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# A Historical Account of Post-Secondary Second Language (L2) Offerings: A Century of Data and Trends at an SCU

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On January 2, 1913, South Georgia State Normal College opened to women in rural Valdosta, Georgia. The school quickly grew. In 1922, it transitioned from a two-year program to a full four-year curriculum leading to the bachelor's degree. The following year the school changed its name to Georgia State Woman's College. In 1933, the Georgia Board of Regents declared the school to be the liberal arts college for women in the University System. In 1950, the school became the co-educational Valdosta State College. In 1993, the school became Valdosta State University (VSU), with a charge to address and provide graduate school needs to its 46 county service area (Davis, 2001). The university currently serves nearly 13,000 students annually, about one-third of whom are African American.

As a state comprehensive university, Valdosta State University provides an excellent exemplar for this study, which analyzes how second language offerings have changed over the past century at an SCU. This individual case study analysis of how language course and major offerings have changed shows the impact of historical, political, and social realities plus community beliefs throughout the past century. The findings in French, Japanese, and Spanish broadly parallel historic national post-secondary second language (L2) enrollment patterns. As such, this study of L2 offerings serves to support the reliability of the historic record of L2 enrollment and curriculum trends. However, several findings, specifically the strength of Latin since 1996 and the strength of German and Russian throughout the 1970s, portray unique circumstances at VSU. These unique results showcase the impact of an individual or initiative on the L2 curriculum possible at one institution. These results both contribute to the national portrait that shaped the current L2 post-secondary curriculum and show the power of highly localized decisions on L2s offered at an institution. A large-scale study of course offerings from primary sources is rare and contributes much to our historical understanding of SCUs.

## Historical Context

Latin was historically considered a hallmark of a classical education (Rudolph, 1962). The late nineteenth century saw Congress establish land-grant colleges, which led to “new colleges in astounding numbers” (Ross, 1885, p. 7). The Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 advocated for a more practical curriculum, and “this move toward more relevant, practical, and accessible education, as well as a rejection of the classics, led to a greater role for modern languages at the college level” (Leeman, 2007, p. 33). Thus, Latin lost major ground to two modern languages, French and German, in the 20th-century post-secondary curriculum. Specifically, from a peak in the mid-1930s, Latin experienced a precipitous decline in the 1940s (LaFleur, 1985).

At the turn of the 20th century, German was the most commonly studied modern language, as it was seen as a model of scientific advancement (Leeman, 2007). Also, German and French were considered the languages of culture and sophistication (Cook, 1922; Rudolph, 1962). Accordingly, they were “overwhelming preferences in the post-secondary context” (Leeman, 2007, p. 34).

Events such as World War One (WWI), the Great Depression, World War Two (WWII), the Cold War, and terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, impacted enrollments nationwide. The impact sometimes manifested as a gain in general L2 study, or in a specific language. Other times the impact was negative and created a general decline in L2 enrollments across the curriculum, or in a specific language. For example, both world wars had a negative impact on German enrollments. Specifically, during and after WWI, Leavitt (1961) notes that “[t]he study of German dropped off rapidly” (p. 621). Later, the Great Depression created a downturn in enrollment at the undergraduate level, as difficult financial situations prevented or delayed college entrance for many students (Edwards, 1932, p.13). World War II was the impetus for policies that forced the discontinuation of teaching German at many colleges in the United States (Pavienko, 2004). However, WWII increased the perception that global languages were valuable and led to nationwide support for the post-secondary study of L2s (except German and Japanese) in the curriculum (Leeman, 2007). Later, languages, including German to some degree, rebounded in the 1960s, before falling, often drastically, in the 1970s (Huber, 1996). In the 1970s it was public opinion that had a powerful effect on curtailing language offerings. The demand for relevancy, practicality, and skill-based education often rejected L2 study during this period (Huber, 1996; Turner, 1974).

