

March 25, 2008

To: St. Olaf Faculty  
From: Curriculum Committee  
Re: Intended Learning Outcomes for FOL

At the April Faculty Meeting the Curriculum Committee will move that the faculty approve the following Intended Learning Outcomes for the General Education Requirement for Foreign Languages (FOL).

***Description:***

[the description of the FOL requirement, presented here for context, is not part of the motion]

**Foreign Language:** This requirement aims to develop language skills, extend understanding of language as a human phenomenon, and generate insights into a culture other than one's own. Students must demonstrate intermediate-level language proficiency by:

- A. Completion of a fourth semester course (or beyond) in French, German, or Spanish;
- B. Completion of a third semester course (or beyond) in Chinese, Greek, Japanese, Latin, Norwegian or Russian;
- C. Proficiency examination; or
- D. Transfer of credit.

***Intended learning outcomes for students:***

[the following outcomes are the subject of the motion]

*Students will demonstrate*

1. Language proficiency: Proficiency in reading and writing (all languages) as well as in listening and speaking (modern languages only) commensurate with the amount of study completed.
2. Cultural understanding: The ability to understand, through a target language, that language's culture(s) and one's own culture.
3. Metalinguistic awareness: Awareness of language as a system, and of the ways in which language organizes thought processes and information and reflects culture.

**Rationale:**

At the May, 2005, meeting the faculty of the college adopted statements of intended learning outcomes for nearly all existing GE requirements. At that time, the proposed statement of intended learning outcomes for FOL was referred to CEPC for further work. The present statement of intended learning outcomes for FOL reflects the subsequent efforts of many individuals and groups, including instructors of courses that satisfy the FOL requirement, chairs of foreign language departments, members of the Assessment Subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee, and an earlier working group on inquiry in support of student learning (ISSL).

Comments on specific outcomes:

1. The intended level of proficiency to be attained in the requisite skills/modalities upon completion of the FOL requirement will be established by individual language departments in accord with guidelines for proficiency in world languages established by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).

The language proficiency levels targeted for each language taught at St. Olaf recognize the distinction between classical languages (reading and writing only) and modern languages (reading and writing as well as listening and speaking). They also take account of the fact that languages are classified in different groups in terms of their relative difficulty (for native speakers of English) and the amount of instructional time required to attain a given level of proficiency. Norwegian, French and Spanish, for example, are classified as Group 1 languages whereas Chinese, Japanese and Russian are Group 3 languages. The level of proficiency a student can be expected to achieve at the end of a given number of semesters of study will therefore depend not only on the student's effort, but on the language the student is studying. Finally, the current FOL requirement calls for completion of the third semester course in Chinese, Greek, Japanese, Latin, Norwegian, and Russian, and for completion of the fourth semester course in French, German and Spanish. These two factors account for the differences in targeted proficiency level across languages.

2. Cultural understanding occurs as a result of and is demonstrated through the use of the target language to comprehend, analyze, compare and contrast texts, media, and other artifacts.

3. Awareness of language as a system occurs as a result of and is demonstrated through the use of the target language to comprehend, analyze, compare and contrast texts, media, and other artifacts.