

Sonoma State University
ITDS Special Major: German Cultural Studies
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Self-Study for Program Review
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Brief Introduction¹

German has existed as a program at Sonoma State University since the earliest days of the institution. German classes have been offered since the 1960s, and as recently as the mid-1990s there were two full-time tenure lines in German at SSU. As the third most commonly taught spoken language among US colleges and universities in the present day, it is fitting that German is also the third-largest language program at SSU. Furthermore, the German program enhances Sonoma State's role as the sole California member of the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC), as SSU commits to providing its students with robust, well-developed programs in the Humanities and Liberal Arts. Both the minor in German and the interdisciplinary B.A. program in German Cultural Studies seek to contribute to that commitment by providing a greater diversity of language offerings to SSU students. As this document shows, the German program is a well-developed, academically rigorous, and unique program that greatly contributes to student success, experiential learning, community engagement, career preparation, and the mission of our institution. The special major in German Cultural Studies provides interdisciplinary as well as foreign language and culture competencies as essential core academic learning outcomes that help students prepare for careers in our globally interconnected world.

1. Program Context and Curriculum

1a. Description of Program and Overview

This program offers students an interdisciplinary Bachelor of Arts degree that incorporates language courses required for the German minor plus courses in other disciplines (<http://modlang.sonoma.edu/german/major>). This special major is the only interdisciplinary program through Interdisciplinary Studies (ITDS) at Sonoma State University (SSU). It is also unique within the California State University (CSU) system, because it is the only interdisciplinary language-focused B.A. program CSU-wide that incorporates one year of study abroad, very much like selected private liberal arts and sciences colleges. Furthermore, SSU is part of the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC), which promotes an "intentional, integrated approach to undergraduate research" and "shared goals with students, internal, and external audiences" (<https://www.aacu.org/leap/states/coplac>). The special major in German Cultural Studies is based on these principles, and is in alignment with the values and goals as expressed by this prestigious association.

The German Cultural Studies program enriches students' academic and career opportunities by providing them with important skills to find employment both in the USA and abroad, responding to 21st century needs in our interconnected world. The special major prepares students for international or cross-cultural careers in the USA or abroad that require a basic knowledge of the German language, history and culture as well as skills in cross-cultural communication. Recognizing the increasing cross-cultural links in the global work field, and Germany as one of the key players within the EU and in the international arena, the B.A. program prepares students for graduate school and careers in a field of their interest. As the letter of support by the Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany elaborates:

¹ Please note: Supporting materials can be found in this [Google Drive folder](#).

“We believe that SSU is serving a growing need in global education through offering the special major in German Cultural Studies.... In today’s world, we need students graduating with more than just subject matter knowledge. The ability to communicate effectively across cultures, disciplines, and in foreign languages will become increasingly important in the future. By combining the teaching of German language with other subject matters at your university, you are recognizing this need and with German you have picked a language that promises your students some of the highest returns that learning a language can yield.... The German program at SSU is a significant sign to the German-American community in the Greater Bay Area to look towards Sonoma State, since there are few German programs left in Northern California, despite California’s rich history of German immigration and the second largest expat community from Europe (after the UK).... We believe that a clever combination of German language instruction with subjects like sustainable development or mechanical engineering could really set future SSU graduates apart.” (see letter in [Google folder](#))

This program aligns with SSU's mission to educate our students to "have a broad cultural perspective" and to educate them to become "active citizens and leaders in society [who] are capable of pursuing fulfilling careers in a changing world, and “are concerned with contributing to the health and well-being of the world at large” (<https://www.sonoma.edu/policies/sonoma-state-university-mission-statement>).

To achieve its mission, SSU promotes instructional programs that “are designed to challenge students not only to acquire knowledge but also to develop the skills of critical analysis, careful reasoning, creativity, and self-expression. Excellence in undergraduate education requires that students participate in a well-planned program which provides both a liberal education and opportunities for specific career preparation.” This mission statement is also supported by “close human and intellectual relationships among students and faculty to foster the open exchange of ideas.” The special major in German Cultural Studies provides these close relationships between students and faculty, fostering individualized support and academic progress. SSU’s vision as part of the Graduation Initiative 2025, “embraces innovation” and strives to prepare our graduates “to meet the challenges of the 21st century and to make an impact in the community and the world.” Its mission includes educating our students for “meaningful citizenship in a complex world.” As part of the university curriculum, the German Cultural Studies program also supports this university-wide strategic plan and its core values of diversity and social justice, sustainability and environmental inquiry, connectivity and community engagement as well as adaptability and responsiveness. In particular, the major promotes linguistic and cultural diversity, and connectivity and community engagement through international exchange and internships here and abroad, regional outreach to schools, and collaborations with community partners.

Studies show that students, who are engaged in interdisciplinary learning and working environments, thrive academically because they are encouraged to make meaningful connections to other fields and issues of inquiry. We are confident that this major, once established as a funded ‘stand-alone’ degree program, which can then be promoted like all other majors at SSU to potential applicants to SSU, will help attract new students to SSU. Students from other CSUs (e.g. Sacramento), Junior Colleges (e.g. SRJC), and other institutions

have approached Dr. Grobbel over the years, expressing their interests in combining Music, Sociology, Psychology, or Political Science with German. Some have come to SSU specifically because of the German minor or special major. They find the interdisciplinary structure of the German Cultural Studies unique and appealing as well as the fact that they are able to graduate within four years, including studying abroad for one year.

Special majors are encouraged to study in Germany and acquire fluency in the German language. This is, however, not required and students, who are not able to study abroad, still benefit from contact with visiting native speakers who motivate and assist students in their studies. In an effort to enhance students' learning experience and to grow German at SSU Dr. Grobbel started two programs that are unique in the CSU: the [Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistantship Program](#) and the **Sonoma International Teaching Experience (SITE)**. Since the start of the **Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistants (FLTA) Program** at SSU in 2009, we have hosted five FLTAs from Germany. FLTAs are carefully screened by the German Consulate, Fulbright and the Institute of International Education (IIE), and the United States Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). It took three years, many conversations and funding applications, before the first FLTA arrived. The program was partially supported by Instructionally Related Activities funds for several years. After its initial development, former SSU President Ruben Armijañana decided to support the annual funding of a German FLTA. Dr. Grobbel offered to share this opportunity with the French Program to support French-language instruction on campus in alternating years. Through a CSU award, earned by Dr. Christine Renaudin, and donor support from donor Daphne Smith, we were able to host two FLTAs from France and Germany last academic year. It is noteworthy that up to today, SSU is the only CSU campus that participates in the Fulbright FLTA program with Germany. This makes SSU a distinguished place to study and has increased our university's reputation internationally. Only two universities in all of the Western United States, Pacific University in Oregon and SSU, offer their students these exciting special learning opportunities through the highly qualified Fulbright FLTAs, who often assume visible leadership positions in their later careers. These FLTAs assist our language learners inside and outside the classroom, and also serve as cultural ambassadors on campus offering high-impact campus-wide lectures or other presentations. German FLTA Elena Magill was even invited to present the talk she had given at SSU at a prestigious conference in Italy during her FLTA position at SSU in Spring 2019, raising our university's profile at this international meeting in Europe.

The German Program is enriched by other language teaching assistants from Germany who selected to come to SSU through CSU International Programs (CSU IP) to participate in our **Sonoma International Teaching Experience (SITE)**. Together with our colleague Dr. Robert Train, Dr. Grobbel started this program in 2014 as a trilingual certificate program. Even when we were no longer able to offer the core pedagogy course through our Department of Modern Languages and Literatures and thus had to put the program's certificate status on hiatus, German exchange students continued to select SSU to gain teaching and mentoring experience as Language Teaching Assistants (LTAs), now Peer Language Facilitators (PLFs). This opportunity has been promoted and highlighted through CSU IP as a unique program in the CSU.

International students considering studying at SSU read the following on the [CSU IP webpage](#):

“In line with the campus’ emphasis on global awareness, SSU engages in many high-quality, internationally focused opportunities. SSU is the only CSU campus that hosts Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistants (Fulbright FLTAs) and offers the Sonoma International Teaching Experience (SITE) for international students. SITE offers German exchange students the opportunity to gain hands-on teaching experience while attending SSU. More information can be found in our [brochure](#). Example classes that SITE students have taken in the past can be viewed [here](#), and all classes available at SSU can be found in our [course catalog](#).”

As Renata Bowmeester, Assistant Director of Academic and Exchange Services in the Office of International Programs at the Chancellor’s Office noted on April 26, 2019 after her visit at SSU, SITE has been a major reason why international students selected SSU for their study abroad: “From the 57 exchange students that studied at SSU since Fall 2013, approximately one-third (19) applied for the SITE program and took Education courses. The Peer Language Facilitator course was taken 20 times not including 2018-19 [note by Dr. Grobbel: this means we had 23 Exchange students serving as LTAs or PLFs in the German Program who also took courses in a variety of other departments.] Ms. Bowmeester writes: “SITE is unique. SSU is the only campus that allows students to take courses in Education while offering a Peer Language Facilitator experience to CSU students. Without SITE, we would have seen a reduction in inbound exchange student numbers.” (see [Google folder](#), email from Renata Bowmeester, May 13, 2019; see also a copy of the SITE flyer).

These visiting IP students from Germany, who are studying to become teachers, assist in the classroom, tutor our German studies students, facilitate the German Film Series and weekly conversation hours, or collaborate with the German Club to offer cultural events, often in the German language. Fulbright FLTAs add interdisciplinary academic rigor, and offer campus-wide academic programs that benefit students from a range of disciplines.

For these and other reasons, the special major provides students with a stimulating, unique, and supportive learning environment as well as in-depth advising within a small but vibrant community of German language students. Most students enter with no German language skills; a few declare the special major with German language skills acquired in high school or through their family. All students have to earn the **internationally recognized Goethe-Certificate B1** and pass the rigorous language proficiency examination, administered at the Goethe Institute Testing Center at SSU. Our testing center is only one out of three Goethe Institute Testing Centers in California. SSU students benefit from the convenience of being able to take the proficiency examination here on campus, administered by our colleague Dr. Kathleen Foley-Beining, a part-time lecturer, and Dr. Grobbel. They regularly take part in rigorous recertification workshops and tests to maintain the Goethe-Institute’s examiner license. Besides earning the B1-language proficiency certificate, all special majors must complete an **internship** in a German-speaking country or in the USA. They are also required to demonstrate their academic achievements through a **portfolio** in their final language class as well as a **public presentation of their senior project**, which connects their German studies with another selected discipline.

Today, the special major in German Cultural Studies is only one out of five German B.A. programs offered in the CSU besides CSU Chico, San Diego, Long Beach, and San Francisco. At

SSU it is the only program in Interdisciplinary Studies, which used to offer individualized special major degrees for students. ITDS students in the past created their own programs and selected professors from at least two different departments; these professors served as advisors and mentors for their senior theses. The University Studies Curriculum Committee (USCC) is the faculty governance body overseeing Interdisciplinary Studies and the curriculum of German Cultural Studies. Dr. Stacey Bosick, Associate Vice President of Academic Programs and Dean of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies, serves as “Dean” of the special major in German Cultural Studies while Dr. Grobbel technically serves as “Chair” of the special major.

1b. Curriculum

The interdisciplinary structure of the B.A. program allows students to focus on their individual interest and thus work towards individual study and career plans. Students choose one of two pathways toward graduation: **Track A** offers a pathway for those students who wish to include **study abroad** for one year; **Track B** suggests a pathway for students who do not plan to study abroad. The special major webpage presents these two pathways, suggesting two distinct four-year sample plans. As of this fall semester, students may also choose to study in Germany for the spring semester only; I suspect that this will attract even more students for study abroad. Students must take a required set of German language classes and also select courses from a range of disciplines that are part of their major electives and that reflect their academic interests (see <http://modlang.sonoma.edu/german/major>). For example, students fulfill their German language requirements and take courses in disciplines that are connected to German Studies, such as History, Political Science, Economics, Art History, Education, Philosophy, Physics, or Geography, Environmental Studies and Planning (GEP). **Core courses** (42 units) include all German language and literature classes and one course from History, one from Art History, and two from Political Science. These courses ensure that special majors learn about Eastern Europe after 1815 and up to the fall of Eastern Communism and the Berlin Wall, about perspectives on the Holocaust and other genocides as well as European parliamentary democracies. Students also select 23-24 units from approved major **elective courses** outside the German Program.

Study abroad is strongly encouraged and up to 30 units may transfer to the special major. This is an attractive feature since it makes study abroad possible without adding an additional year or semester until graduation. All but one graduate so far took advantage of this option. This student developed fluency in German without any foreign experience. After starting to learn German at SSU, she became exceptionally fluent through extensive study and collaboration with FLTAs and LTAs. Additionally, she discovered her focus and career path through the special major and graduated within four years. She discovered her passion for teaching through her internship at the German Language School of the North Bay, was directly accepted into SSU’s Teaching Credential Program, and has been working as a teacher in the East Bay since graduating from SSU.

As mentioned earlier, students must earn the **internationally recognized Goethe-Certificate B1** and pass this rigorous language proficiency examination, administered at the Goethe Institute Testing Center at SSU. Most students take it at SSU but they may also take it at any Goethe-Institute in the US or abroad. Some students take the proficiency exam in San Francisco if their

examination dates align better with the individual student's schedules. Some even pass the test at a higher level. Community members are also invited to take the test at SSU and have benefited from this opportunity.

Students must also complete an **internship in the US or abroad**. In the past, they have interned in Germany through **International Cooperative Education** (ICE) where they have the opportunity to gain professional experience in a variety of businesses: e.g. Porsche, BMW, Airbus, Siemens, Infineon, Nestle, Wacker chemical plants, banks (e.g. Stadtsparkasse München), health clinics, nursery facilities, the International Red Cross, supermarkets (e.g. Edeka in Germany or Migros in Switzerland), *Kindergärten*, or hotels, depending on their language skills. Students have also interned through the German Academic Exchange Service/Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (**DAAD**), or **Cultural Vistas**. Students also set up their internships on their own, e.g. at the German School of Marin in Novato or Santa Rosa, a German children's daycare in San Francisco, or at accountant firms in other parts of California. In the past, some students interned during their study abroad in Germany at the International Office at the University of Tübingen, at German schools or cultural centers, with the Red Cross, or in retail (e.g. at a German café or ice cream shop).

The final and most advanced German language course is GER 300 (Advanced German Studies), which culminates in a course **portfolio**. Students use this collection of highlights featuring their German work when applying to graduate school or for jobs. The portfolio contains evidence that demonstrates the progress students made toward achieving objectives that they helped define, in consultation with their instructor.

Another curricular key element is the interdisciplinary **senior project**. Students are required to present it in a public setting (e.g. at the SSU Undergraduate Research Symposium at the end of the spring semester), where they have to explain and defend their research. This senior project can take various forms (e.g. a blog, a multimedia lecture, a concert plus educational component, or a written thesis) to suit the student's interest or future career goals. It must be presented and defended, though, in a public setting, where it is evaluated by two professors: Dr. Grobbel and the student's second advisor in another discipline. Students work on projects related to their post-SSU plans and career objectives. One student published her work as an article in SSU's History Journal; she was admitted to SSU's Master's program in History. Other students selected the format of a blog or visual presentation that helped them gain acceptance in graduate programs in American Studies (University of Tübingen in Germany), Organizational Psychology (SSU), Nursing (Columbia University), or in Ecology, Evolution, and Conservation (University of Potsdam in Germany). Another student, who had researched civil resistance to a huge railroad project in Germany, found work at the Sonoma County Transportation Authority, whereas another one started her career in a well-known tech firm in San Diego after her research on cultural assumptions underlying German and American business practices. Another student started his career at an international tax firm in Seattle.

German Language and Literature Courses (Abridged Catalog Descriptions)²

101 First Semester: The Personal World (4), Fall, Spring - German for beginners. Through communicative activities covering the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), students learn to ask and answer questions and share information about themselves, their families, and their daily activities. Satisfies GE, category C2. Prerequisites: None.

102 Second Semester: Contemporary Germany (4), Fall, Spring - Expansion of the skills acquired in GER 101. Students build on their knowledge of German culture. They improve their communicative competence, and develop skills needed to negotiate a variety of everyday situations in Germany. Satisfies GE, category C2. Prerequisite: GER 101 or consent of instructor.

200 Intermediate German: The German-Speaking World Today (4), Fall - This course introduces various cities and regions that provide the context to review first-year German. Students develop the ability to communicate in German and their understanding of Germany, Austria, and Switzerland by engaging with increasingly complex topics (e.g. education, environmental issues, politics, history). Satisfies GE, category C2. Prerequisite: GER 102.

210 Intermediate German through Film (4), Spring - This course uses films to expand students' knowledge of the history and culture of the German-speaking world. Films promote vocabulary enhancement, grammar review as well as improvement of speaking and writing skills. Cross-cultural comparisons encourage critical thinking skills. Satisfies GE, category C2. Prerequisite: GER 102. This course may be taken before GER 200.

300 Advanced German Studies: Special Topic (4), Spring - Prepares students for the "Zertifikat Deutsch." Students acquire differentiated vocabulary, greater grammatical accuracy, and improve their speaking and writing skills by focusing on varied language use in different contexts. Content may include: issues of gender or multiculturalism; the continued influence of the Nazi past; German reunification. Prerequisites: GER 200 and GER 210. Course may be taken before GER 314. Must be taken in residence at SSU.

314 Literature of the German-Speaking World: Special Topic (4), Fall - Studies of literary and cultural achievements from the German-speaking world, with particular emphasis on Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Organized around a particular theme, genre, or a literary/cultural movement. Discussion of literature, film, art, and the cultural histories of the particular countries. Includes techniques of reading, analysis, composition. Taught in English. Satisfies GE, category C2 (World Literature). Prerequisite: ENGL 101 and GER 102, or consent of instructor.

315 German Language and Literature (1), Fall - Readings and discussion of selected literary works in German. Review of vocabulary and grammar. Includes practice of pronunciation. German minor students must take this course concurrently with GER 314. Also open to other German students. CR/NC only. Prerequisite: GER 102 or consent of instructor.

395 Community Involvement Program CIP (1-4) - CIP involves students in basic community problems, performing such tasks as tutoring, coaching, and assisting others in the process of learning. Students receive one to four units, depending on the specific tasks performed.

495 Special Studies (1-4) - Directed individual study. Prerequisite: consent of instructor.

499 Internship (2) - Internship in the USA or in a German-speaking country. Prerequisite: consent of instructor.

² All courses are taught in German, except for the GE course GER 314

Sample Four-Year Program: Track A

Studies at SSU, plus study abroad in a German-speaking country

Freshman Year: 30 units*Fall Semester (15 units)*

MLL 161A: GER 101 (C2) (4)

MLL 161A: GE (A3) (2)

GE (A2) (4)

GE (B1) (4)

General Elective (1)

Spring Semester (15 units)

MLL 161B: GE (A3) (2)

GER 102 (4)

ANTH 200 (D5) (4)

GE (B4) (4)

General Elective (1)

Sophomore Year: 30 units*Fall Semester (15-16 units)*

GER 200 (4)

GE (B2) (3-4)

GE (D1) (4)

Major Elective (4)

Spring Semester (14-15 units)

GER 210 (4)

ARTH 464 (C1) (3-4)

General Elective (4)

GE (D3) (3)

Junior Year Abroad: 30 units

Intermediate German Language Courses: 6 units at 200 level (or higher)

Upper-Division German Language Courses: 8 units at 300 level and higher

German Culture/History (in German): 6 units at 200 level and higher

German Literature (in German): 4 units at 200 level and higher

(counts for Core Requirement & GE C2)

Other courses: 6 units (e.g. courses for major electives or covering GE)

*Note: Courses taken abroad may count for major core courses (up to 8 units) and major elective courses (up to 14-15 units)***Senior Year: 30 units***Fall Semester (15 units)*

GER 499 (Internship) (2)

General Elective (4)

Major Elective (3)

GE (D2) (3)

GE (E) (3)

Spring Semester (15 units)

GER 300 (4)

GER 495 (Senior Project) (4)

GE (D4) (4)

Major Elective (3)

Total units: 120

(including 50 units in General Education, 42 units of Major Core Courses, 21 units of Major Elective Courses, and 19 units of General Elective Courses)

Sample Four-Year Program: Track B
Studies at SSU; study abroad not included

Freshman Year: 30 units

Fall Semester (15 units)

MLL 161A: GER 101 (C2) (4)

MLL 161A: GE (A3) (2)

GE (B1) (4)

GE (A2) (4)

General Elective (1)

Spring Semester (15 units)

MLL 161B: GE (A3) (2)

GER 102 (4)

ANTH 200 GE (D5) (4)

GE (B4) (4)

General Elective (1)

Sophomore Year: 30 units

Fall Semester (15-16 units)

GER 200 (4)

GE (B2) (3-4)

GE (D1) (4)

Major Elective (4)

Spring Semester (14-15 units)

GER 210 (4)

HIST 202 (D2) (3) (also Major Elective)

GE (B3) (3)

GE D3 (3-4)

Junior Year: 30-31 units

Fall Semester (15-16 units)

GER 314 (C2) (4)

GER 315 (1)

ARTH 464 (C1) (3-4)

General Elective (3)

Major Elective (4)

Spring Semester (15 units)

GER 300 (4)

POLS 307 (D5) (4)

POLS 350 (4)

General Elective (3)

Senior Year: 29-30 units

Fall Semester (14-15 units)

GER 499 (Internship) (2)

Major Elective (3)

GE (E) (3-4)

General Elective (6)

Spring Semester (15 units)

GER 300 (4)

GER 495 (Senior Project) (4)

Major Elective (3)

GE (D4) (4)

Total units: 120

(including 50 units in General Education, 42 units of Major Core Courses, 21 units of Major Elective Courses, and 19 units of General Elective Courses)

Courses and Requirements for the Special Major in German Cultural Studies

Prerequisite (4 units):

GER 101: First Semester: The Personal World (4; C2)

Major Core Courses (42 units, including 11-12 GE units):

GER 102: Second Semester: Contemporary Germany (4; C2)

GER 200: Intermediate German: The German-Speaking World Today (4; C2)

GER 210: Intermediate German through Film (4; C2)

GER 314: Literature of the German-Speaking World (4; C2)

GER 315: German Language and Literature (1)

GER 300: Advanced German Cultural Studies (4; C2)

GER 499: Internship; (2; Cr/NC)

GER 495: Senior Project (4)

HIST 415: Eastern Europe, 1815-1918 (4)

or: HIST 416 Eastern Europe: 1918-1989 (4)

or: HIST 418 Fall of European Communism (4)

POLS 307: Perspectives on the Holocaust and Genocide (4; D5)

POLS 350: European Parliamentary Democracies (4)

ARTH 464: History of Modern Art: 20th Century (3-4; C1)

Major Electives (23-24 units)

ANTH 200: Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology (3; D5)

ANTH 203: Intro. to Cultural Anthropology (3; D1)

ANTH 380: Language, Culture and Society (4)

ANTH 382: Language Change (4)

ANTH 480: Studies of Language Use (4)

ARTH 466: Contemporary Art (3-4)

BUS 391: Cross-cultural Communication and Negotiation (4)

BUS 393: Intro. to International Business (4)

COMS 321: International Communication (4)

ECON 204: Intro. to Macroeconomics (4; D5)

ECON 303: International Economics (4)

ECON 313: Economics of the European Integration (4)

ENG 341: Explorations in Language (4)

ENG 343: Youth and Literature (4)

ENG 379: Structure of English: Pedagogical Grammar (4)

ENG 491: Seminar in Teaching Composition (4)

ENG 492: Reading and Responding to Literature (4)

Major Electives (continued)

- GEOG 320: Geopolitics (4)
- HIST 202: Development of the Modern World (3; D2)
- HIST 380: Twentieth-Century World (3; D2)
- HIST 401: The Roman Empire (4)
- HIST 406: The Crusades (4)
- HIST 408: The Early Middle Ages (4)
- HIST 409: The High Middle Ages (4)
- HIST 410: Early Modern Europe: 1350-1789 (4)
- HIST 412: Europe since 1914 (4)
- MUS 250: Survey of European Music (3; C1)
- MUS 251: History of Western Music: Ancient World to 1750 (3);
- MUS 252: History of Western Music: 1750-Present (3);
- MUS 310: Theory III: Form and Analysis (3)
- MUS 316: Diction: French and German (1-2)
- MUS 325: SSU Chorus (1-2)
- MUS 410: Theory IV: 20th Century Techniques (3)
- MUS 343: Studies in Musical Genres (3; C1)³
- MUS 344: Studies-Specific Composers (3; C1)*
- PHIL 207: Philosophical Movements (4)*
- PHIL 303: Social and Political Philosophy (4)*
- PHIL 307: Philosophical Figures (4)*
- POLS 352: Politics of Eastern Europe (4)
- SOCI 375: Sociological Theory (4)
- THAR 203: Introduction to the History of Drama and Dance: 1800 to Present (4; C1)
- THAR 320A: Intermediate Acting Block (5)
- THAR 371B: History of Dance B (3)
- THAR 420A: Advanced Acting Block (2-5)

Information about prerequisites or consent by instructor/chair can be found on the [special major webpage](#). Other courses may count as a major elective depending on sufficient course content related to German Cultural Studies.