As noted in the case for WWII, war has not always caused the reduction in enrollment seen in German (Posin, 1948). In the 19th century, the U.S. war with Spain increased enrollments in Spanish, because the language was seen as strategically important (Fernández, 2000; Leeman, 2007). Also, the U.S. Cold War period, with the icy relationship between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, spurred the growth of Russian study at the college level, as “Russian was seen as particularly important for the national interest” (Leeman, 2007, p. 36). Similarly, with continued US military action in the Middle East, Arabic has experienced significant growth in the 2000s (Modern Language Association, 2009). Unlike at the beginning of the 20th century, when Spanish was “little known and poorly regarded” (Leeman, 2007, p. 34), Spanish has come to dominate the post-secondary curriculum in terms of offerings and enrollments. Specifically, Spanish enrollments have, in general, continued upward since the 1940s with major gains, and a widening disparity evident between Spanish and all other languages, beginning in the 1980s (Leavitt, 1961, Leeman, 2007).

In summary, classical languages, namely Latin and Greek, with their cultural prestige, were the primary languages offered, and usually required, by U.S. institutions of higher learning from Colonial times to well into the 18th century and beyond. Later, modern languages, specifically French, German, Russian, Spanish, Japanese, and now Arabic gained prominence and became common college course offerings. Such language course offerings over time show clear national trends; for example, the preference for German and French language study in the early 1900s, the ascension of Spanish language study in the late 1900s (Leeman, 2007), or the current uptick in Arabic language study (Brint, Proctor, Mulligan, Rotondi, & Hanneman, 2012). Also, several major events, notably the Great Depression and the backlash in the 1970s against core L2 requirements, affected all languages as a whole. Thus, over the past century there were clear national patterns in L2 offerings to which we can compare and contrast the study results.

## Research Questions

Per primary source material, what were the L2 majors offered by year throughout the existence of the university?

Per primary source material, what was the number of L2 classes offered in each language by year throughout the existence of the university?

Do the findings follow national trends at other post-secondary institutions throughout the past century?

What circumstances explain findings that do not follow national trends?

## Methods

The Odum Library Archives and Special Collections at VSU provided primary sources for this research: a complete collection of original bulletins and catalogs from South Georgia State Normal College, Georgia State Woman' s College, Valdosta State College, and VSU. From each catalog, all L2 majors were recorded. For each L2 noted in the catalog, the number of language courses was recorded. Additionally, three interviews were conducted to verify and expound on the reported data. The first interview was with the current department head of Modern and Classical Languages at VSU, who came to the school in 1995. The second interview was with a past department head of Modern and Classical Languages. She was a professor at VSU from 1985-2009, and was herself a Spanish and French double major at the institution, graduating in 1969. The third interview was with the current editor of the catalog, who was himself an assistant professor of Modern Languages at VSC and VSU from 1967-2012.

This was a study of primary source material, specifically a complete set of printed academic catalogs spanning one hundred years. But catalog offerings do not provide exact enrollment numbers, and "ghost" courses and degrees linger in college catalogs (Glenn, 2011). This is an acknowledged, but inherent, limitation of such a unique research project, course offerings over time collected from primary sources. However, the current catalog editor, who has been in the position for over three decades, confirmed that he continually sought to deactivate such courses from the catalog, especially when it came to the Department of Modern and Classical Languages, to which he belongs (L. Bradley, personal communication, March 9, 2012). Furthermore, the reliability of the findings was strengthened and confirmed through research question three that required the verification of similar national historic trends in L2 enrollment and curriculum. Similar research exists; for example, Tucker' s (2013) history of the mathematics major that detailed post-secondary academic history at individual institutions by examining "offerings and requirements...gleaned from old college catalogs" (p. 688). Such individual case study analysis via primary sources provides a detailed chronicle of the evolution of academic history.

## Results

**Majors.** Each catalog represents a full academic year, running from July through June. For the purposes of data presentation, the first year is referenced. For example, data from the 2009-2010 Valdosta State University Undergraduate Catalog is represented in this study by the year 2009.

