




## Executive Memorandum 23-037

**December 20, 2023**

**From:** Stephen Perez, President \_\_\_\_\_

**Subject:** Approval to Discontinue the Bachelor of Arts in French

Upon the recommendation of the Academic Senate and with the concurrence of the Provost, I approve the discontinuation of the Bachelor of Arts in French, effective fall 2024.

<b>Policy Title:</b>	EM 23-037 Approval to Discontinue the BA in French
<b>Contact:</b>	Department of Languages and Cultures
<b>Supersedes:</b>	
<b>Revision:</b>	
<b>Enabling Legislation or Executive Order:</b>	

# Discontinue Undergraduate Program: See EM 15-005

Program Name: BA in French

Complete only if applicable:

Program named above is:

Option within \_\_\_\_\_  
(Degree program name)

Option is being elevated to a degree (see elevation proposal for rationale).

Minor

Certificate

## Rationale:

The Department of Language and Cultures lacks the staffing, students, financial resources, and institutional support needed to sustain the BA in French.

## Required Signatures

The Department of Language and Cultures  
has reviewed and approved this program discontinuation.

Christine Goulding Sep 16, 2023  
Chair, Department Curriculum Committee Date

Christine Goulding Sep 16, 2023  
Department Chair Date

The College of Humanities and Fine Arts  
has reviewed and approved this program discontinuation.

Joseph Alexander Sep 16, 2023  
Joseph Alexander (Sep 16, 2023 14:13 PDT)  
Chair, College Curriculum Committee Date

Tracy R. Butta Sep 18, 2023  
College Dean Date

9/26/23  
*Kiara Gray*

## Discontinue Undergraduate Program: See [EM 15-005](#)

### Send signature page with proposal attached to Curriculum Services, zip 128

Note: As stated in EM 15-005: Although this document identifies many of the issues deemed essential for a thorough, open, and complete discussion and debate, those involved in pursuing program discontinuation should recognize that it would be inappropriate to judge all programs by the same standards or specify the range of information necessary to make a considered recommendation in each particular case. Therefore, the Academic Senate may 1) consider issues not specifically listed in this document and 2) recognize that some issues listed in this document may not be pertinent to a specific case. The goal is to help the Academic Senate reach an informed recommendation based on the evidence provided.

### Description and History of the Program:

The Department of Languages and Cultures has a BA and a Minor in French. Beginning and Intermediate French classes (FREN 101, 102, 201, 202) fulfill Area C2 General Education and the Global Cultures graduation requirement. Thirteen CSU campuses have a major in French, some with multiple options.

The French program was already well established in 1967, the earliest date for which the Department of Languages and Cultures still has records. The BA in French was designed to fulfill the needs of students wanting careers in translating and interpreting, teaching, or international business. As society and technology changed over the decades, these goals evolved and expanded. Graduates with the BA in French have gone on to careers in international journalism, politics, sales, finance, travel and tourism, teaching, and worked with international organizations such as the Peace Corps and the United Nations. Alumni have pursued graduate work in such fields as foreign relations, political science, law, and business. Given that French is spoken on five continents, coursework in French has underscored the diversity among and within French-speaking societies and prepared graduates to navigate these. While the BA in French alone opens multiple career paths, French in addition to another major has opened up international and domestic opportunities in an even wider variety of fields.

French is the second most commonly taught language in the US (after Spanish). Even as foreign language enrollments in the US have been on a downward trajectory since 2009 ([MLA report 2016](#) | [MLA snapshot 2020](#)) and reached a trough in 2020, French has remained the second most commonly learned language.

A report commissioned by the US Congress in 2017 ([America's Languages: Investing in Language Education for the 21st Century](#)) identifies a significant need for bilingual and biliterate citizens to help ensure national security, promote economic and job growth, and develop the potential of every American student. The 2019 ACTFL/Lead with Languages report [Making Languages Our Business: Addressing Foreign Language Demand Among US Employers](#) indicates an urgent and growing demand for skills in multiple languages in the workplace. The [Global California 2030](#) initiative announced by the California State Superintendent of Public Instruction in 2018 proclaims the need to expand access to world language experiences, increase funding for language teacher training, and improve quality and availability of advanced language classes.

