

**Strategic Plan for  
the Department of World Languages and Cultures  
at The College of New Jersey  
Spring 2025**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Department of World Languages and Cultures is a culturally and intellectually diverse community dedicated to fostering global citizenship through linguistic and cultural education.

Our mission is to:

- Cultivate understanding of the relationship between cultural products, practices, and perspectives through immersive language learning and authentic cultural experiences;
- Connect language study with other disciplines, enabling students to access and evaluate information in both English and target languages while developing critical thinking skills applicable to real-world contexts;
- Create opportunities for students to develop comparative insights into the nature of language and culture, preparing them to serve as effective cultural bridges in professional settings.

Our faculty guides students in developing advanced communicative competence while building intercultural awareness and skills that extend beyond the classroom. We prepare graduates who can navigate cultural differences with sensitivity, engage thoughtfully with diverse communities, and pursue lifelong learning in an interconnected global society.

Our curriculum and practices align with ACTFL and other best-practices standards to ensure excellence in language and cultural education while promoting intercultural understanding

## **STRATEGIC INITIATIVES**

The Department of World Languages and Cultures organizes its strategic plan by initiatives as described below. The initiatives listed here come from the discussions among the World Languages and Cultures faculty, staff, students and alumni.

### **SECTION I - CURRICULUM:**

including the Department's Academic Program and Student Learning, Advising, and Internationalization

### **SECTION II - COMMUNITY:**

including the Department's Community, Intellectual Climate, Faculty, Diversity, Alumni Relations, Community Outreach, and Leadership and Governance

### **SECTION III - RESOURCES:**

including the Department's Fundraising and Development, Technology, and Office and Classroom Space

## **I. CURRICULUM:**

All of our academic programs teach students to read closely, think analytically, write clearly, speak articulately, and evaluate and present evidence wisely and accurately. We will prepare students to become informed global citizens by engaging with people and cultural artifacts from different languages and traditions, and by interacting with people and experiencing places different from their home communities.

**Goal A: Curriculum Development and Revision.** We will ensure that our academic programs and course offerings reflect the goals of our mission statement.

*Strategies:*

1. Promote and evaluate intensive language programs in less commonly taught languages.
2. Continue examining the design of the Spanish and World Languages and Linguistics majors and implement revisions that will expand curricular options for students while enhancing staffing efficiencies.
3. Continue on examining the viability of the various minors, focusing on ways to attract more students and encourage higher enrollments at the advanced level. To do so, we will explore ways to best serve TCNJ's increasing population of heritage and native speakers of Spanish, including potentially expanding courses and programs designed for this population.
4. Engage in regular assessment of curriculum to determine curricular development/revision.
5. Promote increased understanding among language sections to foster ongoing dialogue and cooperation among faculty and different disciplines within the department.
6. Create incentives for heritage students to try to place into higher-level courses.
7. Develop criteria to determine what, if any, languages we could feasibly add to the curriculum.
8. Continue promoting the new ESL/SPA track—which addresses the critical shortage of NJ world-language and ESL teachers.
9. Continue following the necessary steps to expand the ESL track to other languages so that it can hopefully be ready for next AY 25-26 (Jeanne DelColle, Interim Assistant Director for Program Development & Certification, is currently working on this).

10. Maintain promotion of our undergraduate Spanish Certificates for the professions.
11. Continue promoting our undergraduate Business Certificates for all the languages we offer, including carrying on reaching out to the School of Business.
12. Explore the possibility of having ALL incoming students take the language placement test, which would help immensely with WLC recruitment.
13. Offer more WLC 370 Topics in World Languages (in English) and WLC 371 Topics in Foreign Lit (in English) courses, and explore the possibility of having them count towards our minors and majors when possible.

### **Goal B: Interdisciplinary**

We will enhance and support interdisciplinary curricula and research within the department, the School and across schools, and will work with colleagues to expand interdisciplinary learning, teaching, and research opportunities across the campus.

#### *Strategies:*

14. We embrace opportunities to offer courses -including team-taught courses- that cross disciplinary boundaries and foster critical thinking and exposure to other peoples and cultures such as First-Year Seminars and courses within the Honors program.
15. We will consult with other departments to explore interest in developing language-specific offerings that can be taught by qualified faculty not housed in World Languages and Cultures, such as a Women's and Gender Studies course in Spanish, a section of Latin American History given in Spanish, or Chinese Studies in History.
16. We will seek to enhance our involvement with other academic units on campus through expanding Languages Across the Curriculum and developing appropriate language for the professions courses (e.g. Business Chinese, Spanish for the Health Professions).
17. We will examine the possibility of integrating courses from other academic units on campus to count toward our degrees.

