

### **FLL's Mission Statement and Assessment and Improvement Steps:**

Mission statement: The Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics through its major program seeks to educate students to high level in their chosen areas of academic specialization. The Department teaches a variety of courses at the introductory level with no prerequisites, including Freshman Seminars, that encourage an interest in the academic disciplines represented in our department and that seek to foster in our students the critical thinking skills and values so important to a liberal arts education. Our upper-level courses build the specific academic knowledge base and analytical thinking needed to master our disciplines. Our majors are excellent preparation for students who will enter graduate school in our disciplines, go on to teaching certification, or who will pursue employment in the private sector upon graduation. Our department is dedicated to the proposition that students benefit most from direct interaction with professors in their area of specialization. The department evaluates its faculty annually with respect to their continuing progress in contributing to cutting-edge scholarship in their fields, teaching excellence in the classroom, and programmatic activities that build and maintain our fine academic programs.

To monitor the progress of our major students and to ensure that the quality of our major programs is maintained and improved, the department carries on a continuous process of quality improvement defined by the following steps:

- 1) Students who have expressed an interest in declaring a major meet with a faculty advisor assigned to majors in that particular discipline. The advisor assesses the student's background in the discipline, the student's academic and life goals, and advises the student on whether the major in question is appropriate under these conditions. The student is advised of academic and professional opportunities for students who graduate with this major, as well as the specific course, credit, and capstone requirements of the major in question. The student is made aware of the L&S appeal and grievance procedures available to all of our students. At this point, the student can declare the major if s/he wishes, provided that s/he has already completed at least 45 credits of coursework in L&S. A major file is begun for the new major.
- 2) The progress of the student major continues to be monitored by the major advisor throughout his or her course work. Periodic meetings may take place between the student and his or her academic advisor during this period, normally at least once per academic year. Students in all classes in FLL are given the opportunity to complete evaluations on their classes and instructors each semester. These results are later reviewed by the instructors, program coordinators and/or department chair or department review committees.
- 3) In the semester prior to the semester in which a student major plans to graduate, the academic advisor reviews the student's progress in the major

with respect to all requirements, including the capstone requirement. If the student has not decided how s/he will meet the capstone requirement, the academic advisor and student meet to finalize this determination. The student is then directed to L&S Advising to set in motion the process for his or her graduation clearance.

- 4) At the conclusion of the student major's final semester, the faculty advisor will review the projected outcome of the student's capstone requirement (project, proficiency exam, study abroad option, etc.) The student receives a major program evaluation for to be completed by the student prior to graduation and conveyed to the department chair. The chair and major advisor oversee the tabulation and analysis of these evaluations, including the capstone requirement results, and convey the results and recommendations to the appropriate department committee or subcommittee. Based on these results and other input, the committee may enact changes to the major program or procedures. When implemented the changes are incorporated into the program and students are apprised of any changes in the program by the major advisor. The capstone results are entered into the student's major file, and preserved. In addition, the department will keep a statistical record of the outcome of the capstone requirement as an indicator of general student and program success.

*Capstone as an assessment measurement:*

The capstone requirements (UWM Undergraduate catalogue, p. 154) in our department's majors are an appropriate indicator of the success of the students in our major programs, as well as the success of the program themselves. This is especially the case when the capstone results are considered together with other measures of student success such as individual course grades, overall GPA, and the number of students who successfully double-majored. A capstone experience requirement consisting of various options was implemented in L&S as a means of meeting the needs of a diverse student population. FLL embraces the diversity of its students and offers various capstone options in each major. These usually include a proficiency exam option (especially in the foreign language majors) as well as a senior project option or study abroad experience in the senior year. Multiple capstone options allow students to select the option that makes the most sense given their academic interests and all such options provide a measurable indicator of student and program success.