

Annual Report, Department of German and Russian Studies

Submitted by Morgan Koerner, Department Chair



I. Narrative Description of the Status of the Discipline from a National Perspective

The “status of the discipline” requires considerations of demographics, economy, and the academy’s recent responses to both.

Preparing graduates to be competitive in the modern global economy continues to be central to the mission of any responsible and relevant higher-education institution. Demographic trends and their impact on the economy, particularly here in the U.S. and the southeastern region, as well as general geopolitical considerations underscore the critical importance of our Department of German and Russian Studies in equipping students for their future careers. Therefore, the demand for and importance of all levels of German and Russian instruction will remain not only at colleges and universities nationwide, but especially at the College of Charleston for reasons outlined ahead in this report.

First, though, the national picture: Aggregated enrollments in Foreign Languages across the United States dropped by 6.7% between 2009 and 2013 according to the MLA’s most recent report on “[Enrollments in Languages other than English in United States Institutions of Higher Education, Fall 2013](#).” The same report notes that German enrollments decreased by 9.3% nationally during that period, while Russian saw a “more radical” decrease of 17.3%. The report listed German as the fourth most common language behind Spanish, French, and American Sign Language.

Despite the narrative of falling enrollments nationally, however, German and Russian Studies look very promising regionally and especially locally here at the College of Charleston. According to a 2015 report by the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce, there are more than 160 companies in the state of South Carolina and German investment and job creation in the state [have been tremendous since 2011](#): 4.1 Billion dollars of investment and 9,000 new jobs, which brings the total of jobs from German industry in the state to 27,000. The below

chart offers a list of the most prominent expansions in the state:

New and Expanding German Companies South Carolina, 2011-2015		
Company	Jobs	Capital Investment
BMW Manufacturing	1,100	\$1 Billion
ZF Group	1,650	\$605 Million
Continental Tire	1,700	\$500 Million
Daimler Vans Manufacturing, LLC	1,300	\$500 Million
Robert Bosch LLC	300	\$125 Million
Bosch Rexroth	210	\$90 Million
Schaeffler Group	360	\$76 Million
Tognum America	30	\$62 Million
BASF Corporation	25	\$62 Million

At the time of the Modern Language Association's [2013 report](#), there were 15 institutions of higher education in South Carolina that offered German at the undergraduate level, with only USC Columbia offering graduate level degrees. According to the [MLA Language Enrollment Database](#), in 2013 the *only* institution of higher learning in South Carolina that surpassed the College of Charleston with total undergraduate enrollment in German was USC Columbia with 488 vs. 333 at the College of Charleston.

Russian, the department's other academic program, continues to be vibrant and indispensable for the mission of LCWA in light of the global economy and geopolitics. The U.S. State Department and its higher education arm, the [National Security Education Program](#) (NSEP), still identify Russian as a critical language: a less commonly taught language where the demand for proficient speakers exceeds the supply. Therefore, the efforts of the Russian Studies Program at the College of Charleston to address the pre-professional needs of students interested

in doing business with Russia (“Russian for Business”), journalism and other communications- related career fields (“Russian for the Mass Media”), and to introduce students to the heterogeneity of Russian culture(s) through literature and film courses are directly aligned with national developments related to the needs-based acquisition of Russian language and a deeper understanding of the Russian culture.

The aforementioned MLA report published in February 2015 noted that although Russian, along with Ancient Greek, Modern Hebrew and Latin, experienced significant drops nationally in undergraduate enrollment for the period 2009-13, “these four languages, especially the first three [Russian, Greek, Hebrew], maintain a substantial percentage of advanced undergraduate enrollments, indicating that institutions where the languages are taught offer balanced curricula with courses at the introductory and advanced levels.” In addition, “advanced enrollments as a percentage of all undergraduate enrollments in Ancient Greek, Russian, and Spanish increased slightly between 2009 and 2013.”

U.S. Students Studying Abroad

On November 17, 2014, the [Institute of International Education](#) released its “Open Doors 2014” report, which was supported by a grant from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State. Referring to “U.S. Study Abroad Trends,” the report noted that 289,408 U.S. students studied abroad for academic credit during AY 2012-13, which was a 2.1% increase from the previous year. Over the past 15 years, U.S. student participation in study abroad has more than doubled. Among the major fields of study for these same students, “foreign languages” ranked #6 (up one from the previous year) for the total number of U.S. students who study abroad. Of the top 25 leading destinations listed for U.S. study abroad students, two countries for German were included: Germany (#6) and Austria (#24, up one from the previous year). Clearly the Department of German and Russian Studies at the College of Charleston plays an important educational role in this trend.

