

To: The Colonnade Committee
From: The Department of Modern Languages
The Department of Philosophy and Religion
American Sign Language Studies
Date: February 13, 2018
Re: World Language Proficiency Requirement

The faculty in the affected units (Modern Languages, American Sign Language Studies and Philosophy and Religion) express their support for Option #3 in the report of the World Language Proficiency Workgroup. Please find in the following pages a detailed rationale, staffing and implementation plan.

Option 3: Identify and proactively implement alternative means for significantly more students to demonstrate world language proficiency without the need for 101- and/or 102-level language coursework.

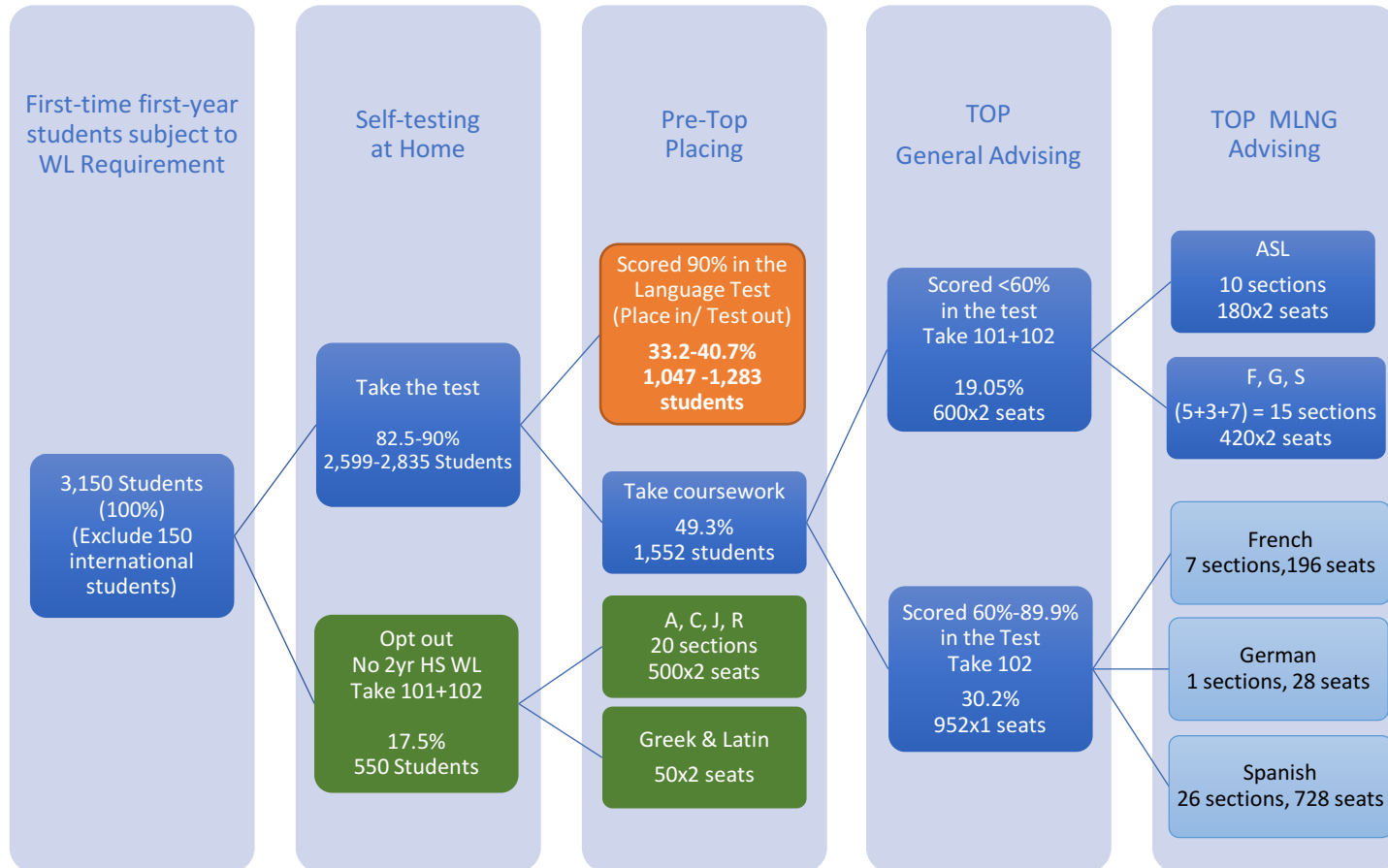
Section I: Underlying Rationale of This Option