There is an obvious disconnect between the recognized need for language instruction and the decreasing enrollments in languages in higher education. The 2019 [MLA report](#) provides some examples of outlier campuses that are successfully defying the downward enrollment trend in

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languages. What those have in common are innovative curricular thinking, dedicated faculty members, and the strong support of administration. The report's authors conclude that "a program designed to meet the needs of an institution's students that has been provided with enough resources to survive, if not thrive" can be successful despite national trends.

While several CSUs communicate through policy that learning another language is an essential part of a university education and some of these programs defy national trends, Chico State has adopted policy decisions and curricular changes over time that marginalize and deemphasize language education and have accelerated their decline. Beginning and intermediate-level language courses, including French, are recognized as Area C GE courses. However, in 2012 the newly adopted pathways-oriented GE program collapsed what was previously GE Areas C2 Languages and Literatures and C3 Philosophy, Religion, and Humanities into a single GE Area C2. In addition, over the past decade, most programs that once included a language requirement (e.g., the MA in English, the BA in International Relations) eliminated that requirement. The BA in Humanities has recently reduced their language requirement from four semesters (intermediate proficiency) to two semesters (novice proficiency). Over the past 5 years, we have eliminated instruction in Chinese, Russian, Portuguese, and Hebrew. We have been unable to offer Arabic for the past three years. Last year, we were unable to offer Italian, and last semester, we offered no French courses for the first time in the known history of the department. While as of Fall 2023, enrollments in language classes seem to be on the rebound, we are far from having the resources and institutional support to offer a BA in French.

### **Indicate areas of concern, with reference to the above history, as it pertains to the proposed discontinuation.**

The French program was sustained for many years with two full-time professors -- Dr. Patricia Black, who was hired 1986, retired 2019, and is teaching her last FERP semester in Fall 2023, and Dr. Karen Sorsby, who was hired in 1993 and retired in 2016 – and up to three lecturers. Dr. Black served as department chair for 15 of those years, so was assigned only one course per semester for that duration, though she often took on additional work. One long-time lecturer retired and another lecturer left Chico State in 2019. We have two part-time lecturers who can teach French, but neither of whom have had work in French the past few semesters.

Because early language instruction requires a succession of courses with chained prerequisites, when the courses are canceled or not offered, students are unable to continue to pursue the major. FREN 201 Third-Semester French and FREN 202 Fourth-Semester French have not been offered for a number of years. Various due to budget issues or low enrollment or both, we have been able to offer FREN 102 Second-Semester French only intermittently. Some students have completed work toward the major while studying abroad. In addition, French programs in the CSU have long participated in a consortium of shared courses and our students have taken courses through CSU Fully Online to help bridge these course gaps. However, student success in these online offerings have been mixed. Additionally, these external options do not provide a clear path to the major and leave us with little control over instruction.

With no full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty left who speak French, advising has defaulted to the department chair. Three students finished their degrees in 2022/23 and there are now just two

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students left in the French major. One returned from a leave of absence last year and largely has incompletes to make up to finish the major. The other is currently on leave and has just one incomplete to make up. There are no new students in the pipeline. The College of HFA has neither the human nor financial resources to sustain the program beyond helping the last two French majors finish out their program.

### **Describe the consultation process and procedures:**

The Department of Languages and Cultures has been discussing the possible suspension of the BA in French for the past two years. It is not what anybody in the department *wants*, but the shortage in staffing, the lack of students, the state of the university's budget, and campus priorities all point to the practical reality that the department is no longer able to sustain nor has the resources to rebuild the BA in French.

The Curriculum Committee brought this proposal to the department for additional discussion and a formal vote at our 8/27/2023 department meeting. Faculty present voted unanimously (9 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions) to proceed with discontinuing the program.