

The faculty of East Asian Languages and Literatures, German and Scandinavian, and Romance Languages would like the Faculty Senate to institute a process for evaluating the CAS Deans' proposal to reorganize the departments of EALL, GERSCAN, Global Studies, and RL into a School of Languages and Global Studies that would also house a variety of programs and minors. As listed on the current SLGS proposal these include: African Studies, Arabic Studies, American English Institute, Asian Studies, European Studies, Global Health, Latin American Studies, Middle East-North Africa Studies, Native American Studies, REEES, Translation Studies, and the Yamada Language Center.

We raise the following as issues of deep concern:

**Process:**

a) Even though CAS convened a Global Studies steering committee that included the department heads of the affected departments on January 22, 2020, they have as yet had no input in developing the intellectual or pedagogical vision of the proposed School. Only now that we are well into May did the Dean signal that he would like input from the steering committee in developing an academic vision for the proposed School. We are concerned that the CAS leadership is failing to respect the principles of shared governance. Our goal in asking for Senate oversight is to ensure a process that conforms to the University's commitment to shared governance, particularly as related to curricular issues.

b) There is no transparency around the process. The messaging from CAS as of May 8, 2020 is that the plan for the School needs to be in place by September 2020. Representatives from the Provost's office have said that the process is on hold because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

c) We believe in best practices. The proposed timeline for reorganizing these units is absurdly fast given that the faculty of the affected units are on 9-month contracts and are focused on reconfiguring pedagogy and assignments for remote learning for the duration of the Spring term. Departmental leadership are being asked to respond to a variety of requests to prepare for the unknown conditions we will face Fall term. One month is not nearly enough time to think through such a profound organizational and academic change to our departments.

**Rationale:**

CAS has not yet presented a coherent or compelling rationale for shifting the academic focus of the affected departments. The Dean has provided the following reasons:

a) The redesign of the ground floor of Friendly Hall. We have been told that if the affected units do not commit to the new School, even though the organizational and academic structure and academic mission are as yet completely opaque to us, we will lose access to the ground floor of Friendly Hall and it will be given to SOJC. We reject the notion that space allocations should drive academic decisions.

b) To remedy shrinking enrollments in languages and to make our units more student centered. We resent that the language, culture, and literature departments are being punished for academic

decisions made elsewhere in the University, including the dropping of a language requirement from certain degrees and the promotion of BS degrees in disciplines that traditionally award BA degrees.

c) CAS has not produced any evidence that the proposed changes will achieve their desired results. Our fear is that the proposed structure of the new School will so weaken the humanistic research and teaching missions of the existing Language and Literature departments that we will no longer be academically viable.

### **Academic Mission:**

As presented by CAS in various meetings and the SLGS proposal, the academic vision for the proposed School is opaque. We have been told that we will continue to offer our current undergraduate and graduate degree programs but that the School will be organized around a number of themes. The draft list of themes, proposed without consulting the SLGS task force, are primarily oriented toward the Social Sciences, even though the vast majority of faculty members in the proposed SLGS teach language and literature courses and would come from the Humanities division of CAS. It remains unclear whether the SLGS head would report to the Social Science or Humanities Dean. When presenting his vision for SLGS to the EALL faculty on May 8, 2020, the CAS Dean said SLGS faculty would be expected to contribute curriculum toward the new degree tracks, and that while one-time summer funds for new course development might be possible, there would be no funds for new FTE.

It is also important to note that many of the proposed SLGS themes (e.g. World Cinema, Religion and Culture, Global Health, and Food Studies) are already covered in currently existing majors and minors offered at UO. Whether understood as “tracks” or as part of current majors and minors, the proposed themes would require new courses and changes to department curricula.

We are deeply concerned that Language/ Literature Departments would not be able to maintain the rigor of our current degree programs if, as proposed, faculty FTE is diverted into supporting degree tracks that lie outside our academic expertise. We currently do offer courses, as appropriate to our expertise, that support other programs, minors, and majors throughout the university.

Of greatest concern is the Dean’s vision for what co-teaching might look like in this proposed School. The Dean enthusiastically proposed a model where Language faculty might teach a Chinese section of a high enrolling Social Science course as a model of team teaching. Having faculty with no disciplinary training co-teach courses in other units would be disastrous to the academic mission and stature of the UO. When asked about the possibility of team-teaching without the proposed new School, i.e. team teaching around the model where both faculty members contribute their academic expertise to the course content, the Dean’s response was that these courses could only count for a half course for each faculty member.

It seems clear from all indications that SLGS, as currently envisioned, would undermine the academic and research integrity of the Language and Literature departments. Since the Faculty Senate has authority over academic matters as commonly understood, we ask that the Senate intervene in the process to ensure that we have a clear and transparent process that follows best practices.

Signed:

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