This option (see flowchart on the next page) rewards student achievement, presents an attractive option to potential students, preserves major programs with a high degree of recruitment/retention, and is based on objective standards of performance. In a thorough and strategic manner, it addresses implementation issues that arose with the demonstrated proficiency requirement of 2014-2017, among them communication, timeline, and staffing. This option includes developing and implementing an online screening instrument that students will complete at-home, prior to campus arrival, in order to assess and schedule their individual language requirement completion within the first 3 semesters of college coursework. Such a deadline will support the framework of early language learning as a key to academic foundations and explorations.

Feasibility	This option is based on current staffing; it prevents any backlog of students needing to meet the language requirement from recurring; it can be implemented in accordance with the attached timeline. (Beta-tested Spring 2018, First roll-out Fall 2018, Final roll-out Fall 2019)
Scalability	The percentages used in this option can be adjusted if necessary.
Rewarding Student Achievement	This option rewards students for performing well on a screening test, rather than an automatic credit for high school classes, regardless of performance in those classes.
Attractiveness to potential WKU students	WKU would attract higher performing students who would see that their skills are rewarded, whereas an automatic credit for high school classes would tend to attract students who performed poorly. Higher performing students are more likely to be retained and graduate. Proactive options based on learners' current abilities will put them in charge of their class planning, create more student buy-in for the department and increase student success through more accurate placement, based on proficiency, rather than seat time. This option will appeal to those higher performing students who wish to make significant strides in language learning and in adjusting to living in different cultures.
Preserving major programs	Modern Languages programs such as Chinese and Arabic have major recruitment rates at 50% or higher. These majors are also highly sought by government agencies and employers, as well as related to prestigious scholarships. With performance-based evaluation, preservation of WKU's diverse language programs is in WKU's long-term interest. This option provides a path for students into these majors.
Objective standards	This option uses performance testing based on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) standards to place students. Similar methods are used by many benchmark universities for this exact purpose.
Precedents	Elimination of any kind of skills testing (as in Options 1 and 2) sets a precedent likely to be applied to other General Education categories and sends a poor signal to statewide secondary education. The pressure on high schools to provide low passing grades to students, which is already high, would become greater. While this seems convenient, it would lead to lower levels of retention and graduation when those unprepared students go into higher level courses without adequate foundations. WKU would be seen as the destination for poor performing high school students.

Flowchart of World Language Implementation Plan

(Abbreviation: A= Arabic, ASL= American Sign Language, C=Chinese, F= French, G= German, J= Japanese, R=Russian, S= Spanish)



All incoming students who are subject to the world language requirement (N=3,150) will be required to complete a Qualtrics survey online (with hyperlinks directing students to the placement test if needed) before attending TOP sessions. Those students who have not received two years of world language instruction in high school (projected 340 students/year) and those who have indicated in the survey they want to opt out of the placement test may choose to take 101+102 ASL, Arabic, Chinese, Greek, Japanese, Latin or Russian. [Maximum capacity: 550 students every year (17.5%)]. Of all the test takers ($\geq 82.5\%$), we expect more than 33.2% will be able to meet the novice high proficiency requirement based on AVANT STAMP national data (more expanded instrument, and the mean score is 3.2, a.k.a. novice high proficiency, across all languages after 2 years of high school language learning), and therefore will not need any further language coursework at WKU. The remaining students (up to 49.3% or 1,532 students) will either take a 102 course (up to 952 seats) or 101+102 courses (up to 580x2 seats). As mentioned on the previous page, the percentages and number of seats used in this option can be adjusted.