For the first 16 years of the institution's existence, no L2 majors were offered (1913-1929). In 1927, the catalog listed an option for a second major in Latin and French combined. The offering clearly showed this as a second major in both Latin and French combined, not two separate second major possibilities. However, this was not classified as a full major, as the 1927 catalog states in reference to these second majors that "full major programs will be developed . . . as the demand for these subjects as independent majors appears" (p. 43). The following year, 1928, the catalog mentioned that a second major in additional subjects was possible. However, the catalog did not list any second major subjects, so Latin and French were not specifically mentioned. Two full independent majors, Latin and Modern Language, appeared in the 1929 catalog. But French was the only modern language offered at this time in which there were enough available courses to earn the Modern Language major. Thus, for this study the short-lived Modern Language major is counted as a French major (see Table 1). These two majors continued for five years, from 1929-1934. In 1935, both the Modern Language and Latin major were dropped, and French appeared as the only language major offered.

Language Major	Date(s) Offered
French	1929-1944 and 1953-current
German	1970-1980
Latin	1929-1934
Spanish	1943-1944 and 1963-

	current
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Table 1: *VSU Second Language Majors (1913-2013)*

French continued as the only L2 major offering until Spanish was added in 1943. The Spanish major lasted two years, and all L2 majors were dropped in 1945. For eight years the institution did not offer a L2 major. During this time, 1944-1952, there was a major in humanities, with a possible concentration in French. In 1953, French was reinstated as a major and remained the only L2 major for nine years. In 1963, Spanish was reinstated as a major, and both Spanish and French were offered as majors for seven years. In 1970, German was added as a major, and for a decade, 1970-1980, VSU had three L2 majors, the most ever offered in the Department of Modern and Classical Languages. The German major was dropped in 1980. Since 1980, French and Spanish have been the only L2 majors offered.

**Languages.** Six languages (French, German, Japanese, Latin, Russian, and Spanish) have appeared in the catalog. First Latin, then French, and then Spanish was the language with the most courses offered. Table two shows all six languages with their apex of offerings, defined as the dates when the maximum number of courses were offered in the language.

Language	Year(s)	Number of Courses
Spanish	2011 – Today	34
French	2007 – Today	29
German	1978 – 1982	21
Russian	1976 – 1981	12
Latin	1923 – 1924	10

Japanese	1998-Today	5
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Table 2: *VSU Second Language Offerings: The Apex of Individual Languages*

The first catalog did not list courses for any subject, including languages. But Latin appeared in the second catalog, and from 1914-1921, four courses in Latin were listed. In 1922 Latin offerings declined to two courses, but eight Latin courses were added in 1923. There were 10 Latin courses listed in the 1923, 1924, and 1934 catalogs. Thus, these three years list the most Latin courses ever offered in the catalog. From 1925 to 1933, Latin offerings remained constant at eight or nine offerings. From its apex of 10 courses in 1934, the Latin offerings fell to two in 1935 and remained so until 1938. Latin fell out of the catalog in 1939 and remained absent for 57 years. In 1996, four Latin courses reappeared. The number increased to five in 1998. Latin offerings remain at five listed courses today.

French first appeared in the catalog in 1919. From 1919-1924, two French courses were listed. This number steadily climbed as French offerings increased from three to 14 courses from 1925-1938. Decreases in French offerings began in 1939, as listed French courses fell to eight by 1942. French offerings then remained steady, at eight or nine offerings, for 16 years, from 1942-1958. In 1959 French offerings began steady growth. Consistent growth in French offerings followed for over a decade, as course offerings climbed to 20 by 1970. The 1970s and early 1980s saw numbers ebb and flow between 17 and 23, with a low of 17 by 1984. In 1985 French offerings began an upward trajectory, except for falls in 1987 and 1993, that continues today (with French offerings at 29, where they have been since 2007).

Spanish first appeared in the catalog in 1934, when four courses were offered. This number fell to two courses from 1935-1937. No Spanish classes were listed in 1938, but then Spanish reappeared in 1939 with four courses listed from 1939-1941, and the number jumped to seven courses from 1942-1944. A decrease for Spanish, with only three courses listed, occurred in 1945. Spanish then began a steady climb (from three to 34) that continues today. During this time, the year 1962 saw a significant increase from nine to 12 Spanish offerings, with another significant jump from 20 to 26 courses in 1970. But from 1971-1973 offerings fell to 17, before increasing again throughout the mid-1970s and 1980s. 1987 and 1991 recorded minor drops in an otherwise steady increase in Spanish offerings. From



1992 onward Spanish increased without experiencing a decrease in the number of courses offered, as Spanish offerings climbed uninterrupted from 24 to the current 34 courses listed in the catalog.