II. Program

As ratified on May 3, 2012, the mission of the Department of German and Russian Studies is

to provide students with a broad range of courses, degree programs, study abroad opportunities and internships to develop proficiency and cultural literacy in German and Russian. The department's mission is to prepare all students for success as professionals and for life-long critical engagement as global citizens through the study of language, literature, and media as an integral part of the liberal arts education.

As revised February 2013, the College of Charleston's [Strategic Plan](#) summarizes five "goals", four of which are directly linked to our department's own mission and aforementioned objectives:

- Provide students a highly personalized education based on a liberal arts and sciences core and enhanced by opportunities for experiential learning.
- Develop or enhance nationally recognized undergraduate, graduate and professional programs in areas that take advantage of our history, culture and location in Charleston and contribute to the well-being of the region.
- Provide students the global and interdisciplinary perspectives necessary to address the social, economic, environmental, ethical, scientific and political issues of the 21st century.
- Establish and promote a vibrant campus-life atmosphere dedicated to education of the whole person through integration of curricular and co-curricular or extracurricular activities.

The demonstrated commitment of our department's tireless faculty affords students invaluable experiential learning opportunities through various activities that include our department's multiple student organizations—German Club, Delta Phi Alpha German Honor Society, and Russian Club—which connect students in meaningful ways while

complementing our academic programs. *Stammtisch* (conversation table), theater performances in German, guest faculty and artist lectures, language films, cultural festivals, among other activities, help "establish and promote a vibrant campus-life atmosphere" as specified by the College's Strategic Plan.

Finally, underlying every course taught in German and Russian—from basic language through advanced courses in literature, civilization and culture—is an intrinsically interdisciplinary approach. From Russian 101 through German 498, language is interwoven with related culture, history, politics, business, economics and society. Here the German program has led the way with its explicit emphasis on a content-oriented, task-based curriculum that teaches language *and* culture from beginning courses to senior seminars.¹ Our curriculum in the Department of German and Russian Studies has consistently provided the quintessential and fertile ground for cultivating these global, interdisciplinary perspectives, a mission we continue to fulfill as demonstrated in the success of our graduates who not only succeed in graduate studies in the discipline, but who also secure various opportunities both in the U.S. and abroad.

III. Narrative Description and Analysis of Department Accomplishments

The Department of German and Russian Studies continued to offer a dynamic program via a small yet tireless group of highly dedicated, experienced and qualified faculty members during the 2015-16 academic year: 6 adjunct professors and 5 roster faculty, 11 total. New faculty this year included program director and Assistant Professor of Russian, Dr. Irina Erman, retired program director turned adjunct Raisa Gomer, Carol Hollen, a full time adjunct in German, and Dan O'Neal, who taught five courses in German in the fall while Stephen Della Lana was

¹ In October of 2014, Dr. Nancy Nenno and Dr. Morgan Koerner attended the AATG Seminar on College Curriculum Development, a workshop held by Georgetown University's German department, and as a result have begun to revise their 202 through 314 language sequence without a textbook and organized around themes.

on sabbatical. As outlined below, we consistently and actively engaged students both inside and beyond the classroom, and we collaborated with other departments and programs through our Literature in Translation courses in both German and Russian. The department also coordinated the Cultural Vistas Summer Internship in German, thanks to the leadership of the program's coordinator, Professor Stephen Della Lana. The following are students who participated in these study abroad internships in 2015 and 2016:

2016 (student's name, internship, location)

Castengera, Melaina: Symrise AG, Holzminden

Ianuario, Samuel Logan, *Berlin Language School only*

Mawra, Brianna: Weingut Karl Schaefer, Bad Dürkheim

Mayfield, Caleb: Fileshare, Stuttgart

Ruedy, Lanie: Fields GmbH, Berlin

White, Cameron: Hemholtz Zentrum, München

2015

Katherine Eaton, *language school only, Berlin*

Todd Middleton, Crobo, Berlin

Therese Spaseff, Media, Mannheim

Christopher Spellman, Schlosser und Pfeiffer, Grimma

Kevin Tully, Unternimmdich, München

Responding to curricular demands and the academic interests and needs of our advanced German and Russian students, the department offered two special topics courses in German (390.01, Poetry, and 390.02, Fairy Tales), a new German 468 course in spring 2016 (Avant-garde! German Expressionism and Dadaism), two in Russian (390), six independent studies, and one Bachelor's Essay in German during the 2015-16 academic year. In addition to the extra preparation that such courses demand of our faculty, the special topics arena also presents students with unique angles and skill-sets within the discipline that are not normally addressed in the regular German and Russian course offerings.

