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**Recommendation to Merge the  
Department of East Asian Languages and Literature and the  
Department of Languages and Cultures of Asia to become  
The Department of Asian Languages and Cultures**

This proposal to form the Department of Asian Languages & Cultures has been developed by representatives from the faculty and staff of the departments of East Asian Languages and Literature (EALL) and Languages and Cultures of Asia (LCA), with important contributions from the directors and affiliates of the Center for South Asia, the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, and the Center for East Asian Studies, and other Asianists on campus.

Restructuring the existing departments is motivated by both external and internal factors. Externally, the different regions of Asia are becoming increasingly interconnected with one another and with the outside world. And the robust interconnection of Asia is paralleled by a dramatic increase in the impact of the region on the world in multiple domains ranging from pop culture to commerce and beyond. UW's student body is rapidly internationalizing, with students from Asia leading the trend, and the classrooms of colleagues teaching about Asia are at the front lines of UW's global transformation. In short, by any measure, the global importance of Asia and the complexity, frequency, and depth of its connections to the United States and to Wisconsin have increased. There is no pressing problem in the world today, nor any enduring question in human history, that can be considered while ignoring Asia. Internally, faculty, staff, and students are increasingly pursuing research, teaching, and learning that crosses regional divides. At the same time, the units studying Asia have suffered from faculty departures and face the administrative and governance challenges common to small units. This proposal will create a new unit that is robust and flexible enough to take on the challenges of learning from Asia, as well as learning and teaching about Asia, in the 21st century.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison, with a history of leading scholarship and teaching about South, Southeast, and East Asia, must adapt to current changes to best serve students and the larger community. Historically, the university has been known for its strength in an Area Studies approach, through which departmental structures are conceptualized in terms of regions. When conceptualized in these terms, academic units involve the interaction of disciplines that might otherwise be kept apart: literature, history, religion, and many other foci of scholarly practice interact in such a way that each informs the other. The strength of a place-based approach is that religion, for example, is studied not as a transcultural abstraction; instead, it is understood as emergent within the particular and complex interaction of all that is not religion. An academic unit that is conceptualized along these lines is one in which conversations cutting across disciplines are integral to scholarly practice, and scholarship becomes an innately collaborative project that emerges from the rich complexity of a region itself.

In organizing an academic unit around a region, one key to success is the conceptualization of that space itself. When a conceptual boundary is drawn, the region created thereby must not only be sufficiently cohesive, it must also be relevant in the way that it impacts the world beyond its borders. And as cohesion and impact increase, so too does the rationale and need for research and teaching focused on the region in question. It is with all this in mind that the formation of a new unit, "Asian Languages & Cultures," is proposed.

The formation of a new department of Asian Languages & Cultures (ALC) involves the reorganization of two existing departments: Languages and Cultures of Asia (LCA) and East Asian Languages and Literature (EALL). Part of the rationale for forming ALC is already implicit in these existing units. Using an Area Studies approach, these departments emerged from the cohesion and global impact of the regions that are the focus of their teaching and research. As Asia itself becomes far more cohesive, and as its highly significant and global impacts are generated from interactions that are Asia-wide, it becomes clear that these existing departments can far better serve the university by merging—and drawing in new colleagues from other units—so as to create a robust yet flexible structure for future teaching, research, and community engagement about the deeply interconnected and globally impactful region that is Asia in the twenty-first century.

Established in 1967, EALL has offered undergraduate and graduate majors in Chinese and Japanese for almost five decades. The Chinese M.A. and Ph.D. were established in 1963 and 1964, respectively, under the Department of Chinese, EALL's precursor. The Chinese graduate program's traditional strength has been in the study of Classical Chinese literature, but it has recently developed additional foci on the study of Chinese religion, as well as contemporary literature and media, the latter particularly in connection with the transasian track. The Japanese graduate program, on the other hand, was established in 1967, first as MA and committee PhD degrees, and the Japanese PhD was formally approved in 1991. The Japanese graduate program's traditional strength has been the Japanese linguistics program, whose graduates have been in high demand as language instructors in major U.S. institutions, and the Japanese literature program has become more prominent in recent years. Both Chinese and Japanese undergraduate majors have a national and international reputation for excellence, and have maintained robust student numbers. In addition, the department began to offer undergraduate certificates in both languages (Japanese in 2011, and Chinese in 2012) thanks to the support it received from the Madison Initiative for Undergraduates.

