



University of Colorado **Boulder**

2016 Program Review

Department of Germanic and Slavic  
Languages and Literatures

Academic Review and Planning  
Advisory Committee Final Report

Approved

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul M. ...".

Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs: \_\_\_\_\_ Date

04/14/2017

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## Process Overview

The review of the Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures (GSSL) was conducted in accordance with the 2016 review guidelines. The Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC) conducts and writes the final reviews of Boulder campus academic units. GSSL prepared a self-study, which was reviewed by an internal review committee (IRC) of two CU Boulder faculty members from outside of the department. The internal reviewers certified that the self-study was largely accurate and complete, noting that there were some minor discrepancies between the Office of Data Analytics' (ODA) unit reports and the self-study, which have been since corrected. Other IRC comments are cited at the appropriate points. An external review committee (ERC), consisting of two experts within the discipline from outside of the University of Colorado, visited the unit April 12 and 13, 2016, reviewed the relevant documents, and met with faculty, students, university administrators, and members of ARPAC. The reviewers' comments and recommendations are cited at the appropriate points. This public document reflects the assessments and recommendations for the Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures as approved by ARPAC.

Academic Review  
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## Unit Overview

The campus' standardized description of the Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures, and information regarding comparable units, can be found on the Office of Data Analytics' (ODA) website

<http://www.colorado.edu/oda/institutional-research/institutional-level-data/information-department/academic-review-and-0>).

ODA updates the Department for Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures' (GSL) profile annually in the fall semester. This report cites the ODA data for GSL posted in October 2015, the most recent update available; these figures reflect the state of the unit in academic year (AY) 2014-2015. More recent data, from the revised self-study, is cited where relevant.

The external review committee (ERC) was impressed "by the academic quality of the programs on all levels and by the professionalism, the intellectual engagement, and the vital energy of the people in GSL." The department has three programs: German, Russian, and Nordic. Hebrew has moved since the last review to the Jewish Studies Program, accounting for decreases in the number of faculty and lecturers since the last review.

The German program offers both undergraduate and graduate degrees, including a new PhD, and both graduate and undergraduate interdisciplinary certificates. The Russian program offers a bachelor's and a master's degree and one undergraduate certificate. The Nordic program offers a minor for undergraduates (with a new language requirement) and one undergraduate certificate. Beyond its core language and literature courses, GSL has increased its commitment to interdisciplinarity since the last review. As the self-study points out, the senior faculty have extended their research and teaching into new areas

and new hires were made with the goal of diversifying faculty research and teaching.

Although the number of majors in GSLL is down slightly since the last review, GSLL has a significant number of minors. The ERC found that the number of majors in German and Russian were “comparable to other departments at similar institutions, and significantly better than at many other universities that also cannot draw on a stream of heritage students.” The ERC encouraged the administration to “look beyond the number of majors alone and include double majors and minors.”

#### Personnel and governance

The Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures currently has eleven tenured and tenure-track (TTT) faculty members: four full professors, four associate professors, and three assistant professors. The department has four senior instructors, two instructors, two visiting assistant professors, a lecturer, one graduate part-time instructor (GPTI), nine student teaching assistants (TAs), and two staff members.

The department is governed by by-laws revised in May 2014. A faculty-recommended and dean-appointed chair serves a three-year term. The term is renewable once. There are associate chairs for graduate and undergraduate studies. The bylaws suggest that both German and Russian should be represented in these positions. An elected executive committee assists the chair in the conduct of departmental business, acts as a conduit for communication, and hears student and faculty grievances. The annual merit review committee is made up of senior faculty. However, the internal review committee (IRC) recommended the inclusion of untenured faculty and instructors on the evaluation committee, and GSLL agreed to “discuss practical means to make the peer-review process more inclusive.” The by-laws and

governance structures conform to university norms, and the department appears to be well-governed and collegial.

