

PROGRAM DISCONTINUANCE: AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE, ITALIAN, JAPANESE  
Faculty Comments and Recommendations  
Academic Senate, July 2011

---

*Die Grenzen meiner Sprache bedeuten die Grenzen meiner Welt.*<sup>1</sup> ~ Ludwig Wittgenstein

*Un homme qui parle trois langues est trilingue. Un homme qui parle deux langues est bilingue. Un homme qui ne parle qu'une langue est anglais.*<sup>2</sup> ~ Claude Gagnière

*Con cada lengua que se extingue se borra una imagen del hombre.*<sup>3</sup> ~ Octavio Paz

七転び八起き<sup>4</sup>

*Americans who travel abroad for the first time are often shocked to discover that, despite all the progress that has been made in the last 30 years, many foreign people still speak in foreign languages.* ~ Dave Barry

---

The Foreign Language Department requests that Cabinet consider further compression of the Foreign Language programs rather than the discontinuance of American Sign Language, Italian, and Japanese. Faculty see three possible alternatives to complete discontinuance, which can be taken up individually or in combination. We have set out the compression alternatives, some possible combinations, and the rationale for the College's pursuing one or more of these alternatives instead of discontinuance. As always, faculty are more than willing to work with the administration to explore additional models through which the Foreign Language department may continue to best serve CSM students.

### Faculty Recommendations

*Notitia linguarum est prima porta sapientiae.*<sup>5</sup> ~ Roger Bacon

*A tutto c'è rimedio, fuorchè alla morte.*<sup>6</sup>

1. Compression: Realign all foreign language offerings so students can fulfill IGETC requirements in two semesters, as is currently possible in American Sign Language. In consultation with the deans of Language Arts and Counseling, faculty recently learned of the possibility to bring all of CSM's language offerings into alignment with American Sign Language, such that the two-semester sequence of 111 and 112, reworked and amended to include the cultural component, will fulfill the IGETC requirement. This has the potential to

---

<sup>1</sup> The limits of my language are the limits of my universe.

<sup>2</sup> A man who speaks three languages is trilingual. A man who speaks two languages is bilingual. A man who speaks only one language is English.

<sup>3</sup> For every language that becomes extinct, an image of man disappears.

<sup>4</sup> Fall seven times; stand up eight.

<sup>5</sup> Knowledge of languages is the doorway to wisdom.

<sup>6</sup> There is a cure for everything but death.

guarantee enrollment and persistence, i.e., completion of the compressed series in each of the five languages we hope to continue offering (American Sign, Chinese, Italian, Japanese and Spanish).

*No man should travel until he has learned the language of the country he visits. Otherwise he voluntarily makes himself a great baby, –so helpless and so ridiculous.*

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

The success of the compression and rotation of the three targeted languages hinges on two factors: the number of semesters required for the student to complete the offering, and the acceptance of that completed offering in fulfillment of IGETC and other transfer agreements. These three languages have had robust enrollments; the audience is definitely there. We believe a shortened path to completion will extend the success of the beginning level courses throughout the transfer sequences.

2. Rotation: Offer a complete transfer sequence of American Sign Language, Italian, and Japanese courses in rotation so that each language would be available to students once every three years.
3. Selective Discontinuance: Retain one of the three languages slated for discontinuance.

*I speak Spanish to God,  
Italian to women, French  
to men, and German to  
my dog.*

~ Emperor Charles V

### Justification and Rationale

君子食无求饱，居无求安，敏于事而慎于言，就有道而正焉，可谓好学也已。<sup>7</sup>

~孔子

In today's world of global citizens, more people are pursuing world language learning due to economic, political and personal needs; as such, foreign languages are an integral part of the basic skills needed to thrive in today's world. CSM has consistently been the district leader in both breadth and depth of foreign language classes offered and successfully completed, an attribute that enhances the reputation of the College and serves the needs of a very diverse

*If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart.*

~ Nelson Mandela

audience. In fact, CSM is the only college in the county that offers courses in Italian and Japanese. Because we believe that all scholarship begins with language and our ability to see others with empathy and respect, we contend that CSM students would greatly benefit by maintaining a basic and minimal variety of foreign languages for study.

All course offerings in American Sign Language, Italian, and Japanese are AA/AS degree applicable (area 5C) and count as credit for the CSU transfer agreements in area C at the 110

---

<sup>7</sup> When the Superior Man eats he does not try to stuff himself; at rest he does not seek perfect comfort; he is diligent in his work and careful in speech. He avails himself to people of the Tao and thereby corrects himself. This is the kind of person of whom you can say, "he loves learning." Confucius

level. The study abroad program's semester in Italy is quite popular with students, so maintaining Italian would logically support the College's continued participation.

Offering a variety of foreign languages is one of the best ways to demonstrate that CSM is a "comprehensive community college" which offers unique and diverse programs. It also underscores CSM's contribution to strategic planning in the District, whose vision statement begins with this sentence: "The San Mateo Community College District, renowned throughout northern California as an exemplary multi-college district, *inspires a global and diverse community of learners* to achieve intellectual, cultural, social, economic, and personal fulfillment" (emphasis added). We believe any educational organization that aspires to have any sort of global vision must value, at its foundation, multilingual communication and must offer its students the opportunity to study a variety of modern languages.

*The loss of languages is tragic precisely because they are not interchangeable, precisely because they represent the distillation of the thoughts and communication of people over their entire history.*  
~ Marianne Mithun

In addition, we would hope that implementation of the modified Course Outlines would permit us to reinstate the traditional HBA required by university level language courses. All Foreign Language faculty have consistently shown the highest level of professionalism and collegiality by holding office hours and volunteering their own time in the Foreign Language Center. As with other labs, this provides staffing by certificated professors to comply with state requirements, which also improves funding from Sacramento.

*Those who know no foreign language knows nothing of their mother tongue.*  
~ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Finally, the targeted programs will search for ongoing funding from outside sources to support continuance of the programs during the budget crisis period. As Distance Education becomes the trend, the targeted programs will also continue to transition into courses online as well as continue the Foreign Language Department's exploration of the means to offer Honors Programs.

- 
- ✍ Richard Castillo, Professor of Spanish
  - ✍ Jing Wu, Professor of Chinese and ESL
  - ✍ Machiko Conway, Professor of Japanese
  - ✍ Tiziana Balestra, Professor of Italian