Starting in the mid-1980s EALL began to offer Korean. The program has grown considerably since then, and Korean language and culture courses now attract over 120 students per semester. Recognizing Korea's fundamental significance in the region and responding to the growing interest in Korean language and culture, EALL and the Center for East Asian Studies made concerted efforts to strengthen the Korean program.

In the meantime, EALL has also seen an increasing number of graduate and undergraduate students whose intellectual curiosity goes beyond the focus on one particular language and culture. In order to support graduate students who were admitted to the Chinese or the Japanese graduate program, but aspired to pursue research projects that crossed regional and disciplinary boundaries, the department has foregrounded the theme of "Transasian Studies" in its application for the Chancellor's Fellowship competitions. Under the leadership of faculty specializing in contemporary China and Japan, this transasian emphasis has become a popular trend, so much so that the current structure of having the two separate degrees in Chinese and Japanese has become unsuitable to accommodate students with transasian interests.

Much needed support for the Korean program and the emerging discipline of transasian studies within the department prompted EALL to consider the restructuring of its graduate education; it

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decided to propose a single degree program with named options. This structure allows more flexibility to build on the department's existing strength in Chinese literature and culture, Japanese linguistics, and so on, and at the same time to accommodate changing student interests. This structure also allows the department to continue exploring new emphases in response to qualifications sought after in the current and future academic and other job markets. This discussion began in the early 2010s, and when EALL was about to propose this new structure, the discussion of restructuring on a larger scale began.

LCA was established in 1999, emerging from the Department of South Asian Studies (DSAS) which included the study of Thai and Indonesian languages and literature. DSAS was established in the mid-1960s and had its origin in the Department of Indian Studies (DIS) which had been established in the late 1950s. Thus, the University of Wisconsin-Madison has maintained a commitment to the study of South and Southeast Asian for more than fifty-five years.

Since 1999, LCA has encompassed the study of South, Southeast, and Southwest/Central Asia while focusing on the research and teaching of Asian humanities, with particular emphasis on the cultures, literatures, religions, and languages of the geographical regions mentioned above. The faculty has engaged in wide-ranging humanistic scholarship that transcends the boundaries of language, region, historical period, nation, and ethnic and religious identity. Faculty and academic staff train undergraduate and graduate students from across the university in the humanistic study of Asia. More broadly, LCA has served as a source of expertise on various parts of Asia for the university, the local community, and the state, and also at the national and international levels. In all these contexts, LCA has emphasized the significance of the Asian humanities, promoting them as something not only to learn about but also, and equally importantly, to learn from. LCA's paradigm of Asian humanities has been seen as a groundbreaking innovation because, at present, no academic program in North America or Europe is able to approach Asian materials systematically across the humanities, especially in the fields of religious, literary, and cultural studies.

Despite the innovative vision and approaches to research and education of the Asian humanities, LCA faced challenges due to the departure and retirement of faculty members, whose positions have not been replaced. The process of reimagining the structure and mission of LCA began in the fall of 2013 when Associate Dean Susan Zaeske announced that the College of Letters and Science was asking small departments throughout the college to propose departmental structures that would allow the new unit to have an executive committee of at least 14 members. Prior to being told that LCA had to restructure, some (especially those in the field of religious studies) have, for a number of years, thought that it would be intellectually exciting to collaborate with EALL on a degree program (or two) such as an Asian Humanities BA or a PhD in Asian religions. Since LCA has never emphasized national borders, but rather regions, moving to a larger regional perspective has been an attractive new direction for a number of faculty members. Thus, exploring the possibility of establishing a new department in collaboration with EALL was a logical step.

For the purposes of this department, how to determine geographic coverage of Asia is a complex question. Although this new unit wishes to stress transasian teaching and research, at the same time it cannot cover all areas. The Future of Asian Studies Committee charged to make recommendations for restructuring proposed that this unit will cover the areas and languages funded by the Centers for South Asia, Southeast Asia, and East Asia, while the areas funded by CREECA may move to another newly emerging department. The current proposal that adopted

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this recommendation was presented to LCA and EALL members for the purpose of voting. This proposal is not meant to discourage future collaboration with scholars and students working on central and southwest Asia.