Research, scholarship, and  
creative work

The faculty are active in their research and scholarship. Besides publishing in the core areas of German, Russian, and Nordic literatures and cultures, the faculty publish scholarly works in theater studies, cultural anthropology, disability studies, gender studies, folklore, history of art, history of science, and Jewish studies. The ERC notes that the faculty in all three programs “maintain significant and nationally, even internationally respected research profiles.” Compared to the rest of the division, the faculty fall in the middle in terms of refereed articles, refereed chapters, and creative works, but they show a high number of edited and refereed books. The self-study notes that GSSL ranks fourth in the Arts & Humanities for the number of refereed books. Faculty have received support from such bodies as the German Academic Exchange Service, the Austrian Ministry of Culture, the National Council for East European and Eurasian Research, and the American Council for International Education, and the Center for Jewish Studies at Harvard University. GSSL faculty have also given a large number of invited lectures and keynote addresses during this period at US and international institutions including Oxford, Cornell, Duke, Stanford, Yale, Vanderbilt, University of Chicago, University of California-Berkeley, The Johns Hopkins University, NYU, CUNY, Tretyakov State Gallery (Moscow), Beijing University of Foreign Languages, Tokyo University, University of Geneva, University of Genoa, University of Zurich, and University of Oslo. Faculty have won a number of awards for their publications.

Undergraduate education

Of the three programs, German has the most teaching faculty, followed by the Russian and Nordic programs. Across all its programs in AY 2014- 2015, the department awarded 20

bachelor's degrees, making it one of the smaller degree programs in the College of Arts and Sciences. Minors are not reported as awarded degrees, and, as the self-study points out, minors account for all the Nordic program's degrees (40 in fall 2015), and minors in German and Russian programs have increased (84 in fall 2015).

Much of the department's teaching serves other departments: 94 percent of the student credit hours (SCH) are taken by non-majors (fourth of 17 units). Despite relatively few majors, enrollment of non-majors in GSSL courses boosts its total SCH per full-time equivalent (FTE) employee to near the university and division medians. The number of SCH taught by tenured and tenure-track (TTT) faculty has increased 35 percent since the last review cycle. TTT faculty now teach 36 percent of SCH, ranking GSSL 29th out of 51 campus units. Instructors now teach 43 percent of SCH (down 14 percent), while graduate part-time instructors (GPTI) and teaching assistants (TAs) account for the remaining 21 percent. The department's distribution across ranks now sits near the median of both the division and the university. Class size is near the division average. The department continues to update its curriculum. Requirements for undergraduate majors in German cover language courses (14-17 hours) and German culture and literature (15-18 hours). Four of the undergraduate courses offered in English have been developed since the last review, and, in addition to hybrid courses and "flipped" classroom learning components, there are now two fully online classes. All language classes in both German and Russian are hybrid.

Requirements for undergraduate majors in Russian include 32-34 hours that can follow a language and culture track, a culture and literature track, or a heritage speaker track. There are twelve



newly developed undergraduate courses in the Russian major since the last review, and three are fully online.

The Nordic minor requires nine hours in language, culture, and society and nine hours in literature. Nordic plans to institute a language requirement in the near future.

The department offers undergraduate certificates with the College of Engineering and Applied Science (in international engineering) and with the Center for Western Civilization. GSSL also participates with the Leeds School of Business in global business programs.

Students rate their academic experience highly. For example, faculty course questionnaire (FCQ) ratings fall in the top third of the division. Again, eighty-six percent of the undergraduates who responded to the internal review committee student survey were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the department as a whole. The largest source of dissatisfaction (20 percent) involved course offerings, with students asking for more courses in German or Russian. According to 98 percent of the undergraduates, the department has a positive environment and is respectful of diversity. The department’s rate for retaining majors is the highest at CU Boulder.

#### Graduate education

In AY 2014-2015, the German MA program enrolled 16 students, and the new Russian MA program drew five graduate students. GSSL awarded a total of five MA degrees. The new German PhD program has eight students, a healthy total, but the program has not been in existence long enough for any of the cohort to graduate.

The small unit size and the variety of degrees and certificates offered has made interdisciplinary collaborations key components of GSSL's graduate programs. For example, the new PhD program links the traditional study of German language and literature to larger social and cultural issues; this mix promises to attract students from a wide variety of backgrounds. Again, the new graduate certificate in critical theory is interdisciplinary and has successfully graduated 27 students from a variety of departments in the humanities and the social sciences since its implementation in 2009. The new MA/BA-MA in Russian studies has just been launched. GSSL also offers an MA/MBA (with the Leeds Business School).

