

Strategic Plan for 2023-2028

Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures

Approved by faculty vote on April 13, 2023

Mission Statement

The Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures (LAN) dedicates itself to the intellectual and experiential development of its students by offering courses of the highest caliber in language, culture, literature, linguistics, and pedagogy. We are proud to foster a global citizenry as expressed in the strategic plans of Illinois State University and the College of Arts and Sciences, and we share the commitment to internationalize the curriculum with ISU's international strategic planning documents. Furthering these goals, we continue to enhance our offerings, raise awareness about the critical role of languages in a global society, and place our unique learning and expertise at the service of Illinois State University, the people of Illinois, and the academic community.

Core Values

Consistent with the strategic plans of Illinois State University and the College of Arts and Sciences, we in LAN value:

Multilingualism

We value the practicality of knowing more than one language in a multilingual world. We are committed to the study of languages, literatures, and cultures to develop important intellectual skills: approaching the world with empathy and curiosity; understanding, appreciating, and engaging with knowledge produced in other languages and cultural contexts; exploring other perspectives and points of view to deepen cultural knowledge and develop intercultural competency. We view the interrogation of one's own position in the world as essential to learning from others' experiences and ways of knowing. We appreciate cultural and linguistic diversity in our society and in our world, and we value the lifelong learning and cognitive benefits inherent in nurturing bilingual/multilingual skills.

Learning and Scholarship

We value the active pursuit of new knowledge through research and its dissemination through publication and teaching. We study and teach languages with the goal of communicating across languages and cultures. The disciplines of theoretical and applied linguistics, and literary and cultural studies, are fields that examine how language works and how literature and other forms of cultural expression reflect and inflect the human experience, universally and in culturally specific terms. We are seriously committed to the scholar-teacher model in keeping with the

longstanding goals of the college and the university. We believe the two roles are indissolubly intertwined. Just as teaching benefits from research conducted outside the classroom, research benefits from ideas first generated as part of course preparation. Our research and teaching foster innovative thinking, engagement with diverse perspectives, and lifelong learning.

Teaching and Individualized Attention

We value the development of skills necessary for lifelong learning, critical thinking, and engaged citizenship within a global society. We foster the development of marketable, transferable skills among students: effective reading, writing, listening, and speaking in one's first/heritage and additional languages; development of cultural knowledge and intercultural communication skills; critical and creative thinking; research strategies and practices; information literacy and fluency, and formation of evidence-based arguments; and collaborative learning and problem solving. Our student-centered instruction, along with strong academic support services, proactive and responsive advisement, and active student organizations, offer community and expand learning outside of the classroom—all of which cultivates belonging and encourages thriving. We value the development of undergraduate and graduate programs of the highest standards.

Collaboration

We value engagement with students and faculty of other disciplines as part of our contribution to the overall quality of scholarship, learning, and teaching at Illinois State University. We value LAN's partnership with interdisciplinary programs across campus, contributing to course offerings and extra-curricular programming to maintain active dialogues on vital issues related to language, culture, and the humanities. As a department of languages, literatures, and cultures, we must perform and indeed seek to expand our role in developing and supporting the global dimension of higher education both inside the university and within our local, state, national, and international communities.

Shared Governance

We value the diversity of ideas, academic freedom, cooperation, and collegiality among faculty members. The enfranchisement of all members of the department is essential to setting and managing departmental goals and priorities. We value participation at all levels of administrative organization of the college and the university as part of our role as members of a thriving academic community.

Equity, Diversity, Access, and Inclusion

We are committed to fostering a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion through the teaching of languages, literatures, and cultures. We value diverse perspectives and teach the skills of intercultural dialogue to empower our students to think critically, engage in informed discussions, challenge existing viewpoints, and navigate the complexities of our global society. As scholars in our field, we are acutely aware of how linguistic and cultural hierarchies shape our society and limit access to knowledge and power. We recognize and seek to address the historical inequities that have shaped access to higher education and representation within our disciplines, striving to create a more equitable and just world. Our goal is to create a welcoming and inclusive environment that promotes the intellectual and personal growth of all students.

Strategic Goals and Actions

LAN will ensure long-term success in meeting and exceeding our goals by strategically investing in our faculty, staff, and students, as well as in our facilities and intellectual environment. We are committed to collaborating with other units on campus involved with international education and promoting the importance of language and culture in any such endeavors. Given that our core mission has always centered on international and global issues through the study of languages, literatures, and cultures, we contribute international and intercultural perspectives to the curriculum and to the intellectual life of ISU.

