

State of the Department: January 2017

Germanic Languages and Literatures has experienced another outstanding year in 2016. We have gained a faculty member, stabilized our budget, and continued to expand our production of student credit hours. Members of the department have excelled once again in research and teaching, and we have sponsored public events that have added intellectual stimulation to the campus.

In 2016 the department focused once again on enhancing its enrollments in courses. Although our lower-division language enrollments decreased slightly over the previous calendar year, interest in learning German remained strong and consistent with the patterns we have seen since converting to semesters. Upper-division enrollment for the year increased by almost 200 students, due largely to the high enrollment in general education courses and the introduction of new general education offerings. Overall our enrollment therefore exceeded the totals for the previous year. We increased student credit hours per FTE faculty and per instruction staff FTE and reduced spending per credit hour. Although we lost three faculty members, our instructional staff remained constant thanks to the hiring of lecturers. While the number of majors dipped significantly after semester conversion, the number of seniors graduating in the academic year 2015-2016 was approximately double the number who graduated in each of the previous two years. We hope to see our numbers continue to rise in the coming years.

We are hoping to counter reductions in majors and minors by placing increased effort on recruitment. We are devoting a half-time lecturer position to keeping in touch with high school German teachers throughout the state and maintaining contact with prospective German majors admitted to OSU. We are also trying to obtain lists of students who have taken German in high school and who have matriculated at the University. And we have participated in various events surrounding general recruitment efforts on campus. In addition, GLL reintroduced German Day in 2016. 89 students attended, touring the campus and engaging in various German-language activities. We will have another German Day this spring and expect even greater attendance.

Our graduate program enrolled three new students, but only one who came to us outside of the Dresden exchange program. The students in our program continue to be of high quality and are doing excellent work; several are near finished with their dissertations and should receive doctorates this year. Important for their progress were regular presentations of dissertation chapters to faculty and fellow students in dissertation colloquia. Six students completed their Masters degree in 2016 and two passed their qualifying examinations for the PhD program. The applicant pool for the fall of 2017 looks very good, and we are hoping to maintain our graduate student numbers, which increased overall in FY 2016 to the highest point in five years.

The budgetary situation for the College of Arts and Sciences stabilized this past year after several years of declines, and GLL was fortunate to secure permanent funding that allows us to offer our complete undergraduate and graduate program, as well as several courses in the general education curriculum, without any additional one-time supplements. We were able to secure in our permanent budget a second lecturer position to assist us with large general education courses and with funding to support approximately twenty graduate assistantships every year. Part of the reason that we were granted this permanent funding was our ability to generate credit hours

despite the loss of instructional faculty and base budget. The bottom line is that we now have more budget stability than we have had since the semester conversion.

Yiddish and Ashkenazic Studies is dynamic in its contribution of campus culture with its ongoing suite of general education courses, nearly always fully enrolled. This past year one student completed requirements for the master's degree and moved on to candidate status as another prepared to write her dissertation. YASP continues the connection with sister programs in China which attracted a postgraduate student from Shanghai several years ago. An endowed scholarship administered by the Melton Center sends two undergraduate students to the summer language program at Vilnius University, with which YASP has been informally associated for over twenty years. YASP is in the process of developing a robust sequence of language courses under the aegis of the Big Ten Academic Alliance. While a requested position in Yiddish was put on hold last year, we are optimistic that this year the College will be able to fund such a position so that YASP may thrive and continue to strengthen.

The Scandinavian program continues to hold its own despite staffing shortages. Swedish enrollments held pace with the previous year, and we are again offering a fourth-semester course in the spring of 2017. For the first time in many years Masterpieces of Scandinavian Literature is being taught, this time as "Northern Darkness, Northern Lights," with a reading list including works from every Nordic country, Greenland, and Sápmi.

2016 also saw Barbara Heck receive the Provost's Award for Distinguished Teaching by a Lecturer. Barb has been teaching in GLL since 2008 and has been an outstanding presence in the classroom. Consistently and uniformly she received the highest accolades from her students for her work in intermediate German classes and upper-division courses in German for the Professions.

This past year we also welcomed the first new tenure-track faculty member in five years. Matthew Birkhold, a PhD from Princeton University who also holds a degree in law from Columbia University, began teaching in GLL this past fall. His dissertation was the first in-depth study of fan-fiction, which involves works written by readers or "fans" who appropriate characters invented by other authors.

Faculty accomplishments this past year included Bernd Fischer's monograph on Saul Ascher: *Ein anderer Blick: Saul Aschers politische Schriften* and a co-edited issue of *New German Critique* by Bernhard Malkmus, as well as many scholarly essays written by other members and appearing in journals and collections.

GLL sponsored several important events. The third annual Ohio German Studies Workshop took place on October 22nd with presenters from institutions of higher education around the state. The eighth annual GGSA conference was held on April 1-2 on the topic: "Between Utopia and Dystopia: Visions of Germany." The annual Carolyn Engel Luebeck lecture was delivered by the eminent Yale historian Timothy Snyder and was entitled "Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning." David Blackburn lectured on environmental issues in Germany in April, and two departmental faculty members, Bernhard Malkmus and Katra Byram presented their ongoing research to GLL.

We are looking forward to another productive year in 2017 and continued success for all of our programs and events.