Both of our programs were also involved in the FYE curriculum, with a learning community between German 101 and Management 105 and Oksana Ingle's course "A Window into Russia" in the fall and spring, in the latter semester as part of a learning community with Classics.

The department had a very exciting year, with a long list of events that engaged our students, our colleagues, and the broader Charleston community, including the following highlights:

- Russian Club, which met every two weeks during the year on Wednesdays to discuss topics related to Russian culture.
- *Piano Battle*, a public piano performance by two German classical pianists on September 20th, 2015 at Sottile Theater, co-sponsored by the German Friendly Society and the German Consul General for the Southern US in Atlanta.
- Public Screening of *The Aryans/Die Arier*, a documentary film by Mo Asumang at the Charleston Museum, on September 25th, 2014. Due to the hard work of Dr. Nancy Nenno, who organized the event, the filmmaker and activist Mo Asumang visited the College of Charleston and took part in a Q&A with the audience in Charleston Museum after the screening of her film.
- Lowcountry German Day, September 26th. A public event for four local high school German students and their teachers (from Wando, West Ashley, Ashley Ridge, and Summerville High Schools) which featured a German lesson and a Q&A with three German majors who studied in the previous summer or year.
- Department Co-sponsorship of the guest Geography lecture “Monuments we’d like to forget,” by Stephen Hoelscher on October 1st. (The lecture explored the city of Vienna’s monuments reflecting its Nazi past.)
- “A Conversation with Russian Pianist Gerard Aimontche,” an event organized in conjunction with the Colour of Music Festival, October 22nd, 2015. Dr. Irina Erman, together Dr. Michael O’Brien (Ethnomusicology), led a public discussion Afro-Russian pianist Gerard Aimontche, who was in town to perform in the Colour of Music Festival.
- The [Southeastern German Studies Consortium Workshop](#), on March 10-11th, 2016, a two-day German conference that drew scholars from throughout the Southeastern US. (organized by Dr. Nancy Nenno and Dr. Bryan Ganaway).
- The annual spring workshop of the South Carolina chapter of the American Association of Teachers of German (SCAATG) on

May 19th, 2016. The German program hosted the event, which drew 20 high school German teachers from throughout the state.

- Delta Phi Alpha Honor Society Induction, March 22nd, 2016. The ceremony, in the recital hall of the school of music, included *Lieder* performances by Professor David Templeton's voice majors as well a local children's chorus led by Jean Breza.
- German and Russian tables at the LCWA World Cultures Fair on March 31st, 2016.
- Guest Lecture by Russian Studies professor Dr. Thomas Lee Roberts (University of Colorado Boulder) on "Materialism and Narrative Transcendence in Dostoevsky's fiction of the 1860s" on March 31st, 2016.
- Guest Lectures by Fabio Bela, Interim CEO of Mercedes-Benz Vans, Ladson, April 7th, 2016. The German program coordinated a morning guest lecture in Professor Stephen Della Lana's German 325 course, on the German education system and a public afternoon guest lecture in the School of Business, on the plant expansion in Ladson.
- [German theater performance](#), April 19th, in Wells Fargo Auditorium, by students of German 468 and to a standing room only audience (circa 180 audience members)

The above sample of events underscores the department's status as a productive interdisciplinary hub where disciplines, discourses, and communities intersect. The events traverse disciplines as diverse as Business, Philosophy, Urban Studies, Theater, Music, and Black Studies, and many of the events emphasize a strong relationship between town and gown, both in our outreach to high schools, industry, and to the larger community. Although our department may be comparatively small in size, our impact across campus and the community are substantial.

The department continues serving as the only official testing center for the Goethe Institute in South Carolina, which requires a significant amount of volunteer (uncompensated) service by departmental roster faculty, who also must continually renew their testing credentials. This spring we administered the B1 exams to 9 students and the C1 exams to 5.