German was not listed in the catalogs until 1929, when two courses were offered. From 1930 to 1934, the number of offerings increased from two to six, but then fell to two courses in 1935, before being dropped from the catalog for 18 years, from 1936-1954. When German reappeared in the catalog in 1954, three courses were listed; this number continued until 1960, increased to 10 by 1965, but dropped to six in 1966. Starting in 1967, German began a period of slowly increasing offerings that continued into the 1980s. Specifically, offerings increased from 10 to 21 from 1978-1982. This was the apex of German course offerings, exceeding the number listed today. In 1983, German offerings began a fall to 16 that went to 11 offerings by 1993. The present number of German offerings, 17, began in 1998.

Russian and Japanese represent less commonly taught languages in the history of VSU. Japanese is a relatively recent entry into the catalogs, while Russian alternatively appeared and disappeared over the years. Russian, with four courses, was first listed in the catalog in 1962 and 1963; however, it dropped out of the offerings until 1972, when three courses were listed. Then, Russian made a steady climb in the number of offerings, from seven to twelve in 1981, except for a one-year drop to ten in 1977. The apex of Russian offerings occurred in 1981, but the language dropped out of the catalog the following year and remained out for 12 years. In 1995 Russian reappeared with three course offerings. In 1998, the total offerings increased to the current total of five. Japanese appeared in 1991 with three courses offered. It remained at three until 1998, when this number increased to five, where it remains today.

## Discussion

**Majors.** Latin was a major from 1927-1934. French became a major in 1929, followed by Spanish in 1943. The results in this study showing the trends of the French, Latin, and Spanish majors offerings at VSU are representative of similar trends that occurred nationwide at the post-secondary level (LaFleur, 1985; Leeman, 2007).

However, the German major was not representative of nationwide norms. During and after WWI, the study of German fell precipitously (Leavitt, 1961). This downward trend continued during WWII, with anti-German laws even

forcing the discontinuation of German instruction at institutions in the United States (Pavienko, 2004). German rebounded slightly, along with other languages, in the 1960s, before falling drastically in the 1970s (Huber, 1996) due to the anti-L2 study trend within the call for practicality and skills-based education of the time. Thus, the introduction of the German major at VSU and its successful continuance for a decade, from 1970-1980, did not follow national trends.

This result most likely arose due to unique circumstances at the institution. Specifically, there were two professors of German at the time, and active internal promotion of German was needed to continue the major and to fill the teaching loads of the two professors. Thus, the availability of professors and the creation of demand prompted the initiation, promotion, and continuation of the German major for a decade.

World War II increased the perception that global languages were valuable and led to support nationwide for the post-secondary study of L2s (except German and Japanese) in the curriculum (Leeman, 2007). To follow national norms, second language majors at VSU should have increased (except for German); however, L2 majors at the institution completely disappeared for nearly a decade, from 1945-1952, in the catalogs.

This total loss of L2 majors did not follow national trends, because WWII affected the college in a unique way. Men enrolled at the institution for the first time in 1942, as an emergency measure brought on by the war and the closing of Emory Junior College at Valdosta. The war shifted the emphasis of the institution away from a liberal arts college to new initiatives in mathematics and the sciences. After approving the addition of men, the Board of Regents officially broadened the focus of the college with new pre-medical and pre-dentistry programs, a push for sciences to become prominent throughout the curriculum, and ultimately a name change from the Georgia State Woman's College to Valdosta State College (Davis, 2004). After the war, returning soldiers using the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (GI Bill) swelled enrollment, a nationwide phenomenon (Tucker, 2013). Second languages were deemphasized throughout this time, as evidenced by the drop of all L2 majors.

