German Department Will Stay

By Rachel Swartzendruber

In early January, Ervie Glick, professor of German, was thrilled to hear that his department would receive funding for another academic year. For, unknown to most undergraduates, the German department was in danger of being eliminated from EMU’s Department of Language and Literature.

In early December, Dean Marie Morris informed the department that it might not be possible to maintain German in the following year, due to low enrollment in German courses and difficulties with the school budget.

“The reasons were strictly financial,” explained Carroll Yoder, chair of the language department. “Marie [Morris] wants to see the program stay if we [EMU] have sufficient funds.”

Currently only 13 students are enrolled in any type of German course, including those who are declared as German majors or minors.

“Especially for political purposes, German is not a required course—it’s an elective. If students don’t want to take it, they don’t have to,” said Yoder.

“We only have two majors and one minor,” said Glick. “German is quite possibly more difficult than other languages—more inhibiting and grammatically difficult. It is also not as immediately applicable, as is Spanish.”

Spanish, however, was not threatened by budget cuts. Enrollment has been relatively stable, as seen by the larger number of Spanish professors and language assistants. But the problem is not to be seen as the

Elementary German I: Karl Souffrant, April Miller, Greg Sachs, and professor of German Ervie Glick

Spanish language competing with the German language.

“I am not saying that I don’t value Spanish—indeed I do, very highly—but I don’t believe [EMU] can afford to become monolithically focused on Spanish,” said Glick.

Glick believes that the study of German is important because it sheds light on a part of the world that is often ignored. Culture, along with grammar, is an important aspect of studying any language.

Glick said, “For instance, Austria has no slums, a relatively small homeless population, public transportation works, free education, and health insurance available to all.”

In Glick’s time at EMU, interest has increased following a German experience. “Movies are one of the strongest forms of communication in our culture today,” he said. “This class is a way to interact with an important form of communication and storytelling. It is education, not entertainment. It’s meant to stretch people’s minds.”

Detrow is equally positive about the subject matter of the class.

“Any class is a good class,” he said. “This is for serious viewing of significant films that really contributed to the world of film and cinema,” he said.

Fact Box:

Enrollment Numbers

A routine report regarding EMU student numbers was released at the end of December showing enrollment changes between the fall and spring semesters. The full report is available online at http://www.emu.edu/registrar/springenrollment.htm

Fall enrollment: 922
Spring enrollment: 862

Explanation: Between graduation and other factors that cause students to leave (including transfers or financial situations), the exiting numbers outweigh incoming transfers.

Fall first-year students registered in fall: 240
First-year students registered in spring: 185

Explanation: This change in numbers from fall to spring semester is not surprising. Many students enter their first year already having accumulated some college credit. By second semester, some have achieved sophomore status.

Fall seminary enrollment: 122
Fall graduate program enrollment: 109
Spring graduate program enrollment: 107

To keep track of reasons for leaving, EMU asks those students who are leaving without graduating to fill out a form. If a pattern does appear in student reasons for leaving, these forms will allow EMU to look into the problem and make appropriate changes.

Correction:

Weather Vane incorrectly attributed last week’s photo essay on the anti-war protests in Washington, D.C. to Joelle Hackney. The photos were actually taken by Weather Vane photographer Stephanie Miller.

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