

## UBC French Centre – Centre francophone de UBC

### Green Paper - Education in French at UBC

#### Vision

UBC is a leading university in a bilingual country. UBC students who are able to speak French and English, Canada's two official languages, greatly increase their chances of employment as well as their leadership opportunities in the community, the government and in Canadian businesses

#### Mission

In Trek 2010 UBC promotes languages, Canadian values and global citizenship. As a member of *la Francophonie* and of the Commonwealth, Canada plays a key role in the United Nations, UNESCO, the Olympics and the World Bank. Canada's unique position owes a great deal to its bilingual heritage. It's UBC's duty to build on that distinction and to bring the world together for a better future.

The French Centre's mission is to allow students who have completed their education in French in BC in the *Conseil Scolaire Francophone* or in a French Immersion Program to continue part of their post-secondary education in French. The French Centre also wishes to attract native-speakers of French from Quebec and French-speaking countries and to create a community where French is spoken and where non-native speakers can practice their French.

The mandate of the French Centre is to increase the number of undergraduate courses offered by 1%. These courses will be in addition to the ones already offered by the Department of French, Hispanic and Italian Studies and the Faculty of Education. In order to reach this goal, the departments and faculties will offer French sections of high enrolment courses as well as new ones.

#### Goals and Strategies

Canadians should feel at home in Vancouver, Kelowna, Moncton or in Montreal. Canadians may speak different languages but they should all have the foundations to understand each other. By perfecting a second or additional language, UBC students will have the ability to communicate with French speakers and be sensitive towards those who don't speak either of Canada's official languages.

UBC is making a concerted effort to attract students from other provinces and countries. The goal of Trek 2010 is to increase the current number of students from outside BC by at least 10%. A larger number of French-speaking students, will enable UBC to promote the cultural and linguistic aspects of Canada and to listen to the aspirations of the 128 million people who share French as a language.

**Vision for a bilingual future at UBC:** As of 2010, UBC could have a French Centre with a student residence, classrooms and office space to create an environment where the language of communication would be French. This Centre would house programs that are currently dispersed on campus and could serve as a link to the French Community in Vancouver and to the French-speaking World, by offering conferences, cultural events and other social activities.

### **Part 1 - Objectives for the short term**

UBC's proposal is geared towards all students interested in learning any subject in French and is not dedicated to a particular discipline. Students taking French sections of regular credit courses may in the future receive "bilingual" recognition with their UBC degree; however, main goal of UBC's proposal is to educate bilingual Canadians and International students who will be able to work anywhere in Canada.

For French-speaking students, the possibility of taking courses in French is a considerable advantage. They may find that their undergraduate education is facilitated by the fact that they are able to take some of their courses in French, thereby relieving the second-language pressure of completing all their studies in English.

*Access Studies*, a UBC initiative, is another advantage for French speakers because adults do not need to apply and be accepted at UBC to attend some credit and non-credit courses. They only need to demonstrate to the instructor that they can succeed in the course. The entire French-speaking Community may benefit from this initiative. The entire French-speaking community benefits from this initiative.

UBC's initiative will also benefit education students and French Immersion and Core French teachers. Those who need to develop their French conversational skills will appreciate the diversity of courses because this means more choice and more challenges in many academic disciplines.

UBC will use existing resources, faculty and sessional instructors to teach French sections of high-enrolment courses. For example, if there are ten sections of the same math class, an eleventh one could be offered in French. In addition, collaboration with SFU, local colleges and EducaCentre will allow students to take UBC courses that may not be offered by their home institution.

External funding for the French Centre will allow UBC to offer classes in French with fewer students than normally required in English classes. This is the only way to establish this program. This practice is similar to the one adopted by SFU at the beginning of its French program. Students choosing to register in French sections will have, to a certain extent, the advantage of small class sizes, but this advantage is mitigated by the very limited choice of courses taught in French. UBC students taking courses taught in English have a very large choice of courses and sections.

### **Part 2 - Green and White Papers**

This Green Paper follows an initial draft that was circulated during the 2004-2005 academic year. It is a shorter version of the draft and takes into consideration suggestions we received from different sources. Further comments are welcome and will lead to a White Paper that will present the official UBC Policy regarding the French Centre. This official document will be made

available to the public at large and will serve as the basis for a grant request from Heritage Canada and the BC Government.