³ Applied to the German Special Major if German artists or scholars are taught

1c. History of Program

German Instruction at SSU - German is one of several modern languages that have been taught at Sonoma State University since its inception. In the 1990s, the German program contracted significantly after campus-wide budget cuts that affected the entire CSU. By 1996, the German major had been eliminated. At that time, only a handful of German students were left, and the last of two German professors retired in 2005. After Dr. Grobbel's arrival at SSU in 1996, she taught German as a lecturer for the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures in addition to teaching other humanities courses in other departments on campus. During her years as a lecturer from 1997-2005, Dr. Grobbel increased enrollment in German so that in 2005 a tenure-track position was announced to rebuild the German Program.

Dr. Grobbel was hired as a tenure-track professor in 2005 to rebuild the German program. In 2007, Dr. Grobbel restructured the German minor to attract more students to German. The substantially revised program focused on content-based language learning and cultural competency. It included, for example, learning German through film as well as language courses focusing on contemporary culture and politics in the German-speaking world, and a GE course in English on German literature and culture. She changed the curricular structure, too, to offer flexible entry into the program by offering beginning German each semester to increase the number of students taking German and grow the German minor. The two language courses on the 200 level were also interchangeable to maximize student entry into the program (see *German Curriculum Proposal* in [Google folder](#)). This structure includes four courses per semester (plus one additional one-unit course each fall), and it was partly responsible for a substantial increase in minors from 2007 to 2012 (see section 5d.). Overall, the number of minors increased from a low point of 34 students in 2002 to 64 students in 2006, and eventually reached a maximum of 120 German minors by 2012.⁴

It is noteworthy that even a recent drop of German minors compares with other minor numbers university-wide. Below are Fall 2019 numbers for enrolled minors at SSU in the <40 range of student enrollment: Art History (33), American Multicultural Studies (40), Astronomy (14), Chemistry (39), Chicano & Latino Studies (39), Economics (35), Electrical Engineering (11), Environmental Studies & Planning (5), French (25), Geography (4), Geography and Environment (22), Geology (14), Gerontology (2), Global Studies (2), History (27), Integrative Studies (5), Jewish Studies (12), Latin American Studies (1), Linguistics (2), Math for Teachers (8), Museum and Gallery Methods (9), Music (26), Native American Studies (4), Paleontology (26), Physics (2), Queer Studies (33), Statistics (2), Theatre Arts (36), and Women's Health (7). In 2019, there were 32 German minors, in comparison.

As the SSU campus deliberated on whether to reduce the role of minor programs in undergraduate degree programs, Dr. Grobbel proactively developed plans for an interdisciplinary major with a German language focus. The German minor is the third language degree program at SSU besides Spanish and French, but those two programs offer majors at the Bachelor level as well as an M.A. program in Spanish. Dr. Grobbel designed a different model for a German major by envisioning an interdisciplinary German B.A. degree that would help

⁴ *These data as well as all other data in this self-study were provided by the SSU Office of Reporting and Analytics (now Office of Institutional Effectiveness) unless stated otherwise.*

students prepare for a wide range of professions here and abroad as well as for work in a wide range of fields and graduate study in disciplines outside German. This program took shape as “German Cultural Studies.” As she planned the program, she gathered information about successful German Studies programs in other parts of the country as well as results of student surveys among German minors who over the years had asked for a German B.A. at SSU. To house the new program, Dr. Grobbel was encouraged by administrators to start this program through ITDS, following the model of Global Studies and Women and Gender Programs. Although the time and effort to design and implement a special major would not be funded by the University, Dr. Grobbel knew that this was the best opportunity to maintain German at SSU by building an interdisciplinary German B.A. program.

After proposing the program, working with all departments to check for courses that could be part of the special major, and getting the necessary approvals through university governance in 2013, Dr. Grobbel established the special major as a pilot program, one of its kind within the CSU. One year after students were able to join the special major in 2014, fifteen were enrolled as special majors already and two of them were completing their senior project. Most of them switched from being a minor to a special major. In 2016 Dr. Grobbel revised the program already, prompted by the elimination of traditional language lab courses that had been part of the special major curriculum. The program review was approved in Spring 2017 (see *Program Revision* in [Google folder](#)). In 2016, the first students graduated with a degree in German Cultural Studies. Between 2014 and 2019 (the range of this program review) a total of 15 students graduated in German Cultural Studies.⁵

Looking forward, we hope that the special major will be recognized university-wide as an academically rigorous, interdisciplinary program worthy of a stable home in an academic department. Ideally, German Cultural Studies would find its home in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures since it offers all required German language courses and is also Dr. Grobbel's home department.

2. Assessment

2a. Program Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes for the German Cultural Studies major were developed after careful examination of general undergraduate learning outcomes developed through the Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) initiative. LEAP is a national public advocacy and campus action initiative that champions the economic and civic value of a liberal education. The initiative promotes essential learning outcomes of a liberal education, principles of excellence to guide educational reform and renewal, high-impact practices that engage and challenge students, and authentic assessments that use students' own work.

The learning outcomes of the ITDS special major in German Cultural Studies address the following: Upon successful completion of their studies, students will 1. acquire and improve German language skills in all areas of competency, including speaking, reading, writing and

⁵ *The program review focuses on 2014-2019. It was disrupted Spring & Fall 2020 due to COVID-19, and the virtual visits with the external reviewer were moved to Spring 2021.*

aural comprehension, in addition to cultural competency; 2. connect these skills and competencies to knowledge gained from other disciplines, which focuses students' interests and prepares them for life after graduation; and 3. gain important secondary competencies and skills that are highly desired by many employers and graduate schools through their German and interdisciplinary studies. These include cultural awareness, critical thinking and creative thinking skills, communicative and interpersonal skills, and metacognitive skills including language learning processes and execution of individual goals.

The learning goals below can also be found as a list on the special major webpage:

German Language Skills

- ability to understand spoken German and to read a wide variety of texts written in German
- ability to communicate effectively in German orally and in writing
- ability to respond in culturally appropriate ways to common situations in German
- knowledge of phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics of the German language

Cultural Awareness and International Engagement

- knowledge of the history and cultures of the German-speaking world, including contemporary events
- knowledge of literature, art, film, and other cultural expressions in the German-speaking world
- knowledge of cultural diversity in the global context
- ability to engage with international communities

Critical and Creative Thinking Skills

- ability to analyze the treatment and solutions of problems in the German-speaking world, the European Union, and the USA
- ability to analyze issues in a cross-cultural and interdisciplinary context

Communicative and Interpersonal Skills

- ability to express themselves effectively in written and oral communication in both German and English
- ability to work independently as well as collaboratively

Metacognitive Skills

- awareness of the language learning process and the learning process in general
- ability to formulate individual goals, execute them, and reflect on them

The following curricular map shows how the required special major courses and external language certificate requirement support these PLOs:

	Course Descriptions	Units	German Language Skills	Cultural Awareness & International Engagement	Creative & Critical Thinking Skills	Communication & Interpersonal Skills	Metacognitive Skills
Core courses							
GER 101	First-Semester: The Personal World	4	X	X	X	X	
GER 102	Second Semester: Contemporary Germany	4	X	X	X	X	
GER 200	Intermediate German: The German-Speaking World Today	4	X	X	X	X	
GER 210	Intermediate German through Film	4	X	X	X	X	
GER 314	Literature of the German-Speaking World	4		X	X	X	X
GER 315	German Language and Literature	1	X	X	X	X	X
GER 300	Advanced German Cultural Studies	4	X	X	X		
HIST 415, 416, or 418	Modern European history (Eastern Europe 1815-1989, or Fall of Communism)	3-4		X		X	
POLS 307	Perspectives on the Holocaust and Genocide	4		X		X	
POLS 350	European Parliamentary Democracies	4		X		X	
ARTH 464	History of Modern Art: 20th Century	3-4		X		X	
GER 495	Senior Project	4	X	X	X	X	X
GER 499	Internship	2	X	X	X	X	X
Electives	Multidisciplinary)	23-24		X	X	X	X
Certificate	Language Proficiency Test	-	X				X
Study Abroad	Optional Courses in Germany	30	X	X	X	X	X

As this table illustrates, learning outcomes for the special major focus on language competency, global awareness, and skills that will help graduates to develop careers with a global dimension. These outcomes are distributed across disciplines. Goals regarding cultural awareness and international engagement are demonstrated in most of the courses. Students learn about cultural diversity, the international community, and European history and culture. They also learn about those parts of the world where Europeans have influenced or colonized and repressed other cultures, which now strongly influence the cultures of German-speaking countries in Europe. Language competency includes written and oral expression in German and English. Goals of most courses address the demonstration of so-called “soft skills” in communicative, interpersonal, and critical thinking skills abilities.

2b. Core Assessment at the Program Level

The core tools of assessment at the program level are the following, as outlined in the 2016 approved revision of the special major. To earn the special major,

- students must pass the [Goethe-B1 Proficiency Certificate](#) that is recognized world-wide and assists universities and employers in their selection of candidates for graduate or professional work.
- Students must pass the internship performance evaluation. Students are evaluated through the use of our departmental internship evaluation form (see "Final Evaluation Form" or [Google folder](#)).
- Students language skills are assessed in GER 300, the capstone language seminar, through a **portfolio** of their work highlighting their German proficiency, their own creative achievements, and their individual learning process (see [Google folder](#)).
- Two professors evaluate the individualized **Senior Project** (professor in German, and the other in the student's field of interest). The research must be presented and defended in a public forum, such as the SSU Undergraduate Research Symposium (see [Google folder](#)).

2c. Course-Embedded Assessments

The portfolio, mentioned above, is part of GER 300 and must contain samples of evidence that demonstrate the progress students made toward their self-defined objectives whose attainment requires creativity, self-discipline and interdisciplinary studies. Portfolio requirements include German essays on topics discussed in class (e.g. on the integration of foreigners in Germany and in the USA, or green energy projects in German-speaking countries), an abstract of at least one oral presentation, samples of original creative writing (fairy tales, poetry, song lyrics), and vocabulary lists that include student’s own sentences, along with detailed grammar explanations how and why these words are used in their examples. Students are also required to include film reviews, reflections on extracurricular events or personal off-campus learning moments. They also write a reflection essay based on at least one SSU Holocaust and Genocide lecture. Besides demonstrating German language skills and critical and creative skills in German, all entries are accompanied by reflections (in English or German) on how and why students chose these documents to be in their portfolio, how they were created, and in what capacity they document their learning experience. The portfolio concludes with a self-evaluation of their learning process, reflecting on their learning goals and final outcomes.

Other assessments besides homework assignments, quizzes, tests, midterms, finals, and research papers include the following assessment tools that require adaptability to work with a peer or a group, independent creative thinking skills, and cultural awareness:

- Partner role-play, starting in GER 101, and refined in GER 102 - Together with one partner, students write their own scripts of a scene on a provided topic, and perform their dialogue/scene in class. They must use particular grammatical structures and highlight them in their written texts.
- Small group skit in GER 101 - This is an open topic assignment to allow for more creativity. The focus is on comprehensibility of the scene and spoken German is assessed (no written work).
- Individual oral interview in GER 101 and GER 102 – These test their listening and speaking skills. The format is basically a 10-15 mini-conversation in German based on six out of thirty questions that are known to the students. Some questions require some research (e.g. about German businesses in the Bay Area). In GER 102, this assessment tool is based on a discussion of a photo (out of a pool of six images), requiring a developed ability to describe the scene in detail as well as imagination to develop a story around it.
- Creation of a short film in GER 102 and GER 210 - Instead of the partner role-play in GER 101, second-semester students are assessed on their speaking ability, use of grammar and vocabulary, and pronunciation through their animated fairy tale that they create themselves on an app. The topic (e.g. house hunting) supports the course material, asking the students to expand on it in a creative way. In GER 210, the culminating project is a video of themselves or their group in German, accompanied by the script. Students may select to write a longer film script instead (if they do not want to create a film featuring themselves in it). Peer reviews of other students' work as well as student assessments about their own/co-peers' contributions are part of this assessment. See two examples from 2017 of the GER 210 film project final, posted on YouTube: [“Dinge aufschieben”](#) (Procrastination) about life at SSU, and a thriller set in the woods outside SSU, [“Der Dachs”](#) (The Badger).
- Reflection Papers – GER 314 (GE course in English) requires a set of ten thoughtful and well-written reflection papers about assigned readings as well as three thought-provoking discussion questions. Depending on the German language class, responses in German are often part of the homework, too.
- Culture Points – These “Kulturpunkte” are part of all my courses. Students learn about the German-speaking world and German culture here in the US through participating in German-related events and writing about them (e.g. attending a German music event at the GMC or an art show in San Francisco; watching a Swiss film online; reading about current news in Austria on [Deutsche Welle](#)). A minimum number of “Kulturpunkte” need to be turned in by the end of the semester. These *Culture Points* encourage and assess student learning about cultural affairs and critical thinking through cross-cultural awareness skills.
- Senior Project in GER 495 – This culminating interdisciplinary work is assessed by the German professor and the project's mentor in the student's other field. The student is free to select the topic and the format of their research presentation. It must be publicly presented.

2d. Assessment by Community Partners

- Goethe-B1 Proficiency Certificate Examination – This certificate has been described already. It is an objective and internationally vetted assessment tool administered by the [Goethe Institute](#), which is Germany’s cultural institute, promoting the study of German and cultural exchange worldwide. Dr. Grobbel and adjunct professor Dr. Kathleen Foley-Beining are licensed Goethe-Institute examiners and administer the examination at SSU at the end of each spring semester. The test is the very same test given worldwide, including at the Goethe Institute San Francisco. The exams taken at SSU are sent to San Francisco for a third-level review (the SSU professors individually evaluate the students’ work, before sending their combined results to the Goethe Institute that assesses the students’ work for a third time before issuing the final certificate. It is a high-stakes assessment. Students who fail this test do not earn the special major (or German minor) regardless of having passed all required coursework. Its rigor may also be recognized by the fact that the SSU German Program is one of very few American universities that requires this proficiency examination for its minor or major students. Usually, only private colleges or research universities require this level of proficiency for their German language majors, not minors.
- Internship Performance Evaluation – This was discussed above but we want to point out that this is another form of external assessment embedded in a real-world learning experience.

2e. Student Assessments through Video Testimonials and Interviews

Student alumna Holly Lyon (now Blevins, graduated in May 2018), Joseph Paulukonis (graduated in December 2018), and Stella Stefanovich (graduated in May 2019) assessed the special major based on their experiences in the program. Their video testimonials are posted on the [German homepage](#) (5:30 min.).

Holly and Joseph started out in GER 101 without any knowledge of German, but attained an impressively high level of fluency through their study abroad in Tübingen and Heidelberg. Both earned language tutor positions on campus, and Joseph was offered a paid German instructor position at the German School of the North Bay. Holly graduated with a second major in Environmental Studies and Planning, and a minor in Biology. She explains that she selected the special major because of study abroad “which really helped [her] to develop her language skills.” She stresses that “international education is a really valuable thing, especially for United States students, because we are rarely exposed to other cultures.” Her stated goal to study Ecology and Evolution at a German university has come true; she is now pursuing a Master’s Degree in Ecology, Evolution, and Conservation at the prestigious [University of Potsdam](#) in Germany.

Joe describes the program as “amazing,” “broadening [his] worldview, and “mean[ing] so much to [him].” He appreciates the flexibility of the program, which helped him graduate within four years, including studying one year abroad at the top-notch University of Heidelberg. He also values the fact that the internship can be taken in the US or in Germany. He currently works as a sales representative, focusing on German beer retail, at Wine Warehouse in Oakland.

Stella added her second major in Business Administration, and describes the value of combining German and Business, and how study abroad taught her that businesses in Germany look for

applicants with cultural competency and knowledge of the international market. In her senior project she compared German and US American marketing practices, which helped her, she states, apply for business positions. She is now working as an Engineering Operations Analyst at Qualcomm, a world-wide company leading in innovative wireless technology headquartered in San Diego.

Holly is also featured as an alumna in an [interview](#) with Dr. Grobbel on our departmental homepage. She explains how the special major helped her in moving toward her career goals to advance her scientific career in Germany, a country which she describes as being “really at the forefront of the fight for sustainability: “I wouldn’t have made it into this program [at the University of Potsdam] if I couldn’t speak German, which I learned mostly at SSU in the German Cultural Studies program. My senior project compared environmental action in Germany and the United States, which was helpful for my admission to the Master’s Program in Germany. The SSU German program also helped me to learn a lot about the culture; we played board games, cooked German dishes, had movie nights, went to San Francisco for German events, and a lot more. Sharing ideas and experiences with other German language learners and with the German Fulbright Teaching Assistants at SSU was invaluable, and I enjoyed my time there very much.”

2018 graduate Elise Manzanillo is featured as another [“spotlight.”](#) Elise is currently enrolled in the Master’s [Nursing program at Columbia University](#) in New York City and was also accepted into their Doctor of Nurse Practitioner program. She points out that her volunteer experiences through the SSU German Club and during study abroad propelled her toward a community-based career as a nurse. Through her studies, she adopted “a global perspective” and a “skillset in intercultural communication” that motivated her to pursue a career in global health care where she “would be able to equitably treat patients in underprivileged populations.” Elise assesses that her German Cultural Studies degree helped her get accepted at Columbia University. She believes that her non-traditional degree allows her to bring in a different perspective and to connect with patients in a different way. Elise points out her activities in the German Club showcasing her leadership and community involvement as very helpful in her application for nursing school. She further explains how the special major has helped her launch to become a Doctor of Nurse Practice through the development of a range of intercultural and communicative “soft skills,” including the ability to understand people from other cultures and empathy:

“I developed a plethora of skills relating to the healthcare industry by taking German classes as SSU without even realizing it. Learning a foreign language was a difficult feat. I found, however, that noting a person's physical cues and facial expressions in addition to what they were saying greatly aided my understanding of what was being said. Not only that, but it helped me predict where the conversation was going and what was said without fully comprehending the words used. These subtle nonverbal signs of communication are vital in the healthcare industry because it greatly enhances your assessment skills when treating patients, who may not be able to fully express themselves, and this can lead to a more accurate diagnosis. Additionally, studying abroad has increased my perspective and empathy by exposing me to situations I wouldn't have typically been in. I came across many obstacles like culture shock and growing pains while studying abroad but it helped me develop as a

person. With these experiences, I find myself being more patient, understanding, and empathetic to others. The same characteristics are the bases of any nurse when giving patient care. German has even influenced me where I applied for grad school. I wanted to be more involved in enacting care globally, so I enrolled at Columbia University because of their global initiative program that gives care to those in impoverished areas across the globe.”

2f. Survey of Alumni and Current Students for Self-Study

In the beginning of Fall 2020 Dr. Grobbel had eleven students enrolled in the special major, while fifteen students had already graduated. To prepare for this program review, Dr. Grobbel set up two Qualtrics Surveys and asked her students to assess the special major: She asked her fifteen alumni and her current students in two separate polls. Out of the 15 graduates, 13 responded; and out of the 11 current students at the time of the survey, all of them responded. Due to individual life circumstances in 2020, including COVID-19, five students either dropped the major or left SSU altogether. Although the numbers of students in the program and a slightly lower number of students who responded are low, it is clear that student success and satisfaction are high.

Let us highlight student success first showing what students were doing directly after graduation, followed by a list of their current professional careers or graduate school information.

Directly after graduation, alumni were involved in

Internships:

- German Language School of Marin,
- UC Davis Anthropology Museum,
- SSU’s Northwest Information Center,
- Healdsburg History Museum, and
- California Senator’s office.

Professional experience through paid positions:

- Hospice company,
- GIS mapping agency,
- German Language School of the North Bay
- Sonoma County District Agency tasked with transportation planning, and
- multiple companies in retail, logistics, and sales.

Earned a certification degree (Certified Nursing Assistant)

Entered graduate programs:

- Clinical Nursing (Columbia University, New York City),
- American Studies (University of Tübingen, Germany),
- Ecology and Environmental Conservation (University of Potsdam, Germany),
- History (SSU),
- Public Administration (SSU),
- Teacher Credential Program (SSU), and
- Organization Development (SSU).

By the end of Fall 2019 alumni were either studying in graduate programs or had secured employment as a(n)

- flight attendant (Virgin Airlines),
- administrative assistant (Sonoma County Transportation Agency; [Drew Nichols](#)),
- consultant and coach in multinational Leadership Coaching Business (Numina, Mill Valley; [Vanessa Huebner](#)),
- sales representative in a Wine/Beer Retail Business (Wine Warehouse, Oakland),
- sales development leader in an innovative organization (Blueboard, San Diego),
- senior associate advisor in a top international accounting firm (Deloitte, San Francisco; KPMG, Seattle),
- engineering operations analyst in a leading company in wireless technology (Qualcomm, San Diego),
- employee in international sales companies with ties to Europe, and as a
- multiple subject teacher (Pleasanton) or German language instructor (Santa Rosa).

In the following we align alumni's narrative responses to the question how the special major helped their progress toward their stated career goals. Highlights were added by Dr. Grobbe:

Cultural Awareness and International Engagement/Critical and Creative Thinking Skills/Communicative and Interpersonal Skills

"German Cultural Studies has aided me in my goals by enhancing my **global perspective**, providing **leadership opportunities**, and connecting me with a supportive faculty. The field of healthcare is transforming in which clinicians are expected to treat the patient holistically. With this, clinicians must be able to factor in a patient's needs, such as their customs, in order to enact the best possible care. With German Cultural Studies, I was exposed to a **different way of thinking** ultimately expanding my worldly perspective. German Cultural Studies also provided different ways to be involved with the Sonoma County community. Providing both leadership and volunteering opportunities in sharing German Culture with the community the major allows for different avenues to gain **professional experience**. Lastly, the department provides endless support to its students. Spanning from tutoring, office hours, and even internship opportunities the department builds its students up for success in obtaining not only a Degree but assisting in long term career goals. If it weren't for the opportunities presented to me as a German Cultural Studies Major I would not be considered a **well-rounded** candidate for nursing school."

"German Cultural Studies gave me a **world outlook!**"

"The German Cultural Studies major **helped me with my M.A. thesis and cultural differences in organizations and cultures**. I was able to connect with German-American businesses and interview key stakeholders. Drawing from the German Cultural Studies courses was a **great way to see differences and similarities** more clearly and ask important questions in the interviews."

"The special major in German Cultural Studies launched me into my career track before I realized where I was heading. Without having the opportunity to experience this major, the

year overseas in Germany, I would not be where I am today. Through this major, I was able to **greatly understand cultural nuances** that I fear many Americans simply reject. I witnessed a **participatory citizenship**, expressing publicly their opinions on government-sponsored infrastructure projects that was something I seldom witnessed in my hometown.”

Critical and Creative Thinking Skills – with emphasis on the ability to analyze issues in a cross-cultural and interdisciplinary context, discover career opportunities, and prepare for professional positions:

“The special major allowed me to **explore other fields in relation to German Cultural Studies**. It was through the major that I explored political science and history. The course which led me to a master's in history was taken during my time as a German Cultural Studies major. My final project in the major connected my interests in music and history and encouraged me to apply to the history department. If it wasn't for the modern languages department and the support of my advisor I wouldn't have been able to study abroad and find my passion in German history.”

“It **sparked a love for the education field** after completing my internship at the German School of Marin where I was a teaching assistant for a kindergarten class.”

“The special major in German Cultural Studies has allowed me to connect with clients and team members that I would not otherwise have been able to work with. I have utilized my **intercultural communication skills** specifically learned while undertaking this demanding degree to **further my career** in a way that I would not have been able to otherwise.”

German Language Skills

“Having a degree in German Cultural Studies was immensely helpful when I was selecting and applying to a University in Germany. With the knowledge I gained during my studies, I was able to make an informed decision on a location within Germany that would be most advantageous as an international student. In addition, the **German language skills** that I built at Sonoma State have been immeasurably helpful for my life in Germany.”