In summary, the French, Latin, and Spanish majors at VSU all largely followed national trends at other post-secondary institutions. Specifically, the French major was consistently offered throughout the past century. The Latin major was offered at the beginning of the 20th century, while the Spanish major was offered at the end of the 20th century and into the 21st. However, the German major at

VSU did not follow national trends, with its introduction in the 1970s, a time of general decline nationally in L2 enrollments (Huber, 1996). The existence of the German major was most likely linked to promotion of German by necessity and desire, as the department had two German professors during these years. Also, all L2 majors were dropped for seven years, starting in 1945. This occurrence did not follow national trends in that there was a general increase in L2 offerings during and after the globalization linked to WWII (Leeman, 2007). The de-emphasis of languages at the institution was found to be a direct result of state-level policy, as mandates from the Board of Regents heavily promoted sciences and pre-medical fields, at the expense of L2 offerings.

**Languages.** This study's findings (see Figure 1) concerning L2 course offerings over time add substantial detail, and include two additional L2s, to the findings concerning L2 majors over time at VSU. Some findings follow broadly similar patterns of L2 offerings over time at other U.S. schools of higher education (Modern Language Association, 2009). For example, French was the most consistently offered L2 at VSU. Although always with fewer courses, German was also consistently offered, except for time periods impacted by both world wars. At the beginning of the 20th century, Latin was the language with the most course offerings, while Spanish had the most course offerings at the end of the 20th century and into the 21st century. However, Latin experienced a revival and currently has a consistent number of course offerings. Also, Russian experienced a noted rise in enrollments throughout the 1970s into the early 1980s. Japanese and Russian have had consistent offerings for roughly two decades (1990s-today).

Latin's rise and fall in the VSU curriculum mirrors nationwide patterns. Latin was the only language offered at the institution for most of its first decade, until French was added in 1919. By 1939, there were no Latin classes offered. Nationwide, this was a common story, with Latin a central discipline in the post-secondary curriculum from the earliest days of higher education into the 1930s. From its height in the mid-1930s, Latin experienced a steep drop in enrollments in the 1940s (LaFleur, 1985), and this decline mirrored the fall at VSU.

Gone for almost sixty years, Latin re-entered the catalogs in 1996, and the language has retained a consistent presence ever since. Latin's resurgence at VSU was greatly impacted by localized institutional conditions. Specifically, in 1994, the language department hired a Classicist as the department head, and she immediately pushed for Latin offerings (V. Soady, personal communication,

March 5, 2012). While not a large national trend, there was a blip in Latin enrollments in the late 1970s and the early- to mid-1980s when “considerable public interest was generated in Latin for its usefulness in improving English vocabulary and reading comprehension” (LaFleur, 1985, p. 342). This linked to the “Back to Basics” campaign at the secondary level in education and the report of President Carter’s Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies (1978), which highlighted the state of foreign language study and called for its revitalization across all educational levels, including post-secondary (LaFleur, 1985). However, by the 1990s any rise was over and national post-secondary Latin enrollments were generally either flat or slightly declining. Thus, it does not follow such trends that an institution with the medium size and regional focus of VSU would add five Latin courses in the mid- to late-1990s (Huber, 1996). The author concludes that Latin grew because of internal promotion, with demand created and supported by the new department head. In fact, the previous department head remembers her immediate push for new Latin courses, including Latin as an option for fulfilling the language requirement, and for a departmental name change to the Department of Modern and Classical Languages (Sandra Walker, personal communication, June 1, 2012).

French was the L2 course most consistently offered at the institution. As of 2013, it has been offered for 94 straight years. French, with its prestigious public perception and continuing presence in the secondary curriculum, has long been a preferred language to study at the undergraduate level (Leeman, 2007). As Latin faded in the 1930s, French became the L2 with the most course offerings by 1935, and it remained so for 27 years, until 1962, when more Spanish courses were offered. French and Spanish switched back and forth as the L2 with the most classes offered for the next 20 years. However, the 1983 catalog listed more Spanish courses, and Spanish has remained the most offered L2 ever since. These results follow national trends for both languages; nationally, by 1990, enrollments in Spanish nearly doubled those of French (González, 1997). In fact, Spanish has become “the de facto second national language” (Leeman, 2007, p. 37), and in percentages of degree recipients today it nearly equals all other L2s combined (Modern Language Association, 2009). Multiple reasons explain this rise in the study of Spanish by undergraduates: Spanish is considered useful and practical, many students studied Spanish in high school, and Spanish links to the ethnolinguistic heritage of an increasing number of students (Leeman, 2007).