### **Goal C: Experiential Learning**

We will increase opportunities for experiential learning, including both undergraduate research and internships.

#### *Strategies:*

18. We will strive to increase opportunities for our students to conduct research and participate in internships under the mentorship of our faculty and to embed these and other experiential learning opportunities in our curricula.
19. We will expand community-engaged learning opportunities and bring students and faculty together, within their academic programs, in meaningful service to the larger community and abroad.
20. We will consult with the Bonner Center, Career Services, and international TCNJ study centers in Costa Rica, Chile, and Spain to develop opportunities to engage with the surrounding communities, particularly with immigrant and international communities.

#### **Goal D: Assessment**

We will continue to implement assessment measures for our academic programs, evaluate the data and utilize the findings to improve our programs.

##### *Strategies:*

21. We will continue to assess student learning to identify and enhance areas of strength in our programs as well as to address any areas of weakness (e.g. OPIs, assessment in Phonetics ). This assessment will also be used for Middle States Accreditation.
22. Following any curricular or programmatic changes within the department, we will administer a student survey similar to the one that was developed as part of the departmental Self Study to seek direct input and to gauge student satisfaction.
23. We will continue documenting our students' postgraduate educational and career choices, including admission to graduate and professional schools, as well as their placement in jobs gained because of their liberal arts education.
24. We will continue to be guided by national standards and proficiency guidelines in our assessment of curriculum and student outcomes.

#### **Goal E: Advising**

In concert with the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and TCNJ as a whole, we will recognize the value of thoughtful student advising and support the professional development of faculty advisors to enhance the advising and mentoring of our students.

##### *Strategies:*

25. We will develop advising strategies to respond to our students' growing interests in graduate study, an expansive variety of professional opportunities, and volunteer possibilities, particularly abroad.

26. Our faculty will work with the Career Center to help our students with post-graduate planning, including compiling comprehensive lists of job and internship opportunities for our students and graduates.

### **Goal F: Internationalization**

We will continue to support global awareness and engagement and promote rigorous academic study abroad opportunities for all students.

#### *Strategies:*

27. To encourage student participation in study abroad opportunities, we will continue to implement early advising for students and promote awareness among parents about the importance of study abroad in a liberal arts education in recruitment events, and Accepted Students Day presentations.
28. In order to help students overcome administrative and financial obstacles to study abroad, we will seek to increase the range of opportunities for going abroad (e.g., international internships, and summer research opportunities) and the number of financial support options, encouraging students to apply for national and international study abroad scholarships. We will work closely with the Arlotto Family Center for Global Engagement to make sure all students are aware of scholarship opportunities.
29. We will expand opportunities for our students to engage with immigrant communities and we will seek to increase the number of foreign students and scholars coming to our campus for short- or long-term stays and to integrate them into the life of our School.
30. In order to enhance the internationalization of our community, we will continue to offer volunteering opportunities and internships in the community for students to immerse themselves in the languages and cultures we teach and will develop criteria to assess their success.
31. We will continue to collaborate with the Arlotto Family Center for Global Engagement to identify and select opportunities for Exchange Agreements with foreign universities, and international internships for students studying abroad.
32. We will seek collaboration with the Bonner Center to identify study abroad opportunities.
33. We will continue to explore more international initiatives (e.g. International Film Festival).
34. We will continue integrating technology in the curriculum to engage students in communities around the world.

### **Goal G: Strategic Hiring in support of the department's curricular goals**

We will develop a plan for strategic hiring in support of the various areas of development

*Strategies:*

35. The Department of World Languages and Cultures will prioritize its staffing needs in light of students' needs. It will strategize how best to provide quality programming in various areas of demonstrated interest and need.

**Goal H: Examination of Placement Policy and Testing.**

*Strategies:*

36. Examination and revision of our current Placement Test Examinations to reflect curricular changes since our last curricular revision. Possible revisions include adding an aural component to the exams; adding reading passages to the exams; development of placement test examinations for less commonly taught languages.

**II. COMMUNITY:**

The Department of World Languages and Cultures wholly supports the School of Humanities and Social Sciences' assertion to be "an inclusive and intellectually rigorous community that offers a transformative education in the humanities and social sciences, integrating theory, research and practice. Our students will have the knowledge and skills to navigate complex cultural, social, political, and ethical issues in an ever-changing world"

**Goal I: Affirming Our Identity**

*Strategies:*

37. Examine the extent to which our current name, Department of World Languages and Cultures, genuinely reflects our multi-disciplinary focus.