“The German Cultural Studies major has allowed me the opportunity to pursue my **goal in becoming a computational linguist by preparing me for an education in Germany**. I cannot afford a Master's degree in the U.S. Germany, however, offers free education to all international students as well as its own.”

Additionally, alumni point out the professional preparation they received through their studies:

“Without my choice of major I would have never become the person I am today. I would have never discovered my passion for linguistics and travel and would likely be on an entirely different trajectory. My **time abroad** and subsequent **internship** in the US have been **immense resume boosters** and have been integral to my acquisition of several jobs.”

Other students express how the special major has prepared them for graduate education in the US or in Germany, including how to do research and write graduate theses, or ready them for a professional position. One student also stressed that they learned to communicate more effectively, supported by their German language studies, which prepared them for work with speakers from non-English cultures:

“Having learned another language, I am aware of some of the common pitfalls that students can have when learning their non-native languages. I am also able to **more effectively communicate** with others who may be speaking English as a foreign language as I can more easily parse what they might mean if they are having difficulty with certain words or grammatical structure.”

Interdisciplinarity

“The interdisciplinary aspect of the major is fantastic. I love that I have knowledge from many different subjects.”

“Having the breadth of classes available for the major electives as options mean that you can also focus on certain aspects of what you would like to learn. For me specifically, as I was an art minor, I did take several art history classes that were pertinent to the major, but I was also able to focus on areas of personal interest, such as foreign history and politics.”

“I think the interdisciplinary aspect is a definite strength because I feel I was given great exposure to many different fields such as history, anthropology, and global studies. The exposure gave me a broader kind of knowledge that wasn't limited to just the German language itself, rather the history of it, the literature that developed because of it, AND the mechanics of the language and culture.”

“This major provided me with the opportunity to learn about German culture from the United States. Up until that point, all I had learned about Germany was their involvement in the two world wars. However, there is so much more to German history and culture than just those time periods. I was able to view Germany from a new perspective at the same time that I studied the language, and it changed my way of thinking about not only Germany, but also Europe as a whole. I am very grateful for that.”

Diversity and Internationalism

“This major's special strengths [are] its diverse community and networking on a national and international level.”

Life-long learning skills

“I think this major has a very strong intercultural communications aspect that I find myself using every day in my job as well as in my personal life. Having completed this major, I can say that without it I would not have expanded my horizons and gone out of my way to become a life-long learner.”

Student Support in General

“... endless resources provided to succeed (tutoring, Kaffeestunde, etc.)”

“There was never a moment within the major I did not feel supported or thought I would be unable to finish the degree.”

“Lots of opportunities to practice German.”

Student advising

The following excerpts show that, from the former students' perspective, the special major program offers a high quality of advising, contributing to the success of the students. This is also reiterated by special majors currently in the program. Asked about the quality of advising the alumni state:

“Excellent. I really enjoyed working with professor Grobbel.”

“The quality of advising was **excellent.**”

“Dr. Grobbel provided **the best advising.** She worked with all students in the major and you could really tell she cared.”

“The quality of advising I had for the German Cultural Studies Major was **superb.** Dr. Grobbel was able to clearly line out the requirements needed for graduation and the schedule of courses. She was always available to set up appointments to meet when questions arose about the major and was easy to get in touch with via E-mail. I found this most helpful after studying abroad since I needed to transfer over my courses from the university in Germany to my home campus.”

“I was fortunate to receive the **highest quality of support and encouragement** while working on the special major.”

“Michaela Grobbel was a **supportive advisor** who encouraged my academic interests and helped me connect them to German culture and language.”

“Michaela Grobbel is truly a blessing to cross my journey. As an advisor, she guided me, patiently, during my struggles. She has tremendous passion for the German language and her dedication is inspiring. My quality of advising from Professor Grobbel was significantly stronger than the advising I received for my other major. Many students don't receive this type of passion from their advisors, and we need more of it.”

“Kate and Michaela are **kind, generous and thoughtful advisors** who understand fully the benefit of spending time abroad and, from what I heard from my peers, were excellent at presenting time abroad as a realistic and affordable option for many students who had written off the possibility early on. In addition, they made the process of writing my thesis and graduating college much less stressful than that of some of my peers.”

“Prof. Grobbel was a **great advisor,** and although incredibly busy, always made time to meet with me....”

“I feel that Dr. Grobbel provides **great advising** in the undertaking of this major. I personally received no other advising at Sonoma state besides with her. The advising I received for my other degree was sub par and the **one on one connection** I was able to have with Professor Grobbel allowed me to succeed.”

Exploration of Study and Career Path

“This major allowed me to explore my interests and widen my field of knowledge. The major also works well for students who wish to study and work abroad.”

Learning from required non-German courses

“I really appreciate that one of the classes you are required to take for this major is the Holocaust and Genocide lecture/discussion series. Both because of it's [sic] importance in the history and culture of Germany specifically in regards to the atrocities of the Holocaust, but also because of the unfortunately common similarly horrific genocides and ‘ethnic cleansings’ that have happened since. We often overlook this as a culture, as too often it happens in areas we don't even think about. I can't tell you how much I learned from that

class that I would have never even heard of except in footnotes of other classes or textbooks.”

Study abroad

“The biggest strength of this major is [its] access to studying abroad. I contribute many of my skill sets and strengths to my year in Germany and can't imagine my life or myself without the experience gained there. Living in another country and having to build your linguistics and cultural understanding from the ground-up is incredibly rewarding and inspiring.”

“The year abroad is a complete strength in that it really challenges students to explore the world around them during their college years. I understand I was fortunate enough to make this journey, but I am convinced this piece enhanced the major, and strengthened, me into the person I am today.”

“I would like to highlight my experience abroad with this major and giving me inspiration to pursue architecture at a higher degree.”

“I've never had a more immersive way of learning where I was able to bring everything I had learned in the classroom into the real world. The best part about the experience was all the classes taken while abroad counted towards the major making it easy to graduate within four years.”

“A specific learning moment for me was learning how to interact and live in a country other than my own and I would not have had that experience except for this major.”

In the following we present responses to what alumni highlighted as their special learning moments or opportunities in the program. Some of them overlap with earlier comments:

Support by Professors, FLTAs/LTAs, and Student Community:

“I have always appreciated the **camaraderie** surrounded with this major.”

“In a nutshell: the support and close working with professor Grobbel and the study abroad year. I learned so much through the whole process of being in Germany and then when I came back I felt really supported. I also really enjoyed our visiting **Fulbright scholars** from Germany and the **exchange students**.”

“I think the ability to have a **small cohort** that felt more like a **true community was truly unique** and special to the Special Major. Working with the German Club alongside having the classes gave a lot of students the opportunity to use their **communication skills** on another level; not only with each other but also out **in the community with people not at SSU**. We also got the opportunity to pick a **thesis under a very large umbrella** and work individually towards a goal rather than being boxed in. I think that was truly amazing.”

“Something that really helped me to learn German was all the opportunities available outside the classroom. Each class requires "Kulturpunkte," or Culture Points, that can be earned through participation in many **extracurricular activities**. For example, the German club "Gemütlichkeit" has regular movie nights, which were incredibly helpful for me to learn German as well as a bit about the culture. There were also board game nights, dinners, and hiking trips, as well as an annual trip to the German film festival in San Francisco. By making participation in these events mandatory, students are really encouraged to get involved in the German language, which is rewarding and a ton of fun.”

“Just wanted to mention how grateful I was for the opportunity I was given with also having had Fulbright students as helpers with the German courses. I always found them incredibly helpful and it was a joy to know them! I'm still in contact with Rebecca :)”

Inspiration from Instruction in German Program

“I reflect on the teachings of Dr. Grobbel when I lesson plan for my students. Dr. Grobbel's classes were always so interactive that it is hard not to learn from her.”

“My first semester of German at Sonoma State was one of the few classes in which I genuinely went above and beyond to learn more about the subject, beyond what was being asked of us. I pursued the answers to questions which had not been covered or assigned, and in some cases, would not be until later courses. I put this much effort into the class not for a high grade or praise from my professor and peers, but simply because I had discovered such a passion for the language that I wanted to learn as much as I could as quickly as possible.”

In the following, we list comments and suggestions about course offerings by special major graduates. Overall, they point out their satisfaction as this comment shows:

“I loved that I could choose courses from many different fields of study, it feels like there is something for EVERY student. No matter the background or their interests: German Cultural Studies has something for everyone!”

“All courses I took for the German Cultural Studies major were very informative.”

“I felt the German language courses were great. I can only remember having a positive experience.”

“... courses ... were challenging and inspiring.”

“I think we had a plethora of choices for classes which gave all of us the ability to choose what kind of path we wanted to work towards. At the same time I was working towards a career in education I had other students in the same German courses as me working for psychology, business, and economics. We all brought unique experiences to the table that created a very well-rounded course selection based on our other educational needs (i.e Double majors or minors).”

Senior Project:

“Writing the final paper/thesis /senior paper (not sure what they're called anymore) was the most eventful learning experience in the major because I was able to connect themes from my Political Science major with this topic, with complete support from my advisor. I studied public participation related to a major infrastructure project currently under construction in Germany. Since I was able to study in Germany, I witnessed this project, witnessed demonstrations, and understood more what public participation can look like. And then bringing this information back home and relaying it to my community was truly exciting. I still speak of this process, this paper, and am still following construction updates.”

Other issues and comments

Alumni point out that some courses are not offered frequently enough or that the range of courses should be widened:

“I wish there was more variety in the courses offered for the special major or at least a higher frequency in which the courses were offered. When limiting a class to a certain term it constrains a student's schedule and forces them to drop conflicting classes. This becomes frustrating when a course is needed for graduation however one cannot attend said course due to time constraints. The same thought can be applied to courses with a seat restriction, by which there is not enough availability in seats to take the course.”

“Course offerings should be expanding. Providing individual courses on German culture such as: literature, art, music, history, environmental sustainability, politics. It can be difficult and overwhelming to have these topics squeezed in a couple of courses.”

While one comment positively addresses the small class sizes and close interaction between students and faculty/FLTAs, it also points out a “lack of staff,” which we understand as a lack of instructors:

“The German program at Sonoma State is immediately intimate with it's [sic] small class sizes and one-on-one time with professors and FLTAs. The only area of improvement I would note is a lack of staff, which I attribute more to the horrendous compensation given to teachers in the country as a whole and less to the program itself.”

Another comment includes the request for increased collaboration with the Business Administration Program:

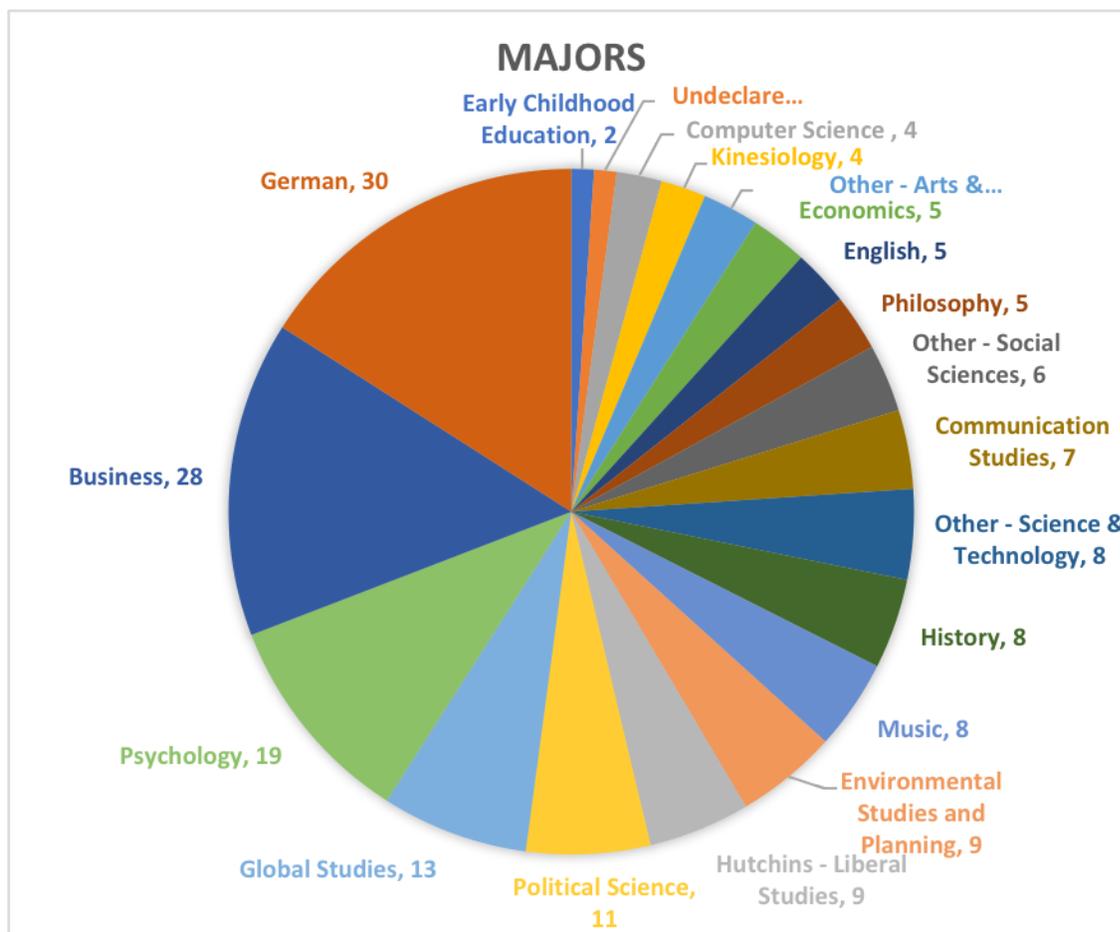
“I would love to see more integration with the business school including international business classes.”

Overall, though, the comments align with one alum's assessment that the “emphasis on interdisciplinary work in art, music, political science, and history contribute[s] to a well rounded curriculum which encourages further academic opportunities.”

Considering these comments, Dr. Grobbel is interested in reviewing course offerings in other departments and in intensifying her interaction with her colleagues in Business Administration. She has been working closely with Professor Dr. Renata Schaefer for several years, and currently plans a German/Business event for Spring 2021. Together with the German Consulate, she is exploring ways to highlight opportunities for German and Business students in the Bay Area and internationally.

Considering that a significant number of Business students select Germany for study abroad (between 2004 and 2019 twenty-eight studied abroad), Dr. Grobbel will continue to strengthen the link between the two disciplines. Many business organizations in the Bay Area and in the US welcome job applicants with German language and culture skills. Since the International Business Program was discontinued several years ago, she has been trying to resurrect an aspect of it by offering a German dimension to the Business students.

The graph below shows how this number compares to students who studied in Germany from other SSU programs:



The graph above was provided by SSU’s Global Engagement Office. It demonstrates students’ self-identified major prior to their departure for study abroad in Germany between 2004 and 2019. 125 SSU students studied in Germany during that time.

Suggestions for other program improvements by alumni, responding to the specific question “What do you suggest can be improved to make the special major in German Cultural Studies more effective for students?” point to the following areas:

Lack of visibility and promotion:

“SSU could do more in declaring German as a defined major, from my time at SSU there were always students interested and a decent number of students who have conferred the degree. It may be trivial but it becomes tiring in explaining that I have majored in an 'interdisciplinary' major and what that means.”

More flexibility for working students:

“Offer more German classes, so working students can take classes as well.”

More funding for more courses and instructors/staff:

“Hopefully with more staffing/funding there can be more courses taught in German to allow for more practice using the language while discussing the different subjects under the major.”

“[H]iring more professors and administration for this department.”

Here we add that Dr. Grobbel has been working on creating a new online course. This bilingual German course “Crime and Secrets in German Film” (GER 210/314) will be offered bisynchronously as a test run in Spring 2021. If successful, Dr. Grobbel intends to offer this course asynchronously for all CSU students to make it easier for working students. Moreover, she continues to offer her core language courses later during the day, and all Spring 2021 language courses will be offered from 5:00-6:50 p.m. for that reason, too.

Increase the number of FLTAs for increased immersion in the German language:

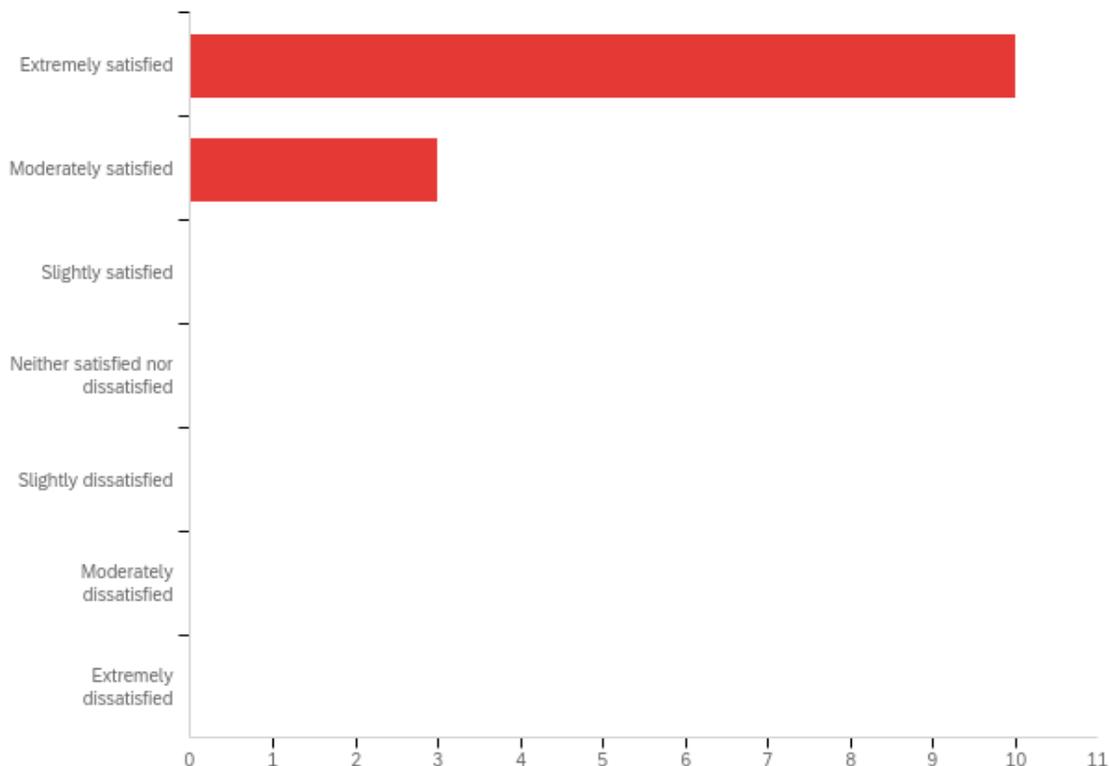
“Bring in a second FTLA. I felt that having one German language teaching assistant was too competitive amongst the students, especially for those who had already [gone] overseas and needed more conversation practice.”

“An advanced class might also be more helpful if split between the students who do study abroad and those who don't might be helpful as you reach higher levels (300 or higher) as generally there's quite a large gap because of the immersive language experience.”

Regarding the latter comment, we point out that regularly having a Fulbright FLTA in the German Program would make this possible and considerably improve the quality of German language instruction. On a different but related note, it would ensure that low-enrolled language courses, often cancelled for budgetary reasons, could be taught by experienced FLTAs under the supervision of Dr. Grobbel. FLTAs are allowed to teach up to two courses each semester, and could thus help ensure the continuity of required courses in the German curriculum.

In conclusion, despite these suggestions for improvement, the evaluation of alumni's overall experience with the special major reveals high student satisfaction. Out of seven rating categories students, ten students selected the top category expressing that they are “extremely satisfied,” and three students selected the second category of being “moderately satisfied.” This distribution pattern is the same for the assessment by the current students in the program (see Qualtrics survey by current students in [Google folder](#)).

As one alum points out: “I enjoyed and learned SO MUCH while working on the special major. Going through the whole process, I wished SSU could offer more classes and a wider variety of class topics. I got to experience the importance of learning about cultural differences not only at school, but also at the work place and hope other students will benefit from earning the German Cultural Studies special major as much as I did/do.”



2g. Assessing the Special Major in the Context of SSU Strategic Priorities

As stated earlier, this curriculum supports the CSU Graduation Initiative 2025, because it allows students to graduate within four years. In fact, many special majors choose to double major. In a student survey administered as part of this self-study, students commented positively on the fact that the structure of the special major makes a degree within four years possible.

The curricular requirements also reflect **SSU’s Strategic Priorities**, especially its second priority regarding **Academic Excellence and Innovation**. This priority aims to “prepare students to flourish in a changing workforce and world. By educating beyond classroom walls and across disciplines, Sonoma State promotes synergy and creativity in a dynamic educational environment that responds to regional workforce and community needs” through “high-quality, innovative academic programs and “hands-on, real-world learning.” The special major program also directly supports the other three priorities: **Student Success, Leadership Cultivation, and Transformative impact**, including their interwoven core values in each area:

- Diversity & Social Justice (through coursework, extracurricular programs, internships, and senior project),
- Sustainability & Environmental Inquiry (through coursework and opportunities through senior project),
- Connectivity & Community Engagement (through study-abroad, internship, and extra-curricular engagement), and
- Adaptability & Responsiveness (through study-abroad and internship).

In the following we describe the four main Strategic Priorities areas:

Student Success

Timely graduation within four years is easily possible, especially if students plan their special major courses starting in their first semester at SSU. Transfer students or German minors switching to the special major, even in their last year at SSU and after study abroad, are often able to graduate within that time frame. Especially after their study abroad, German minors often decide to become a special major when they realize that up to 30 units of courses may count toward the special major. A few students double-major, and some even add a minor to their double-major. One student, however, dropped the special major in Spring 2020 because of COVID-19 (his other major is Electrical Engineering) after taking the spring semester off. He needs to graduate without losing any more time for financial reasons. Another student, double-majoring in Music and German Cultural Studies, also took a break from SSU but will be back in the spring. Three minors who had expressed their interest in switching to the special major, changed schools to be closer to home.

Close interaction and one-on-one advising are part of the major reasons for student success. Survey comments, supported by SETE comments over the years, show that students are very appreciative of this time with Dr. Grobbel (most of it outside her office hours; she is the sole advisor) and often comment on this special experience compared to bigger programs where they are not able to get this individualized attention. She has always spent considerable advising time with her students but the recent work conditions of teaching remotely during the COVID-19 epidemic have made it extremely time-consuming: one student threatened suicide and Dr. Grobbel tried to be a positive support for her (also in communication with the CARE Team); family members of several students died or were ill with COVID; about 50% of our students in our two GER 101 courses were not able to attend classes because of family crises, unexpected or increased workload to finance their families or themselves; deaths of pets; internet issues and privacy issues (students trying to learn in their or other people's cars using their cell phones), etc. Dr. Grobbel spent more time talking individually with students or attempting to reach them and assist them. She realizes that this has been an exceptional situation and that it will eventually be over. But she also realizes that she has done this for at least fifteen years and has often been close to reaching her limits. This is not sustainable; without a colleague she will not be able to sustain this positive aspect of one-to-one advising. In terms of academic advising, the University Studies Curriculum Committee (USCC) already told her in 2013, when they discussed the establishment of the special major, that time for advising would be one of the biggest challenges for her. This has proven to be true. Each special major student has an individual study plan, a focus outside German Studies, and needs assistance in advising for 1. courses; 2. study abroad and later for transferring those courses to SSU; 3. for the selection and application of the internship as well as support during the internship; 4. the supervision of the senior project; and 5. help in updating their ARR. Both the senior project supervision and academic advising are extremely time-consuming. Students work on their senior projects in the form of graded 4-unit contract courses (GER 495), which Dr. Grobbel has been teaching as a voluntary overload since the beginning. The same applies to the internships (GER 499, formerly 395 or 399). She already talked to our A&H internship coordinator Hillary Homzie, but most of the internship opportunities Dr. Grobbel located through her professional

network or students found them on their own in the US or abroad. She has encouraged Hillary to work with agencies or programs that offer internships for German students and also encouraged her to work with representatives when they were on campus. Should the numbers of special majors increase significantly, she would need to work more closely with Hillary and advisors in other Schools, as she tried in the past with former School of Business internship coordinator Sarah Dove.