In surveying the GSSL graduate student population, the internal review committee found a largely satisfied group. Fifty-eight percent of graduates who responded to the IRC survey were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the department as a whole. The student survey also reports 83 percent satisfaction with the unit's climate. Half of the graduate responses (five) were neutral about opportunities to publish, but GSSL noted that it was difficult to assess satisfaction without knowing if those responses were from MA students, who don't publish, or PhD students. The ERC, in its report and in the exit interview, discussed graduate student concerns about the PhD program funding model and its impact on MA funding, suggesting that GSSL needs to more clearly communicate the nature of the new Consortium of Doctoral Studies in Literatures and Cultures to the graduate students.

Space

For the most part, GSSL faculty express satisfaction with their surroundings, and are especially appreciative of the McKenna 112 remodel as a smart classroom. Staff office space seems appropriate, although the department would like to see a larger

space made available for language conversation clubs. According to the ERC, the staff “are satisfied with the facilities and the cooperative atmosphere on all levels.”

Budget The GSLL self-study states that “the GSLL budget is in good standing and meets the needs of the department.” All significant expenses are approved by the department chair, in consultation with the executive committee and, where relevant, program heads. Program faculty are consulted for significant expenses related to departmental gift funds.

The leave and replacement budget from the College of Arts and Sciences pays for visiting faculty and lecturers; these expenses are approved by the department chair and the program heads. GSLL also generates income from program fees of \$1 per credit hour; a committee including a student advisory board distributes these funds for such things as the German KaffeeKlatsch, Russian Tea, and Oktoberfest. GSLL also has scholarship funds from gifts and fundraising efforts.

Library resources The department’s German and Nordic library needs have, according to the self-study, “been very well served by [the assigned] bibliographer.” GSLL notes that the Russian program does not have a Slavic languages bibliographer and that the monograph budget is too low to maintain a good collection. These needs are more critical in light of the approval of an MA in Russian.

Inclusive excellence The Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures seeks to attract a diverse faculty and student body and to incorporate diversity across its curriculum. GSLL has developed three new courses that discuss gender, race, and

sexuality and, in keeping with the university's commitment to internationalization, offers study abroad programs and academic exchanges. Diversity for GSSL exists now primarily across European cultures (German, Russian and Nordic) and gender. GSSL would like logistical support and appropriate resources to "expand outreach programs to reach more underrepresented groups." GSSL requests campus or college funding for graduate diversity fellowships and recruitment visits of non-traditional students.

## Past Reviews

The Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures last underwent program review in 2009. At that time, ARPAC found that “the department appears to be exceptionally well-governed, collegial, and effective in making the most of its resources.” GSSL was tasked with continuing to maintain and build on those strengths. In the current review cycle, both internal and external reviewers agreed, stressing the collegiality within GSSL, noting only that there are tensions between “philological and culture-studies approaches” that seem to be carried on “behind closed doors.”

The 2009 ARPAC report recommended teaching more courses in German; GSSL has added “a more varied menu of 3000[-level] courses taught in German” and has revamped its German language classes. Also in 2009 ARPAC recommended that GSSL “develop and improve procedures to assess undergraduate and graduate knowledge and skills.” GSSL’s self-study states that it has retained its previous assessment procedures for its German majors but has added a new assessment exam for all graduating majors in the Russian studies program. GSSL has implemented the 2009 recommendation to add a PhD program in German studies and to launch a concurrent BA/MA in Russian studies.