Enrollment

Statistics for overall German and Russian Studies student enrollment

Total Student Enrollment

Program	Fall 2013	Spring 2014	Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Fall 2015	Spring 2016
German	361	362	353	344	407	363
German Lit in Trans	39	10	15	6		33
Russian	94	59	90	66	65	67
Russ. Lit in Trans.	42	27	39	30	59	27

Course Sections Offered

Program	Fall 2013	Spring 2014	Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Fall 2015	Spring 2016
German (lower)	18	17	18	18	20	17
German (upper)	5	5	5	4	5	5
German Lit in Trans	1	1	1	1	0	1
Russian (lower)	9	8	8	9	8	9
Russian (upper)	4	2	3	2	3	1
Russian Lit in Trans, including FYE	2	2	2	2	3	3

In the fall of 2015, high demand for German from incoming freshman forced us to cancel our LTGR 250 course in order to be able to offer another German 101. As a result, we had a near-record number of students enrolled in German. Russian's enrollments saw a considerable drop from the previous fall of 2014, which we believe stems from the

transition to a new Russian Studies program director, Dr. Irina Erman. Russian is currently taking steps to increase enrollments for the fall of 2016, through a First Year Experience Learning community with Russian 101 and Computer Science. In the Fall of 2015, however, our Russian Lit in Translation Courses saw an increase of 20 more students enrolled, and we hope to continue that trend in the future with the increased course offerings brought to the table by Dr. Erman.

In its revised 2012 statement, the Association of Departments of Foreign Languages (ADFL) affirmed that for “foreign language courses that stress all four skills, the maximum class enrollment not exceed twenty students” (see http://www.adfl.org/resources/resources_guidelines.htm).

The ADFL also notes that “class size must be appropriate for enabling, rather than inhibiting, the kind of effective interaction between teacher and students necessary for developing proficiency in speaking and writing. Smaller class size also leads to greater student satisfaction and retention.” In addition, in May 2006 The American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) published the following as one of its official position statements: “Given the goals of a standards-based language program (i.e., the development of students’ communicative competence), there must be opportunity for frequent and meaningful student-to-teacher and student-to-student interaction, monitored practice, and individual feedback during instructional time. This warrants attention to a class size that remains as small as possible.” The department is pleased to report that generally it succeeded in AY 2015-16 in conforming to ADFL’s recommended 20-cap in most basic language classes.

Statistics for German Majors and Minors, German Studies Minors, Russian Studies Minors

College of Charleston Programs in German and Russian

Program	Spring 2011	Spring 2012	Spring 2013	Spring 2014	Spring 2015	Spring 2016
German Majors	35	34	27	25	14	28
German Minor	21	30	27	40	41	47 ²
German Studies Minor	13	14	10	6	4	6
Russian Studies Minor	25	34	34	31	27	27

After an impressive surge in the number of German majors in 2011, there was a steady decline through 2015, down to 14 majors. Over the past year, however, the major numbers have returned to the 2013 level. Faculty in the German program believe that the significant drop in majors from Spring 2013 to 2015, with a decline of 50%, resulted from two years of sabbaticals by key faculty members during that period. While less of an issue in larger departments, sabbaticals in a smaller program can disrupt the usual recruiting methods and incur a momentary decline in majors; the speedy recovery, however, demonstrates that the students were already present, but not yet registered as majors. A further sign of this understanding is the continued rise of German minors since Spring 2011, with the new record number of 47 according to a Cognos report at the end of the spring semester 2016.

The number of Russian Studies minors peaked at 34 in both 2012 and 2013, and then declined gradually until 2015. However, they stabilized this year as we maintained our current level of minors. Our faculty in Russian has been monitoring these trends to determine the best courses

² This number of 47 minors comes from a Cognos report run at the end of the Spring semester, and therefore differs from the Census report run by Institutional Research, which was run on March 31st.

of action to bolster numbers. For the coming academic year, the Russian program will be expanding its recruiting from the incoming class of freshman by adding two new FYE courses, a learning community between RUSS 101 and an Intro to Cybersecurity course and an FYE seminar on Vampires.

In terms of its representation among both Majors and Minors, the College of Charleston’s German program is by far the strongest undergraduate German program in the state, with more majors and minors than both USC Columbia and Clemson in the spring of 2016, despite the fact that Clemson and USC are considerably larger.