This special major, with proper advising, allows for graduation within four years because of its interdisciplinary structure that adds GE units to required core and elective courses. The fact that study abroad also counts up to 30 units helps speed up graduation in a remarkable way. Dr. Grobbel has been working with university advisors for undeclared students and EOP students for many years, especially at Summer and Student Transfer Orientations, and tabling at many different events, including within the School of Arts and Humanities. She plans on intensifying her efforts in the future to attract particularly undeclared students.

Dr. Grobbel frequently spends several two-hour blocks with students, checking courses taken here or abroad that are not on the list of approved courses for the special major. There are still a number of courses at SSU or abroad that qualify for substitution. New ones are offered at times, or course content of existing courses changes. After the revision of the special major in 2016, Katie Musick (Academic Programs) was of great help in refining the ARR to make it easier for the students and for Dr. Grobbel. As SSU's representative on the CSU Academic Council for International Programs (CSU ACIP) and working closely with Hope Ortiz, our SSU Global Engagement Coordinator, she looks forward to CSU IP's distribution of their list of approved GE courses that our students can take abroad. This will be one step that will help reduce her workload regarding student advising.

Supervising and guiding the senior projects are the most-time consuming, however. In the upcoming spring semester Dr. Grobbel will supervise three senior projects and meet with the students individually at least every two weeks to discuss their process. Although she designed a scaffolded schedule that helps students move forward, including the plan that they also meet every other week for peer feedback, there is still a lot of work involved. Last year Dr. Grobbel discussed the idea of having special major students join the Global Studies senior project class, which could help support the special major and address the workload issue, too. Both Dr. Rheyne Laney, Global Studies Coordinator and Advisor, and Prof. John Nardine, who has been teaching the two-semester Global Studies senior course in the past, were interested in pursuing the idea. Dr. Grobbel plans on pursuing this interdepartmental collaboration depending on the outcome of the special major program review since it would involve curricular restructuring and particular attention to the needs of the special majors by the Global Studies instructor.

The issue of Dr. Grobbel's voluntary teaching of contract courses highlights the problem that these independent study courses are not given workload credit as in other schools. Dr. Grobbel has raised this issue over the years with her MLL colleagues and others on campus as well as with SSU Provost, Dr. Karen Moranski, who shared her concern and expressed interest in finding a solution. It is Dr. Grobbel's hope that there will be a fair campus-wide policy so that all faculty receive credit. Dr. Grobbel has regularly been teaching uncompensated contract courses on a voluntary basis to support her students and the German programs: from 2002-2014, she taught or supervised 74 students through contract courses. After the establishment of the

special major in Fall 2014, she engaged and instructed 68 students through special studies courses until Fall 2019.

In terms of retention: The special major (as well as the German minor program) is a lively and close-knit community in which students get to know each other well through their classes and many extra-curricular activities. Dr. Grobbel knows all of her majors and provides a lot of support outside the classroom. This also applies to her minor students and other students, as frequently noted on her course SETEs and echoed in the special major survey. The sense of community is essential for student success. Close interaction with the FLTAs and/or LTAs significantly contributes to community-building. This provides a 'safe space' for learning a foreign language outside class, and not worrying about making mistakes. Our weekly informal conversation hour ("Kaffeestunde") in Charlie Brown, our biweekly film series (both now on Zoom), regular club activities, and the strong extracurricular programming every semester (often with guests from abroad) build a foundation for student success in a major way. Fieldtrips to Career Days or Hip Hop Concerts at the Goethe Institute, German hikes and picnics in the Redwoods, German volleyball parties, "Stockbrot" beach barbecues (dough on a stick over the fire), or the club's annual participation as volunteers at the Cotati Oktoberfest provide enjoyable and meaningful connections with other German students. These events also ground their studies within a social network. For about five years in a row, the German Club has also participated at Robert L. Stevens Elementary School in Santa Rosa and been sharing fun language mini-lessons and cultural presentations with the young students and their families. (See the description of club & academic FLTA events from 2019-20 and the letter by school counselor Carmen Wandel in the [Google folder](#)).

Many of these events, such as campus-wide presentations by Fulbright FLTAs, also blend club programming with high-caliber academic lectures. The same applies to Dr. Grobbel's teaching in which she strives to include relevant current information. Students' comments demonstrate that they value these additional learning moments that help retain students and often motivate them to engage in further studies. For instance, motivated by our discussion about the 2015 refugee crisis, two students (one in GER 101, the other at the advanced level) went to Germany to intern with the German Red Cross and a church to assist refugees in summer 2016. Besides intellectually engaging with social justice issues in class, students frequently choose to engage with them in real-life experiential learning moments in order to make a positive impact. Learning about sustainability issues in class or through FLTA or German consuls' presentations is tied into all my classes at all levels; this further supports SSU's core values and strategic priorities and often makes an impact on students' lives.

Molly Oates, a German language student, describes the German classes, the extracurricular events and her interactions with the FLTAs and LTAs from Germany as "amazing" and "super fun" and her involvement in the German Program as the "highlight of her career at Sonoma." Her [video testimonial](#) is posted on the German homepage, entitled "Why Learn German at SSU: A Student Perspective."

Academic Excellence and Innovation

Many of these events are built into Dr. Grobbel's instruction, bridging the learning within the classroom with learning outside. Almost each semester she offers at least one major event. Depending on the topic, she often collaborates with colleagues in Business, Economics, Political

Science, Electrical Engineering, GEP, Music, or English, Electrical Engineering, Music, Theater Arts, English, or AMCS. This semester she organized two events on Zoom: [The Mitzvah Project](#), a powerful solo theater production and lecture about the persecution of so-called “Mischlinge” (half Jewish/non-Jewish people) in the Holocaust, and an Afro-German film screening of [At Second Glance](#) with the film director zooming in from Berlin for discussion. A colleague in the Hutchins School of Liberal Studies helped her monitor the lively chat during the discussion at *The Mitzvah Project* event where 145 students and community members from the Alliance for the Study of the Holocaust participated. Student comments and letters written to playwright/actor Roger Grunwald reveal the powerful learning moment. The other high-impact event was a film screening by Nigerian-German filmmaker Sheri Hagen who joined us from Berlin to discuss her film about Afro-Germans in Germany, in particular visually impaired people. Colleagues and students from Disabled Services, Theater Arts, Jewish Studies, and Hutchins were present, contributing to a thought-provoking discussion. Student letters to the filmmaker and discussion board assignments also revealed the strong impact and learning moment for the students. These unique high-caliber events not only offer new windows into German culture and history but cause many students to push their thinking further to explore new areas of inquiry, such as links between German Nazi ideology and the Jim Crow laws in the US, or other cross-cultural connections about discrimination and racially-driven violence today.

Apart from these core values addressed through extra-curricular events, Dr. Grobbel introduces them in her beginning language courses. She often goes into more detail in the following semester, e.g. about the discrimination of the Roma in Germany in “Intermediate German through Film” (GER 210). In this course, she shares her research about the Roma in Germany and discusses a film about the Roma Holocaust as well as filmed interviews with survivors. She discussed integration challenges of refugees who had fled to Germany in 2015 in all language courses, which prompted two students from GER 101 and GER 210 to intern in Germany to assist displaced people. In the more advanced courses in GER 300 and 315 they may read articles about the integration of refugees in Germany, discuss literature by an Afro-Austrian author, poetry by an Afro-German performance artist, or debate the importance of sustainability to slow down climate change through comparing steps taken in Germany and the US. This promotes critical thinking skills, efforts to think about creative solutions, interdisciplinary and cross-cultural investigations in a different language. Each course is structured differently based on the level of language proficiency, and students often work with authentic materials addressing important issues affecting us in the moment.

Between 2014 and 2019, Dr. Grobbel created, organized, or supervised nineteen high-impact events from which her special majors benefitted and that were also accessible to all students on campus. Many of these were co-sponsored by community members, ranging from the German Embassy in Washington, D.C., to the German Consulate and Goethe Institute in San Francisco, the American Associations of Teachers of German, or departments and programs on campus. All of these events were purposefully embedded in her courses, supporting academic excellence and innovative instruction as well as SSU’s Core Values as part of our Strategic Priorities.

This list provides a sense of the rich extra-curricular programming, supporting the diverse interdisciplinary nature of our program:

- 2019 Fulbright FLTA presentation on "The 30th Anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall." This event included a conversation with two eyewitnesses from former East Germany.
- 2019 LTA Presentation on German university life for International Education Week.
- 2017 Six German Embassy-sponsored events on Germany and European Integration
 - 1) Lecture & discussion by FLTA Rebecca Meier, University of Paderborn/Germany, "Empathy: Where Integration Starts and Islamophobia Ends?"
 - 2) Film screening & discussion of "Welcome in Germany" (2016)
 - 3) Lecture & discussion by Dr. Giovanni Peri/UC Davis, "Immigration to Europe in a Global Perspective: Opportunities and Challenges."
 - 4) Panel discussion with German Consul and faculty from Economics and Political Science on "Germany and the EU's Triple Crises: Brexit, the Euro, and the Refugee Crisis."
 - 5) Poster exhibit on the European Union, "The EU: A Kaleidoscope of Countries,"
 - 6) Campus-wide essay contest. Topics: "The EU and USA: Partners or Competitors?" or "A Critical Look at Integration Efforts of Refugees in Germany and in the USA." Prizes: Wolfbucks with value of \$300, \$200, and \$100.
- 2016 Berlin-based band ALP, performing live in the GMC to the 1927 silent film "Berlin-Symphony of a Great City."
- 2016 Lecture by Dr. Karen Nakamura, UC Berkeley, "Trans/Japan: The Reframing of Trans as Disability in Contemporary Japan" (presented through Phi Beta Delta).
- 2016 Campus-wide International Research Contest, sponsored by the Provost's Office (presented through Phi Beta Delta).
- 2016 Fulbright FLTA Presentation "The EU in World Politics" (2016)
- 2014 Fulbright FLTA Presentation: "How Germany has Gone Green: A Role Model for the Future?" (2014)
- 2014 Fulbright FLTA Workshop "A Call for Action Towards Sustainability: Tearing Down Another Wall" (2014)
- 2014-15 Technology exhibit, "recyclables made in Germany," from Berlin Government (twice)
- 2014-15 Lecture on "Germany's *Energiewende*/Energy Transition" by Dr. Sabine Blankenship, German Consulate General San Francisco (twice)
- 2014 Austrian Music and Dance [workshop](#), Gerald Kolm, Krems/Austria

Through different teaching modalities Dr. Grobbel, who has won two teaching awards, tries hard to motivate her students to learn more about current events in Germany and in the world: In her courses, she uses [Deutsche Welle](#), for example, to stay up-to-date with events in Germany, over here, and in other parts of the world. She encourages students to dig deeper and pursue their questions and interests. Her syllabi provide more information about course-specific goals, topics, in-class activities and assignments (see [Google folder](#)). Students know they are responsible for their own learning, and she views her role as a teacher not as an expert in her field but as a supportive facilitator of their learning process. In GER 300 ("Advanced

German Studies”) students start with reflecting on their individual learning goals and determine ways how to reach them. They individually discuss them with Dr. Grobbel and check on their progress mid-semester. By the end of the semester, when they turn in their portfolios, they write a final assessment of their challenges, what they learned, and how they achieved their stated goals. This self-critical perspective on their own role in their learning process helps them to become lifelong passionate and more productive learners.

In her GE literature course on “Love and Desire in German Literature” (GER 314), students also fill out questionnaires twice the semester monitoring their role as active discussion participants. Although Dr. Grobbel presents lectures for detailed information, students often lead their class into discussion and have the opportunity to shape it. She uses facilitation strategies she learned from her years of teaching in the Hutchins School. GER 314 students do a lot of reading, writing, thinking, and communicating their thoughts. It is not a GE class in which they can simply sit back but they are asked to engage in thought-provoking topics. They make transnational connections between Germany, Africa, and the US, see the impact of Audre Lorde on the Black feminist movement in Germany, learn about the consequences of colonial history in Germany, and realize similar issues of racially driven social injustice in their own country. We discuss, for example, the autobiography by Afro-German writer Ika Hügel-Marshall from Berlin. Twice, GER 314 students were inspired by the author presenting an inspiring bilingual reading from her book at SSU. Dr. Grobbel also incorporates her own videos, photographs, and stories from her research on Afro-Germans and the Roma to make her teaching more personable, memorable, interesting, and thought-provoking for them.

Dr. Grobbel creates stimulating language courses, too, and encourages creativity and self-expression in first-year German already where they write and perform their own role-plays (GER 101) or demonstrate their mastery of grammar and vocabulary through an animated short film (GER 102). The final exam in GER 210 is the creation of a brief film in German, which at times is posted on the German homepage. Dr. Grobbel’s passion for teaching translates into creating, reshaping, and improving courses. She tries to make learning German as enjoyable as possible, for example, by acting out much of what she teaches them. When she stands on a chair, hides under the table, or dances with students around the classroom on the first day of GER 101 the students not only have fun but they learn grammatical structures or vocabulary in a way that helps them remember it. Continuous participation in pedagogy workshops inspires her to try out new things so that her teaching is fresh, innovative, and informed by best teaching practices.

A major demonstration of academic excellence is the required Goethe B1 Language Certificate. Our special majors know that they need to pass this exam which is administered through the Goethe-Institute all over the world. Without passing this examination (it takes about half a day for the students to take this rigorous written and oral test), students do not earn their degree. This motivates them to excel, and they also know that they will be rewarded by adding this special, internationally recognized certificate on their resume. Usually, only a few elite liberal arts and sciences colleges require this test for their bachelor students.

Academic success is also demonstrated when special majors win awards for their senior projects or are invited to participate in the CSU Research Contest: For example, Sandra Arjona won the *Outstanding Poster Presentation* in the School of Arts and Humanities for her senior

project, entitled "Tübingen: From Breeding Ground of Nazi Ideology to a Place of Refuge," and only a few months later, she enrolled in a Master's Program at the University of Tübingen in Germany. For his work, Marcos Diaz was awarded the *Best Applied Research Prize* at the SSU Undergraduate Research Forum for his senior project "Robin, A German Robot: A Threat to Language Teachers!?" After graduation he worked as a German language instructor at the German School of Marin. Special major Josephine Ockrassa, published her work on "Political Resistance and the Censorship of Music under the Third Reich" in the *Sonoma State History Journal*. Vanessa Huebner's senior blog-project entitled "Parental Leave — Or the Lack Thereof: A Comparison between Germany and U.S.A." was nominated for the CSU Undergraduate Research Award, which she presented at CSU San Obispo. After receiving her double major in Psychology and German Cultural Studies, Vanessa completed her MA in Organization Development at SSU, and is now working nationally as a consultant for the executive coaching group Numina. See her [profile](#) in which she acknowledges the significance of the special major as preparation for her professional position.

Academic student success is also evident in the fact that 7 out of 15 students graduating between 2014 and 2019 earned Distinction: two students graduated with Magna Cum Laude, With Distinction; another two with Cum Laude, With Distinction; and three other students graduated with Distinction.

Dr. Grobbel has continuously refined existing courses to improve their academic effectiveness. This past year she also created two new courses: MLL 273, the department's section of the Second Year Research and Creative Experience ([SYRCE](#)) learning community, the interdisciplinary flagship program in the School of Arts of Humanities. Within a very short period of time, Dr. Grobbel designed and implemented this new course and lectured to more than 200 students on the culture and history of 1980s Germany in Fall 2020. She has also been busy designing a new bilingual film course on "Crime and Secrets in German Film" that will be offered in Spring 2021 benefitting her German language students in GER 210 as well as GE students. The course development was supported by two workshops over the summer, and the goal is to have it offered through CSU Fully Online next academic year. Dr. Grobbel hopes that this innovative new class will be supported by the assistance of Fulbright FLTAs who will teach the German population within that course.

Leadership Cultivation:

The special major program encourages and supports the cultivation of leadership skills in various forms. It makes use, for example, of the peer mentor program through university-wide learning communities. Dr. Grobbel informs her first-semester students already about leadership positions at the university, and encourages them to take the University Leadership course. She individually encourages outstanding students to apply for certain positions or recommends them. Special major student Wiley Winheim served as a peer mentor for the German section of the MLL Humanities Learning Community (HLC), after she had demonstrated academic excellence and emerging leadership skills in this HLC. This proved to be a key experience for her that made her consider to select Education as her secondary focus. Other leadership positions, available through the German Club or activities supporting our FLTAs or LTAs in their work, for example, as film series facilitators, followed. Working with two Fulbright FLTAs and several LTAs refined her leadership skills, and her following internship as a classroom aid and co-teacher

further refined her abilities. Wiley is now teaching as a teacher in the Bay Area and happy about her professional life.

After Dr. Grobbel's encouragement, Frank Tanner, one of the special majors at the time, successfully applied to be a student representative on the University Studies Curriculum Committee. Special majors such as Frederick Lockett and others have served as International Student Ambassadors through our campus International Programs Office, now known as Global Engagement Office (GEO). They help advise and facilitate programs for international students on campus and outgoing SSU students. Many special majors have held German Club positions as presidents, vice-presidents, outreach coordinators, treasurers, event managers, or other officer positions on campus that serve them well when they apply for internships or positions after graduation. They have been actively involved in organizing, promoting, and facilitating club events. They have also assisted in campus-wide events, organized by Dr. Grobbel or the FLTAs. These have included exhibits, sponsored by the German Consulate, interactive workshops on sustainability, presentations on the fall of the Berlin Wall during International Week, or the German Embassy-sponsored week-long mini-conference on European integration. Without Dr. Grobbel's presence but under her supervision, they have responsibly led off-campus trips to elementary schools, to the Goethe-Institute, or many other locations (see list of club events in Google Drive or Dr. Grobbel's cv). Advanced students also serve as tutors in the Learning and Academic Resource Center (LARC), if no LTA is available for that position. Dr. Grobbel actively encourages her students to develop leadership skills and rewards students with demonstrated outstanding contributions in our program, which enhance the academic experience of other German students, through awarding them "Graduation with Distinction."

Dr. Grobbel herself serves as a role model for leadership positions visible to her students during this review cycle from 2014-2019: She served as an Academic Senator At-Large, on the Executive Committee, and presented campus-wide lectures. She presided over SSU's Phi Beta Delta (Honor Society for International Scholars), and nominated many qualified special majors to be initiated in this prestigious society. In her role as president, Dr. Grobbel created a campus-wide International Research Competition, supported by the Provost's Office. Students from all disciplines, including special major students, submitted their research projects that were publicly acknowledged (see [Google folder](#)). Off-campus Dr. Grobbel served as President of the Northern California Chapter of the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG), was interviewed on radio as a leading expert in Roma Studies who had organized a major traveling Roma art exhibit, including a show at SSU. Students also know that she has been a vocal promoter of international exchange and that she has served as SSU's representative for CSU Academic Council of International Programs (CSU ACIP) in the past three years.

Transformative Impact:

Transformative learning experiences are integral parts of German Cultural Studies. Special majors assist our visiting FLTAs in navigating campus life, setting up events, and supporting their public programs, contributing to their success. They may also work closely with them on special projects. In 2017-18, a group of special majors produced together with FLTA Rebecca Meier two bilingual editions of a magazine that they called "[LoboWelt: German News for SSU/Deutsche Nachrichten für SSU.](#)" These publications highlighting parts of German history, culture, film, and events at SSU, in the Bay Area, and in Germany were distributed all over

campus. Students researched the content and produced it in English and German, gaining powerful learning experiences in research, translation, and publishing. Most important was the transformative impact for them as they realized their own potential to create a striking, informative, and well-presented magazine in German and English that reached several hundreds of readers each of the two semesters. They received enthusiastic feedback on and off campus and were proud that it was featured in many SSU offices, including the Provost's Office. Other experiences include a myriad of extra-curricular learning opportunities, the internship and many opportunities of community engagement through club activities, supervised by Dr. Grobbel, and mentioned above already. These are transformative since they help facilitate their admission to graduate schools (e.g. SSU, Columbia University, University of Tübingen, University of Potsdam) or entry into a career of their choice.

Students also experience the impact their work makes on the community, as, for example, as German interns or paid instructors at the German School of the North Bay, at the Oktoberfest events in Windsor or Cotati where they explain the history of the Oktoberfest and teach the community to sing German Oktoberfest songs. All this is very empowering and transformative. Transformative learning moments can emerge through coursework as well. SETEs highlight, for example, Dr. Grobbel's choice of readings and films in GER 314, "Love and Desire in German Literature" as impactful. Students also stress the content in other courses or her way of teaching as inspirational. We want to conclude here, however, with the immensely important, often life-changing experience of living and studying in Germany for one year:

Study abroad is a profoundly transformative experience for all special majors who went abroad. Through study in Germany, all program learning outcomes are effectively addressed in intensified form: German language skills, cultural awareness, true international engagement, critical and creative thinking skills, communicative and interpersonal skills, and finally metacritical skills. This international learning experience transforms students on a personal level as well as on an academic level: They learn about their challenges and strengths in adapting to a new culture; they learn to connect and communicate as a foreigner; they develop a different perspective on themselves and their own culture through making cross-cultural connections. They also realize their own potential that propels them forward in their academic studies and future careers. Study abroad is a powerful and transformative piece of the special major (and each SSU student should have the opportunity to experience it!). It contributes to students' growth to become culturally sensitive and more informed citizens of the world. Most of the special majors come back speaking fluent German; quite a few of them started the program without any language skills. Upon their return, they often take on club positions making use of their newly found linguistic and cultural skills in these student leadership positions.

We note that other students also benefit from study abroad in Germany where they can select from 22 universities through CSU IP. 125 SSU students studied abroad in Germany from 2004 to 2019. Out of those, 56 students claimed German as their minor, and 30 students claimed German as their major, followed by Business (28 students), Psychology (19), Global Studies (13), Political Science (11), Environmental Studies and Planning (9), Music (8), and other majors (see data from GEO earlier). Noting the high number of students self-identifying German as their major before going abroad, Dr. Grobbel plans on increasing her outreach and recruitment

efforts and connecting with those students already before they are going abroad, and contacting them more often while they are in Germany. She will discuss these strategies with Hope Ortiz, our Global Engagement Coordinator, with whom she has collaborated for many years to promote study abroad, which is a key element to a true international and transformative education.

2h. Impact on the Local & Bay Area Community

Letters from the German Consulate, the San Francisco Goethe Institute, the Northern California chapter of the American Association of Teachers (AATG), the German School of Marin (in Santa Rosa and Novato), and the Robert L. Stevens Elementary School in Novato describe the effect of the collaboration between the SSU German Program and its community partners:

The **German Consulate General** highlights public events at SSU, sponsored by the German Embassy in Washington, D.C., such as the series of six events in 2017, featuring Germany's refugee and immigration policies and European Integration. The letter also calls attention to two technology exhibits, sponsored by the German Consulate, on Germany's policies and programs towards sustainability, and a number of other events, e.g. lectures by German consuls over the past decade on current political topics. Consul General Hans-Ulrich Südbeck and Dr. Sabine Blankenship comment on Dr. Grobbel's "exceptional efforts" to establish an interdisciplinary German Program that serves a "growing need in global education." They also point out that Germany is an economic powerhouse, that German is one of the three official languages of the European Union, and one of the most popular languages in Europe, and spoken as a native language by 92 million people. In particular, the consuls stress the significance of German in Northern California that has "a comparatively low supply of German speakers in the US." Germany's central position in international trade also offers students an "accumulated life time bonus" in economic terms when they are able to use the language in careers where German language skills are needed. Based on a study, published in *The Economist*, this 'accumulated lifetime bonus' of learning German far succeeds other languages, such as Spanish or French. Moreover, many German companies in the Bay Area are in need of bilingual employees. The letter concludes that the "German program at SSU is a significant sign to the German-American community in the Greater Bay Area to look towards Sonoma State, since there are few German programs left in Northern California, despite California's rich history of German immigration and the second largest expat community from Europe (after the UK). We believe that a clever combination of German language instruction with subjects like sustainable development or mechanical engineering could really set future SSU graduate apart." (see [Google folder](#))

A spokesperson for the **American Association of Teaching of German (AATG)**, Christiane Frederickson, describes Dr. Grobbel's contributions in the wider Bay Area community in the following way:

"During her terms of office as vice president and president of our local Norcal AATG chapter, Michaela initiated, organized, and participated in numerous events geared for learners of German at all levels, all ages, all institutions and all interests: from motivational Welcome speeches to hundreds of high school students and their families at Stanford University, to our annual German immersion day for middle and high school students in Menlo Park, to lectures for university students, and film screenings, art exhibits, book readings and political

round table discussions for the general public. Many of these events were supported/co-sponsored by AATG and the Goethe Institute.”

