to have had an impact on personal relations but, more importantly, on the development of courses and programmes. Action in this area would seem to be a necessary prelude to a review of the department's current offerings and to its planning for the future. All of this should ensure the Department's continued development and success within the Faculty, the University and the region and allow it to contribute to Memorial's growing reputation as an important national comprehensive university.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

REVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH AND SPANISH

- Recommendation 1: That an outside conciliator should be appointed to assist the Department in establishing a work covenant (collegial **working** relationship).
- Recommendation 2: That the Department seek clarification from the Faculty of Arts regarding the expectations of the second language requirement as far as developing language proficiency in **oral/aural skills** as well as in **reading/writing** and cultural awareness. Once this is done, that the Department examine its proposed new first-year course, along with its existing first-year courses and any other proposed solutions in order to determine whether the class **size/format/method** of delivery can allow for the achievement of the expectations of the second language requirement.
- Recommendation 3: That the Faculty of Arts provide adequate resources to the Department so that it may provide courses allowing students to satisfy the second language requirement in a meaningful way.
- Recommendation 4: That there be evaluation of contractually' language proficiency as a means of determining the appropriate levels at which they may teach.
- Recommendation 5: That the current online diagnostic test (or an alternative one) be made compulsory so that students are streamed into the appropriate first-year course. This recommendation includes giving the Department the right to be the final arbiter of the appropriate first-year course for students.
- Recommendation 6: That contractually be given professional development assistance by workshops, especially at the beginning of the year, as well as in-class observation with formative feedback, in order to help them achieve the Department's goals.
- Recommendation 7: That there be consultation concerning textbook choice, not only with the faculty, but also with contractually and that furthermore both faculty and contractually have a vote on such decisions.
- Recommendation 8: That the Department consider recommending to the Faculty of Arts a waiver of the second language requirement for students having completed Grade 12 core French. Similarly, that a waiver

of Spanish **1000** be awarded to students having completed one year of high school Spanish and a waiver of Spanish **1001** be awarded to students having completed two years of high school Spanish. Furthermore, that all such waivers should be automatic and that students should be so informed. Students wishing to obtain university credit for courses completed in high school should be informed of the challenge for credit procedures.

- Recommendation **9**: That the Department establish core content areas for each of the language courses from the first to the fourth year, and that the sequencing of these courses be **carefully** planned. That, furthermore, appropriate pre-requisites be set for each course.
- Recommendation **10**: That the Department set goals and standards for all multi-section courses and that there be coordination of multi-section courses beyond the first year.
- Recommendation **11**: That the Department consider introducing an oral component into the French language courses at the second, third and **fourth**-year levels.
- Recommendation **12**: That the Department consider creating an advanced oral French course at the third or fourth-year level.
- Recommendation **13**: That the Department consider creating lab sections in which students register so that they commit themselves to going to the lab at a certain hour each week. Awarding a percentage of the course mark to lab work might improve attendance at the lab.
- Recommendation **14**: That the Department advise incoming students from immersion programmes to consider taking **210012101** rather than **215912160** if they plan to take a Major.
- Recommendation **15**: That the Department consider increasing the expectations of reading in French **260112602**. Without sacrificing the benefits of training in intensive reading, it might be possible to ask students to do some extensive reading as well.
- Recommendation **16**: That the Department be invited to determine core courses in French, aside from language classes, to be required of major, honours and minor students.
- Recommendation **17**: That the Department encourage all major, honours and minor students to meet with the Departmental Undergraduate Advisor at least once a year in order to plan their programme.

- Recommendation 18: That the Department be encouraged to propose a diploma programme in translation.
- Recommendation 19: That the Department pursue the idea of a **B.A.** in International Communication.
- Recommendation 20: That the Department be encouraged to develop courses in French literature in translation to serve the needs of allied departments.
- Recommendation 21: That the Department seek funding to create up-to-date and visually attractive promotional materials about its graduate programme.
- Recommendation 22: That the Department promote its **M.A.** programme nationally and in the eastern United States. The Department can and should point to the excellence of its faculty scholars.
- Recommendation 23: That the Department be vigilant about graduate admissions criteria, ensuring that the students admitted to the **M.A.** hold a **B.A.** Honours degree in French or its equivalent.
- Recommendation 24: That faculty members teach graduate students in separate graduate courses as part of their course load when feasible (**i.e.** when there are four students or more). Failing that number of students, the Panel believes that independent study options are preferable to cross-listing graduate and fourth-year courses. Faculty should have the option of **taking** remuneration for such independent study supervision in the form of a research stipend or credit towards future course release.
- Recommendation 25: That the Department be encouraged in its initiative for an interdisciplinary coursework **M.A.** calling upon the resources of the Departments of French and Spanish, and Linguistics, and the Faculty of Education and aiming to serve the needs of French teachers in the school system.
- Recommendation 26: That the Department be encouraged in its effort to propose a graduate diploma in translation which might lead in the future to an **M.A.** option.
- Recommendation 27: That the Department encourage the Spanish section to develop new courses that would reflect more appropriately the interests and needs of present students.
- Recommendation 28: That the Department be encouraged in its efforts to establish a

study abroad programme in Cuba

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