**Goal J: Contributing to the Larger Community**

We will sustain and improve an intellectual climate that provides students and the larger community with a rich cultural basis for a lifetime of intellectual growth.

*Strategies:*

38. In order to enhance the spirit of community within our School, we will continue creating opportunities for faculty, students, staff, and alumni to work together on community projects, through various club activities, possible International Film Festivals, and other cross-disciplinary events.
39. We will continue to promote thought-provoking discussions by inviting scholars from beyond the TCNJ community to give lectures and lead discussions on our campus. We will

coordinate such lectures, as well as exhibits, performances, and films as much as possible with courses taught in our department and other departments to enhance the academic impact of these special events for our community.

40. We will seek various ways to connect with the larger community and attract potential students by inviting them to cultural events.

### **Goal K: Faculty Development**

We will support the professional development of faculty from their hiring through their retirement, through existing and new practices.

*Strategies:*

41. Any requests for new faculty positions will be guided by school-wide goals and strategic planning.
42. We will develop strategies that complement School-based mentoring programs to extend mentoring to all departmental faculty.

### **Goal L: Alumni Relations**

We will improve and strengthen alumni relations.

*Strategies:*

43. We will participate in the School's Alumni Advisory Council to foster relationships between current students and alumni and between faculty and alumni.
44. We will continue to update our graduate database to help maintain closer relations with the department's alumni.
45. We will start hosting an alumni reception during Alumni Weekend.
46. We will support fundraising initiatives among our alumni in collaboration with the Office of Development.

### **Goal M: Community Outreach**

We will improve our engagement with the larger community beyond the boundaries of our campus.

*Strategies:*

47. We will expand on community-engaged learning classes that engage students in responding to community needs and interests, and classes that provide opportunities for students to

enhance their skills while helping the school understand the needs and interests of community organizations and residents.

48. We will encourage and support faculty members who wish to help build and sustain positive relationships with the community and community organizations.
49. We will intensify our collaboration and coordination with the Bonner Center for Civic and Community Engagement, creating and supporting educational opportunities that address the unmet needs of its community partner organizations.

### **Goal N: Leadership and Governance**

We will improve governance structures and processes that involve all stakeholders in the life of our department.

*Strategies:*

50. We will examine the governance structures outlined in the Department By-laws and amend as needed after thoughtful consideration.
51. We will nominate alumni to participate in the Alumni Advisory Council.
52. We will serve as needed on school-wide committees, both elected and appointed, standing and ad-hoc.
53. We will nominate students to the School's Student Advisory Council.

### **III. RESOURCES:**

We strive to utilize our existing resources in an efficient, productive, and equitable manner, and to enhance revenue to the School and the College.

### **Goal M: Fundraising and Development**

The Department will work closely with the School and the Office of Alumni Affairs and Development as appropriate to find new revenue streams.

*Strategies:*

54. The department will participate in the School's initiatives to create short-and long term priorities for fundraising.
55. We will seek to engage alumni, Faculty emeriti, parents, friends and corporate and civic leaders through our community programming events.
56. The department will explore grant possibilities in support of our mission and teaching.



## **Goal N: Technology**

We will improve the technological literacy of our students, faculty, and staff.

*Strategies:*

- 57. The department will continue to participate in the School's CETL events.
- 58. The department will continue to investigate and incorporate software that enhances the technological literacy of our students and supports our various language programs, such as Audacity, Callgraph, etc., Our department supports efforts to include technology-based projects in our curriculum to enhance our instructional efforts and to ensure that our students graduate with technological literacy
- 59. The department will continue to work with colleagues in Information Technology to identify technology-based solutions to research and teaching challenges.
- 60. The department will continue to explore ways to incorporate technology in the curriculum to facilitate engagement with global communities (eg.: Talk Abroad).

## **Goal O: Office and Classroom Space**

We strive to employ our classroom and office space in the most efficient, productive, and fair manner.

*Strategies:*

- 61. We will continue to schedule our classes across the grid and ensure that some classes meet during under-utilized time slots.
- 62. We will participate in School audits of the use of office and classroom space once every five years, in order to determine that the allocation of office and classroom space (classrooms for priority scheduling) is consistent with demand in the context of changing patterns of staffing and enrollments.
- 63. Our Program Assistant will participate in the annual discussion of concerns and issues related to the use of office and classroom space.

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This Strategic Plan was created by faculty, current students, and alumni in the Department of World Languages and Cultures participating in face-to-face meetings, email correspondence during AY24-25.