She also writes:

“The Bay Area is home to numerous German businesses who may soon be looking for employees with bicultural language background. While SSU may not yet be known for its progressive outreach German program beyond campus limits, I am confident that Michaela’s efforts to establish the new interdisciplinary German BA will soon draw the same outside interest that her successful outreach to high school and community have in the past.” (see [Google folder](#))

Peter Zygowski, who recently retired from the **Goethe Institute San Francisco**, discusses Dr. Grobbel’s outreach work through workshops with teachers as “insightful” and her “unrivalled passion and dedication” to the profession at our many community collaborations, a “wide variety of projects which ranged from film festivals to soccer (!) contests.” He states that through his position at the Goethe Institute, he “got to know literally thousands of educators in the field” and comments:

“So I can state without a hint of exaggeration that Sonoma State University can call itself lucky to count one of the most competent, dedicated and passionate professors of German in the nation among its faculty. The program Michaela Grobbel has built at SSU may not have the student numbers of bigger departments but the overall quality of her program can beyond a doubt compete with UC Berkeley, UCLA, or other prestigious schools.” (see [Google folder](#))

Noemie Njangiru, **Director of the Goethe Institute**, and Julia Koch, **Director of the Goethe Institute’s Language Department**, point out that the German Program at SSU

“has distinguished itself as a highly-regarded German program in the State of California.... The German program at SSU is especially important for the North Bay since it attracts local students and community members to events at SSU that feature the German language, history, or culture in an international context and also provide an up-to-date look at current affairs. It also provides a rare opportunity for students to pursue a major linking German with Business, Marketing, Economics, Science, Education, Music, Psychology, or other areas of study, thus making them more employable in today’s international job market.” They conclude in their letter: “It is in our interest to see the interdisciplinary BA program in German Cultural Studies continue to flourish, and we look forward to more exciting collaborations with SSU’s vibrant German Program in the future!” (see [Google folder](#))

Counselor Carmen Wandel of the **Robert L. Stevens School in Santa Rosa** explains how SSU German students have been contributing in the past five years “in large measure” to the success of her school’s annual “Culture Day and Dinner.” She writes:

“I would like to acknowledge the contributions of your students from both an academic and cultural diversity perspective. The SSU students continually impress me with their creativity and enthusiasm. They truly engage our elementary school students in learning about culture and language. Your students are models for holding conversations about culture and diversity, and they also act as ambassadors to higher education and for continuing language

acquisition and enrichment.... Having college-going guests at Culture Dinner creates a direct link to higher education for our students who are often first generation Americans and who I hope will become first generation college graduates.... Being a first generation American and first generation college graduate – of Sonoma State University – I am very sensitive to helping students grow into their cultural identity with pride and confidence. I thank [Michaela Grobbel] for coordinating the participation of the SSU students and the German Club to make this all possible and for helping the students and families of Robert L. Stevens along that path of greater empathy and wisdom that comes with growing awareness toward cultural competence.” (see [Google folder](#))

Three letters from the **German Language School of the North Bay** (formerly known as the German School of Marin) evaluate the impact of our special majors who interned or taught (as paid instructors) at the campuses in Santa Rosa and Novato. They also comment on the impact of German cultural events at SSU on the broader community:

Carola Bartz, head teacher at the **Santa Rosa campus of the German School of North Bay**, writes:

“The German program at SSU and the German Cultural Studies major students have become a vital part of our community.... [These students] have spent a semester or school year with us, supporting the teaching staff as assistants or sometimes even full teachers.... I have been very impressed by these students.... They have come up with fresh, new ideas for teaching that have enhanced the instruction at our school.... They also have their own unique view of the German culture, which brings a new, fresh outlook on learning German cultures.... They come to us with a professional, positive attitude and ready to take on tasks.... Lastly, the German program at SSU offers events not otherwise available in Sonoma County. German cultural events offered in other parts of the Bay Area are typical[ly] too far for our German community and students to participate in. The German program at SSU fills this void for our families, students, and German community.” (see [Google folder](#))

Fanny Jasper, Curriculum Director at the **German School of the North Bay (Novato campus)**, talks about the

“outstanding German program ... at Sonoma State University ..., and in particular ... the German Cultural Studies Major, which contributes to the unique and distinguishing character to the Sonoma State foreign language program, within the broader context of the California State University system.... At the German Language School of the North Bay, we have really come to rely on the SSU special major internship students, who work with us in the fields of teaching or school administration. They have become a vital part of our school community. It is a mutually beneficial experience – they learn language and teaching skills (which sometimes triggers their desire to become educators!) and we gain valuable classroom assistants, who sometimes become full teachers, that help us keep our class offerings....

The cultural events offered in San Francisco, the East Bay, and South Bay are often too remote for German enthusiasts in Sonoma County to attend.... We have numerous adult students, educators, and people connected to our German school community who attend film screenings, concerts, Kaffeeklatsch, etc. in a given semester. Sonoma State is often the only place to see a German language film, or attend a panel discussion on Germany-related topics ‘up north’.” (see [Google folder](#)).

Marcus Kubath, President of the German School of the North Bay, echoes these sentiments. In addition, he writes that our special major interns have

“helped us provide cultural events to our students and communities that we would not have been able to offer without their assistance.... Some have continued to volunteer by offering events through our school to the German community even after finishing their internship.

The SSU German program is very important to us, because it helps us promote the German language and culture in our area.” (see [Google folder](#))

3. Faculty

3a. General Information

Number of full-time faculty: 1 (Dr. Michaela Grobbel)

Number of part-time faculty: 1 (Dr. Kathleen Foley-Beining)

Student-Faculty Ratio for Teaching:

Year	Semester	German (GER)			Interdisciplinary Studies		
		FTES	FTEF	SFR	FTES	FTEF	SFR
2014	Fall	26.93	1.332	20.22	0.33	0.00	0.00
2015	Spring	22.27	1.534	14.52	0.53	0.04	13.33
2015	Fall	24.00	1.530	15.69	1.03	0.13	7.95
2016	Spring	12.67	1.000	12.67	0.00	0.00	0.00
2016	Fall	22.27	1.002	22.22	0.25	0.00	0.00
2017	Spring	8.27	1.001	8.26	0.00	0.00	0.00
2017	Fall	25.47	1.602	15.90	0.25	0.00	0.00
2018	Spring	16.07	1.270	12.65	0.00	0.00	0.00
2018	Fall	17.93	1.271	14.11	0.00	0.00	0.00
2019	Spring	7.13	0.708	10.08	0.00	0.00	0.00
2019	Fall	17.47	0.999	17.48	0.17	0.00	0.00

The table above shows the difficulty of distinguishing between student-faculty ratio information in German minor and special major courses since both student populations are taking the same language courses. The only exceptions are GER 495 (“Senior Project”) and GER 499

(“Internship”) in Fall 2014, spring 2015, and the fall semesters of 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2019.

The breaks in-between point to potential errors, since German faculty were involved in teaching contract courses for special majors in Spring 2016, Spring 2018, and Fall 2018.

Nevertheless, the table overall shows solid student-faculty ratio numbers that are comparable to other language programs, where 25 (max. 28 students) are the highest number of students enrolled in a beginning language course. It also illustrates the fact that enrollment is lower in the spring semester: This is not surprising since most students start with GER 101 in the fall (and it is hardly offered in the spring), and the General Education course GER 314 is only offered in the fall. It is a known fact, supported across the US, that course enrollments in subsequent language courses generally decrease by 50% to 70%, if there is no requirement for students to continue with a lesser taught non-English course, such as German. Again, that is why it is

important to create a large pool of German students in the first year (GER 101 and 102), so that more students will choose to continue into the second and then third year.

Student-faculty Ratio for Advising

All advising is conducted by Dr. Michaela Grobbel, the coordinator of German. In Fall 2008 and Fall 2011, when Dr. Grobbel was on sabbatical leave, Dr. Foley-Beining served as student advisor.

Ability to Recruit Quality and Diverse Faculty

Since 2005, when Dr. Grobbel was hired as a TT faculty member in the German Program, she has been the sole FT faculty member responsible for the maintenance, development, and promotion of German at SSU.

Adequate Faculty to Maintain Program Quality

Even before the establishment of the special major, there have been many semesters when required German courses were not taught, especially GER 101 and 102 that are crucial for program building. It is our hope that adequate support will be secured in the future through funds for securing a lecturer each semester to help teach the required German courses as outlined in the curriculum and especially through funds for a regular German Fulbright FLTA who is able to teach up to two (low-enrolled) German courses per semester that would otherwise be cancelled. In the past, our two last FLTAs already 'saved' GER 200, GER 210, GER 300, and GER 315 by teaching these students under Dr. Grobbel's supervision in the form of contract courses so that the minors and special majors were able to advance or complete their degrees. Without the German Program's ability to host FLTAs on a regular basis, we believe it will be impossible to grow the program. The current pandemic certainly has contributed to even lower enrollment numbers. Fulbright FLTAs, who already proved to be highly effective in supporting the German Program by teaching low-enrolled courses, should be regularly hosted until enrollment numbers of required language courses have stabilized.

Looking into the future, the ideal scenario to provide a stable special major includes a tenure-track position in German Studies, perhaps with a focus on Film Studies, Music, History, Jewish Studies, Sustainability, or another field. This would help ensure the growth of the special major, and could also help strengthen a program in another discipline.

3b. Faculty Profiles

Dr. Michaela Grobbel, a native of Germany, earned her M.A. and Ph.D. in Comparative Literature at the University of California at Los Angeles after finishing her undergraduate and graduate coursework at the University of Bonn in Germany. She was hired in 2005 as a tenure-track professor in German at SSU, and became full professor in 2014. Before 2005, she had been working as an adjunct faculty member in multiple departments and programs at SSU, including in German. She taught in the Hutchins School of Liberal Studies, English Department, Global Studies, California Cultural Studies (through ITDS), and in university learning communities focusing on international issues. Her extensive teaching experience in German language, literature, and culture as well as in world literature and interdisciplinary and cross-cultural programs include positions at the University of California at Davis (two sabbatical replacement positions in German and in Comparative Literature). She also taught German

language at the Brussels Goethe-Institute in Belgium and theater at the University of Zürich in Switzerland before coming to Sonoma State University in 1997.

Dr. Grobbel's teaching interests besides German language, literature, and culture include memory studies, feminist studies, and German Studies focusing on Romani and Afro-German cultures and histories, as demonstrated by her publications and conference presentations. Her book *Enacting Past and Present: The Memory Theaters of Djuna Barnes, Ingeborg Bachmann, and Marguerite Duras* (2004) reveals her interest in innovative feminist and interdisciplinary research. Subsequent publications and many conference presentations in Europe and in the US show how this research expanded into the field of Romani Studies. Dr. Grobbel is currently working on a book, even exploring a documentary film, on Romani artist Ceija Stojka from Austria. One of her manuscripts, entitled "Art Against Forgetting: The Nazi Genocide of the Roma through the Eyes of Painter Ceija Stojka," is currently under review. Another article about film and dementia, "When words fail: The Story of Alzheimer's in Arno Geiger's text *Der alte König in seinem Exil* (The Old King in his Exile) and Til Schweiger's film *Honig im Kopf* (Head Full of Honey)," submitted to *German Studies Review*, a major academic journal in German Studies, is under revision.

As a lecturer at SSU, Dr. Grobbel increased enrollment in the German minor program and revived the program after the German B.A. had been discontinued prior to her arrival in 1996. As soon as she entered the tenure-track position, she single-handedly revised the minor to attract more students to the program, which was completed in 2008. Five years later, responding to the possibility that all minor programs might be eliminated, she designed and implemented a new interdisciplinary special major in German Cultural Studies. This innovative B.A. program, offered through ITDS, now Interdisciplinary Studies, built upon her restructured and modernized minor program, included a wide range of courses from other disciplines, an internship, an individualized interdisciplinary senior project, and optional study abroad. The program was approved in 2013, and was part of the SSU Catalogue by Fall 2014. One year later, Dr. Grobbel initiated a revision of the program, responding to the elimination of language lab courses that affected the French and Spanish programs, too. She took this opportunity to expand the course offerings and strengthen the interdisciplinary nature of the special major. By Fall 2016 the SSU Catalogue reflected this revision.

Dr. Grobbel has taught all courses in the German minor program, which are also required courses for the special major. All of these courses she designed herself, and she continuously strives to improve them. Student Evaluations of Teaching Effectiveness (SETEs), continuous professional development through pedagogy workshops (e.g. through the American Association of Teachers of German), and discussions with colleagues nation-wide help her provide a pedagogically sound, rigorous, and stimulating curriculum. At SSU she won several teaching awards, including the "Educational Experience Enhancement Award," the "Goldstein Award for Excellence in Teaching and Scholarship," and the "Student Ambassadors Academy Award." Outside SSU, she earned the Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce's "Excellence in Education Award." In her own school, Dr. Grobbel's innovative teaching was recognized through the 2018 "Innovation and Strategic Priorities Award," which supported the first two editions of the student-created bilingual magazine "LoboWelt: German News for SSU."

The quality of her research and teaching has also been recognized through fellowships and grants by Fulbright, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG), and CSU International Programs (CSU IP). These external forms of support have made it possible to support her students at SSU: For example, Dr. Grobbel was able to bring five Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistants (Fulbright FLTAs) to SSU between 2010/11 and 2019/20. Through other Fulbright support, a Fellowship for American faculty in German Studies, she participated in a seminar in Germany that allowed her to launch her work in establishing ties between German Education and Engineering Universities and SSU. Especially her work in establishing the Sonoma International Teaching Experience (SITE) at SSU in 2013, which has brought over 20 exchange students from Germany who also served as Peer Language Facilitators (formerly known as LTAs), has been featured as a unique program in the CSU. The same recognition applies to Dr. Grobbel's efforts to establish the German Fulbright FLTA-Program at SSU, now shared with the French Program: Up to today, SSU is the only CSU campus participating in this prestigious international Fulbright program. The NEH fellowship enabled her to benefit from a summer institute about ethnic groups in Austria which helped start her project in organizing a traveling Romani ("Gypsy") art exhibit in the US. This 2009 exhibit was enthusiastically received at SSU and Dr. Grobbel was interviewed on a local radio station as a leading expert in Roma Studies. She co-organized this first exhibit in the USA, together with Dr. Lorely French from Pacific University in Oregon, entitled *LIVE-DANCE-PAINT: Works by Romani ('Gypsy') Artist Ceija Stojka*, a remarkable artist who had survived three Nazi concentration camps.

An AATG grant on ethnic populations in Germany supported her research on Afro-German history and culture which is now, like her research on Romani art, literature, and theater, part of many German courses highlighting the diversity in the German-speaking world. DAAD fellowships as well as other AATG grants or awards facilitated her work in international education and exchange. In 2018, CSU IP selected her as a participant (one per CSU campus) in a faculty seminar at the University of Ghana to learn more about this country, about this student exchange, and to promote collaborations with our Ghanaian colleagues. This seminar afforded Dr. Grobbel the opportunity to deepen her research in Afro-German culture and transnational connections between Africa and Germany, which she continues to incorporate in her teaching.

One project of Dr. Grobbel's efforts to support the internationalization of our campus encouraged students from all disciplines to engage in international research projects. As president of SSU's Zeta Tau chapter of the Phi Beta Delta, the national Honor Society for International Scholars, Dr. Grobbel designed and organized the "Phi Beta Delta International Research Contest" in 2016 and 2017, financially supported by the Provost's Office. This campus-wide contest highlighted outstanding research in the international arena, conducted by students across the university.

As a strong supporter of international studies, almost each semester Dr. Grobbel offers events that are related to the history or cultures of the German-speaking world. These events are open to all SSU members. In the past they have included art shows by Romani or Holocaust survivors; Afro-German film screenings; theater performances of children's tales or about lesser known groups targeted by Nazi persecution; panel discussions and lectures about the integration of

refugees into the EU and about BREXIT; live music concerts (e.g. by a famous Romani ensemble from Austria; an electronic band from Berlin performing live music to a 1927 silent film classic about Berlin; the German National Youth Orchestra); [a traditional Austrian dance workshop](#); lectures on sustainability in Germany by German Consuls; German or bilingual author readings and spoken-word performances; and lectures by Dr. Grobbel herself or her Fulbright FLTAs. These included, for example, presentations on the fall of the Berlin Wall or islamophobia in Germany. Events sponsored by the German Embassy in Washington, D.C., the German Consulate and the Goethe-Institute in San Francisco included technology exhibits and lectures on Germany's current affairs or transatlantic connections between the US and Germany.

Apart from her campus-wide programming and rebuilding/building academic degree programs at SSU, Dr. Grobbel is also known in leadership positions in her School and across campus. She served on departmental and School RTP committees, including chairing the Arts and Humanities RTP committee. For six years she served as an Academic Senator At-Large, including on the Executive Committee for one year, and she just entered a third three-year term as Senator At-Large. She also participated in various other forms of university governance. Outside SSU, Dr. Grobbel served as President of the Northern California Chapter of the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG) from 2009-2014 where she organized pedagogy workshops and events for German teachers in Northern California and was involved in many outreach projects working with teachers from San Jose to Sacramento and Eureka. She presided over award ceremonies at Stanford University and co-organized events at the University of California at Berkeley. Dr. Grobbel has been SSU's representative for CSU Academic Council of International Programs (CSU ACIP) in the past three years, where she also chairs the CSU ACIP Committee of Academics and Fiscal Affairs. In Spring 2021, she will serve as an external program reviewer for the State University of New York at Geneseo (SUNY Geneseo)'s Department of Languages and Literatures.

Overall, Dr. Grobbel has tirelessly used her expertise and passion in promoting German as well as international and interdisciplinary education at SSU and beyond.

For more information, see Dr. Grobbel's curriculum vitae in the [Google folder](#).

Dr. Kathleen Foley-Beining has been part of the German Program faculty at Sonoma State University since 2006. She received her Ph.D. in Germanic Languages from the University of California at Los Angeles in 1992 after earning her Bachelor and Master of Arts in German from the University of Iowa. Her near-native German language skills are excellent. Since her two years of study abroad in Freiburg as an undergraduate student, Dr. Foley-Beining has kept herself up-to-date on current events in Germany that she incorporates in her instruction. She is an accomplished author of a unique book in her main research field of German Baroque Literature, with a focus on womb narratives. Her book, entitled *The Body and Eucharistic Devotion in Catharina Regina von Greiffenberg's Meditations*, was published in 1996 by Camden House, a prestigious publisher in German Studies. Her particular area of inquiry within German feminist cultural studies has emerged as an exciting field of research within the past few years, and Dr. Foley-Beining shared her research at the national German Studies Association conference in 2019.

As an adjunct professor at SSU, she has been teaching all German language and literature courses over many years. Since her arrival, she has volunteered to assist Dr. Grobbel in

administering the Goethe-B1 German language certificate examination. Twice she replaced Dr. Grobbel when the latter was on sabbatical leave in Fall 2011 and in Fall 2018. In Fall 2018 Dr. Foley-Beining also mentored the senior projects of special majors Josephine Ockrassa and Joseph Paulukonis. She oversaw the activities of our Fulbright FLTA and international SITE assistants from Germany, too, as they assisted our students inside and outside the classroom, and guided them in designing and delivering German cultural events on campus. As a sabbatical replacement for Dr. Grobbel, she also supervised the German Club activities, the campus-wide biweekly film series, and our informal weekly conversation hour. Additionally, she accompanied students on field trips, for example, to the “Berlin and Beyond” Film Festival at the Castro Theater in San Francisco and to the Goethe Institute to listen to German poetry slam star Julia Engelmann perform her groundbreaking work, “One Day/Reckoning.”

Another example of her creative extra-curricular engagement in the German Program was a performance she created together with students: For the 2014 Seawolf Decision Day, Dr. Foley-Beining choreographed and taught a dance to the SSU German Club members which they performed as a flash mob to Pharrell William's song “Happy.” This [event](#), posted on YouTube, both supported the German learning community in a fun way but also helped promote German at SSU in an unusual manner. Bystanders were delighted with the show of community spirit displayed by SSU German students, one of whom even danced in a traditional German *dirndl*.

Between 2003 and 2008, Dr. Foley-Beining also volunteered her time as a judge at the German language competition, which was part of the Language Festival at Sonoma State University. Her teaching in the German Program has not been regular, though, due to budget-driven course cancellations. Based on the German curriculum, there should be at least one course per semester taught by adjunct faculty. In Fall 2020, for example, she is teaching German language and literature courses in SSU's Liberal Studies Ukiah/Napa Program, at the Santa Rosa Junior College, and at Humboldt State University. Besides her instruction at SSU, she has been teaching German at the Santa Rosa Junior College, Humboldt State University, Pepperdine University, UCLA, and the Goethe Institute since 1992.

Dr. Foley-Beining brings a wealth of creative ideas into her courses, inspired by her work as a music teacher, singer, and artist. She has performed locally in various venues, and her paintings have been exhibited in art shows. She also collaborated on the monumental oil painting “Family Trees” by renowned artist Christopher Leith Evans. This piece was featured in the GMC Lobby at the 2014 SSU Sustainability Day, and then again in the Student Center at our 2018 Sustainability Day. Whenever possible Dr. Foley-Beining includes German music history into her lessons or sings German songs with her students. She played Mozart to support her course module on Salzburg, when her class was taught in a classroom with a piano. In second-semester German her students construct a two-dimensional “Hundertwasser Haus” and prepare German dishes to share. Her experience with improv theater also adds humor to role-plays. To support cross-disciplinary relations on campus, Dr. Foley-Beining added the 19th century play *Woyzeck* by Georg Büchner to the reading list of GER 314 when it was performed by the SSU theater department at SSU in Fall 2018. She invited the dramaturg and main actors to her class, which brought not only the story but also the stagecraft and production to life for her students.

Besides her passion in German language and literature her teaching interests include poetry, writing & composition, Gender Studies, social/emotional literacy, piano, vocal music, oil

painting, the poetry of Joni Mitchell, and topics such as womb narratives in literature, or childbirth as ritual. Dr. Foley-Beining stays abreast of current development in German language and culture instruction and holds memberships in the important organizations in our field: Modern Language Association, Women in German, German Studies Association, American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, American Association of Teachers of German, and Society for German Renaissance and Baroque Literature. At SSU, she is a member of Phi Beta Delta, the national honor society for international scholars.

You find Dr. Foley-Beining's curriculum vitae in the [Google folder](#).

4. Program Resources

4a. Student Support

Dr. Grobbel as the only full-time faculty has been responsible for supporting her students, especially through advising. She is, however, also responsible for the German minors and all students enrolled in German courses. She regularly advises all students enrolled in her classes about the special major (and minor). Most of the in-depth special major advising as well as advising for minors who may switch to the special major takes place outside of office hour since it takes a lot of extra time. Updating the ARR for special majors takes a long time, especially when students have been abroad for one or even two years. As mentioned earlier already, the University Studies Curriculum Committee noted this as an upcoming challenge in 2013 already. Dr. Grobbel also regularly advises potential and/or incoming students during Summer Orientation, and has been updating university advisors as well as EOP and career advisors about German courses regularly. She has also used LoboVision as well as distributed flyers all over campus for many years. She makes sure that each department/program receives course information that can be posted and sends emails to School or department staff for distribution to their faculty and students. She also makes use of listservs and social media (especially the German Club Facebook group) in order to promote German and the special major.

Dr. Grobbel also spends a lot of time assisting students with study-related questions during her office hours. Students also use this time to practice their German or gain more cultural information. This is when FLTA support is very helpful since they also function as tutors and hold office hours. In many ways, these mature students function as substitute 'colleagues' who share some of this one-on-one work with the students during their office hours. On the other hand, though, assisting and supervising FLTAs and SITE PLFs is also very time-consuming (Dr. Grobbel meets with them for at least one hour per week). She does find, though, that this additional time is time well spent since it supports the program and her students in a significant way through these FLTAs. All of this work has been a voluntary overload to maintain and grow German at SSU: the German minor and the special major, which is dependent on the minor.

Student support also includes adequate funding for at least four German courses each semester (plus the one-unit GER 315 each fall) and the required contract courses for the internship and senior project. Especially the mentoring of the senior project takes many hours of meetings with individual students. It also includes contract courses to supervise the weekly conversation hour and biweekly film series with discussion. These are also important extra-curricular learning opportunities for our students that depend on uncompensated time for Dr. Grobbel.