### Timeline

Founding Document (Draft 01)	February 1, 2005
First Draft	April 1, 2005
Second draft (Green Paper)	October 1, 2005
Public Document (White Paper)	January 1, 2006
Grant application	April 1, 2006
Selection of key players and courses	Summer 2006
Part-time Coordinator and staff hired	September 1, 2006
Pilot courses at UBC	September 1, 2006
Promotion and student recruitment	Winter 2007
First official session	Summer 2007
First regular year of operation	Academic year 2007-2008
First program evaluation and report	Summer 2008

## Part 3 – A simple structure for supporting UBC’s initiative

### 3.1 The UBC Writing Centre model

Support for UBC’s French initiative will be more easily obtained if it is modeled on existing units with a proven track record. The UBC Writing Centre was created fifteen years ago and funding was provided for a half-time Coordinator, a part-time Secretary and a small office operation. Most of the funding went to pay for Sessional Instructor salaries for sections of Writing 098, a writing course preparing students for the LPI (Language Proficiency Index) Exam – an examination required by some students to register for first-year English courses. Additional sections, new writing courses and the Writing Centre Tutorial Clinic were covered by tuition paid by students.

As the program expanded, more sections and new courses were added. As a result, the Writing Centre is now a significant UBC Department with a full-time Director and Program Assistant. Each year more than 1500 students register in Writing Centre courses while several hundred additional students benefit from the Writing Centre’s free tutoring services.

### 3.2 Portrait of a nascent French Centre

If we were to follow the Writing Centre model, the French Centre would initially consist of a half-time Coordinator seconded by a UBC department and a part-time bilingual Secretary. It would provide enough funding to support the teaching in French of sections of high-enrolment courses and would offer French resources for students and instructors. Initially, the Centre would finance assistance for instructors in developing their resource materials in French as well as free tutoring in French for UBC students modeled on the tutoring services currently offered by the Writing Centre.

The French Centre could be situated in close proximity to the Writing Centre so that it could use existing resources. An option worth considering is locating the French Centre in one of the Ponderosa Annexes.

### **3.3 Space and office requirements for a French Centre**

Assuming that the French Centre would use already existing support facilities from the Writing Centre or from another UBC Department, the Centre would only need some offices for administration, instructors and tutors as well as a larger room for meetings. Assuming that supporting departments would take charge of mail, photocopies and necessary equipment, a few phone lines and computers would be adequate in order for the Centre to function.

Should the French Centre move into offices that do not require major upgrades and are already furnished, the set-up cost could be minimal. An annual contribution would be paid to the supporting department for the space and services received.

At a later date, a classroom could be added and paired with a similar classroom at UBCO, SFU and other institutions. These classrooms would be equipped with video-conferencing capabilities and would enable students at all institutions to attend courses without needing to be physically present on the UBC campus.

### **3.4 Relationships with the Departments and Sessionals teaching the courses**

Instructors teaching sections in French would be provided with resources that would be equivalent to those they would receive if they were teaching the same course in English. These additional resources in French would be a cost to the French Centre at first, at least until a given section has been repeated a few times. The instructors may also be provided with teaching assistants if the program were to grow to the point where there was a need for extra help with the classes whether they are on campus or in another institution jointly offering the same course.

Instructors who are not native speakers of French would have access to Francophone Teaching Assistants while instructors who are native speakers may need teaching assistants with experience teaching French as a second language. A Francophone Resource Person would be available for final editing of all materials translated or written in French at the French Centre.

Departments (and faculties) are responsible for the curriculum and for the final selection of sections to be taught in French. Departments hire the instructors teaching the French sections and provide the academic support they need to complete their task. As Departments are able to add the credits earned by additional French sections to departmental totals, they may claim additional funds to provide French language resources for their instructors and students.

### **3.5 French Resource Centre**

Instructors teaching sections in French would have two offices: one in their originating department and a shared office at the French Centre. For this reason, the Centre would be developed as a Resource Centre with common office space and resources. The administration of the Centre would be able to maintain regular office hours with the help of TAs, tutors and workstudy students. On-line tutorials like those currently provided by the Writing Centre for Writing 098 students would complement face-to-face tutorials and serve students who have difficulties getting to the campus or who prefer to work at home.

## **Part 4 – Principles of Student Assessment**

### **4.1 Levels of French required**

If we adhere to the vision of a bilingual Canada, we must accept students who are not fully proficient in French. Students taught in BC in the *Conseil Scolaire Francophone* or the French Immersion Program may need additional help with their French. This is especially true regarding more specialized vocabulary for the discipline and idioms that students may not have encountered in their daily life in British Columbia. Supplementary, individualized instruction in French will be offered.

