



March 28, 2024

Xiaoxia Newton
Faculty President
UNC Charlotte

Dear Xiaoxia:

In accordance with the procedure concerning the change of departmental names, I am forwarding a request from the College of Humanities & Earth and Social Sciences to change the name of the Department of Languages and Culture Studies to the Department of Languages, Cultures and Translation.

The justification for the name change is attached. I ask that it be considered for faculty approval at the next Faculty Council meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Troyer'.

Jennifer Troyer
Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

cc: John Smail, Interim Dean, College of Humanities & Earth and Social Sciences



MEMORANDUM

To: Interim Dean John Smail and Provost Jennifer Troyer
From: Anabel Aliaga-Buchenau, Chair, Department of Languages and Culture Studies
CC: Chair Advisory and Policy Committee (CAPC) Paloma Fernández Sánchez, (Chair), Ryan Augustyniak, David Dalton, Javier García León, Carol Hartley, Anton Pujol
Date: January 19, 2024
Subject: Proposed Program Name Change for the Department of Languages and Culture Studies

I am writing to initiate the process of changing the name of the Department of Languages and Culture Studies (LACS) to the Department of Languages, Cultures and Translation (LANG). We would like to change the prefix LACS to the prefix LANG. The proposed change will mean that the name of the department will more clearly represent and advertise the programs offered in the department and will assist in recruiting more students and expanding enrollment in all departmental programs. In what follows, I briefly outline the most substantial reasons for the proposed name change.

First, the current name “Department of Languages and Culture Studies” refers to “Culture Studies,” which is not an actual academic field. The academic field, which people assume we refer to with this name is “Cultural Studies.” The assumption is that when we say “Culture Studies” we mean “Cultural Studies” but that there is an error in the name. However, what our name refers to with the term “Culture Studies” is the study of different cultures and not the academic field of “Cultural Studies.”

Second, the term “Culture” with a capital C, as found in the current name “Department of Languages and Culture Studies” is a problematic term. The term Culture is intertwined with the ethnocentric term Civilization, which historically has been employed

to categorize societies as culturally superior (e.g., modern, civilized) or culturally inferior (e.g., 'savage' or 'barbaric' cultures). In other words, the ethnocentrism of the term 'Civilization' or 'Culture' creates a false and dangerous opposition between morally good and culturally advanced societies versus the rest which were deemed morally wrong and culturally backward. The complicated/ideologically suspect history behind these two terms is the main reason why we would like to drop Culture from the name of our Department."¹ On the other hand, we have decided to include Cultures, in its plural form, to draw attention to the ways intercultural competence (one of the four Charlotte Core competencies) is central to language study. Alongside Communication, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities, "Cultures" is one of the five "C" goal areas promoted by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).

Third, our department is unusual and outstanding in the United States because we have a focus on Translation and Translation Studies both in our undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as Interpreting at the graduate level. Only 37 universities offer formal programs in Translation Studies in the United States. Adding the term "Translation" to the department name will allow us to advertise one of our strengths and therefore recruit more effectively.

Finally, the new name accurately represents the wide array of expertise in our Department and of our faculty offerings. It will assist our ongoing efforts to attract students from diverse backgrounds to the program and the university more widely.

In sum, I propose changing the name of the Department of Languages and Culture Studies to the Department of Languages, Cultures and Translation. Such a change has potential positive impacts for recruiting and developing a clearer program identity.

¹ <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/key-components-civilization/>