4b. Campus Support Services

Overall, different offices such as the Learning and Academic Resource Center, including the Tutorial and Writing Center, have been very helpful for the special majors. In the past few years, our department has worked more closely with the Career Center and they offered a career workshop for all our language students, too. We plan on working more closely with them in the future. The most important office for the special majors and other German students is probably the Global Engagement Office (GEO; former Center for International Education). They assist students in preparing for study abroad and also offer important support for international students, such as our FLTAs and PLFs. GEO has also provided students with excellent leadership opportunities through its International Student Ambassadors Program, and thus plays an important role for special majors. Additionally, GEO Coordinator Hope Ortiz has been instrumental in promoting study abroad which is one of the most attractive program elements for our special major students.

Recent reorganizations and departures of key staff members such as Berta Hodges (also a major supporter of Phi Beta Delta) and Becky Petrow (among other tasks responsible for supporting our FLTAs) have caused confusion and instability. Other staff, e.g. Katie O'Brien have been reassigned to other positions on campus, and it is obvious that these shifts and added new tasks for the GEO coordinator make it challenging to run that office as effectively as possible. We are concerned that GEO, which plays a central role in SSU's mission, is still understaffed. In fact, last spring before the COVID-driven campus closure, students from other departments and Schools still continued to seek out Dr. Grobbel for IP advising when they were not able to obtain it through our IP office. It is absolutely crucial to have a well-staffed Global Engagement Office to support SSU's mission to prepare our students for life and work in a diverse, multicultural world.

Moreover, our French and German FLTAs had a very difficult time receiving the university support they needed because of shifted responsibilities among admission staff who were not familiar with the FLTA situation. Our special Fulbright visiting students, who enrich the SSU community in a significant way, were stressed for many weeks and feared that they may have to return home: They felt they were not welcome at SSU. We hope that this will not happen again and that Fulbright support will be clearly communicated to all staff members involved in this responsibility. Overall, the university should do its very best and financially invest in fulfilling its mission to prepare students as global citizens and assist them in succeeding in their academic studies. Fulbright FLTAs play a unique and powerful part in this endeavor.

4c. Library and Information Resources

The German Program has been very appreciative of the assistance it receives from colleagues in the library. They regularly offer research workshops in GER 314 that are very helpful for our students. Over the summer and in early fall, Laura Krier and John Muller in particular have been supporting my new bilingual film class "Crime and Secrets in German Film" by helping me locate learning material and digitizing films or purchasing streaming licenses that will be posted on Canvas. This will also be appreciated by students since it will be a zero-cost class for them. In the past years, our School's library liaison has been very responsive to suggestions for purchasing new books, and all of the research librarians have been very helpful to our students through individual research assistance, too.

4d. Teaching and Technology Resources

Our colleagues in Information Technology as well as in the Center for Teaching and Educational Technology (CTET; formerly known as the Faculty Center) have been extremely supportive. Especially during this period of remote learning due to the pandemic, staff in both centers have been widely available for competent and professional individual assistance. We also very much appreciate the prompt support we have been receiving when questions regarding Canvas, the new LMS at SSU, or recording tools such as YuJa, Camtasia, or other applications come up. Both German faculty members profited from several Canvas and online pedagogy workshops over the summer to prepare for the fall (albeit Dr. Foley-Beining was not offered a course to teach that semester). They especially appreciate the help through the online drop-in sessions, provided by CTET. Non-SSU tech support regarding other learning platforms is provided by publishers who offer online programs accompanying our first-year German textbooks. They, too, offer online support through drop-in sessions and quickly respond to email inquiries by students and professors.

4e. Instructional Spaces and Facilities

Offices for Dr. Grobbel and for Dr. Foley-Beining as well as the German FLTA, if needed, are housed in the Rachel Carson Hall area. Although Rachel Carson Hall is an attractive space with several green inner yards and easy access to nature, it is located on the edge of campus. It also resembles a labyrinth, and offices and classrooms are not easy to find for newcomers. In order to promote the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, including the German Program, clear signage should be installed to point new students and visitors to our place. Classrooms have been adequate overall although we would appreciate it if the computers as well as the technological hook-ups to our laptops and screening modalities were the same in all classrooms. Office space for adjunct lecturers is usually shared among the languages, and recently among other departments, too. We very much appreciate having a separate FLTA office which is key since they need a quiet space to prepare their courses (both the ones they co-teach or teach, plus the ones they take as students themselves). This space is also crucial for meeting with our language students during office hours, and for small group work or tutoring. We hope that the upcoming Stevenson Hall renovation will not impact on this important office space that needs to be kept for our Fulbright FLTAs.

4f. Staff Support

Our Academic Coordinator (AC) Linnea Mullins, who replaced Kate Sims but who is still available if her assistance is needed, have both been extremely helpful and supportive of the special major. Without any hesitation, they have both taken on additional workload to support the special major students. In addition, they have also always welcomed and generously assisted our FLTAs and SITE students as well as all German students. They assist Dr. Grobbel in promoting the special major through flyers, brochures, or information on the German website. Updating and maintaining the German webpage is very important, and it is labor-intensive. Dr. Grobbel plans on working with Ms. Mullins on putting more materials online and retrieving other links that have been broken. Once COVID is over, we hope to have more funds available for increased student assistant hours in our department office so that our AC may devote more time to the individual needs of each language program, including the special major. Dr. Grobbel is grateful that our AC is supportive of the idea of moving the special major out of

Interdisciplinary Studies into our Department of Modern Language and Literatures, should the University and the School of Arts and Humanities support this decision.

4g. Potential Changes Affecting Resources in the Foreseeable Future

As noted above, the Stevenson Hall Renovation Project may cause a problem with appropriate classroom and office space in the next few years. This could possibly impact negatively on the quality of course instruction for both German as well as for other departments that offer courses for the special major.

More importantly, Dr. Grobbel is very concerned about the tightening budget that is likely on the way. Even before COVID-19 there was not enough support to offer all courses in the curriculum, especially beginning language courses each semester. A large pool of GER 101 students is needed to have enough students to take GER 102 in the following semester, and then courses on the 200 level. Now, in addition, the epidemic has caused a drastic decrease in university enrollment and reduced course offerings. This has particularly affected German as a small program. Dr. Grobbel is committed to do everything she can to devise a creative pathway for the special major to go forward – with administrative and institutional support, and fully aware that the rebuilding of German at SSU and strengthening the special major will now even take more time. But she is confident that visionary thinking and a step-by-step approach will help the special major come out strong once this crisis is over.

4h. Financial Support

There has been no financial support through Interdisciplinary Studies/ITDS as no funds for program development and support have been allocated to this School. For this reason, allocating adequate funds to the special major, once it has been assessed as a valuable program to be maintained, is absolutely necessary. Since Dr. Grobbel is part of the Department of Modern Languages and Literature and all German courses are financed through this department, Modern Languages has largely supported the development of the special major program whose students have taken classes that are also required for the German minor, housed in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures.

This is the total budget for the operation of the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, which includes six full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty and one to three temporary faculty teaching in our three language programs:

\$ 5,193 for operating expenses, and
\$ 1,281,000 for faculty and staff salaries plus benefits.

This translates into approximately \$865.50 in operating expenses per faculty member. The Operating Expenses fund has been, in recent years, the source for funding the department's participation in the CSU World Languages Council and departmental memberships. It also covers photocopying, toner, and other office supply expenses, such as miscellaneous office machine and peripheral compute-related costs. Having such an austere budget has a direct negative effect on faculty development, class offerings, course designs, student learning, and morale in general.

In particular, there has been no financial support for designing, implementing, developing, and maintaining the special major since 2013. Dr. Grobbel has voluntarily engaged in this work in order to save German at SSU by securing it as an interdisciplinary BA program. It is our concern that this situation cannot be maintained. We are hopeful that funds will be identified at the university level to cover assigned time for teaching the required contract courses and for advising and coordinating/promoting the special major in the future.

5. Student Population

5a. General Information

By 2015, one year after the establishment of the special major, fifteen students entered the German Cultural Studies major. Most of them had switched from the German minor. By Fall 2019, 15 out of 28 students had graduated, and 13 remained enrolled. Currently, there are eight students in the program. Five students left SSU or dropped their second major in German Cultural Studies because of the pandemic.

Numbers of Degrees Conferred (2014-2019):

Academic Year	# Graduates	Double-Major	with Minor
2014-15	-	-	-
2015-16	3	1	2
2016-17	3	2	1
2017-18	3	1	2
2018-19	6	1	1
	Total: 15	Total: 5	Total: 6

Double Majors or Special Majors with Added Minor Degrees:

Out of the 15 alumni, 5 students (33%) graduated with a double major in German Cultural Studies and

Environmental Studies and Planning,
 Psychology,
 Political Science,
 Physics, and
 Business Administration - Financial Management.

6 out of 15 alumni (40%) **added a minor** in

Political Science,
 History (2 students),
 Biology,
 Music, and
 Art.

Out of 11 students responding to the Qualtrics survey sent to the current student population, more than 50% (6 students; 55%) added a second major in the following fields:

Women and Gender Studies,
 Early Childhood Education (2 students),
 Global Studies,
 Geology, and
 Music Education.

It is interesting to note that none of our current students added a minor to their special major but rather chose to double major instead, enabling them to graduate with an even more powerful degree. We also note that these data show that our students have taken advantage of the flexibility of the special major curriculum that provides ample space to allow for a second BA or minor degree. This significantly enhances the depth of student learning as well as the quality of their SSU degree when they apply for graduate programs or professional positions. Other data from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness show that 25 out of 28 students (including alumni and current students at the end of Fall 2019) are/were **first-time first-year students (89%)**. The remaining three students entered the special major program as **transfer students**.

5b. Diversity of Student Population

Based on data provided by the SSU Office of Institutional Effectiveness, out of a total of 28 special majors (alumni, current students, and including those who had to leave the program) almost 43% self-identified as non-Caucasian while one student declined to state their ethnicity: 8 students identified as Hispanic, 1 as Black, 3 as two or more ethnicities, 15 students identified as Caucasian, and one student declined to state their ethnicity. A total of 9 students were reported as underrepresented minority (URM) students.

Overall, we can state that **traditionally underrepresented racial or ethnic groups are well represented** in the special major program.

The following table compares the ethnic and gender distribution of special major students from Fall 2014-Fall 2019 with the overall SSU student population from Fall 2020:

Special Major	Sonoma State University		
Fall 2014-19	Fall 2020		
Hispanic	28%	Hispanic/Latino	37.9%
Black	3%	Black/African-American	2%
two or more ethnicities	10.7%	Multiracial	6%
declined to state	3%	N/A	
Caucasian	53%	White	43%
Non-Caucasian	42.8%	Non-White	56.7%
Female	64.2%	Female	63.5%
Male	35.7%	Male	36.5%

It is noteworthy that a proportionally higher number of special majors is of Black/African-American/multiracial ethnicity: 13.7% of special majors identify as Black and multi-racial students compared to the overall lower number of 8% of the Fall 2020 SSU student body.

In terms of **gender distribution**, the number of female special majors is higher than their male peers, which is typical for language programs in the USA. Nevertheless, the male students represent 35% in the program: Between 2014 and 2019 the special major attracted 10 male and 18 female students to the program, which shows a program population that is similar to SSU’s overall gender distribution data from Fall 2020.

Realizing that special major students come from all over California, in addition to one student of German origin, SSU’s recruitment efforts could be intensified at schools from the following 17 counties in California:

Origin	# students
Sonoma	5
Alameda	3
Contra Costa	2
Sacramento	2
San Bernardino	2
San Diego	2
El Dorado	1
Humboldt	1
Kern	1
Madera	1
Mendocino	1
Napa	1
Riverside	1
Santa Clara	1
Solano	1
Ventura	1
Yuba	1
Germany	1

These data regarding the students’ county of origin reveal a **strong regional and cultural diversity** among our student population. Other statistical information points to the students’ **diverse background** in terms of their financial need and status as the first member in their family to graduate and/or enroll in an institution of higher learning. Of 28 special majors, 13 **(46%) are/were eligible for Pell Grant support**, and 10 students **(35%) are or were first-generation students**. As noted in the assessment section, too, 7 of 15 special majors graduated with Magna Cum Laude (2), Cum Laude (2), and Distinction (3). Information about numbers of students enrolled in graduate programs and active in professional careers is provided above as part of the program’s assessment in 2f. (Survey of Alumni and Current Students for Self-Study).

Below is a list of the current activities of 15 alumni of the Special Major. Notably, **seven** alumni enrolled in graduate programs in a variety of areas and **two** alumni are completing graduate study in Germany.

5c. Special Major Alumni, Senior Projects, and Current Activities

- Victoria Steiner: History/German. Senior Project: “Die goldene Banane: How the Wende Shaped East German Advertisements.” Graduated Spring 2016. Employed as flight attendant for Alaska Airlines.
- Drew Nichols: Political Science/German. Senior Project: “Stuttgart 21: Testing Public Dissidence.” Graduated Spring 2016. Employed as administrative assistant for Sonoma County Transportation Authority and completing a Master’s in Public Administration at SSU.
- Andrew Pickett: Business/German. Senior Project: “Germany vs. the US – Adding Commentary to Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions.” Graduated Fall 2016. Employed as sales development leader at Blueboard in San Diego, California.
- Sandra Arjona: Political Science/German. Senior Project: “Tübingen – From Breeding Ground of Nazi Ideology to a Place of Refuge.” Outstanding Poster Presentation in School of Arts and Humanities at SSU Symposium for Research and Creativity. Graduated Spring 2017. Currently completing the Master’s Degree in American Studies at University of Tübingen, Germany.
- Vanessa Huebner: Psychology/German. Senior Project: “Parental Leave – Or the Lack Thereof: A Comparison between Germany and the United States.” Nominated for CSU Undergraduate Research Award and selected for research presentation at Cal Poly San Obispo. Graduated Spring 2017. Completed M.A. in SSU’s Organization Development. Employed as leadership consultant and executive coach at Numina in Mill Valley, California.
- Frederick (Demarcus) Lockett: Political Science/German. Senior Project: “Refugees: A Comparison Between the United States and Germany.” Graduated summer 2017. Employed as senior associate advisor at KPMG International, a leading company providing audit, tax, and advisory services in Seattle, Washington.
- Diane Gaitan: Physics/German. Senior Project: “Quantum Physics during the Post-Atomic Era: German Physicists’ Influence from 1945 to 1950.” Graduated Spring 2018.
- Holly Lyon: ENSP/German. Senior Project: “The Green Why – Investigating Environmental Action in Germany and the United States.” Graduated Spring 2018. Enrolled in the Master’s program in Ecology, Evolution, and Conservation at the University of Potsdam in Germany.
- Miriam Hassmann. Art/German. Senior Project: “East vs. West: Contemporary Artists from Both Sides of the Berlin Wall.” Graduated Spring 2018.
- Marcos Diaz Lezama: Anthropology/German. Senior Project: “Robin, A German Robot: A Threat to Language Teachers?” Awarded Best Applied Research Prize at SSU Undergraduate Research Forum. Graduated Spring 2018. Currently German language instructor at the German Language School of the North Bay and completing a California Real Estate License.
- Elise Manzanillo: Pre-Nursing/German. Senior Project: “A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Health Insurance in the United States and Germany.” Graduated Spring 2018. Enrolled in M.A./Ph.D. Program in Clinical Nursing at Columbia University in New York City.

- Wiley Winheim. Education/German. Senior Project: “Foreign Language Education in Germany and the United States.” Graduated Spring 2018. Completed the SSU Teaching Credential Program. Employed as a teacher at Henry P. Mohr Elementary School in Pleasanton, California.
- Joseph Paulukonis: Philosophy/German. Senior Thesis: “Homeschooling – A Comparison of its Implementation in the United States and Germany.” Graduated Fall 2018. Employed as a sales representative, focus on German beer retail, for Wine Warehouse in Oakland, California.
- Josephine Ockrassa: Music/German. Senior Thesis: “Political Resistance and the Censorship of Music under the Third Reich.” Graduated Spring 2019. Completing M.A. degree in History at SSU.
- Stella Stefanovich: Business/German. Senior Project: “Comparison of Marketing Practices of Businesses in German-Speaking Countries and the United States.” Graduated Fall 2019. Employed as an engineer operations analyst at Qualcomm, a leading company in wireless technology, in San Diego, California.

5d. Course Enrollments

German course enrollments are tightly connected to the German language curriculum and which courses are offered during particular semesters. To adequately understand the fluctuations in German enrollments, it is valuable to examine longer-term data. These data begin within the first two years of Dr. Grobbel's participation in German instruction, first as a lecturer (2002-2007) and then as a probationary faculty member (2007-present). During the early part of this period, Dr. Grobbel usually taught lower-division and introductory German courses, and Dr. Phillip Beard taught most of the upper-division and advanced courses. The German program, like other language programs in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, has been traditionally taught in a vertical fashion. First-semester German was typically taught in the fall, with an enrollment capacity of approximately 24 students. This course was taken by students who had an interest in German or who wanted to satisfy GE breadth requirements in area C (Humanities). Second-semester German (GER 102), was taught in the spring. Although it technically satisfies GE requirements, most students would not be able to use it, or the succeeding courses, for this purpose. Therefore, inevitably a large proportion of first-year students typically do not progress from first to second-semester German.

Second-year German courses have first-year courses as prerequisites, and once again, many students have difficulty fitting additional language courses into their schedules and enrollment numbers inevitably decline. Third-year courses suffer yet again from the same loss of students. Without larger numbers of students taking introductory courses, enrollments in advanced German courses have always been low, and during the early 2000s, courses at different levels were often combined into one section to raise enrollments. This was not optimal for student learning, as the instructor needed to cover materials at multiple levels at the same time.

The table below shows the pattern of enrollment and student progression during this period. Dr. Grobbel successfully convinced the department to offer more first-year German sections in order to increase the number of students eventually progressing to second and third-year German. These included offerings of GER 102 in the fall (which had never been offered

previously) and GER 101 in the spring. After the first two years of this practice, enrollments began to increase in the second and third-year German courses, but the curricular structure still limited the number of students who completed second and third-year German. This limited the number of students graduating with a minor in German.

Course	Fall semester					Spring semester					Total	
	101 ^L	102 ^L	201 ^L	301	495	101 ^L	102 ^L	201 ^L	202 ^L	302		495
2002-03	24	13	10	1	1	18	7	7	6	1	1	89
2003-04	15	9	6	2	1	17	14	-	6	3		73
2004-05	16	-	7	6	1	12	-	-	6	5		53
2005-06	19	-	11	7	2	19	11	-	8	7	2	86
2006-07	15	9	6	2	1	20	18	-	6	6	3	86
2007-08	26	-	12	2	7	27	20	-	11	3		108
Units	4+1	4+1	4+1	4	1-4	4+1	4+1	4+1	4+1	4	1-3	

^L = four-unit course plus one-unit language laboratory

During this five-year period, GER 101 was always taught in the fall, and only twice in the spring. GER 102 was taught only once in Fall 2006 to provide a 'next' course for those who had taken GER 101 in the spring. In most years, spring first-semester students were not able to continue with GER 102 the following semester. Nevertheless, overall enrollments in German courses increased by 25% by the 2007-2008 academic year, a dramatic reversal from prior declines from the 1990s to 2002.

In 2007, Dr. Grobbel proposed a curricular revision in German, with the goal of reducing the strict vertical structure of the program and allowing more opportunities to enroll in language courses. When she submitted these revisions to faculty governance, they constituted the first revisions and innovations in the GE program since a moratorium had been placed on GE curricular revision. The revisions involved 1) revising the spring semester intermediate-level course (GER 210) to focus on German film, 2) creating a course that could serve both German minors and English-speaking students wishing to satisfy their C2 literature GE requirement (GER 314), and 3) replacing a four-unit course with a one-unit course (GER 399) supporting German students enrolled in German 314. She also changed the content in all German language courses to include culture as an integral part of language instruction. These adjustments to the curriculum provided students with a less unit-heavy pathway to complete the German minor (21 units). Most importantly, she provided flexible entry into the program: Sections of GER 101 and 102 were to be offered each fall and spring, and GER 200 and GER 210 could be taken out of sequence. The reality, however, showed that it was not possible to offer GER 101 and GER 102 in both semesters, due to budgetary constraints:

Year	Fall semester						Spring semester					Total
	101 ^L	102 ^L	200 ^L	314	399 ^L	495	101 ^L	102 ^L	210 ^L	300	495	
2008-09	25	9	14	30	14	2	-	11	16	11	2	134
2009-10	25	-	13	11	8	8	25	15	6	12	8	131
2010-11	26	9	11	30	8	2	-	18	10	19	7	140
2011-12	26	-	21	-	-		27	14	13	8	4	113
2012-13	53	-	14	35	15	7	-	20	11	19	2	176
Units	4+1	4+1	4+1	4	1	1-4	4+1	4+1	4+1	4	1-3	

^L => language course (4 units) plus lab course (1 unit) combined

By Fall 2008 the revised German minor curriculum had made it easier for students to complete a German minor. GER 101 was offered twice in Spring 2010 and 2012. Each course was filled with 25 and 27 students (25 is the maximum number). As before, there was a drop from GER 101 to GER 102. Some students took GER 101 to prepare for study abroad. Student interest in beginning German is evident, as in Fall 2012, when two sections of GER 101 were offered and both filled. Between 2008-2009 and 2012-2013 enrollments at the upper-division level increased and stabilized. They reached impressive levels of 15 students in GER 315 (GER 399 before) in Fall 2012, and 19 students for German 300 in Spring 2013. Total enrollments rose by 63% during this period from Spring 2008 (108 students) to Spring 2012 (176 students).

During Provost Andrew Rogerson's tenure at Sonoma State University, there was a re-evaluation of campus priorities. Specifically, Provost Rogerson believed that recruiting international students would provide diversity to the student body and offer a chance to enroll more students who could pay full tuition costs and thereby enhance the campus budget. This emphasis was positive for the German program. However, he also indicated a desire to reduce the number of students graduating with minors, which would threaten enrollments in minor courses and endanger even healthy minor programs like German. These concerns provided some of the motivation for Dr. Grobbel to propose a new curricular revision that included the addition of the interdisciplinary special major. The increased focus on international exchange and education also benefited German in the sense that the campus was more interested in facilitating the CSU IP program. This, however, also turned out to be a double-edged sword because students who leave SSU for a year on foreign study cannot enroll in campus-based language courses, and the current CSU arrangement provides no reimbursement for campuses, even though the IP program is a source of revenue for the CSU.

The changes allowed the special major to develop and grow and they benefited the students who, as described above, used their special major education to find rewarding careers and opportunities for graduate study. Unfortunately, they also contributed to reductions in the minor population and in enrollments in advanced German courses. The table below shows the German language courses offered between 2013-14 and Fall 2019.