Students with French as a first language, students taught in the *Conseil Scolaire Francophone* and French Immersion students who have completed at least Grade 11 should be accepted in French language sections of courses without an interview, as should UBC students who have successfully completed second-year French courses. Students without a recent French language education background would be invited to take an exam similar to the one required for admission into the French teachers' programs in the Faculties of Education at UBC and SFU.

Students must possess a certain level of French in order to register in sections of courses taught in French. A higher level would be needed on the exam to qualify for a bilingual degree, just as a TOEFL mark of 550 is required to enter UBC, and a level 5 on the LPI and first-year English courses are required to complete an undergraduate degree.

To graduate with a bilingual degree, students would need to pass a French Language Proficiency Index exam similar to the LPI in addition to accumulating a certain number of credits for courses taught in French. Such an exam would probably be borrowed from institutions like Laval University in Quebec (or the DALF from France).

### **4.2 French through the Curriculum**

To recognize that some students take courses taught in French, a system of points might be put in place, similar to the system proposed for English. In addition to the regular credits they would receive, students would accumulate French points leading to a "bilingual" qualification for their degree. The number of points attached to a particular course would vary depending on the amount and level of difficulty of French reading and writing required for the course. If students are allowed to take their exams in the language of their choice, students may receive additional points for taking the exams in French.

A model for French through the Curriculum exists at the University of Ottawa ([http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/ils/eng/immersion\\_courses.html](http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/ils/eng/immersion_courses.html)) and could be easily adapted to UBC.

### **4.3 French Cohort (Arts One or Science One in French)**

The faculty of Arts will offer a French-History cohort on the theme of Canada-Quebec in the fall of 2006. Students will register in one section of History 235, in French (6 credits); French 224 (3 credits) and 225 (3 credits) - two courses designed for students who graduated from the Immersion or Francophone program - of which the subjects will be French-Canadian novels with historical content; and the seminar Arts 100 (6 credits) of which one section will be taught in French.

Participation in a Francophone cohort, following the *Arts One* or *Science One* model, strongly encourages the use of the French language. In addition, by taking courses in French, students will have the opportunity to spend more time communicating and studying together in French.

#### **4.4 Bilingual exams**

As initially we would be dealing with French sections of courses that are primarily taught in English students should have the option of writing exams in the language of their choice. Exams would take place for all sections at the same time and students of the French sections would have access to the same questions in both languages. The decision to take exams in English instead of French would limit the number of French points a student receives for a course. Students applying for a “bilingual” degree would need to do at least 40% of their course work in French and pass exams in French for at least 60% of these courses.

If students chose to take an exam in their second language, the quality of the written language will affect the final grade the student will receive; however, the percentage of the grade affected by the language quality should not be different from the percentage currently used for the UBC students who do not have English as their first language as for Ritsumeikan, Korea University or Tech de Monterey students.

#### **4.5 Bilingual degrees**

We have to look several years into the future in order to imagine the possibility of UBC offering “bilingual degrees.” UBC would first need to have enough courses available to give students the opportunity to take courses in French. Bilingual degrees would be granted by completing 40% to 60% of required courses in French or by accumulating a certain number of points by taking additional courses taught in the language. A French Language Proficiency Exam would be required of all students interested in a bilingual degree.

Bilingual degrees would likely be offered at the Bachelor level only. Bilingual graduate degrees would only be possible through collaboration with a French-speaking university in Eastern Canada or in another French-speaking country.

### **Part 5 - Students**

#### **5.1 UBC Students**

There is a large number of UBC students with the appropriate level of French to start the program. Students interested in taking courses in French would form the nucleus around which a successful program could be built. They would help non-UBC students with life on campus and the French environment created for them.

#### **5.2 UBCO, SFU, VCC, Langara, BCIT and EducaCentre students**

If we consider this proposal to be a provincial initiative fulfilling the needs of French speakers or learners in the Lower Mainland, special provisions should be made to allow students from other institutions to participate.

Accommodating students from other institutions will require consultation and processes that will make access to courses by the greatest number possible of students. Scheduling courses at the

right time will be critical. On-line tutoring may play a significant role for students coming from other institutions.