After careful consideration of the pros and cons of different names suggested for this new department, “Asian Languages & Cultures” prevailed as the final choice. The factors considered for this decision making process include (not necessarily in the order of significance): 1) match with the unit’s scope; 2) accessibility for a broad audience; 3) longevity of the name; 4) potential of confusion with other UW-Madison internal units; 5) potential misinterpretation of the terms used in the name; and 5) length of the name. As simple as they may seem, all of the components in the name of the department, “Asian,” “languages,” and “cultures,” are indeed rather complex and encompassing constructs that warrant intellectual examination, and that is precisely the mission of this department. And faculty of the new department will approach the inquiry from different disciplinary expertise. These three terms also constitute the current name of one of the departments involved in this restructuring. In order to mark a fresh start of this new department, however, the proposed new name is preferred over retaining the name of the existing department. Doing so will also eliminate possible confusions with the current LCA department and this new department.

The proposed Department of Asian Languages & Cultures at UW-Madison is student-centered and driven by research that is integrated into the classroom. With thematic foci in Asian languages, linguistics, and literature, Asian cultural studies, religions of Asia, and critical issues in contemporary Asia, the department aims to teach students how to recognize and critically analyze the realities of past and present “Asia” as a region that is crucial to the global flows of people, materials, and ideas through its own rich complexity with deep interconnections across multiple domains. At the same time, within this context of connections across Asia, the department seeks to promote deep learning and knowledge of particular languages, time periods, and places, since in order to understand transasian regional and global networks, students also need to acquire specific cultural and linguistic competencies.

With all this in mind, students are encouraged to study Asia in a regional and comparative frame while cultivating scholarly capacities in particular aspects of Asian cultures. To that end, the department offers multiple degree options at the BA, MA, and PhD levels, reflecting departmental research strengths that allow students to approach the study of Asian cultures, languages, media, religions, and critical social issues from a variety of perspectives. Both teaching and research will be enhanced through collaborations within the department and beyond, with particular emphasis on the development of robust connections with scholars at peer institutions throughout Asia.

Once approved, the members of the new department will engage in detailed program planning to revise existing programs and perhaps propose new academic programs to be housed in this new department. The existing EALL majors are currently under review, and IRIS plans to review all academic programs currently housed in the area studies centers in the near future. The results of these program reviews will also inform the new department’s planning of new programs and/or revision of the existing major programs.

Based on the recommendations by FASC and ASRIC, the department plans to maintain the existing undergraduate major and certificate programs in Chinese and Japanese. The Chinese and Japanese BA degrees currently housed in EALL are popular and sustainable. Chinese and

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Japanese are the seventh and sixth most studied languages in the U.S. (MLA 2013 survey) and these major degree names are well recognized by students. Advanced proficiency in these languages appears to be in demand in the current job market as well. In addition to these two language-specific majors and certificates, the new department will propose another new undergraduate major, not tied to a specific language and flexible enough to allow for options of concentrations of study.

The department's plan for graduate education, on the other hand, is to create a single graduate program in Asian Languages & Cultures with named options. The move towards this type of structure, rather than keeping Chinese and Japanese as separate graduate programs, had already been explored and approved by EALL in spring 2012 prior to this restructuring discussion. The new structure will enable the program to accommodate students with transasian interests, as well as those with interests in a specific language or a region; it will also enhance communication and collaboration among faculty and increase administrative efficiency. The department intends to begin discussion on the development of new academic programs and revision of the existing programs starting in spring 2016, aiming to launch our new or revised programs in the fall 2017, if possible.

All current EALL and LCA faculty with the exception of one LCA faculty member who is seeking to transfer tenure to the proposed Department of German, Nordic, and Slavic will participate in the new department. In addition, the department is currently conducting an open rank search, and this new hire will be an additional member of the department. There may be other faculty joining the department after the submission of this proposal.

One Faculty Associate in LCA, one Associate Faculty Associate in EALL, and 5 Lecturers in LCA will participate in the new department. The department proposes an additional academic staff position of an undergraduate advisor. The undergraduate programs of the new unit will be complex, including continuing programs, teach-out of earlier programs, and new programs. The consistent support of a professional advisor, working in concert with faculty mentoring in specific areas, is essential to guide our students. There may be other academic staff joining the department after the submission of this proposal.

