

**Appendix 2 to the Faculty Senate Minutes of December 11, 2012**

This RME takes the Foreign Language and International Trade (FLIT) degree program and demotes it to a specialization, parallel to programs with less than half the requirements. It is the view of seven of the 18 voting faculty in our department that FLIT should be removed from this RME.

In 2011 and 2012, the **internal and external program reviewers** of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures advised the Classics, French, German, and Spanish majors to combine into one degree program due to low enrollments. The FLIT degree program was in each case considered a healthy, successful program, with no action necessary. The Classics, French, German, and Spanish degrees combined together would have the numbers they need to continue without scrutiny. Dr. Anne Winston-Allen, the Chair at that time, in response to the review, proposed to include the new International Studies major in the new “umbrella degree” to bolster the numbers further. This proposal was dropped and instead, prompted by the Chair, faculty voted to include FLIT in the new umbrella degree with only 56% of the electorate (10 – 7). It should be noted that, although the vote was conducted by secret ballot, it is apparent from discussions that those voting to demote the FLIT degree to a specialization included faculty in American Sign Language, Classics and faculty teaching graduate students. **If the departmental vote were limited only to faculty who teach FLIT students and understand the program, the outcome of the vote would have maintained FLIT as a separate degree program within the department.**

A reason to consider including FLIT in the umbrella is the fact that **FLIT graduation numbers** were only four in FY 11, and have averaged 6.2 in the last ten years. The complexity of the FLIT program with requirements crossing colleges and a required international internship makes advisement of students essential, although many students since FLIT's inception in 1986 did not seek advisement. In 1998 a sentence was added to the catalog, requiring FLIT students to come in for advisement each semester, yet students continued to exercise their right to self-advise. In 2008, when Banner allowed students to register on-line, advisement rates dropped even further. In 2010 we were allowed to assign Registration User Numbers (RUNs) to FLIT majors and now all FLIT majors must come in for advisement to get their number. In the first semester of the RUN, over 15 students submitted internship checklists because they were within a year of their internships. The results started showing in December of 2011 when we had five graduates in one semester. In FY 12 there were six FLIT graduates and in FY 13 there will be nine. In FY 14 there will be 10-15. As long as we maintain a healthy number of enrolled students (as we have now), our graduation numbers will not be a problem again. Historically FLIT has enrolled an ample number of students with numbers in the 50's and 60's. As long as the FLIT program remains a FLIT degree program (not a specialization) our enrollments will be strong.

The original reason our new department chair believed FLIT should be included in the umbrella degree was to bring more unity to the department, something addressed in previous reviews. Some faculty feel that FLIT competes for their majors and if there is only one major then that feeling might go away. The real issue, however, is **resources**. When our department asks for positions to be filled, the Chair has to make an argument for the number of credit hours that position will generate and the number of majors the position will support. Combining the degrees into one major will not change this. Faculty want to be able to teach their topics of interest, which in our department are mainly literature, pedagogy, and linguistics. Our department has never made hiring faculty with an interest in FLIT a priority, so FLIT courses are not popular among the faculty. Even now we are in the process of interviewing candidates for a German position and every one of the candidates chosen has a research area in literature. With no faculty hired for their research in a FLIT-related, it is no surprise the vote went against FLIT. It is remarkable, however, that so many faculty still do support FLIT.

Our chancellor has encouraged us to **strengthen our strongest programs** and trim back on the weaker ones. The RME as written will do the opposite. Weaker programs that were ordered to combine by program reviewers will now sacrifice the strengths of the FLIT program to bolster their new combined degree. It should be noted that the weaker

Language degree programs are strong enough when they are combined to survive on their own. The effect of pulling FLIT into the combined degree will be to weaken and diminish the FLIT program and then ultimately the other programs as well. One could say that the “cash cow” is about to be slaughtered.

Some have said that it is only speculation as to how this RME will affect FLIT. It is speculation for those who are not familiar with the program, its students, its graduates, their internships, and the jobs they secure. Speculation becomes more accurate when informed with this understanding and our survey results. FLIT as a specialization will not have the **ability to recruit** with the visibility and value of a degree program. As a degree program FLIT is included on SIU and CoLA websites where degree programs are listed. It is a degree for Admissions Officers and recruiters and Hobson to channel students. Our alumni follow-up questionnaires have surveyed graduates every year and prove the importance of the degree name. Recent alumni hearing of the DFLL vote began calling the FLIT office in alarm, testifying of the importance of the degree as an independent degree. Many of them would not have come to SIU if there were not a FLIT degree, certainly not for a specialization. We attract students by offering a degree with a brand they recognize and want. When you have a “hot” item, as the FLIT degree has proven to be, you promote it and emphasize it.