	CofC, Spring 2016	Clemson, Spring 2016	USC, Spring 2016 ³
German majors	28	17 (1 German, 16 International Trade + German)	9
German minors	47	32	1
Overall Enrollment	363	289	590

The Russian Studies minor is one of only three offered in the State of South Carolina, and it is important to highlight that our program has the most minors of the three programs in the state and with its 27 minors, it has more students taking or planning to take Russian beyond the second year than the other two programs combined.

Spring 2016	CofC	Clemson	USC
Russian Studies Minors	27	1	13 majors, 0 minors
Overall Enrollment in Russian Language Courses	67	42	114

³ Numbers here were provided by institutional research at USC and Clemson.

Departmental Workload Productivity

Over the past 15-20 years, the College of Charleston's standards for tenure and promotion have become increasingly more rigorous, especially for scholarship. At the same time, however, expectations for excellent teaching and significant service activity continue as we still emphasize the virtues of our undergraduate education and focus on students. And although the College has attempted to complement increased expectations for scholarship with a 3-3 course load for tenured and tenure-track faculty (those expected to maintain active and sustained research agendas), colleagues of smaller departments and programs still confront the perennial challenge of "doing it all" since there is not a large corps of faculty to assist with the myriad of departmental responsibilities. Yet the German and Russian faculty, despite their many tasks, have managed to balance outstanding teaching, selfless dedication to students and service, and admirable scholarly agendas, even during an academic year when two tenured faculty members in German were absent for one semester and a full academic year respectively for research.

Instructional Costs

The Department of German and Russian Studies continues to maintain reasonable instructional costs at the College: \$264 per student credit hour according to the latest Delaware Cost Data available (fall 2014); the average college-wide was \$228 per student credit hour for the same period. Smaller academic programs, such as those housed in our department, do tend to cost more than larger departments that rely more heavily on larger, more economical, albeit substantially more unstable, adjunct faculty pools. Moreover, during AY 2014-15, the year of the most recent instructional cost data, our program had two sabbaticals (one semester and one yearlong) *and* two Visiting Assistant Professors, and thus had two extra lines than usual. The instructional costs for AY 2014-15 were thus naturally higher than a usual year, and next year's data from the AY 2015/16 will surely paint a different picture, one that is at or below the college-wide average.

Student Accomplishments

Numerous achievements by students in the department during the 2015-16 academic year are detailed at the German and Russian Studies [newsblog](#). There are several accomplishments from our graduating majors and minors that we would like to list here:

Thomas Aggeles, double major German and International Business, German Studies minor. Assistant Operations Manager for IDEA Global, LLC in North Charleston.

Montana Feix, double major in German and International Studies: Position as Acquisition Program Manager, US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) in Tampa, FL.

Stevie Laughead, German Major: position as a Licensed Bilingual Tour Guide, Charleston Convention & Group Services, Inc.

Alex Porter, German Major: USTA Teaching Assistantship to Austria 2016-17.

Therese Spaseff: Double Major in German and International Business: Position as Entertainment/Programming Manager, Gaillard Center, Charleston.

Kelsey Jordan, Biology Major, German Minor: acceptance to the M.A. Science-Technology-Society program at the University of Vienna.

Thomas Beasley, Political Science Major, German Minor: Scholarship to study at Charleston School of Law.

Vanessa Zehnder, Political Science Major, German Minor: University of Maryland School of Law.

Faculty Accomplishments

Faculty in the Department of German and Russian Studies continued to be impressively active with research and professional development in the 2015-16 academic year with multiple refereed publications, conference presentations, etc. As clarified with the charge for this year's annual report, details are not included with this document as they are already available in other institutional databases, particularly FAS. However, many details of our faculty's impressive activities and accomplishments may be found in the 2015 issue of the department's newsblog: <http://blogs.cofc.edu/germanrussiannews/>.

Future Goals Select Department goals for the AY 2016-17

1. Continue to raise the local and regional visibility of the department via public events.
2. Continue to reach out to other departments and programs across campus in the name of interdisciplinary collaboration, both in future FYE learning communities and in joint initiatives.
3. Increase the number of German majors and Russian Studies minors.
4. Continue to build relationships with alumni and industry, especially via the [1st College of Charleston German-American Business Summit](#).
5. Continue the revision of the German program's language sequence (German 313-314) based on task-based, content-oriented foreign language pedagogy.
6. Successfully run the Maymester Study Abroad Program on German-Jewish Berlin.