Both EALL and LCA currently employ two University Staff. Staff positions in the new unit will be defined after faculty and student needs are clear. The new unit will need staff (university or academic staff, as appropriate) for the following three general areas of responsibility: financial administration; graduate program coordination; and undergraduate advising, timetable, placement tests, and coordination of evaluation. The following additional areas of responsibility could be divided among the staff as appropriate to their skills: website and communication; additional research and instructional support; archiving of departmental records, gathering data for department initiatives etc.

The governance structure for this new department has been developed by carefully reviewing Faculty Policies and Procedures (FP&P) and EALL's and LCA's current operations, as well as models presented by other units. The proposed structure, including the selection and duties of Chair, membership and charge of the Executive Committee is in alignment with FP&P. A leadership team consisting of Chair, Associate Chair, and Director of Graduate Studies, with specification of respective areas of responsibilities, will ensure transparent, systematic, and principled decision-making for the department. The five standing committees—Faculty and Staff, Budget, Curriculum and Planning, Graduate Admissions and Funding, and Events,

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Communications, and Advancement—attend to respective key aspects of departmental life.

The new department will have 15 tenured faculty who can participate in the Executive Committee, and over 20 members who can participate in the Department Committee and the standing committees. However, the majority of these are the current members of EALL, who specialize in Chinese and Japanese languages and cultures. In order to ensure a regional and disciplinary balance in its governance structure, the department will establish a transitional arrangement for the new department's initial three years, agreeing to invite up to five tenured faculty members representing otherwise underrepresented regions or disciplines to its executive and department committees. This transitional arrangement will be reviewed by the regular members of the departmental executive committee in Spring 2019, and may be extended for an additional one to three years depending on the configuration of the members and the operation of the department at the time.

In consultation with L&S administration, the departments will combine their current budgets. For reasons of practicality the new unit will use EALL's UDDS. All gift funds associated with the two units will continue to be used as the donors determined, and the department will communicate with all living donors about the change in departmental structure.

The merger was voted on in an advisory vote by EALL faculty and staff, an advisory vote by LCA faculty and staff, and an EALL executive committee vote. The results of the votes were as follows:

- EALL advisory vote (secret ballot, voting from off campus permitted, including one future faculty member of the new department not yet in EALL, completed November 9, 2015): 16 votes in favor, including 11 faculty, 1 academic staff, 2 university staff, and 2 graduate student representatives, there were no votes against the proposal.
- LCA advisory vote (November 9, 2015): 6 votes in favor (1 faculty, 5 academic staff), 4 votes against (1 faculty, 1 academic staff, 2 university staff). The LCA faculty member who voted in favor of this proposal is enthusiastically supportive and has been a valued leader in developing it. The faculty member who voted against it has applied to leave LCA to move to Slavic, the department in which he was originally hired and to which his research is the most closely aligned. The university staff who voted against the proposal expressed concern about their job security in relation to the restructuring. They have expressed such concerns throughout the planning process, in which they were included as appropriate per FP&P, starting with the LCA retreats in fall 2013 and continuing through the recent information session.
- EALL Executive Committee vote (November 10, 2015, 3 colleagues on leave, 2 otherwise absent, chair not voting): 7 votes in favor, no votes against. While the EALL faculty unanimously approved the ASRIC proposal, the EALL executive committee discussed concerns raised by some members of the LCA advisory group and acknowledged that in future discussions about the identity of the new department, it will be necessary to clarify where Central Asia belongs. In the next stage of bringing the new department into being, the members of the new department will work with L&S to define the staffing needs of the new unit and to communicate with current university staff as quickly and as clearly as possible

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On November 17, 2015, the L&S Academic Planning Council considered the proposal to establish a new “Department of Asian Languages & Cultures.” As noted in the proposal, the new department will be created by restructuring the Departments of East Asian Languages and Literature (EALL) and of Languages and Cultures of Asia (LCA). These departments received permission from the L&S APC to plan to restructure in May 2015 and in November 2014, respectively. Since then, they have been engaged in an intensive planning process (per L&S and campus policy) that has been informed by the work of a strategic planning committee focused on “The Future of Asian Studies.” The proposal submitted to the L&S APC reflects honestly concerns and anxieties expressed by faculty and staff affected by the restructuring. The L&S APC discussed these concerns thoroughly, speaking with faculty and staff from the departments and from the planning committee. Voting members of the L&S APC approved this request unanimously.

The proposal was subsequently approved by the University Academic Planning Council on December 17, 2015. This action is effective July 1, 2016.