

## Proposal for Support of Second Language Learners at Cal State San Marcos

Submitted by

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**Director of University Global Affairs**

The goal of this proposal is to improve the student retention rate at Cal State San Marcos, specifically, students for whom English is a second language. Although we tend to think of ESL or second language students primarily as international students, recent census data confirms that a significant and increasing number of California residents use a language other than English on a daily basis. Although the contentious issue of bilingualism in California's public schools appears to have been resolved in favor of mainstreaming second language students as quickly as possible, the reality is that many second language students graduate from high school without the language and academic skills they need to succeed at the post-secondary level. Further, often second language transfer students have difficulty with the CSU Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement.

In 1996-97, 47 percent of entering CSU students assessed in English needed remediation. Curiously, the CSU does not collect data on the percentage of those who are second language learners, but we do know that two-thirds of Mexican American and Asian American students entering the CSU in 1996-97 needed English remediation. The issue, however, is not whether substantial numbers of students require remediation in English, but whether the CSU system, and Cal State San Marcos in particular, can address this problem more effectively, thus improving our retention rate.

Currently, Cal State San Marcos, along with most of the CSU campuses, mainstreams second language learners into whatever remediation or Freshmen Composition track exists. All San Marcos first-year students, for example, go into our GEW course, and satisfy the Graduation Writing Requirement through the All-University Writing Requirement [A sample of other CSU campus GWAR requirements is attached]. The particular needs of second language learners in GEW or those struggling with the writing requirements are not addressed anywhere in this process.

What we propose here is that Cal State San Marcos follow the lead of a few of our sister campuses (San Diego State, Sacramento, and Pomona) by:

- **Instituting a separate track for the fulfillment of the lower division written communication requirement for English as a second language students.**
- **Institute an advanced writing class and workshop for upper-division second language students who are having difficulty with the All-University Writing Requirement.**

We further propose that whatever rubric these classes come under (e.g., GEW, Writing and Literature, Linguistics) that the University **contract with its American Language and Culture Institute to deliver the instruction and manage these programs**, rather than creating a separate, new faculty and program.

## Assessment of Need

The idea of a separate learning track for ESL students at the post-secondary level is not new and not without controversy. The landmark study and recommendations on this matter are contained in the 1996 report: *California Pathways: The Second Language Student in Public High Schools, Colleges & Universities*.<sup>1</sup> This report, updated in 2000, addresses a multitude of issues related to second language learners at all levels of California education, but makes some especially noteworthy points for Cal State San Marcos:

- “Meaningful access for L2 [ESL] learners in the CSU and UC systems is limited by several factors. Not all campuses offer appropriately designed courses taught by qualified instructors. Also few campuses offer instruction in skill areas other than writing, in part because of the emphasis on freshmen composition and, in the CSU, because of the focus on preparing students ultimately for the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement. Thus ESL students’ need for instruction in speaking and listening is most often ignored. ... Nevertheless, a lack of proficiency in such skills can limit a student’s access to the curriculum.” [62]
- “L2 (ESL) learners are included in the general population of students admitted to all segments of California schools . . . For students from some linguistic and cultural backgrounds, true representation has not been achieved, however, this appears to be rooted more in their prior academic training than in admissions policies. The admissions process *appears* [emphasis added] fair and just for L2 learners in all segments.” [37]
- “Meaningful access for language minority students to all of California’s public educational institutions implies not only that these students are admitted into the system, but that they receive the English language support and other support services they need to complete graduation requirements. If such students are admitted but do not graduate, then they lack true, meaningful access.” [33]

Even if the needs of second language learners are real, does that mean they should be addressed in a separate instructional track? The conclusion of the *California Pathways* report is clear on this point:

Because L2 [ESL] learners may not have grown up with the English language and with U.S. culture as part of their primary experience, their education needs differ greatly from those of native English speakers in our schools. While instruction for native speakers, for example, often tends to emphasize reading and writing, L2 learners at all levels need to learn English as part of an integrated curriculum which includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing. . . . To a greater degree than native English speakers, L2 learners need to learn the syntactic structures and organizational patterns of both written and spoken English. . . . L2 learners who have lived most of their lives in this country are familiar with multicultural America, but they may still need additional language instruction, especially in areas of academic reading and writing. In addition, efforts to measure L2 learners’ English abilities need to be carefully designed for this particular

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<sup>1</sup> Commissioned by California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office and endorsed by all post-secondary segments in California.

population. Tests designed to assess native speakers of English are generally inappropriate for L2 learners. [viii]

The professional association, California Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (CATESOL) issued a statement in 1994 identifying the inadequacy of addressing the problems of second language learners in standard remedial courses [Statement attached]. The basic point made by CATESOL is that foreign language instruction is not remedial, and for second language learners English is a foreign language.

Looking specifically at the CSU, Lisa Goddard, an English instructor at Cal Poly SLO, recently produced a report: *The CSU and ESL Freshmen Composition*.<sup>2</sup> Goddard acknowledges, "many people feel that there is no difference between the ESL learner and the native-speaker, and that offering ESL specific Freshmen Composition classes is a waste of time and money." Citing numerous research studies on this topic, however, Goddard argues that the weight of the evidence points to the need for ESL sections of Freshmen Composition because, "If ESL students place the majority of their attention on translating their ideas into English and not on the thinking out of ideas, we are accomplishing only half the intended goal of the Freshmen Composition course as stated by the CSU system."

Goddard concludes: "Therefore, if the principal goal of the CSU Freshmen Composition class is clarity in rhetorical thinking and exposition of prose, then ESL students ought to be addressed separately, since they require more attention in understanding the working concepts of English, both verbally and rhetorically."

Some CSU campuses have already responded to this need. Sacramento offers a course called *English for Speakers of Other Languages*, which fulfills the Freshmen Composition requirement. Pomona offers a series of four English classes for speakers of English as a second language, beginning with basic skills and ending with the equivalent of Freshmen Composition. Similarly, San Diego State has a four-class sequence in Linguistics for ESL students to substitute for the standard English requirement [SDSU catalog pages attached].<sup>3</sup> Goddard notes that other CSU campuses have considered this type of instruction, but have demurred owing to anticipated costs associated with its delivery.

At Cal State San Marcos, retention of first-year freshmen has become a critical problem. Despite our GEW curriculum and Writing Center efforts, we are now losing almost 40 percent of our freshmen class. Although we do not have data on what percentage of these dropouts are second language students, we have anecdotal evidence of second language students struggling with the writing requirement. Additionally, some upper division San Marcos students are enrolling in our ALCI classes, and many more have made inquiries about taking an ESL class. Most do not because they cannot afford the fee and because they cannot apply financial aid toward noncredit ESL work.

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<sup>2</sup> This report is available at: <http://cla.calpoly.edu/~jbattenb/Papers/Goddard.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Pomona's courses are at: <http://www.csupomona.edu/~academic/catalog/CoLASS.pdf>. SDSU's courses are at: [http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/dept/linguist/esl\\_comp.html](http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/dept/linguist/esl_comp.html).

We suggest that in view of Cal State San Marcos's goal of increasing access to first generation college students in our region, and desire to be designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution, academic support for second language learners is essential. Academic ESL instruction for second language learners should be introduced to complement our existing learning assistance programs in a concerted effort to retain our students.

### **Program Delivery**

Creating, delivering, and administering a new Freshmen Writing curriculum and a writing class for upper division ESL students will require additional funding. Faculty who are specialists in ESL instruction will have to be hired and managed, course will have to be created, and the curriculum will have to be evaluated. We suggest that contracting this task to the American Language and Culture Institute (ALCI) will both mitigate the cost associated with such a program and guarantee its quality.

