



Department of Foreign Languages

TENNESSEE TECH

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Kent Dollar, Chair, Department of History
Dr. Lauren Wright, Interim Chair, Department of Sociology and Political Science
Dr. Steven Thomas, Chair, Department of English
Dr. Jeremy Wendt, Chair, Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Dr. Colin Hill, Director, School of Music

FROM: Department of Foreign Languages

Department of Foreign Languages
Tennessee Tech University

CC: Dr. Daren Snider, Dean, College of Arts & Sciences
Dr. Allan Mills, Associate Dean, College of Arts & Sciences
Ms. Deborah Allen, Director, College of Arts & Sciences Student Success Center
Ms. Jennifer Dyer, Advisor, College of Arts & Sciences Student Success Center
Ms. Laura Roberson, Advisor, College of Arts & Sciences Student Success Center
Ms. Kassi Thomas, Advisor, Launchpad Student Success Center

RE: The Department of Foreign Language's ability to provide ongoing support for students enrolled in English, History, Sociology and Political Science, Curriculum and Instruction, and Music degree programs

DATE: 29 July 2025

The recent shuttering of Foreign Language concentrations in French and German has given rise to questions about whether the Department of Foreign Languages (DFL) can still provide support for students in other degree programs.

The answer to those questions is an unequivocal "yes."

We are sending you this memo to quell any doubts you might have that students in your respective degree programs will continue receiving the language instruction they need.

Here is an explanation of how we will accomplish this:

- **Lower-level language classes continue beyond the current teach-out period:** The 2-year teach-out period mandated by THEC was triggered by the elimination of the degree concentrations in French and German. However, no provision stating that lower-level courses in French and German could no longer be offered was made in the memo from the

former provost, Lori Bruce. The teach-out period is a requirement, but it is not necessarily the end for FREN and GERM courses at Tech

- **Dean Snider's stated commitment to continued lower-level offerings in French and German, once the initial 2 year teach-out plan is complete:** The DFL has retained one member certified to teach lower-level French courses, and the certificate in French for the Workplace, which requires FREN 1010-2020, is still available to students. Adjuncts covering German courses can be hired to offer lower-level courses in German. There is also the possibility of eventually expanding the number of languages offered.
- **Spanish majors must take 6 hours of another foreign language:** Because of this requirement, French and German must continue to be offered at the lower levels to support Spanish majors
- **FREN, GERM, SPAN 1010 will fulfill gen-ed Humanities requirements:** Beginning in fall 2026, these lower-level courses will be part of general education courses for the first time, so they must continue to be offered

Moreover, there are other forms of support that the Department of Foreign Languages is committed to providing to students in your degree programs:

- **Curricular changes to support all students:** Spanish faculty have reconfigured the SPAN 1010-2020 sequence so that all four semesters require students to purchase only 1 textbook. The course reconfiguration in Spanish implements changes addressed in comments from students' recent course evaluations and means that students will get more practice with essential grammar, vocabulary, and culture, thereby increasing their overall language proficiency, all while continuing to ensure their career readiness in a global marketplace. French has been authoring its own course materials since 2020, and German has also begun doing the same so that students in these courses, especially during the teach-out period, will not have to purchase textbooks that they cannot resell
- **Overall benefits of studying another language for students:** Learning foreign languages should be a core part of education. Foreign language study is a valuable exercise in its own right, allowing students to broaden their ability to communicate with others, exposing them to other cultures, and encouraging cultural sensitivity and understanding. In addition, research has shown that learning another language has value for cognitive functions as well, resulting in better academic performance in the short term and reduced cognitive decline in the long term. Learning another language also has financial and career advantages, earning employees more pay and opening doors for future opportunities. Resources outlining the benefits of learning another language are available here: <https://www.actfl.org/research/research-findings>.

One of the core missions of any university is to encourage students to explore the world through as many different types of learning as possible; studying other languages is a way to help students engage in this exploration while simultaneously developing pragmatic, sought-after skills that increase their career-readiness and make them more well-rounded