French and German have been consistently offered at the post-secondary level in the United States. As noted earlier, these two languages were considered languages of high culture, great literature, and science. Accordingly, they were “overwhelming preferences in the post-secondary context” (Leeman, 2007). The two languages’ consistent presence in the catalogs examined attests to results entirely representative of national norms. The negative impact of both world wars on the study of German was a national reality and, in the case of WWII, clearly evident in this study’s localized results. German was not yet offered at VSU during WWI, being first offered in 1929, and six courses were offered by 1934. This number fell to two in 1935, and in the years leading up to WWII, German left the VSU curriculum. It did not return until nearly a decade after WWII, in 1954.

Japanese entered the catalogs in 1991 with three courses and bumped up to five courses in 1998, where it has remained ever since, although the 1999 catalog erroneously failed to list any Japanese courses (L. Bradley, personal communication, March 9, 2012). This pattern follows national trends. In fact, after the top three of Spanish, French, and German, the three next most commonly taught languages during this period were Japanese, Russian, and Italian, in that order (Huber, 1996). Indeed, Japanese was gaining enrollments nationwide. Huber (1996) notes that “the percentage [of institutions] offering Japanese was 3.7 times as high in 1990 as in 1974” (p. 58). The addition of Japanese at the institution was directly influenced by state policy. The college was named a Center for Languages by the University System of Georgia Board of Regents, which included funding for a Foreign Language International Culture Center (FLICC) and shared access to a Japanese teacher exchange program (L. Bradley, personal communication, March 9, 2012). Reasons for adding Japanese included connections possible within the university system of Georgia between VSU and a nearby institution, present day Georgia Southwestern State University, and specific desire for promotion of Asian languages by the legislative act (Sandra Walker, personal communication, December 12, 2013). This initiative no longer exists, but Japanese continues as a language offered at VSU. Its status is completely consistent with the most recent reports and trends at similar institutions. In fact, nationwide, Japanese continues as the fourth most commonly awarded L2 degree (Modern Language Association, 2009).

Russian’s entrance into the catalogs in 1972 and subsequent strength in the late 1970s and early 1980s did not follow national trends. From 1978-1981, 12

Russian courses were offered at VSU. This is a surprisingly high number of offerings in Russian at a regional public college, when historically the post-secondary study of Russian was primarily offered at private universities (Wolkonsky, 1957). Even more significant, all the catalogs from 1976-1981 mention “Advanced Studies in Russian,” and the 1981 catalog states that such advanced study in Russian may be combined with any established major at the college, much like the current system of minors. This strong presence of Russian and its growth directly countered the national narrative in which “between 1970 and 1986 the percentages of institutions offering the language [Russian] decreased by 24%” (Huber, 1996, p.59).

These atypical results in Russian, with the number of Russian offerings high and growing when nationally Russian was down, were discussed with the current editor of the catalog. Based on this correspondence, the researcher concludes that the sudden gain in Russian offerings from nine to 12 in 1976, and the subsequent drop of all Russian courses from the catalog in 1982, were linked to the hiring of a professor who spoke and taught Russian, and then to the professor’s return to the military in 1982. Russian was reinstated in 1995 and continues as a language offered at VSU. Its current status is completely consistent with the most recent reports and trends at similar institutions. In fact, nationally, Russian is the fifth most commonly awarded L2 degree (Modern Language Association, 2009).

Beyond individual language trends, the entire L2 curriculum was directly impacted in some cases by national historical realities and cultural opinions. Specifically, two events, the Great Depression and the demand for relevancy and practicality of the 1970s, had significant negative repercussions across all L2s. The Great Depression caused many undergraduates to postpone college or not attend altogether, which depressed enrollment at the undergraduate level (Edwards, 1932). Negative enrollment affected all disciplines, and L2s were no exception. At the institution studied, the impact was clearly shown by 1935. In 1934 the institution offered four L2s: ten courses in French and Latin, six in German, and four in Spanish. German, Latin, and French all decreased in 1935, with Latin plummeting from ten courses to two. German fell out of the curriculum in 1936, and Latin followed three years later. By 1939, only two L2s were offered, French and Spanish, and the curriculum did not recover until 1954, when German was reinstated.