## Campus Context

The Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures contributes importantly to the university's Flagship 2030 goal of fostering cultural competence and intercultural dialogue. GSLL's programs in German, Russian, and Nordic studies provide teaching and research not only in core areas of languages and cultures, but also in theatre studies, cultural anthropology, disability studies, gender studies, folklore, history of art, history of science, and Jewish studies. New courses reflect this intercultural and interdisciplinary focus, and GSLL faculty have been active in helping to create and nurture cross-cultural and interdisciplinary opportunities for both faculty and students. Of particular note, an annual symposium on "Conversations in the Mountains," which explores the interrelationships of German studies with fields such as environmental studies, medicine, music, art, and film. GSLL is second in the division and ninth of 44 campus units in the opportunities it offers its graduate students to interact across disciplines. GSLL's interdisciplinarity promotes the Flagship 2030 goal of transcending traditional academic boundaries. As already indicated, GSLL offers numerous joint degrees and certificates to support that goal, and 94 percent of GSLL SCH are taken by non-majors.

## National Context

According to the the external review committee, Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures faculty “all maintain significant and nationally, even internationally respected research profiles.” The self-study notes the faculty research productivity is high compared to peer institutions. The reviewers were also impressed with the new German doctoral program which they see as poised to be “a model other humanities departments may want to emulate.” GSLL appreciates the weight of the high expectations for ongoing success but welcomes the challenge. GSLL has also taken a strong position in developing online courses and in encouraging faculty members of all ranks to “engage in substantial professional teaching development.”

GSLL has avoided the steep decline in majors that peer institutions have experienced in recent years, although majors have declined. GSLL has been proactive in instituting the new collaborations, certificates, degree programs, and opportunities for its students that will keep its department strong, and deserves credit, as the ERC points out, for its minors and double majors.

## Analysis

The Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures is a well-functioning group as confirmed by the external review committee which remarked on the unit's remarkable functioning. In particular, the committee praised GSSL for nurturing quality leadership and cultivating an atmosphere of respect and appreciation. The staff and faculty work well together. The reviewers also praised junior faculty mentoring and added that department instructors are valued.

The department has a strong record of research across a range of national languages and literatures, and its faculty adopt innovative, interdisciplinary approaches. Student course demand remains high, even as GSSL has seen the same drop in majors as other humanities departments. New initiatives, particularly the cutting-edge German doctoral program, have created a sense of forward momentum. In general, the department has successfully met the challenges facing it with innovation and foresight.

## Personnel and governance

Since the last program review, three faculty members have been promoted to full professor and a fourth member is currently being considered for promotion to full professor. One full professor has been hired during this period. GSSL had never previously had more than two full professors. GSSL believes this change in the department's rank structure reflects an increase in the significance of German and Russian studies and that the creation of endowed professorships for this program will further support and enhance its work. GSSL plans to seek funding and administrative support for the creation of these endowed professorships.

Two of the department's small number of TTT faculty work on service appointments that completely or largely remove them from the classroom. GSSL would like to address this vacuum



with a visiting professor position that would meet teaching needs, contribute to the intellectual life of the department, and help address the absence of senior leaders in the day-to-day life of the unit. GSLL was recently granted a new nineteenth-century Russian faculty line.

GSLL has a laudable history of strong leadership and collegial relations among the faculty. Still, despite the positive reviews of the department's administration and culture, the ERC pointed out some potential fissures that might need to be addressed. In particular, the ERC noted a "behind doors" disagreement between a specific cultural studies orientation, especially in the area of gender and politics, and the literature/language orientation of the program. The department should also examine its merit evaluation process and look to include junior faculty and instructors.

Undergraduate and  
graduate education and  
support

Facing the same decline in student demand that has hit other humanities departments, GSLL has experienced only a small decline in majors. The external review committee sees the department as doing better than peer units elsewhere. Overall, as indicated above, GSLL attracts a large number of undergraduates, and the department contributes considerably to general undergraduate education. Both the self-study and the ERC noted that the administration needs to count minors and double majors in order to fully appreciate the department's contributions to undergraduate education. There was concern about finding the right metrics to measure the unit's contributions.

Since the last review, and since Hebrew studies moved out of the department, GSLL has added a PhD program, a BA/MA in Russian studies, and a successful certificate in critical theory

Given the doctoral program's recent creation, GSSL needs to monitor closely doctoral student placements.

