

Department of Modern Languages & Literatures Goals and Priorities for AY 2022/2023

Submitted September 16, 2022, by Professor Francie Cate-Arries and Tomo Sasaki

Faculty Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention

- Faculty hiring in the department remains highly restricted. In the interest of social justice for the most vulnerable positions, the department seeks to prevent the normalization of hiring adjuncts instead of fulltime, benefit-carrying Visiting Assistant Professors and Lecturers on a track to Senior Lecturers.
- MLL will work with the relevant offices on campus to develop an employment structure for NTEs that is fair. Jennifer Gully, Senior Lecturer in German Studies, is currently a member of the A&S committee for the Term Faculty Framework. During the Sept 12-Sept 16, 2022 Listening Sessions conducted by Dean Maria Velleca and Vice-Dean Silvia Tandeciarz, MLL representatives energetically intervened to express NTE concerns about a variety of points included in the draft. These concerns are now undergoing review by the TFF committee members, before the final draft is brought to the floor of the October A&S meeting.
- Continue to offer Chinese for Heritage Learners (CHIN 111 and CHIN 211), a two-semester sequence that enables students who grew up speaking some Mandarin but have limited proficiency in reading and writing to fulfill the FLP requirement. These courses serve the AAPI community on campus and contribute directly to the departments D&I initiatives. After several years of promoting the Chinese for Heritage Learners courses and cultivating contacts with student groups such as the Chinese Students Organization (CSO), the fall 2022 section of CHIN 111 is full at 20 students. The Chinese program and MLL want to build on this success by continuing to staff this course, preferably with a highly qualified, full-time faculty member who is either a visiting J-1 scholar or NTE instructor.

Student Recruitment, Retention, and Support

- The Diversity and Inclusion Committee will continue to evaluate the MLL Climate Survey and address issues brought up by students (in particular, those related to race and class).
- The four co-PIs on Project Global Officer, all MLL faculty, are working to recruit ROTC students into critical language programs (Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Russian) at W&M and to recruit students from historically underrepresented groups for summer overseas and domestic programs funded by Project GO that will be held in June-July of 2023 at National Central University (Taiwan), European Humanities University (Lithuania), and on the W&M campus. In the summer of 2022, MLL Project Go faculty ran two 8-week programs, Chinese Studies in Taiwan and Russian Studies on W&M campus.
- MLL faculty, energized by two Spring semester MLL D&I-sponsored events—a Narrative 4 workshop for faculty and students, promoting empathy across difference through story-telling, led by MLL D&I committee member, French & Francophone Lecturer Angela Leruth; and a guest speaker who provided a workshop for MLL faculty about Best Practices for teaching “difficult” or polemical topics related to racial/social/sexuality inequality—continue to discuss how to integrate Narrative 4-type exercises into classroom assignments.

The Curriculum

- Various on-campus COLL 300 International Perspectives and 350 Difference, Equity and Social Justice offerings are planned for AY 2022/2023. A two-day A&S funded MLL-sponsored retreat for MLL faculty to collaborate and design course proposals for these COLL courses took place on Aug. 21 and Aug. 22, 2022. MLL faculty will continue to engage in course design and implementation of these COLL requirements.
- MLL is currently proposing a new course whereby students can earn COLL 300 credit for the experience of living in the Language Houses, which MLL faculty run, bringing in International Fellows from around the world to live in our designated residence halls and organize cultural activities. We plan to pilot this course in Fall 2023 and Spring 2024.
- MLL will work with the Dean's Office to ensure that the sustainable curriculum efforts directly address diversity and inclusion. The MLL Chair plans to collaborate this year with WMSURE to publicize our curricular offerings and study abroad opportunities for underrepresented students, in an outreach effort to attract more students from this cohort.
- MLL will work to ensure that the "Foreign Language" Proficiency (FLP) remains an integral part of the COLL curriculum so that all students may benefit from exposure to other languages and cultures.
- One of our MLL D&I Committee student representatives raised the question of possibility of W&M offering sign language courses. Our D&I Committee is currently conducting research about our peer institutions to gather information about curricular offerings in this area, and will also contact the American Sign Language Club on campus. After writing a report on this issue, we would like to start a discussion about the possibility of offering sign language classes in MLL, an idea that has long been supported by the W&M Linguistics program.

Department Climate and Resources

- Our D&I Committee student representatives in the past have played a large role in our efforts and we will continue to maintain students—at least two of them, preferably majors/minors from different programs—as Committee members. One representative who has continued since last year is student in both Hispanic and Japanese studies. We are currently in the process of recruiting one more student, hopefully from other MLL fields.
- We will renew our request for a gender-neutral bathroom in Washington Hall.