Attitudes are as powerful as actual events in impacting the curriculum. The 1970s brought an acute focus on relevancy and practicality to all disciplines.

Cultural opinion turned on L2 teaching and learning. Second language requirements fell, and L2 offerings followed; for example, Turner (1974) describes two major universities where language requirements were dropped, and subsequent attendance in L2 courses plummeted. Similarly, Huber (1996) notes an 18% decline across all L2 enrollments in the 1970s. One such drop was noted at VSU. Spanish fell from 25 courses in 1971 to 17 in 1972. Sandra Walker, Modern Languages department chair, confirmed that this drop at VSU was likely a result of a revisiting and revising of the language requirement as part of the core. Such changes to the curriculum core via a de-emphasis of L2s were happening nationwide, and VSC was not spared.

However, in general, L2 course offerings at VSU remained steady throughout the 1970s. At first glance this steadiness seems to counter the general decline in L2 offerings recorded nationally. But this period in the growth of the college has been called “The Big Boom of 1966-1978,” reflecting the steady growth in enrollment and campus buildings (Davis, 2001). Thus, the researcher posits that flat growth in the L2 program during a time of very strong enrollment growth of the institution did in fact reflect the diminishing offerings of L2s. These patterns were consistent with national trends.

### Further Research

This research study intentionally did not include enrollment figures. Like Tucker (2013), this research tracked and analyzed course and major offerings from college catalogs to describe academic history. Consistent enrollment figures over a century are difficult, if not impossible to obtain. Even modern enrollment figures are difficult to ascertain. For example, numbers may differ depending on the source (the department, the college, or the administration) plus enrollment data may or may not be the same as completion data (some courses experience large student withdrawal rates, which are not captured in initial enrollment data). Such discrepancies amplified over a century of collection would lack the consistency of the present study based on one reliably reoccurring primary source, offerings as exactly listed in course catalogs over one hundred years. Nevertheless, enrollment figures may add further detail and findings, and it is a recommended area for further research, perhaps in a study that focuses on a shorter time-frame, the modern era, or just one L2.

Also, through this research the researcher noticed that the concept of a minor (as opposed to a concentration) evolved, and it was not until recent times

that the modern concept of a minor was consistently found in the catalog. Similarly, the concept of a required or core curriculum evolved substantially throughout the institution's history. Both topics, the evolution of the concept of the minor and of a core curriculum, and the place of L2s in it, are recommended topics for further research.

## Conclusion

The historical narrative of French, Latin, and Spanish offerings at VSU bolsters the larger national historical record in which Latin, then French, and today Spanish, have taken their turn as the L2 most taught to undergraduates (Huber, 1996; Leeman, 2007; Modern Language Association, 2009). Historical realities and the resulting public opinion played a strong role in strengthening or curtailing the post-secondary L2 curriculum, and this impact was similarly shown at VSU.

There were several findings unique to VSU in that the L2 offerings over time did not follow national trends. Localized circumstances were found to significantly affect L2 program offerings. Specifically, state-level policies that altered the mission of the institution impacted the entire curriculum, including second languages. Decisions at the departmental level, such as individual hires, departures, and faculty interests were shown to impact course catalog offerings. Connections and exchanges locally and internationally strengthened programs and specific languages. Faculty members brought their own expertise and language skills, and these unique attributes in turn created the need for localized demand, new initiatives, and shifts of focus. As the results show, one faculty member can make a difference in determining the L2s offered, taught, and taken at an institution over time.

Second language study has been an integral component of the post-secondary curriculum. At VSU, students have expanded their worldview and critical thinking skills through the study of world languages since the founding of the institution. But, as the historical narrative and this study show, such realities can change quickly, to the benefit or detriment of one L2, or all. As participants in this story, all of those involved in L2 offerings at the post-secondary level need to remember the past and learn from it, to safeguard the place of L2s in the university curriculum of the future.

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