Tuition could be paid directly to the institution where the student is registered. Those institutions could keep the tuition and use it for funding their own French resources.

### **5.3 UBC, UBCO and SFU sharing French courses**

Course numbers and descriptions could be created at UBC so that they correspond to courses taught in French at other institutions. If we develop the idea a little further, two institutions could offer courses jointly that would be held at one campus. This concept would work particularly well when applied to summer courses. Campus housing facilities could be used to attract students from institutions outside the Lower Mainland. Summer sessions could be offered in some disciplines in order to attract students from Quebec. These students could combine discipline-based courses offered in French with English language courses.

We can also imagine the situation mentioned earlier where UBC, UBCO, SFU and other BC institutions would each have a special classroom with full video-conferencing facilities. Students could attend a course given on the other campus without having to leave their own. This facility will allow students to take courses offered by various institutions without leaving campus. Lectures could also be broadcasted on the Web and could be available to the public at no charge if they wish to audit the course.

### **5.4 Access Studies**

To receive the full support of the Francophone Community and to enable native speakers or second-language speakers with a good command of French to practice French in the field of their choice, the Centre must be open to the community. The recent creation of Access Studies at UBC allows non-traditional students who are not necessarily pursuing a degree program to take some credit courses either for credit or audit. Tuition and student service fees are the same as those for regular credit students.

Access Studies allows students to apply online for courses. An Advisor contacts the student to let him/her know if space is available in the course and to ensure that the student is knowledgeable enough to take the course and succeed. High school diplomas or course prerequisites do not limit admission in courses through Access Studies. Application is open to all adult learners who have the potential to successfully complete courses.

A French-speaking Access Studies Advisor may be assigned to courses taught in French. If need be, this position could be filled by someone working for the French Centre. A special orientation session for Access Studies students may be desirable at the beginning of each term in order to prepare students for their UB courses. On-campus and on-line tutorials may also help these students with their specific needs.

### **5.5 Summer Courses**

Summer Session would be a time when collaboration with French-speaking universities could lead to some exciting programs. UBC students are always welcome to take summer courses at other institutions and do not require a French Centre to lead them. That being said, some students may feel unprepared to take a discipline-based course in French without help.

Summer courses could be offered at UBC with UBC instructors or guest instructors from other universities. They could also take place in Quebec or in France, either hosted by a local institution or organized by UBC on the model of the Institut de Français, UBC à Québec, where Francophone instructors from BC work with Quebecers to offer French language instruction tailored to the specific needs of BC school teachers.

As mentioned earlier, the Summer Session may also attract programs from other universities where UBC could be the host or the venue of such collaborative programs.

## **Part 6 - Vision of a French Centre with a physical location**

UBC has undergone substantial development in the past few years. Every year, new student residences are built. Creating a residence dedicated to students who want to practice their French is an easy project to achieve. A “Canada House” would not be limited to Francophones or Francophiles but be open to all who want to share in our bilingual heritage. A residence with classrooms, office space, a cafeteria and a theatre could produce a French-speaking Community Centre as a focal point for our diverse heritage on campus.

### **UBC French Centre Steering Committee**

Chair	Dr. André Lamontagne, Professor and Head, Department of French, Hispanic and Italian Studies, Faculty of Arts
Co-Chair	Dr. Guy Dumont, Professor, Electrical and Computer Engineering, Faculty of Applied Sciences
Chair of the Advisory Committee	Dr. Monique Bournot-Trites, Associate Professor, Language and Literacy Education, Faculty of Education
Secretary	Dr. Francis Andrew, Director, Academic Performance Division, Continuing Studies
Member-at-large	Mr. Max Adrien, Modern Language Consultant, Vancouver School Board

This committee will expand as this initiative develops. Consultation with the French Community, with Canadian Parents for French and others has started and will continue as this project takes form.

### **Membership in the UBC Advisory Committee includes:**

Dr. Judith Plessis	Director, Languages, Cultures and Travel Division, UBC Continuing Studies
Dr. Valérie Raoul	Professor, Department of French, Hispanic and Italian Studies and Director, The Centre for Studies in Autobiography, Gender and Age (SAGA), UBC

Comments and suggestions regarding the French Centre should be directed to the French Centre Steering Committee’s Secretary, Dr. Francis Andrew, Director, Academic Performance Division, UBC Continuing Studies Ponderosa C101 – 2021 West Mall, Vancouver, BC, V6T 1Z2  
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