Course	Fall semester						Spring semester						Total
	101	200	314	315	495	499	101	102	210	300	495	499	
2013-14	51	21	40	11	8		26	25	11	9	4		206
2014-15	53	5	29	5		1	34	16	6	8	7	3	167
2015-16	65	24	-		4	1	-	24	7	-	7		132
2016-17	27	14	38	11	3		-	7	12	9	4	1	126
2017-18	65	11	20	6	1	4	27	16	3	12	9	4	178
2018-19	34	9	19	1	9	1	-	11	-	13	4	1	102
2019-20	35	6	22	6	1		28	16	-	-	7	-	121
Units	4	4	4	1	1-4	2	4	4	4	4	1-4	2	

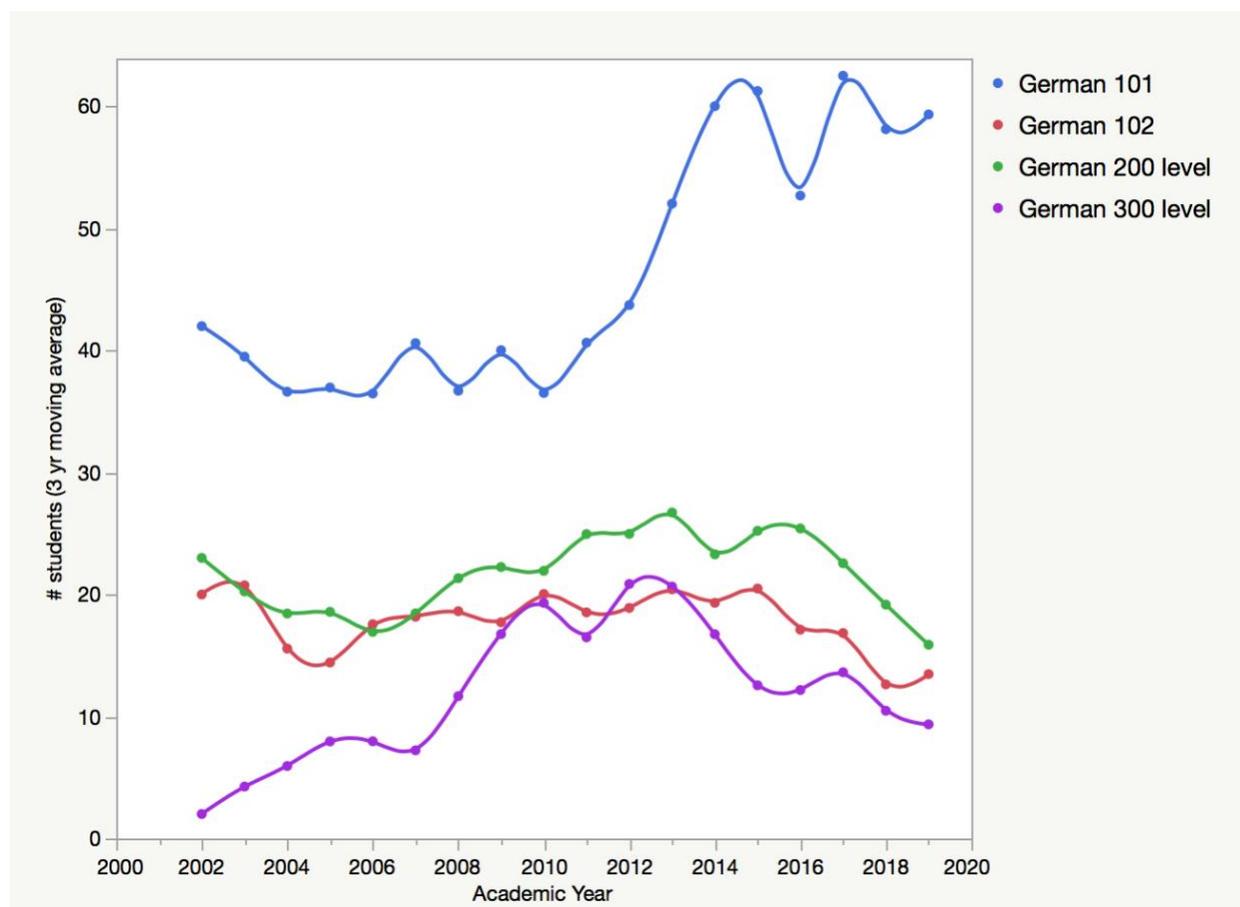
Enrollments in introductory courses usually remained strong, but GER 102 was no longer offered in the fall semester, reducing opportunities for students to enroll in upper-division courses. Total enrollments fluctuated and at times reached the levels observed in the interval 2008-2013. However, a combination of factors resulted in reduced enrollment in upper-division courses. These tend to exhibit lower enrollments due to the vertical structure of a language program, thus unfortunately in some cases courses were cancelled. For example, GER 300 has been taught inconsistently, and when this course was cancelled Dr. Grobbel provided alternatives to students through GER 495 contract course sections. In Spring 2020, GER 210 and GER 300 were cancelled due to low enrollment. To provide students with opportunities to learn advanced German, a Fulbright Language Teaching Assistant taught a course under Dr. Grobbel's supervision. As with other contract courses, Dr. Grobbel did not receive workload credit for these additional instructional responsibilities.

Between Fall 2014 and Fall 2019, 68 students were taught or supervised in 43 contract courses (GER 395, GER 399, GER 495, or GER 499). Each of these 43 contract courses included one to six students. Dr. Grobbel voluntarily took on this uncompensated overload to assist her students, to ensure that they completed their degree, and to support the overall program. We note that three senior projects (GER 495) were supervised by Dr. Foley-Beining, including one internship (GER 499), when Dr. Grobbel was on medical family leave parts of Fall 2015 and on sabbatical in Fall 2018. Altogether, from Fall 2002 to Fall 2019, 142 students were enrolled in German special studies courses.

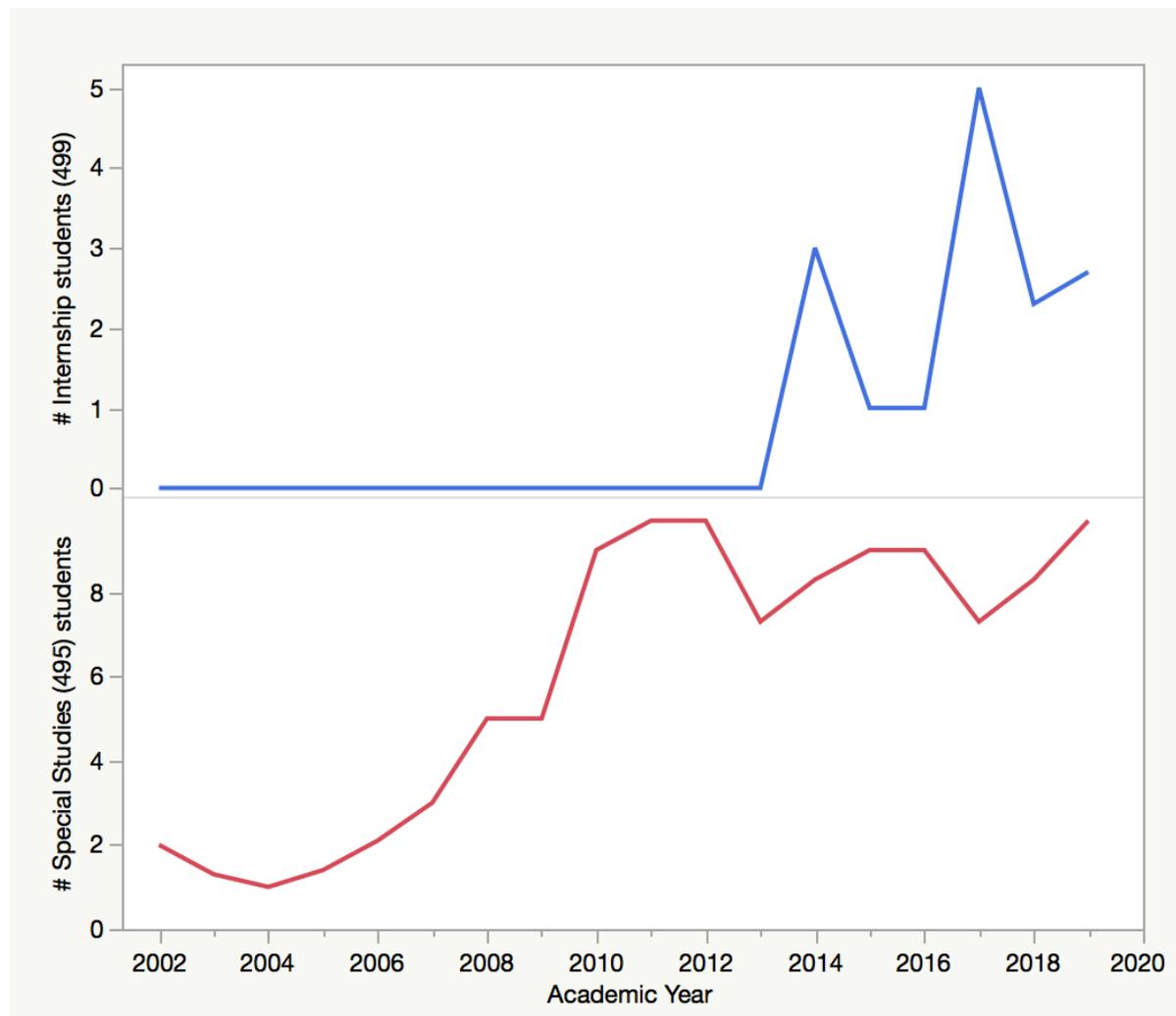
The Qualtrics surveys reveal that most students start with GER 101 at SSU. Among alumni, 71% started with the beginning language course at SSU. Others joined 102, 200 and/or 210 as their first language course at SSU. Out of the 15 students who graduated already, 4 of them had started with GER 101 in 2013 at SSU already, while 7 started with GER 101 in 2014, 3 in 2015, one in 2016. By 2019, this latter student had graduated in Spring 2019, in less than four years. Among the current group of students, the numbers are very similar: 73% also started with GER 101 at SSU.

To examine overall changes in German enrollments over the past 18 years, we calculated three-year moving averages of the total number of students enrolled in different levels of the German curriculum. Moving averages are a valuable tool to visualize patterns over time and are used to visualize long-term population patterns or stock prices. The graph below shows the three-year moving average of the number of students enrolled in GER 101, 102, 200-level courses, and 300-level courses from 2002-2019. The patterns reflect enrollments but they also show course offerings. When sections are cancelled, enrollments drop precipitously and affect the number of students enrolling in the subsequent years.

During the initial period (2002-2008) with the most unit-heavy curriculum, GER 102 sections were often offered each semester, and this contributed to modest increases in 200 and 300-level courses. After the first curricular revision in 2008, enrollments in advanced German courses increased significantly, partly because GER 102 offerings were stable, the prerequisite structure was more flexible, and the unit load of some courses was reduced. During the most recent years, GER 102 has been offered less often and this inevitably resulted in reductions of students taking intermediate and advanced courses. With reduced enrollments, sections were cancelled, resulting in still fewer students.



The graph shows that GER 102 is a key course in stabilizing and growing the special major: We need a robust second-semester course to rely on a solid pool of first-year students to populate the intermediate and upper-division.

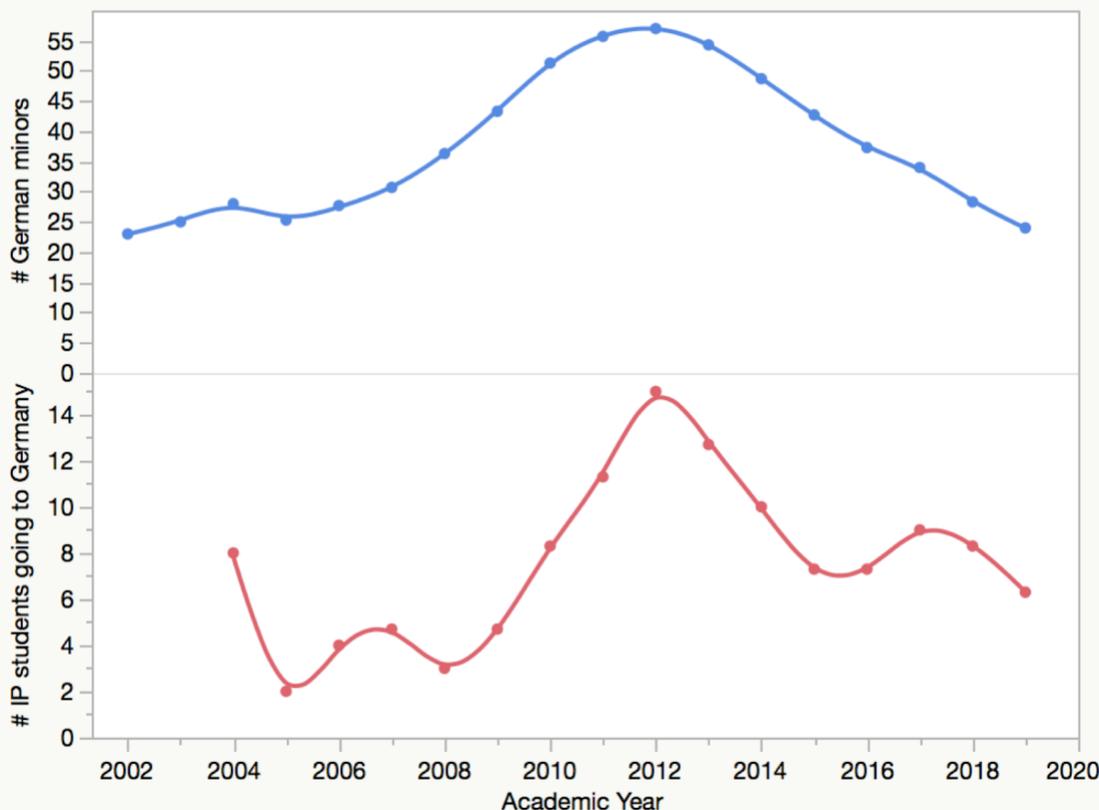


The graph above shows the number of students participating in special studies and internships. Internships were added to the German program when the special major was introduced in 2014, but the graph reveals that special studies or contract courses had been part of the German program for more than 10 years before the implementation of German Cultural Studies. Significant numbers of students have participated in these high-impact educational experiences throughout the history of the program.

	GER 101	GER 102	200 level	300 level	Minors
GER 102	0.14				
200 level	-0.02	0.30			
300 level	-0.12	0.22	0.30		
Minors	-0.16	0.35	0.65	0.63	
CSU IP	0.11	-0.04	0.37	0.35	0.61

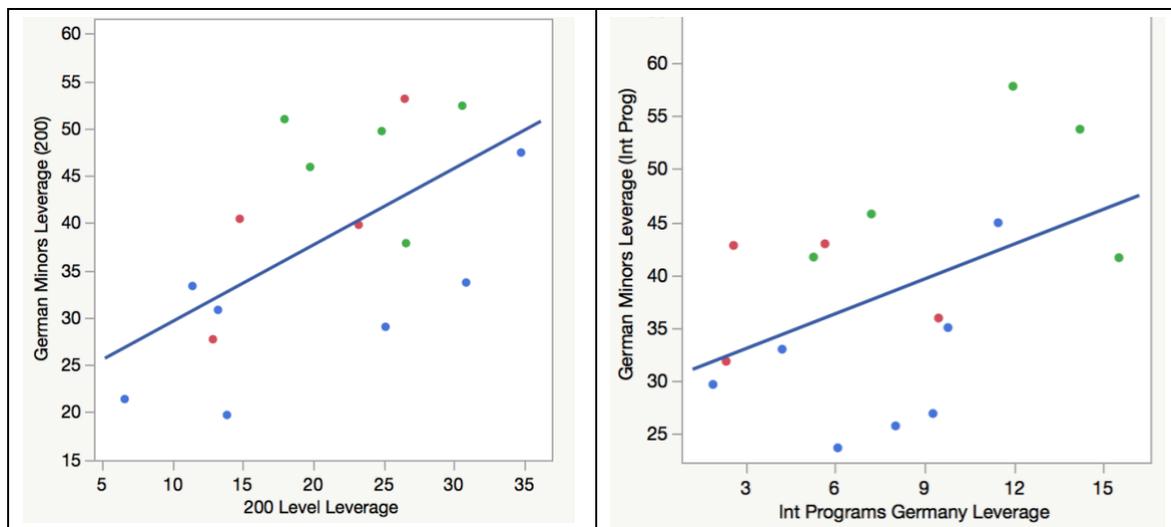
This table above shows the correlation among numbers of students enrolling in German courses at different levels in the curriculum: the number of German minors, and students enrolled in

study abroad through CSU IP. Data are based on 2004-2019 student numbers, which offers a good sample size to examine overall patterns. Possible values for the correlations range from -1, indicating a strong negative correlation between student numbers in different parts of the curriculum, to +1, which would indicate a strong positive correlation. The table shows how the number of students in GER 102 relates positively to the number of minors and to enrollments in 200 level courses. However, the table also shows that enrollments in 200 and 300 level courses are strongly related to the number of German minors. Without these courses, students cannot graduate with a German minor. The table also demonstrates that the number of minors relates to the number of students participating in CSU IP programs in Germany. It illustrates the ‘Catch 22’- situation that the program finds itself in. Students take German courses motivating them to study in Germany, which greatly enhances their language skills and international job prospects. It is a measure of the success of the program. Nevertheless, participating in IP means that these off-campus students are not available to enroll in the intermediate and advanced courses, which contributes to the lower numbers in those courses as part of the vertical structure of the program. This can also be observed in the graph below:



The number of German minors has fluctuated significantly over the 2002-2020 period considered here. As noted above, the SSU campus has at times encouraged minor programs and at other times discouraged them. Until 2013, the minor population steadily grew, initially partly because of increased offerings of GER 101 and 102, which populated the advanced courses, and then because the 2008 curricular revision made it easier for students to progress to the advanced courses. After this period (see graph below), enrollments declined. Multiple

factors contributed to this pattern. First, some German minors migrated to the ITDS major. Other students completed foreign study, and when they returned they were unable to enroll in advanced courses that were cancelled.



To tease out these factors, we conducted a multiple regression, with the number of minors as the dependent variable and numbers of students enrolled in GER 101, GER 102, intermediate GER 200 and 300-level courses. This figure shows the relationship between the number of German minors (dependent variable, vertical axis on graph), the number of students enrolled in German 200 level courses, and the number of students participating in foreign study in Germany through CSU International Programs. Red points refer to the original German curriculum (2004-2007), green points to the time after the first curricular revision (2008-2013), and blue points represent the period since the second curricular revision in 2014. This analysis shows that the best predictors of the number of minors was the number of students enrolled in German foreign study programs and the number of students enrolling in 200-level German courses. This pattern is evident over the long term (2004-2019). It is especially critical that 200-level courses not be cancelled to support the minor population in the future.

6. Proposed Plan of Action

6a. Strengths

We are proud of this interdisciplinary special major in German Cultural Studies that includes collaboration among faculty from across the university and courses from a wide range of disciplines. The special major offers courses from a total of 14 departments housed in three different Schools. It is academically rigorous, stimulating, praxis-oriented, and unique. Experiential learning abroad is encouraged and most students take advantage of it. Public sharing of their senior research is required as well as a prestigious international language proficiency certificate. It is an innovative and cost-effective program due to its interdisciplinary structure, and it provides students with a strong and relevant liberal arts education. The program offers high-impact educational practices, inclusive pedagogies, authentic forms of assessment, and clear pathways to student success – all required elements by the Council of

Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC). It also supports our university's mission and strategic priorities. Additionally, this B.A. program, once firmly implemented, can help rebuild our university during these challenging, financially tight times, compounded by the COVID-19 crisis, in a significant way.

The special major provides a close-knit community for students who receive individualized and one-on-one advising by Dr. Grobbel. Students are able to take a considerable number of GE courses through the special major, enabling them to add another major or minor. The flexible structure of the special major and efficient advising enable students to graduate in a timely manner. Student success is also significantly supported through our highly skilled and motivating Fulbright FLTAs as well as our SITE Peer Language Facilitators (formerly known as LTAs) from Germany. Both programs enhance student learning in a significant way, add to the internationalization of SSU overall, and are considered to be unique in the CSU.

The "Current Student"-Survey from Fall 2019 shows that all students who entered in the special major program in either 2018 or 2019 anticipated to graduate in four years or less, in either 2020, 2021, or 2022. Responding to the question "What do you consider the special strengths of this major?" one student states: "The freedom to pursue a personal field of study with the context of German language/culture intertwined creates interesting perspectives of those fields, and makes it very easy to declare a second major and/or a minor without stretching one's self too thin." Another one comments: "The major offers a significant amount of courses that also meet requirements for G.E. courses and other major course requirements. I personally didn't declare a second major/minor but, had I desired, I could've finished several with an extra semester." Besides the goal of a timely completion of a high-quality degree, the Graduation Initiative 2025 aims to facilitate a path to a degree, committed to eliminate equity gaps between historically underserved students and their peers. One student highlights both of those points as strengths of the program: "This major's special strengths [are] its diverse community and networking on a national and international level. Being able to understand another culture through college level courses that will engage students to expand their future career at an international and intercommunicate [sic] levels." (see [Google folder](#))

In our view German Cultural Studies is the best way to work toward stabilizing and growing German at SSU. Positive student evaluations of the program demonstrate its success. We are convinced that, given proper institutional support, student numbers will grow, as German minor numbers grew until 2012 when foundational courses were regularly offered. Student interest in German has always been there, as demonstrated earlier by the discussion of German enrollment numbers. Additionally, it is our conviction that this is the way forward to offer students a stimulating major that could help define SSU as a university offering unique B.A. programs that further interdisciplinary and international education.

6b. Challenges

Considering that the program has been unfunded since 2014 (including no assigned time for designing it in 2013, promoting it, or student advising) and since official recruitment has not been possible in a visible way, the numbers have been impressive. By Fall 2020, Dr. Grobbel had 13 students enrolled in the special major, while 15 students already graduated from SSU. Let us present the challenges that have been a roadblock in increasing student enrollment:

The special major program occupies a challenging place in the University curriculum, since it is housed, under the oversight of the University Studies Curriculum Committee (USCC), in ITDS/Interdisciplinary Studies as well as in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures. This also places its coordinator or “chair” Dr. Grobbel into a precarious position. It has been difficult to bridge the needs and programmatic realities of the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, housed in the School of Arts and Humanities, to the unfunded terrain of ITDS. Most required language and literature courses are the same courses for the German minor, offered through the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, as they are for the special major. This means that required core courses for the special major are dependent on MLL German language classes, including the required contract courses GER 499 (internship) and GER 495 (senior project). This structure is also reflected by the fact that two Deans, Dr. Stasey Bosick (Dean of Undergraduate Studies & Dean of the Special Major) and Dr. Hollis Robbins (Dean of the School of Arts and Humanities) are responsible for the German programs, despite their different decision-making functions: Dean Bosick for the oversight of the special major program that includes German language courses, and Dean Robbins for the German language courses, that are housed in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures.

The special major relies on the support of our Global Engagement Office (GEO). Most of our students include study in Germany as part of their special major plan. They need GEO’s support before, during, and after their study abroad. Furthermore, the learning experience for German language and culture students is significantly enhanced by our Fulbright and SITE exchange students who are supporting our students. These visiting students and scholars from Germany rely on knowledgeable GEO support. The drain of skilled staff as well as confusing reorganizations within that office in the past few years have been a challenge not just for the German program but for international education at SSU.

There has been a lack of institutional promotion and visibility of the program, both for incoming and enrolled SSU students. The B.A. program is not easily found in the university catalog. Students have to ‘dig deeper’ (only the minor is listed as a degree program when they click on “German”), once they explore German on SSU’s Academic Degree webpage. Dr. Grobbel participates in regular informational tables or information sessions, but the major needs to be promoted online as well as in printed materials. Despite Dr. Grobbel’s efforts, the special major frequently has not been included on schedules or in brochures created for recruitment or outreach events. Once the special major is turned into a funded regular major outside ITDS/Interdisciplinary Studies, we will be able to advertise it visibly on the SSU webpages as well as within our School of Arts and Humanities. Moreover, the major would receive the same attention as other majors do, too, at University and School orientation events.

Extensive time for program coordination, recruitment, and advising has not been funded. University resources are needed to continue this program. If no resources are committed to German Cultural Studies, this B.A. program will not be sustainable - and, we believe, neither the German minor program at SSU.

The uncompensated contract courses GER 495 and GER 499 are required for the special major but they are not funded. Dr. Grobbel has been teaching them since 2013 as a voluntary

overload. The same applies to the high number of other special studies that she has taught when German courses were not offered.

This self-study reveals that GER 102 occupies a crucial place in the German language core curriculum. It provides the stepping stone to move into the intermediate level, which is crucial for students to earn the special major as well as the German minor. If GER 102 is not offered, subsequent course enrollment on the 200 level decreases radically as is to be expected. Usually, GER 210 or GER 200 are then populated by mostly transfer students, students with some basic language proficiency, or highly committed students who wait for one or two semesters to continue their German studies. The latter situation, however, is rarely the case.

We want to emphasize here the importance of offering multiple GER 101 courses each fall in the next few years: In order to ensure that GER 102 is offered each semester (as outlined in the German curriculum in SSU's catalogue), GER 101 must be offered at least twice each fall semester. Only then is it possible to attract a sufficient number of students into the second semester. Ideally, GER 101 is offered three times in the fall (two regular courses, plus the German section of MLL 161A for first-year students). The data tell us that creating a large pool of beginning German students helps enhance the numbers for GER 102 in the spring. Once German enrollment numbers at the first-year level become more stable, we can turn to the original curricular plan and offer GER 101 and GER 102 each semester. This, however, will not be possible unless the pool of GER 101 students in the fall will be increased for a few years.

One big problem is related to the obvious fact that students studying abroad are not enrolled in German courses at SSU. This creates a 'Catch 22'-situation for the German program because it actively encourages study abroad but has to face lower enrollment due to its students taking a number of language courses in Germany. Despite Dr. Grobbel's efforts over many years, not even a portion of tuition fees paid by the students has come back to her School to help fund lower-enrolled German language courses.