Section II: Pros/Profit/Gains

This option demands higher levels of collaboration among different units on campus, but it presents many advantages:

<p>Institutional-level Consideration: Curricular Decisions Matter</p>	<p>This option advocates that world language proficiency be a university-wide requirement and curricular decisions be made by faculty members rather than administrators (resource allocation).</p>
<p>Institutional-level Consideration: Career-readiness Matters</p>	<p>World language proficiency and intercultural competence is a must-have skill for our students in the 21st century. It extends employment opportunities for WKU graduates and prepares them for a wide range of career options. Empirical research correlates the study of a second language to a more profound understanding of the first.</p>
<p>College-level Consideration: Leadership Matters</p>	<p>This option empowers and values the work of world language educators and fulfills the three primary objectives of leadership that hard-working employees expect: protection, provision (resources) and progress (growth). It provides opportunity for daily communication in a second language in order to support future leaders in intercultural communities.</p>
<p>Departmental-level Consideration: Quality Matters</p>	<p>It is important to measure and make sure students have reached novice high proficiency skills after two years of learning in high school, so they can survive in an ever-changing multicultural global society. It is equally important to be able to recruit students and grow the number of majors and minors who get to enjoy the social and economic benefits of learning a foreign language.</p> <p><small>* Suggested reading: 12 Benefits of Learning a Foreign Language https://examinedexistence.com/12-benefits-of-learning-a-foreign-language-2/</small></p>
<p>Departmental-level Consideration: People Matter</p>	<p>No additional faculty is needed for this option; however, to function effectively, the department needs the existing man power and talents in the lower division to recruit and retain language majors and minors. The contribution of our lower-division instructors is of paramount importance.</p>

Section III: Cons/Cost/Risk/Investment

<p>Institutional-level Consideration: Collaboration & Support</p>	<p>This option requires the collaboration and support of several units: Admissions, AARC, IT (Banner/Topnet coding), CITL (Technical support) and the affected academic programs. The cost of the testing is minimal, but it may need to be covered by the TOP fee.</p>
<p>Institutional-level Consideration: Feasibility & Timeline</p>	<p>The feasibility of this option relies on the enforcement and reliability of the online placement test. The placement test can be altered to meet the needs of the evolving department and student population. It will be piloted and evaluated on a smaller scale in 2018 (February to July), and fully executed starting with the 2019-2020 academic year.</p>
<p>College-level Consideration: Cost or Risk</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p>Departmental-level Consideration: Teamwork & Implementation</p>	<p>This option requires high-level teamwork and consistent execution on a fixed timeline.</p>
<p>Additional Consideration: Students</p>	<p>There may be some reluctance from some students, but students have a higher chance of realizing success if placed in the appropriate level.</p>

Section IV: Organizational Structures and Staffing

This option is designed to be achieved with existing staffing. It is flexible and can be adapted to changes in staffing/capacity.

Oversight	
Instruction	Instructional capacity is based on existing staffing levels and capacity in classes and shown in the attached matrix of 101/102 class capacities. Assignment of instructors is the responsibility of the departments providing classes.
Test Development	The Department of Modern Languages is responsible for developing the screening tests used to place students. The plan for development and fielding of these tests is shown in the attached timeline.
Test Implementation	AARC is responsible for incorporating the tests into incoming student processing.
Course Selection	This option includes a student survey that incoming students will use to decide whether to take a placement test or select a language based on their choices. This screening process will facilitate placement of students into classes automatically.
Objective standards	This option uses performance testing based on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) standards to place students.
Enforcement	TOPNET will be used to enforce the 12-month validity of placement test results and show whether a student has met the language requirements.

Projected Allocation of Staffing: from 2018-2019 on

Language	Level	Projected Sections 2018-2019	Projected Seats 2018-2019
Arabic	101	6	6x25= 150
	102	6	6x25= 150
Chinese	101	6	6x25= 150
	102	6	6x25= 150
Japanese ¹	101	5	5x25= 125
	102	5	5x25= 125
Korean	101	/	/
	102	/	/
Russian	101	3	3x25= 75
	102	3	3x25= 75
French	101	5	5x28= 140
	102	12	12x28= 336
German	101	3	3x28= 84
	102	4	4x28= 112
Spanish ²	101	7	7x28= 196
	102	33	33x28= 924
ASL	101	10	10x18= 180
	102	10	10x18= 180
Total		124	3,152
A,C,J,R	101+102	20x2= 40	40x25= 1,000
F,G,S	101+102	15x2= 30	30x28= 840
F,G,S	102	34	34x28= 952
ASL	101+102	10x2= 20	20x18=360

¹ Korean will not be offered in 2018-2019, so the GTAship will be assigned to the Japanese program.

² Spanish program may lose one full-time instructor line. (10 sections x 28 students/section = 280 seats).