

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

S.77-23

MEMORANDUM

To. SENATE

From J. M. MUNRO, DEAN

FACULTY OF ARTS

Subject REPORT - FACULTY OF ARTS - PROPOSED
CHANGE OF NAME OF DML.

Date FEBRUARY 17, 1977

MOTION: "That Senate approve and recommend approval to
the Board of Governors, as set forth in S.77-23,
the change of name of the Department of Modern
Languages to the Department of Languages,
Literatures and Linguistics."

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

S.77-23

MEMORANDUM

FLB11 1977

To President P. Jewett, Chairman
Senate Committee on Agenda
and Rules

From J. M. Munro, Dean

Faculty of Arts

Subject Faculty of Arts - Proposed
Change of Name of DML.

Date February 10, 1977

At its meeting of February 8, 1977 the Faculty of Arts passed the following motion:

That the Faculty of Arts approve the change of name of the Department of Modern Languages to the Department of Languages, Literatures and Linguistics.

I would like to ask that this be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of Senate under the category "Reports from Faculties".

A rationale for the Faculty's action is presented in the attached paper, which was prepared before approval of this change by the Department of Modern Languages in July, 1976. The exact proposal suggested in this paper ("Department of Linguistics, Literatures, and Languages") was rejected by the Department in favour of the title "Department of Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics".

Attachment

cc: Mr. H.M. Evans
Dr. C.P. Bouton

J. M. Munro
J. M. Munro

The intention of changing the name of the DML into DLLL was suggested in a meeting of the Graduate Studies Committee in order to remedy the fact that "Department of Modern Languages" does not seem to be the kind of name which may appeal to a graduate student of Linguistics. As one of the members of the G.S.C said, "DML" suggests a department which essentially teaches languages, where one latin professor is offering a couple of linguistic courses.

In the presentation of this motion, I have been careful enough to review the previous unsuccessful attempts to change the name of the Department in order to avoid the mistakes of the preceding proposals. One of these mistakes has been the total exclusion of literature from the name, which, with linguistics, is the other academically sound subject which constitutes a program and a fortiori and a department.

At the moment, the Department, through its name, reflects the image that we may finally have got in the university and outside; that the DML is a service department teaching how to speak German, French, Russian or English. Such questions arise as "Do you teach linguistics in the DML?".

However, the undergraduate programs offered, according to the Calendar, are in the languages, linguistics and literature; the language courses somehow being the required base to proceed with the study of linguistics or literature. There is, properly speaking, no program of language in the Department, with the exception of the Master of Arts in Teaching French program, but four different programs which include the teaching of spoken proficiency in these languages, and naturally feed the higher number of students in the elementary obligatory courses. The academic subjects taught in those programs are linguistics and literature.

Additionally, we now have a major program in linguistics and a graduate studies program in linguistics, complemented by four theoretically full-fledged graduate studies programs in German, French, Russian and Spanish Linguistics.

It seems quite natural that the name linguistics be somehow included in the new name of the Department.

Furthermore, taking into account the opinion of the literature faculty members, who, with all their reasons, protested the referendum decided on October 1973, it is a general consensus in the G.S.C. that the name literature must also be included in the new name.

It is least clear whether we have to keep the word 'languages' in the new name and some members of the Department have mentioned the possibility of dropping 'Modern Languages' altogether, principally on the basis that the name Department of Languages doesn't constitute a proper academic subject justifying a university program.

The few universities that keep that kind of title in Canada are only three (Laurentian University, Brandon University, and the University of Alberta). None of these include an important program of linguistics. Full-fledged programs in literature are generally included in French Departments, Hispanic Studies Programs, Germanic and Slavic Departments, etc. But traditional Departments of Languages are tending to be replaced, at least in Canada, by departments with literature emphasis. Several of them, particularly in French-speaking Canada, are including courses about the didactics of the languages that they teach. I have checked the following Canadian university Calendars: Winnipeg, Laurentian, New Brunswick, Brandon, Carleton, Notre Dame, Alberta, Calgary, Quebec, Montreal, Concordia, Queen's, Laval, Guelph, Waterloo, UBC, Windsor, Saskat-

What seems quite clear from my survey is that the idea conveyed by the word 'languages' in the name of the academic departments is highly ambiguous and seems to be avoided by most of the universities in the last years.

It is of course true that this department is seriously engaged in the teaching of languages and that, at the moment, most of the students in the lower level courses are enrolled in language courses. This is hardly a surprise because it has been taken for granted that these courses are prerequisites in four of the divisions. It is also true that the Department is or would have to be engaged in offering to the academic population the service of teaching them the reading or spoken skills that the students may need to pursue their academic or professional goal using languages other than English. However, there is no advantage in considering the teaching of languages as an end in itself, and this is what happens when one presents oneself as Department of Languages or Department of Modern Languages.

However, I don't see any serious objections to maintaining the name of 'languages' in the title, provided that it remains clear that the main academic subjects of the Department are linguistics and literatures.

Because I know that some faculty members insist on keeping the word language in the title, I propose to integrate that word also in the new title at the risk of giving the secretaries the arduous task of answering the phone with a four letter word with three L's: DLLL.

I therefore propose that a referendum to change the name of the DML to the Department of Linguistics, Literatures and Languages be approved.

(Submitted by Dr. A. Hurtado)