We can cite pedagogical reasons for assigning this responsibility to ALCI. The most compelling reason is this is what ALCI does well. While ALCI currently works exclusively with international students, all ALCI instructors are trained and experienced in working with domestic ESL learners. Moreover, all ALCI instructors have Master's degrees in Teaching English as Second Language (TESOL), or equivalent post-graduate degree, which is an essential requirement for an ESL program at the post-secondary level. In short, we have a qualified instructional staff on campus prepared to deliver this program. Further, our ALCI director is very knowledgeable about ESL issues and has worked in this area for many years.

Another reason for assigning the task to ALCI is its expertise in the development of academic skills. ESL is only one component of academic preparation for second language learners, especially those who may have had part of their K-12 education outside the U.S. They need to learn skills such as note taking, test taking, library research, Web-based research, and oral communication in class, which is the focus of ALCI's Intensive Academic Preparation program for international students.

We can anticipate a number of sound objections to giving ALCI responsibility for the proposed programs. One is that ALCI is a Foundation operation, not authorized to award credit. Further, the faculty through the GEC of the Senate and the General Education Office will legitimately claim jurisdiction over all academic instruction. There are also likely to be issues raised by the California Faculty Association. However, this proposal is not intended to create an academic program outside the purview and supervision of Academic Affairs and the appropriate faculty bodies. Rather, we are proposing a mechanism for the delivery of a program that will be cost effective and academically sound.

Although it is a Foundation operation, ALCI is under the administrative supervision of the Office of University Global Affairs. The ALCI director reports to the Director of University Global Affairs who, in turn, reports directly to the Provost. This means that ALCI is already within the Academic Affairs area and placing responsibility for an academic program within Global Affairs is feasible.

The creation of the classes and awarding academic credit for them can also be addressed in a collaborative manner. Since as a Foundation activity ALCI cannot award academic credit directly the freshmen composition courses will have to be placed under the same rubric as GEW 101. A Task Group appointed by the Provost could propose the new courses, and, when approved by the Senate, they would be managed by ALCI, and taught by ALCI instructors. Academic Affairs would then compensate ALCI for the cost of instruction and administration of the program. This would take advantage of the economies associated with an existing structure, while at the same time assuring that the quality of instruction is at the highest possible level.

### **Summary**

Cal State San Marcos must do more to increase its student retention rate. Research suggests that one reason some freshmen do not succeed is that their needs as second language learners are not being adequately addressed through our GEW curriculum and writing support programs. A solution that some CSU campuses have adopted is an ESL equivalent of Freshmen Composition, (our GEW course), including preparatory classes. Another solution would be an upper-division writing class for second language students. A cost-effective way of meeting this need with high quality instruction is for Academic Affairs to contract with the American Language and Culture Institute to develop and operate this program through the Office of University Global Affairs.

### **The Next Step**

We suggest that the Provost appoint a working group to explore this proposal. The group should consist of the Associate Vice President for Academic Programs, the Director of ALCI, the General Education Coordinator, the Writing Center Coordinator, a CFA representative, and a representative from the GEC of the Academic Senate. This group would make a recommendation to the Provost and the Academic Senate.

Regardless of how we decide to deliver it, a program for second language learners should be one of the University's highest priorities in its ongoing effort to improve retention.

**From:** Jan Jackson  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 17, 2004 3:51 PM  
**To:** Jacqueline Trischman  
**Cc:** Marcia Woolf  
**Subject:** Request for Academic Senate

Hi Jackie:

I'm writing to request assistance from the Nominations, Elections and Appointments Committee of the Academic Senate as Extended Studies works to launch its first Advisory Council in the fall.