FLIT as a specialization, loses its degree value and will not have the **ability to retain** students with the strength of a degree program bearing its name. The nature of the FLIT program with an international internship requires careful advisement. Students are required to come in for advisement every semester before they can receive their RUN and register for classes. Advisors in CoLA Advisement will tell you that it is the toughest major in the college. When students are not able to keep up, they change their major to the language, business, or another interest. As a specialization they will not be given a degree bearing the name that credits them for their tremendous additional efforts.

The FLIT degree combines the expertise of faculty in both the College of Liberal Arts and the College of Business. We have been encouraged to look for synergies across departments and colleges and the FLIT degree program is a model of intercollegiate success. As such it produces graduates with a well-rounded quality education who are highly successful in the job market, even today. Graduates like Ingrid Henick, highlighted in this year’s FLIT newsletter, vice president at The Cohen Group, attest to the success of this **innovative intercollegiate degree**.

In 2011 our internal program review team noted the **strength of the FLIT degree program by itself** and encouraged only the language majors (Classics, French, German, and Spanish) to combine as a single Language degree. In 2012 the external reviewers agreed. The Chair of the DFLL at that time chose to respond by suggesting the language majors combine with the new International Studies degree program as can be noted in the April 4, 2012 program review response letter from Dean Kimberley Kemp-Leonard. The new degree was to be called International Studies and World Languages (CIP code 30.2001) and the FLIT program was to remain a free-standing degree. This solution was accepted by Provost Nicklow in his May 25, 2012 memo.

The FLIT program is **distinctly different from the language majors**. It shares only 17-24 credit hours with the language majors and requires an additional 6-10 credits in languages, 43 credits in business-related courses and 12 credits of specified core credits, some higher level, totaling 55 additional credits. It requires a higher 2.75 GPA when the other Language majors require only a 2.0. It requires a student-arranged international internship, and a 10-20 page internship report in the target language. It is a unique program that cuts across departments and colleges. As such, it does not belong in an RME for Language majors.

Including FLIT in the RME will put **FLIT students at a disadvantage**. Language majors who pursue a non-language field of study with their elective credits will be able to receive credit for that study by receiving a minor or second major in that area. FLIT students would receive the same degree as the Language majors with no recognition for the additional 55 credits, higher GPA, international internship, and comprehensive written report required.

The  **rushed nature** of this RME has put pressure at every step to proceed without complete understanding of the consequences and has caused those in line with the ability to review and make valuable alterations to the RME feel obligated to pass it along unchanged. The CoLA Council sub-committee met and voted to support the RME without any information given to them from the supporters of the FLIT program. It was only after their vote that the chair of the committee came to meet with the FLIT Associate Director to hear our views. The Associate Director was invited to come to CoLA Council to answer questions at the meeting where the entire council cast their votes.

To satisfy the FA contract our department conducted a T/TT faculty vote and ballots were counted on Monday, December 10. The results of the vote showed that at least two faculty changed their votes to turn down this RME. If a departmental faculty vote were conducted today, and had the same result, this RME would NOT be approved. This RME as presented, does not have support of the faculty and leaves several (almost 40%) of faculty disgruntled. If it were re-written and excluded FLIT, it would gain the support of a majority of faculty and would leave only two or three faculty disgruntled.

Please over-ride the previous departmental vote, which negated the votes of FLIT faculty and allowed faculty from weaker programs to weaken the strongest program, even when it was not necessary for their continuation. Please return this RME to the department with the suggestion to remove the FLIT program from the RME, leaving FLIT intact to continue its success as a bi-collegiate program that attracts students to SIU, to the College of Liberal Arts, and to the department.

As members of the DFLL Electorate who understand the FLIT program we request that you **do not approve** an RME for any umbrella degree program that discontinues the FLIT degree program and demotes FLIT to a specialization within the umbrella. FLIT as a B.A. degree is a strong, innovative, intercollegiate program that effectively serves the university by recruiting students and producing highly employable graduates. We sincerely hope that you will give this the serious consideration it deserves.

Respectfully,

Maria Bell, Senior Lecturer in Spanish

Dr. Alejandro Cáceres, Associate Professor in Spanish

Dimitrios Karayiannis, Senior Lecturer in Spanish

Brooke Thibeault, Senior Lecturer & Associate Director of FLIT