Goal 1. Increase LAN participation in discussions and initiatives involving international engagement on campus and abroad, intercultural perspectives in the curriculum and in the community, and preparation of students to thrive in a culturally diverse, multilingual world.

Actions

- a. Promote the rigorous study of languages, literatures, and cultures as central and indispensable to any international engagement.
- b. Regularly organize campus events related to cultural and linguistic diversity in the US and abroad.
- c. Promote proficiency in additional languages.
- d. Promote Internationalize Your Major (IYM). Continue to develop, share, and update plans of study that add a second major or minor in a language and/or study abroad to other majors across campus. Continue to advocate for the recognition of second majors and minors as a record of LAN's productivity and as a valuable contribution to students' preparation in a variety of fields. Promote language study in fields with high demand for bilingual skills, including business, engineering, education, and the health professions.
- e. Promote the study of language and culture as integral to studying abroad. Increase enrollment in LAN study abroad programs. Seek opportunities to collaborate with other units sponsoring or leading study abroad programs to encourage language development among participants. Propose new study abroad opportunities, particularly in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.
- f. Promote awareness of multilingualism in the US. Develop opportunities to use bilingual skills in internships, courses designed with civic engagement components, and other extra-curricular volunteer opportunities in the community (by partnering, for example, with the Immigration Project, Western Avenue Community Center, Unity Community Center, Community Health Care Clinic, the judicial system, local schools and after school programs, and Chicago Public Schools).
- g. Actively seek opportunities to highlight LAN's mission through such activities as leading workshops at the Center for Integrated Professional Development, participating in the International Engagement Seminar Series, creating a visible presence at study abroad

fairs, inviting speakers related to our research on campus, and promoting our scholarship and good works through the CAS newsletter and other venues.

- h. Promote interdisciplinary initiatives across campus (e.g., African Studies; East Asian Studies; Ethnic Studies; European Studies; Film and Digital Media; Latin American and Latino/a Studies; Native American Studies; Middle East and Southeast Asian Studies; Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies; Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; etc.). Promote opportunities for our students to explore (through general education or elective credits) other fields of study that overlap with ours, especially in the humanities and social sciences.
- i. Foster relationships within the State of Illinois with such groups as the Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies (CEAP), the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLAC), and the European Union Center at the University of Illinois; the Instituto Cervantes, Newberry Library, Alliance Française, and Istituto Italiano di Cultura in Chicago; etc.
- j. Address the affinity interests of ISU students from countries and cultures not represented in the LAN curriculum by inviting available speakers (e.g., the Polish Consul General of Chicago, Crossroad Project guests of the Department of Theater and Dance, etc.).
- k. Explore the possibility of creating a LAN Translation and Interpretation Services resource to connect faculty and students with bilingual skills to translation and interpretation needs at ISU and in the community.

Goal 2. Continue to make innovative revisions to our academic programs and courses to meet the employment needs of our 21st-century students, while still emphasizing the importance of a liberal arts education for a well-educated citizenry.

Actions

- a. Continue to enhance current course offerings. Explore the creation of professionalized tracks and/or micro-certifications to better prepare students for careers related to languages, literatures, and cultures. Review courses with the graduate and undergraduate curriculum committees to ensure that LAN curriculum reflects our commitment and responsibility to recruit and retain a diverse student body.
- b. Continue to review and revise the current curriculum so that it aligns with budgets/staffing, evolving educator preparation requirements, and best practices relative to the disciplines and current trends in each.
- c. Implement the recent revisions to the graduate program, including course offerings and changes to the graduate committee structure. Promote the new MA in Spanish to our own majors, students in undergraduate programs at other universities, students at our partner institutions for study abroad, and area teachers.
- d. Explore the possibility of offering online graduate courses and/or certificates for language teachers, especially those teaching language classes on an endorsement, who may benefit from greater training in language pedagogy, as well as classes to bolster language skills and cultural knowledge. Explore fast-track online teacher certification to

address the shortage of world language teachers. Explore the development of an MA in World Languages Teaching.

- e. Explore the development of an accelerated BA/MA in Spanish.
- f. Continue to contribute courses taught in English on a variety of topics in languages, literatures, and cultures to the General Education program and the AMALI graduation requirement. Explore opportunities to contribute to the IDEAS graduation requirement.
- g. Within the parameters of enrollment and budget constraints, explore opportunities to enhance and diversify our language offerings.