We would very much like a faculty representative from each of the three colleges to serve on our Advisory Council. The role of the Council will be to provide guidance to Extended Studies on continuing education needs, issues, and audiences, which will enhance our ability to serve the region. We also hope that Council members will act as advocates for lifelong learning and assist Extended Studies in communicating its work to the community and through the university. While certainly not a regulatory board, we hope the Council will work to hold us accountable for and keep us faithful to our mission and vision, as described on the attachment. We will also be identifying and inviting representatives from business and industry, government, education, healthcare, etc. to sit on the Council (that is, representatives from those key industries we're here to serve).

Here's what we envision:

- The Council will not number more than 20
- It will be comprised of individuals who understand (or want to understand) our mission and can promote it in a way that will influence positively how we're perceived
- It will be chaired by a member of the Council (not someone from Extended Studies)
- This will be an active council (not perfunctory in nature) with several expected outcomes/deliverables
- The Council will meet quarterly
- Individuals will be "appointed" for one-year terms, with the option to renew as interests and time allow

John Halcon from the College of Education has already voiced his interest in serving, so I hope that the committee will consider his interest. We would like to hold our inaugural meeting in mid to late October, and hope we can have all members in place by then.

Thanks to you and the NEAC for your help with this. Please let me know if I can provide additional information.

Best,  
Jan



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- 1 5. If any stage of a Performance Review has not been completed according to the RTP  
2 Timetable, the WPAF shall be automatically transferred to the next level of review or  
3 appropriate administrator and the Candidate shall be so notified. (15.41)  
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6 A. Election and Composition of the Peer Review Committee (PRC)  
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- 8 1. The Department or appropriate academic unit is responsible for determining the size and  
9 election conditions of the PRC. The Department Chair shall ensure that there is an  
10 election of a PRC. Where no Department Chair exists, the department or appropriate  
11 faculty governance unit will ensure that there is an election of a PRC. (See IV.B.1. and 2.  
12 above.)  
13
- 14 2. The PRC shall be composed of at least three full-time tenured faculty elected by tenure-  
15 track faculty in the Candidate's department (or equivalent), with the chair elected by the  
16 committee. That is, if there are enough eligible faculty members in a department or  
17 program, members of the Peer Review Committee are elected from these areas. ~~If not, the~~  
18 ~~Peer Review Committee may be elected from among all eligible faculty members~~  
19 ~~throughout the university (15.35). If not, the department or program shall elect Peer~~  
20 ~~Review Committee members from eligible university faculty in related academic~~  
21 ~~disciplines (15.35).~~ The PRC shall elect its own chair.  
22
- 23 3. In the case of a faculty member with a joint appointment, the Peer Review Committee  
24 shall include when possible representatives from both areas with a majority of members  
25 on the committee elected from the Department or program holding the majority of the  
26 faculty member's appointment.  
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- 28 4. Peer Review Committee members must have higher rank/classification than those being  
29 considered for promotion.  
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- 31 5. Candidates for promotion are ineligible for service on promotion or tenure Peer Review  
32 Committees.  
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- 34 6. Each College/Library/SSP,AR shall adopt procedures for electing a Peer Review  
35 Committee from the eligible faculty. These procedures must follow the guidelines of the  
36 CBA. (15.35).  
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38 B. Responsibilities of the Peer Review Committee (PRC)  
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- 40 1. The PRC shall review the WPAF for completeness. Within seven days of the submission  
41 deadline the PRC shall:  
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  - 43 a. Submit a letter to the Custodian of the File outlining material that is lacking. If no  
44 WPAF has been submitted, the PRC shall submit a letter to the Custodian of the File  
45 within the same deadline indicating that the WPAF is lacking.  
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  - 47 b. Add any existing material, required or additional, missing from the WPAF that the  
48 Candidate has not added via the COF (15.12).  
49
- 50 2. The PRC shall determine whether to request external review of the WPAF. In the case of  
51 an external review request, see Appendix C for responsibilities and timeline.  
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- 53 3. Consistent with the CBA, the Department/College/Library/SSP,AR RTP  
54 standards/documents and the RTP Timetable:  
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