To support its doctoral program, GSSL has joined the Consortium of Doctoral Studies in Literatures and Cultures under the auspices of the Center for the Humanities and the Arts. The department should make full use of this opportunity. The concern that has arisen centers on GSSL's contribution to the program of some of its graduate fellowship monies. In the past, GSSL has used these funds to support both doctoral and masters students, at least in part to cover student fees (which exceed \$1,000 per student), so some worry that MA students will lose support under the consortium model. ARPAC is recommending in its aggregate report that the campus address the issue of fees assessed on graduate students. The committee, in general, also wants to see doctoral students funding prioritized over masters students, but realizes that within the humanities there are some programs where the MA is a key degree. GSSL should achieve clarity on how it is funding its students and to make sure that graduate students are aware of funding opportunities.

The department is also concerned about the potential impact that the termination of the comparative literature graduate program may have on GSSL's large course offerings which have recitations attached to them. GSSL has traditionally placed five to seven graduate students from the program into high-enrollment comparative literature courses to teach recitations. GSSL will now only have TA lines assignable to German and Russian graduate programs, and these teach mainly language courses. Since there may not be any TAs to support large enrollment courses, GSSL requests that its programs get new TA lines or that the funds be

added to the leave and replacement budget for hiring graduate students from other units to teach recitations.

Budget

While generally satisfied with its budget, GSLL sees the need to improve instructor pay. The salary situation for instructors was noted as “problematic” by the ERC, and instructors would welcome the opportunity to use summer incentives as salary and work overtime.

As noted above, GSLL is seeking additional teaching assistantships to cover large course recitations. They also see a need for scholarships to support graduate program growth, especially to support students during the summer months, while studying abroad, and at the stage of dissertation writing.

GSLL has been quite successful in attracting donors. Several of GSLL’s strategic goals will require further outside investments, including more endowed chairs and student fellowships.

GSLL also feels that it needs outreach funding and university support for diversity initiatives but is not clear what those initiatives would be.

Library resources

While expressing general satisfaction with the library’s German and Nordic collections, the department sees the need for a Slavic languages bibliographer. ARPAC notes that this need could be met by a specialist consultant. As is the case with other humanities departments, concerns were expressed about the size of the monograph budget.

# Recommendations

The members of the Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC) address the following recommendations to the Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures, to the deans of the College of Arts and Sciences and the Libraries, and to the provost. It is the committee's intention that the recommendations serve to benefit program improvement and development and to further the mission of the University of Colorado at Boulder.

## To the unit

1. Continue to maintain a highly functional and collegial department, but attend to possible tensions between the culture-studies and philological approaches in the department and address those differences with GSLL's usual commitment to openness and collegiality.
2. In conjunction with the Office of Advancement, cultivate new sources of private gifts to support endowed chairs and student fellowships.
3. Take advantage of the funding opportunities under the Consortium of Graduate Programs in Literatures and Cultures. Monitor the PhD students' placement as they graduate.
4. Review the department bylaws to address the inclusion of assistant professors and instructors in the evaluation process.
5. Work with the College of Arts and Sciences to determine what metrics should be used to assess teaching contributions. Argue for the inclusion of double majors and minors in such metrics.

To the dean of the  
College of Arts and  
Sciences and to the  
provost

6. Request a visiting professor line to fill curricular and other needs given the assignment of GSLL senior faculty to administrative positions.
7. Acknowledge that departments such as GSLL provide significant student credit hours to double majors, minors, and non-majors, and devise a mechanism to properly acknowledge these contributions in determining how to allocate funding and other resources. Arrive at a clear set of unit's productivity metrics.
8. Give serious consideration to a GSLL request for a line for visiting professors to fill curricular fill curricular and other needs given the assignment of GSLL senior faculty to administrative positions

To the libraries

9. Consider hiring a consultant bibliographer with expertise in Slavic languages to support the new Russian studies graduate program.

## Required Follow-Up

The chair of the Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures shall report annually on the first of April for a period of three years following the year of the receipt of this report (i.e., April 1st of 2018, 2019, and 2020) to the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and to the provost on the implementation of these recommendations. Likewise, the dean shall report annually on the first of May to the provost on the implementation of recommendations addressed to the college. The provost, as part of the review reforms, has agreed to respond annually to all outstanding matters under her/his purview arising from this review year. All official responses will be posted online.