

Annual Report of the Undergraduate Advisor

Department of Languages & Cultures of Asia

Academic Year 2012-13

April 24, 2013

The undergraduate program in LCA continues to function well and shows some signs of growth. The total number of majors in LCA rose slightly to just over 50 for the first time. To my knowledge, all majors are now fulfilling the requirements of the curriculum implemented in Fall 2009. Unlike previous years, most new majors in this academic year declared LCA as their sole or first major, often with no clear intention to declare another. I consider this a good sign for the department in that it might suggest that students feel the major provides them with a sufficiently diverse major experience to stand on its own.

The required courses for the major again met the minimums the department set for itself when it adopted the new curriculum, namely to offer the Capstone seminar once per year (so far always in fall) and to offer one of the three introductory courses every semester. The format for the Capstone followed almost exactly the syllabus from last year, with the exception of a few new readings in the second half of the course, which has been left purposely flexible. Response to the Capstone was once again quite positive and students genuinely appreciated the chance to think through what we do in LCA that is special and distinctive.

Two introductory courses were offered this year. LCA/Relig St 273 was offered again by Prof. Hansen. With recent curricular changes in Religious Studies, LCA needs to consider whether 273 can continue to be offered as one of its core introductory courses, if our cluster Religious Studies faculty have new commitments that do not directly overlap with our offerings. LCA 100 was offered in the spring by Prof. Lowman, our ACLS fellow for this and next year. A negotiation with Prof. Lowman led to his assignment to this course, as he develops a teaching portfolio as part of his professional profile. However, it is imperative that the department think early and carefully about staffing for the required introductory courses, which have served the department well as gateways to other LCA courses, particularly languages, and to the major.

One issue that arose more pointedly this year than in the past concerns overlaps between TA sections for our intro and other courses and graduate seminars offered in LCA. Such conflicts prevented several students from taking LCA seminars. The department should cross-check section timings so as not to conflict with our few graduate courses.

As mentioned in last year's report, the Madison Initiative for Undergraduates funded a new advising position housed primarily in the Language Institute. The International Directions Advisor, Mike Kruse (a former LCA student), has become an excellent resource on campus for career advising for language students and has organized several workshops for students and faculty dealing both with how to get most out of language-centered majors while in college and what to do with those skills after graduation. I highly recommend that the new undergraduate advisor take advantage of Mike's special history with LCA and his knowledge of the local advising scene to supplement his/her own work.

As I am stepping down as undergraduate advisor after this term, I would simply like to recommend that the new advisor seek authorization for DARS (the degree audit system which monitors student progress and fulfillment of requirements), DARSX (the electronic system for DARS exceptions), for Advisor Notes (a campus-wide system that allows advisors to provide quick summaries of contacts with students and to allow other advisors to

see those notes as a way to collectively monitor students), and for the adv-list listserv (which provides helpful information about general advising events, procedures, etc). I am, of course, happy to help the new advisor learn the ropes.

In summary, the LCA undergraduate program experienced further solidification and some growth. Students report being very content with courses, with instructors, and with the structure of our major. It is gratifying to hear from students how much certain teachers have helped or inspired them. Those students who do find us come quickly to appreciate our approach to Asian humanities and the diversity of faculty interests. I think we could do more to help undergraduates connect outside of class, through more extra- and co-curricular events, but the curricular patterns we have established over the last four years seem to have worked as well as we could have expected.

Statistics

Total number of LCA majors at time of report: 53
Number of LCA majors graduating in Spring 2013: 12
Number of LCA majors graduated in Fall 2012: 6
Number of students in LCA 600, Fall 2012: 20

Respectfully submitted,

Don Davis