



TOPIC: Foreign Language Instruction in the USM: Conversation with the Chief Academic Officers

COMMITTEE: Education Policy

DATE OF COMMITTEE MEETING: November 19, 2012

SUMMARY: In conjunction with the discussion of academic program reviews at the January 2012 meeting of the Committee on Education Policy, Regent Gonzales said that she was intrigued by the decline in foreign language requirements and enrollments at a time when it would seem that it is increasingly important that our citizenry be adept at being able to communicate with others in the world. Regent Florestano said she would like to include a conversation with campus representatives on the topic of foreign language instruction in a future agenda.

Following up on this issue, the System Office of Academic Affairs developed a survey that was disseminated to provosts at the USM institutions; all institutions returned completed surveys to the USM Office, and copies of all completed surveys were shared among the provosts and discussed in some detail at the October meeting of the Academic Affairs Advisory Council.

The foreign language survey produced an array of responses, interesting data, and prompted a robust discussion at the AAAC.

Conclusions from the Foreign Language Report:

1. Every institution is providing courses that meet the needs of curriculum and campus mission.
2. There is recognition of changing demographics and need for professionals (especially health services professionals) to have access to Spanish language courses.
3. Some campuses will be proposing the discontinuation of some language majors (e.g. German or French), keeping these as available minors.
4. There is recognition and serious discussion about the need to enhance access to courses in Arabic, Chinese and other languages with demonstrated need of expertise for international relations and business development.
5. The survey precipitated discussions among the provosts on ways to collaborate among campuses in providing the advanced courses that are more difficult to justify on the basis on student enrollment on one campus. Conversations between campuses will continue.

The provosts are available to respond to questions from members of the Committee. Copies of the individual campus surveys are available on the Board of Regents Portal.

ALTERNATIVE(S): This is a discussion item only.

FISCAL IMPACT: This is a discussion item only.

CHANCELLOR'S RECOMMENDATION: This is a discussion item only.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Received as information. DATE: November 19, 2012

BOARD ACTION: DATE:

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