Goal 3. Become a World Language Resource Center to develop community among language teachers and support language teaching throughout the state.

Actions

- a. Develop a World Language Teacher Education Advisory Board with LAN faculty and area language teachers to share ideas and materials, promote networking, and advocate for language study in K-12 schools and higher education.
- b. Organize professional development workshops for teacher education candidates, student teachers, and K-12 language teachers throughout the state on topics such as lesson plan development, incorporation of culture, teaching in the target language, teaching heritage learners, resume writing for the education field, etc.

Goal 4. Recruit, retain, and mentor a diverse and well-prepared cohort of students across all LAN programs.

Actions

- a. Expand outreach initiatives to high school students. Foster club interaction with local high school students. Invite high school students to campus to promote language study.
- b. Promote the Seal of Biliteracy and target recruitment of students from heritage populations (such as the Latino/a and Congolese communities). Promote classes for heritage speakers of Spanish.
- c. Publicize ways to earn academic credit and transcript recognition for language proficiency through the Seal of Biliteracy, Credit for Acquired Proficiency, and the Oral Proficiency Exam.
- d. Continue to provide mentoring, personalized attention, and career-oriented workshops to help students further their own professional development and career goals.
- e. Continue to update classroom and community spaces to ensure best teaching practices, promote community and camaraderie among LAN students and faculty, publicize our programs and activities, and foster intellectual exchange.
- f. Prepare LAN teacher candidates to meet licensure requirements and become future leaders in language and culture teaching circles. Continue to coach teacher candidates toward success on required assessments. Continue to offer workshops and mentoring to

improve pass rates on the first attempt. Develop additional opportunities for language teacher candidates to complete diverse clinical hours.

- g. Continue to enhance and improve students' language proficiency by raising awareness about proficiency development, mentoring students, and offering professional development opportunities for faculty related to language pedagogy. Continue to promote opportunities for students to practice their language skills outside of class (RSO activities, volunteer and civic engagement work in the community, internships, online language partners, etc.) to achieve higher levels of proficiency.

Goal 5. Recruit, retain, and mentor exceptional faculty who are committed to excellence in research and creative activity, teaching, and service.

Actions

- a. Encourage formal and informal opportunities for intellectual exchange both inside and outside the department. Organize regular meetings of the LAN Works in Progress Seminar to publicize and share research.
- b. Encourage formal and informal opportunities to share teaching ideas and strategies inside and outside the department. Organize regular meetings of the LAN Teaching in Progress Seminar to share effective teaching strategies and discuss teaching-related issues.
- c. Promote professional development to ensure classrooms and activities are inclusive and equitable.
- d. Encourage engagement with the scholarship of teaching and learning when research interests align with classroom instruction.
- e. Encourage colleague-to-colleague mentoring and support these efforts where possible with university resources and departmental recognition.
- f. Encourage international faculty and scholarly exchanges by inviting colleagues from abroad to visit, present their work, and, where feasible, teach on the ISU campus. Likewise, encourage LAN faculty to seek opportunities to research, present, and teach abroad.
- g. Regularly review LAN ASPT guidelines to ensure equitable practices in appointment, salary, promotion, and tenure of colleagues.
- h. Cultivate opportunities for collaboration with colleagues at Illinois Wesleyan University, Heartland Community College, Bradley University, and area high schools (e.g., share resources and promotional materials, volunteer as guest speakers, advertise and participate in organized events, open ISU-led study abroad programs and vice versa).

Goal 6. Forge stronger connections to LAN alumni.

Actions

- a. Create a LAN newsletter to highlight department activities, points of pride, alumni accomplishments, and professional opportunities for graduates with bilingual/multilingual skills. Share with current students and alumni.
- b. Revitalize the LAN Alumni Advisory Board and hold annual meetings.

- c. Engage LAN Alumni in recruiting students.
- d. Develop networks of LAN alumni in the teaching profession to serve as cooperating teachers and to mentor our teacher education students. Contact alumni in other fields about networking, internship, and mentoring possibilities, as well as recruitment, etc.
- e. Work with the University's Office of Advancement to encourage alumni giving and major gifts for scholarships, particularly to support study abroad. Consider developing a LAN Teacher Education scholarship to attract the best potential language teachers.
- f. Increase opportunities for students to interact with successful LAN alumni on campus.
- g. Make better use of social media to remain connected to LAN alumni.