Dr. Grobbel is the only full-time German professor, serving as advisor and coordinator of the program. Our adjunct professor, Dr. Beining, has not regularly taught in the German Program due to budget-driven course cancellations.

In Fall 2019 Dr. Jeffrey Reeder and Dr. Grobbel met with Stephen Arneson, Director of University Advancement, to start the process of identifying potential donors who could help support the German program, e.g. through funding one or two language courses. The School of Arts and Humanities at that time, however, was not able to provide University Development with the 'go-ahead' to assist the German Program in identifying potential funding sources.

Finally, a stable, funded home in an academic department must be found for German Cultural Studies to continue. The University Studies Curriculum Committee, which oversees the special major, emphasized at their meeting on February 22, 2019 the exemplary role of the special major in German Cultural Studies. This committee expressed their hope that other faculty would build similar interdisciplinary B.A. programs. They also pointed out that ITDS provides a platform to develop innovative academic programs and the opportunity to pilot them within five years after which a program review should take place. After this has taken place, an academic permanent home must be found or the program will be discontinued. German Cultural Studies, however, as was explicitly stated, is in a special situation since it may stay in ITDS permanently or be "grandfathered" into ITDS, because the ITDS policy was passed by the

Academic Senate in 2017 after the special major had already been approved. Dr. Grobbel notes that although the program could theoretically stay permanently in ITDS as an unfunded program, this is not a viable solution. USCC confirmed that a solution should be found after the special major's first program review. Dr. Grobbel's home department, the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, has agreed to house German Cultural Studies as a B.A. program if adequate resources will be provided without affecting the French and Spanish programs. We hope that the University will deem the special major in German Cultural Studies a valuable academic program that is worthy of financial support.

6c. Opportunities

We believe that the special major in German Cultural Studies presents a unique opportunity for SSU to rebuild itself through interdisciplinary and international studies. Below we present our suggestions how to move toward anchoring this innovative program at SSU:

The future home of German Cultural Studies should be clarified as well as who oversees this B.A. program. Currently, the program is located in ITDS/Interdisciplinary Studies and, in part, in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures due to the required German language and literature courses. This means that its coordinator, Dr. Grobbel, reports to two Deans: Dr. Stasey Bosick, as Dean of Undergraduate Studies and Dean of the Special Major, as well as Dr. Hollis Robbins, Dean of the School of Arts and Humanities. This structure needs reorganization to ensure an efficient way forward. We believe that folding the special major into a regular major housed in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures would clarify this situation. It would also raise the status of the department but, more importantly, the profile of the School of Arts and Humanities.

We encourage the University to collaborate with CSU IP to request at least a partial refund of student-paid tuition fees. One of the highlights of German Cultural Studies is the opportunity for students to study abroad and have all their courses be applied toward their degree requirements. Since German course enrollment suffers from having students abroad, these funds should be used to help pay for under-enrolled courses.

Offering three GER 101 courses each fall semester (including the MLL 161 section) in the next three years or so should help build up enrollment for GER 102 in the spring. During this transitional time, we would move the additional GER 101 course from the spring semester to the fall (according to the curriculum, GER 101 and GER 102 should be taught each semester; this is separate from the MLL 161 A+B course). We believe we should not offer GER 101 in the spring until sufficient enrollment has been built up to offer GER 101 and GER 102 each semester.

We hope to be able to host German Fulbright FLTAs each year to teach up to two low-enrolled classes each semester, under Dr. Grobbel's supervision. The FLTA could also help alleviate Dr. Grobbel's workload in teaching two distinct student populations in the newly developed bilingual film course. The regular use of an FLTA would be a cost-effective solution to help strengthen the program, and the SSU community would benefit from our regular participation in the German Fulbright FLTA program as well. If needed, we would hope that University Advancement will be allowed to identify potential donors.

Offering an online film course through CSU Fully Online should also help with enrollment. Dr. Grobbel has been working on this bilingual course, which will include the GER 210 language students in the new GE course on "Crime and Secrets in German Film." She will offer it as a bisynchronous 'pilot' at SSU in Spring 2021. She plans on offering it through CSU Fully Online starting Spring 2022. This course could also be part of the Film Studies minor at SSU (currently planned as an elective), as recommended by Dr. Talena Sanders, Coordinator of Film Studies. In the future, once enrollment at the immediate-level has increased, we envision turning GER 210 (to be taught as part of MLL 210, a GE course in English) back into a four-unit German language course to strengthen the language instruction.

In the future, once enrollment at the upper-level has increased, we should also explore the idea to turn GER 315 (currently one-unit language class) back into a four-unit course to strengthen our German language instruction.

We encourage the University to pursue a campus-wide policy for compensating instructors who regularly teach special studies. This is particularly important as special studies continue to be required special major courses, until a better solution is found.

Active promotion through the university's webpage of German Cultural Studies, once it will be funded, will help increase enrollment. Dr. Grobbel will intensify her collaboration with SSU Advising, especially for undeclared students. She will also continue to promote German at Summer Orientations and advise students at university-wide events for incoming students. Dr. Grobbel also plans to meet with department chairs to promote the major and attract more students. Additionally, she will continue to reach out to programs that have been part of the special major through shared courses or campus events.

In her effort toward more cross-disciplinary collaboration, Dr. Grobbel has already been in contact with Dr. Jenny Bent, Director of Choral Activities, who is supportive of a German language requirement for SSU's vocal students. Outside SSU, Dr. Grobbel plans to join Dr. Bent's efforts to recruit high school graduates to Music and German. Given the high number of Business students taking German and studying in Germany, she would like to explore the possibility of a joint German/Business certificate.

Dr. Grobbel will also intensify her own recruitment efforts through the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG) in California. Additionally, she plans on reaching out to high school graduates before they send out their college applications. Dr. Grobbel plans to grow relationships with Junior Colleges, including the Solano and Mendocino JCs, too. She would like to explore the idea to create a joint Music/German Cultural Studies degree transition program with the Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC), similar to the recently created Wine Business Degree Transition Program between the SRJC and SSU.

We suggest that the University secures funds for assigned time in form of a course release each semester for coordination, promotion, advising, internship placement and supervision, and the mentoring of senior projects. Advising is very time-intensive as well as securing, facilitating and evaluating internships, and supervising FLTAs and SITE Peer Language Facilitators. Supervising the senior project and evaluating the projects together with the second mentor from another discipline, however, is especially time-consuming. Should a solution be found in the future to

include our students preparing their senior projects in a senior seminar that already exists, assigned time could then be reduced at that point.

Finally, a University-funded tenure-track position in German Cultural Studies with a focus on Film Studies, Music, Jewish Studies, History, Sustainability, or another academic area would be an ideal scenario. Such a position would strengthen the interdisciplinary major as well as perhaps another program or department.

We look forward to receiving the External Reviewer's Report, which will be added below as well as in the [Google folder](#).

Interdisciplinary Studies Special Major in German Cultural Studies

External Reviewer Report (Spring 2021)

Reviewer

Dr. Christine Goulding has been a Professor of German at the California State University, Chico since 1998 and is the Chair of the Department of International Languages, Literatures, and Cultures.

Introduction

This report is based on:

- the ITDS Special Major: German Cultural Studies self-study and supplemental materials
- a two-day virtual site visit
- a review of public-facing information on the Sonoma State website

During my virtual site visit, I met via Zoom with various stakeholders of the program: the program coordinator, Dr. Michaela Grobbel; Chair of the Department of Modern Languages & Literatures, Dr. Jeffrey Reeder; the faculty of the Department of MLL; Dean of the School of Arts & Humanities, Dr. Hollis Robbins; Dean of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies, Dr. Stacy Bosick; former Dean of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies and current interim Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Dr. Karen Moranski; twenty-two faculty and department chairs from across the university whose courses are requirements or electives in the major; twelve current students and alumni of the program; over a dozen former Fulbright and SITE teaching assistants; and members of the larger German-speaking community in the north Bay region. A small number of stakeholders unable to participate in meetings also provided feedback via e-mail.

This report is organized in five sections in which the reviewer contextualizes the program within larger trends in the discipline and then outlines commendations, challenges, and recommendations for the ITDS Special Major in German Cultural Studies, and ends with some concluding thoughts about the future of the program.

Disciplinary context

When the major in German Cultural Studies at Sonoma State was established as an interdisciplinary special major in 2014, it followed a trend in postsecondary German education and foreign language education generally. Especially since the 1990s, the interest in cultural studies, multiculturalism, and a professions-oriented curriculum have influenced foreign language programs across North America. German programs in particular have increasingly departed from the canonical philological and literature-based curriculum and have embraced interdisciplinarity. While emphasizing language proficiency as an essential component of a major, German programs have also progressively incorporated courses taught

in English. In the 1990s, the German Studies Association developed [curricular guidelines](#) to guide programs in making the shift from the traditional canonical “great thinkers” approach toward an interdisciplinary “German Studies” curriculum orientation. SSU’s BA program in German Cultural Studies follows the trendlines of a more holistic German Studies approach to the discipline.

Commendations

The major incorporates several of the best practice curricular recommendations by the German Studies Association, including:

- A strong focus on language proficiency.

This is affirmed not only through coursework taken at Sonoma State and abroad, but through students’ attainment of the internationally recognized Goethe Institute B1 Language Certificate. Passing the level B1 proficiency exam is a requirement for all German Cultural Studies majors and minors at SSU and provides external validation of graduates’ language ability. Such a requirement is unusual in German programs in North America and it is a testament to the quality of instruction in the program at SSU.

- An interdisciplinary curriculum, including core courses on European history.

Required core courses for the major include the study of European history, politics, and art. For the 23-24 additional units of electives, students can choose from courses in thirteen different disciplines across three different Schools. Interdisciplinary courses are taught in English, allowing for scope and depth of investigation beyond students’ level of German proficiency.

- A senior project.

This rigorous culminating experience in the major invites students to connect their knowledge and experience in German with other disciplines. The public presentation of their work requires them to explain and defend their research to a broader audience and provides additional validation of their work.

- A semester or more of academic study or internship experience in a German-speaking country.

While not required, study abroad is strongly encouraged and supported. The result is that nearly all majors graduate having engaged in a longer-term immersion experience in a German-speaking country.

While SSU’s German Cultural Studies program thus sits neatly along a trajectory that is recognizable to those in the profession, the manifestations of its adherence to disciplinary recommendations distinguish it as especially innovative and effective. While giving students a basic familiarity with German history and traditions, the program is forward-looking, familiarizes students with current problems and issues, and prepares graduates for life as global citizens.

- The 2015 book *Taking Stock of German Studies in the United States: The New Millennium* suggests re-envisioning German Studies as transnational inquiry into the relationship and interaction of German-speaking cultures beyond national borders. The SSU German Cultural Studies curriculum encourages students to do exactly that. In addition to the interdisciplinary major core, which develops students' proficiency in German and places their learning about German culture in a firm historical, political, and artistic context, the 23-24 units of elective options to complete the major requirements are far-ranging; it includes courses in anthropology, business, economics, English, history, communications, music, philosophy, sociology, and theater. As evidenced in the themes of students' senior projects, this model breaks down the traditional "silo-ing" of disciplines, stimulates intellectual exploration and encourages students to synthesize knowledge and to identify connections between disparate themes, and empowers them to take ownership of their own learning.
- In addition to the study abroad experience, students are required to engage in an internship. Some do this while abroad. Most participate in internships in the region, e.g., for the German Language School of the North Bay. This has both been a result of and has reinforced community relationships, has provided students with critical real-world experience prior to graduation, and has also led directly to careers for some graduates.
- While ensuring meaningful student experiences in work settings and abroad, the program also has a well-established extracurricular cultural agenda that provide co-curricular opportunities for students and serves the larger campus community. These include a weekly conversation hour, a bi-weekly film series, regular invited speakers from the greater region and from abroad, field trips to career and cultural events in the region, and numerous social opportunities. This contributes to the strong peer relationships and a sense of community and camaraderie among program participants.

The program also takes full advantage of the proximity of Sonoma to German-speaking populations and institutions in the greater San Francisco Bay region. The program has developed close cooperative relationships with the Goethe Institute, the German consulate, and German-American schools in the north Bay Area, among others.

- While language programs are traditionally and typically strongly vertical, i.e., learners must take a series of 4 to 6 sequential courses that advance in proficiency incrementally before students can participate in upper level courses in the target language, SSU's German curriculum has built in flexibility in that sequencing, breaking down one of the traditional barriers to attaining a degree in languages. This and the variety of General Education overlays a student can accomplish through the interdisciplinary major make a double major more feasible while simultaneously facilitating timely progress to degree.
- The program solidly prepares students for productive and interesting careers and opportunities for further education. Alumni are pursuing careers in sales, education, the travel industry, financial services, real estate, and communications and many are engaged in graduate study in diverse fields in the US or abroad. The several alumni with whom I spoke emphasized and

explained in detail how well their experiences in the German major prepared them for life and work outside of the university regardless of whether their chosen area of employment was explicitly tied to German. Graduates had overwhelmingly positive experiences in the program and cited the major as an important venue for exploring new interests and discovering their passions. They are rightfully proud of their work and accomplishments in the major, and described their experiences in the major as “meaningful,” “essential,” and “life-changing.”

- The program enjoys widespread support from colleagues in disciplines from across campus. Several experience the participation of German Cultural Studies students in their courses as a welcome enrichment in courses typically inhabited by majors. The German students bring a level of intellectual curiosity and inquiry that they claim is otherwise largely absent.
- The research agenda of the core faculty person, Dr. Michaela Grobbel, addresses social justice and equity issues in the German-speaking world and these topics are fully integrated in the courses she teaches.
- All evidence demonstrates that the program directly serves the [stated mission of Sonoma State](#) by preparing students who: have a foundation for lifelong learning, have a broad cultural perspective, have a keen appreciation of intellectual and aesthetic achievements, will be active citizens and leaders in society, are capable of pursuing fulfilling careers in a changing world, and are concerned with contributing to the health and well-being of the world at large.
- All evidence further demonstrates that the program is strongly oriented toward serving Sonoma State’s [strategic priorities](#): It fosters student success, is innovative and promotes academic excellence, cultivates leadership qualities in its students, and has a transformative impact on the students and the surrounding community.

Challenges

- The program’s status as a special major in Interdisciplinary Studies (ITDS) is an impediment to its growth and success. The program straddles two Schools with the major administrated in ITDS and the minor housed in the School of the Arts & Humanities. Among other things, this administrative structure creates an unclear hierarchy of leadership, sets it apart visually and factually from other majors at SSU, inhibits accurate data collection, and causes inefficient use of time and resources. Administratively, German Cultural Studies is regarded as a concentration in Interdisciplinary Studies and thus does not enjoy the same financial and institutional support that a regular major does. Furthermore, the program’s status as a “special major” instead of a recognized major housed in a School makes students feel that their work is devalued and not recognized as equal to other majors on campus.

Its current status, which was never meant to be permanent, is an obstacle to the administration, funding, acceptance, promotion, and ultimately, the growth and success of the major.

- Based on discussions with administrators, SSU does not have a well-established infrastructure for supporting interdisciplinary programs. I see this as a major reason that there is both perceived and real resistance to support for the German Cultural Studies major. The university infrastructure seems to offer few incentives for programs that reach across Schools. On the contrary, budget models seem to favor the promotion of enrollment within Schools rather than beyond them. Dr. Bosick reported that there is a growing desire to normalize interdisciplinary programs, but it is unclear how current models might change to encourage and appropriately fund such programs. This institutional barrier is a hindrance to the success of the German Cultural Studies program, but the solutions lie beyond the scope of the program.
- From an institutional and administrative perspective, measures of program success seem to be largely quantitative and tied to the budget model described above. The reliance on selected quantitative data minimizes the narrative that abundant qualitative data tells in demonstrating this program's effectiveness in meeting SSU's mission and strategic priorities.

One example of this is the relationship between the major and study abroad. While abroad, students can earn up to 30 units toward their BA in German Cultural Studies. On the one hand, this represents a cost savings to the university because it outsources a large portion of instruction in the major. Yet, the role of the program in sending students abroad is neither recognized nor remunerated, a problem not only for German Cultural Studies but for all language programs in the CSU. In fact, language programs are implicitly penalized because the quantitative measures for judging program success do not take these cost savings into account and instead emphasize smaller numbers of students in campus-based courses, nor do they acknowledge the transformative and life-changing experiences of participants. The German Cultural Studies program nevertheless is delivered with significant cost savings over other majors and contributes significantly to study abroad and internationalization efforts of the campus as a whole.

- The major was developed in 2013/14 using existing resources at Sonoma State and at the time of its inception did not require additional allocation of funding or new hiring. It continues to operate with the same and in some cases fewer resources, despite myriad new responsibilities the major requires, e.g., major and study abroad advising, supervising senior projects, internship placement and supervision, administering the B1 proficiency exam, developing new courses. The lion's share of work in coordinating, maintaining, and directing the program, and delivering instruction in it, have fallen upon a single faculty member, Dr. Michaela Grobbel, who performs much uncompensated work to keep the program afloat. This was a common theme across *all* of the constituencies with whom I spoke.

Compounding this is the fact that Dr. Grobbel's teaching assignment sometimes includes General Education courses outside of the German program. These are sometimes cross-listed with German courses, but not always. And when they are cross-listed, the German students inevitably receive less instruction in the target language.

In short, this major is operating with less than one full-time faculty person assigned to it and is

only functioning due to her ongoing uncompensated work overloads. The status quo is both inequitable and unsustainable.

- Lack of consistency in course offerings has disrupted students' ability to pursue the major. Cancellation of seeder courses in the basic language sequence makes it impossible for students to progress through the major and impacts all future courses in the language sequence in future semesters. Such cancellations are also demoralizing and demotivating and cause students to seek out more stable options. There is a spiral effect whereby low enrollments lead to cancellations which results in fewer majors which also cause lower enrollments. Such cancellations also interfere with program promotion and recruitment, thus further exacerbating the problem.

Recommendations

My recommendations for the future of the German Cultural Studies program fall into three broad categories:

Status

- Move the German Cultural Studies BA from its current location in Interdisciplinary Studies to its more obvious home in the Department of Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures in the School of Arts & Humanities, thereby dropping its status as a special major and recognizing it as an equal among foreign language programs and among BA programs at SSU. There is broad-based support for such a move among most stakeholders with whom I interacted. Faculty in MLL specifically expressed unequivocal support for such a move and were confident that the move would not drain resources from the Spanish and French programs. On the contrary, it is more likely that the administrative placement of the major in MLL would bring major-based funding to the department. Given that the German minor already exists in MLL, it is also the most logical home for the German Cultural Studies major.

In addition to administrative benefits, this move would also improve the visibility and perceptions of the program, change how students and staff think and talk about it, remove some of the obstacles preventing students from pursuing it, and simplify and aid recruitment efforts.

- Two possible directions for the program, following its move from ITDS to the School of Arts & Humanities, emerged from discussions with campus stakeholders:
 1. Continue supporting and build upon the successes of the interdisciplinary program in German Cultural Studies as it currently exists.
 2. Phase out the program as it currently exists and create a new major with new courses from departments in the School of Arts & Humanities that could be cross-listed as German courses.

While Option 2 would perhaps help the program better meet some of the quantitative measures of program success, in my estimation, Option 1, which was overwhelmingly favored by most campus stakeholders, is the best chance for the ongoing and future success of the program. Option 1 would maintain the broad interdisciplinary structure that is the foundation of its innovative approach and its success. Current and former program participants deem the interdisciplinary approach of the degree specifically to be essential and found that it opens up myriad opportunities post-graduation. Moreover, in its current structure, the German Cultural Studies program tracks trends in the field of German Studies and it is positioned to be a model of the interdisciplinarity that the campus would like to develop.

Such interdisciplinarity that reaches across Schools also has the potential to draw students who initially identify their interests as lying outside the Arts & Humanities. Connecting the major to other disciplines is an effective way to attract students who have an interest in fields that are seen as strengths of German-speaking cultures, e.g., business, sustainability, engineering, sciences, or in international careers. This pattern is identifiable in the double majors and minor choices of program alumni who, in addition to their German Cultural Studies specialization, pursued majors in Environmental Studies and Planning, Physics, Business Administration, for example. The Engineering Sciences Department chair reported developing partnerships with universities that are part of CSU IP in Germany and noted that the German program helps connect engineering students with these opportunities abroad. Option 1 invites the further development of such cooperative relationships with other departments and Schools.

Though demographic data show that the program is statistically slightly more Caucasian than the SSU campus at large (53% vs. 43%), the program has the potential to attract more URM students through outreach and recruitment efforts. The content of the German Cultural Studies program is more diverse and dynamic than the discipline name suggests.

Changing the current major to embrace a more traditionally oriented Arts & Humanities German curriculum would in my view not serve the student population of SSU as well as the current program does. This would diminish the potential of the German Cultural Studies program to attract students from outside of the Arts & Humanities. Implicit in Option 2 is skepticism about the potential future success of the German Cultural Studies program based on selected quantitative measures; however, it seems to me that the program has not yet existed under institutional conditions that would allow it to flourish, and there is no guarantee that it would enjoy more or even equal success in a thoroughly revised format.

Staffing

- The major cannot and should not be expected to survive on the willingness of a single faculty member to voluntarily take on excess workload. In order to survive and have a chance to thrive and grow, the program needs additional support and personnel that could and should include some combination of the following:
 - Assigned time for supervision of senior projects.
 - Release time for administrative tasks associated with the program, including supervision of any teaching assistants.

- Ongoing institutional support for a Fulbright Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA) each year. In the past, the German native speaker FLTAs have provided integral support of extracurricular offerings and community building within the program and have played a significant and active role in helping bring international awareness to the SSU campus. An FLTA is also qualified to teach up to two courses per semester and could take on some teaching responsibilities in the program. A commitment to supporting an FLTA could help provide the necessary programmatic continuity described below and give the program an opportunity to grow.
- An additional tenure-line faculty hire in German with an interdisciplinary focus. This would add flexibility to the German curriculum, increase course sharing opportunities, and allow for sharing of administrative and service tasks associated with the program.
- A regular work assignment for a qualified part-time lecturer. The program has fortunately been able to rely on Dr. Kathleen Foley-Beining to fill in whenever needed, but the lack of consistency in the availability of part-time work could result in a personnel gap in the future. She has not taught a German course at SSU since Fall 2018.
- The outsourcing of some administrative tasks to the extent this is possible, e.g., identify and train a qualified individual to take over study abroad advising, have students complete their senior projects as part of the Global Studies capstone, contract a qualified part-time lecturer to assist with some tasks.
- Thoughtful course sharing collaborations with other German programs in the CSU. These would need to be carefully considered and mutually beneficial to all programs involved and must not undermine the uniqueness of and enrollment in the SSU program.

Stabilized Enrollment

- A commitment to continuity and predictability in the core course offerings each semester is essential to the stability of the program. This would facilitate planning and would demonstrate whether this major can thrive as expected when it has consistent and predictable offerings and adequate institutional support. A functional annual plan of course offerings might therefore look something like this:

Fall Semester:	GER 101 (three sections, one of which could be MLL 161) GER 200 GER 314 GER 315
Spring Semester:	GER 102 GER 210 GER 220 (also offered to other campuses through CSU Fully Online) GER 300 Senior projects

This structure seems realistic and is in fact quite minimalistic considering that these courses constitute the core of a BA program.

As the program grows, ideally at least two sections of GER 101 and one section of GER 102 would be offered both fall and spring, giving students the ability to enter and continue the program in any semester.

- With core courses offered consistently, energies could be devoted to developing cooperative relationships and dual programs with Business, Engineering, Environmental Studies, and Music, among others.

Conclusion

Between the official start of the program in Fall 2014 and Spring 2019, a total of 15 students had graduated with a BA in German Cultural Studies. Considering that most students who complete the major begin in GERM 101 at SSU, 2018 would have been the first year that a student entering the program as a first-time freshman in 2014 could have graduated. AY 2018/19 saw the largest number of graduates (six), which represented a doubling of the numbers in any previous year. Thirteen students were enrolled in the special major as of Fall 2020. This growth trajectory would have the best chance of continuing if some of the barriers to program growth and support that are described in this report were addressed.

The German Cultural Studies program distinguishes itself as an effective, high-quality educational model and is successful by many measures even though it has never existed under conditions that would allow it to thrive. As outlined above, there are many options at the disposal of SSU, many of which would require only a modest commitment of resources, to sustain and expand on the program's current successes and make it healthy and functional into the future. A consistent and reliable investment in the program for the next five years would enable a more accurate quantitative assessment of program productivity and its growth potential into the future.