



THE LANGUAGE FLAGSHIP

*Creating Global Professionals*

## THE LANGUAGE FLAGSHIP: CHANGING THE WAY AMERICANS LEARN LANGUAGES

The Department of Defense is the largest employer, both civilian and military, of Americans with skills in communicating in other languages. NSEP recognizes that in order for the Department of Defense and the broader U.S. national security and foreign affairs community to meet current and future needs for a globally trained workforce, it must rely on our national education system to graduate high school and college students with facilities in languages critical to our future.

The Language Flagship is a partnership between the federal government and the education community with the goal of building language programs that produce professionally proficient language speakers in African languages, Arabic, Chinese, Hindi Urdu, Korean, Persian, and Russian. The Language Flagship is a national initiative that focuses on providing opportunities for American students of all majors to acquire professional language proficiency (ILR 3 or ACTFL Superior) <sup>1</sup> and cultural competency. Today, The Language Flagship is comprised of 22 Domestic Flagship programs, 11 Overseas Flagship programs, and three (3) K-12 programs.

The Language Flagship, an initiative of the National Security Education Program, aims to produce U.S. citizens for the broader U.S. national security and foreign affairs workforce that are linguistically and culturally competent in world regions, languages, and skills who are critical to the success of the United States. The Language Flagship strives to graduate students that will become future contributors to and employees of the Department of Defense and the broader national security community.

### FLAGSHIP UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

The Language Flagship started in 2002 as an experimental national pilot initiative for students who had completed their Baccalaureate degrees. In 2007 The Language Flagship shifted focus and expanded its innovative efforts to undergraduate programs. The Language Flagship now offers pathways and opportunities that resonate with today's undergraduate students: the opportunity to study their majors while gaining advanced proficiency in a critical language.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) is an un-funded federal interagency organization established for the coordination and sharing of information on language-related activities at the federal level. The ILR scale classifies five primary levels, which are the official Government Language Skill Level Descriptions are known as the "ILR Scale" or the "ILR Definitions." All U.S. government agencies adhere to the ILR Definitions as the standard rubric to determine language proficiency. ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) developed and published for academic use proficiency guidelines based on the ILR Definitions. The ILR Level 3 and the ACTFL Superior ratings are equivalent; each requires the ability to use the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in formal and informal interactions on practical, social and professional topics.

Students enroll in Flagship undergraduate programs because they provide an opportunity for students to gain high-level proficiency in the general usage of their language of choice, but also within the context of their academic discipline or profession. Flagship students combine and integrate their language studies into their majors by taking content courses offered in their target language. Moreover, Flagship students are recruited from a wide variety of fields from international studies to mathematics to biology. Thus, the Flagship program provides opportunities for students from a variety of disciplines to become professionally proficient in one of Flagship's target languages.

Flagship programs' curricula focus on proficiency level advancement in all four (4) modalities of language learning: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Students know before they apply to the program what goals they must meet. Flagship programs offer opportunities for students to take summer intensive courses at Overseas Flagship Programs, engage in one-on-one tutoring on their campuses, and live in language dedicated dormitories. All students have ready access to instructors and staff who take student progress and achievements seriously.

The design of The Language Flagship undergraduate programs is based on years of experience, research, and evidence demonstrating that advancing students to professional level language proficiency takes a systematic approach, one that emphasizes content-based language learning tied with overseas immersion to bring students face-to-face with rich language and culture environments. This carefully articulated experience is attractive to students, who are increasingly choosing to study at Flagship institutions because of the opportunities they offer.

## THE FLAGSHIP DIFFERENCE

- **Results Based:** Teaches languages at a level of intensity that ensures achieving professional proficiency (ILR Level 3) by the end of the program
- **Internationally Experienced:** Requires student participation in immersion programs at overseas Flagship Centers; students enroll directly in the foreign institution and engage in a required internship
- **Culture Based:** Cultivates cultural awareness and literacy along with language study
- **Content Based:** Provides language learning opportunities for students of all majors to master the language of their specific disciplines or fields
- **Standards Based:** Holds teachers and students accountable for progress and requires proficiency testing for all graduates
- **Pragmatic and Relevant:** Emphasizes practical and professional use of the target language (idiomatic expressions, process writing, and specialized vocabulary) in work and professional situations.

## FLAGSHIP GRADUATE PROGRAM

While the primary focus has moved to undergraduate programming, The Language Flagship continues to support several effective graduate programs in Arabic, Chinese, Korean and Persian. These programs continue to support superior level domestic and overseas instruction necessary to support the Flagship Fellows.



In 2009, The Language Flagship enhanced the requirements for existing Post-Baccalaureate programs to ensure that all programs became degree-granting graduate programs. This change ensured that there was a two (2) year sequence for instruction, with one (1) year domestic and a second year of overseas direct enrollment and internship. All programs currently have developed, or in the case of Russian are still developing, programs that result in a graduate degree.

The result of this change has been that all incoming students and applicants for Fellowships must be in a Master's degree-granting program. One reason for this change in policy was to improve the competitiveness of Flagship Fellowships nationally. This improvement in competitiveness enhances the opportunities for government employment of these Flagship Fellows. The changes will also eventually make Flagship Fellows eligible for the State Department's Diplomacy Fellows Program (DFP).<sup>2</sup> Flagship graduate programs and all Flagship Fellows devote full-time effort to The Language Flagship.

### **FLAGSHIP PILOT K-12 PROGRAMS**

Since other countries require students to begin learning another language in childhood, the U.S. is at a distinct disadvantage, as most American students have no language requirement to fulfill until high school or beyond. The average U.S. student enters university with only basic skills in a second language.

The Language Flagship has demonstrated that it is possible to create programs that help students of all majors reach ILR Level 3 proficiency during the course of their undergraduate study. However, we know that creating a critical mass of American citizens with high-level language proficiency would be much more efficient if students began learning languages in elementary, middle, and high school.

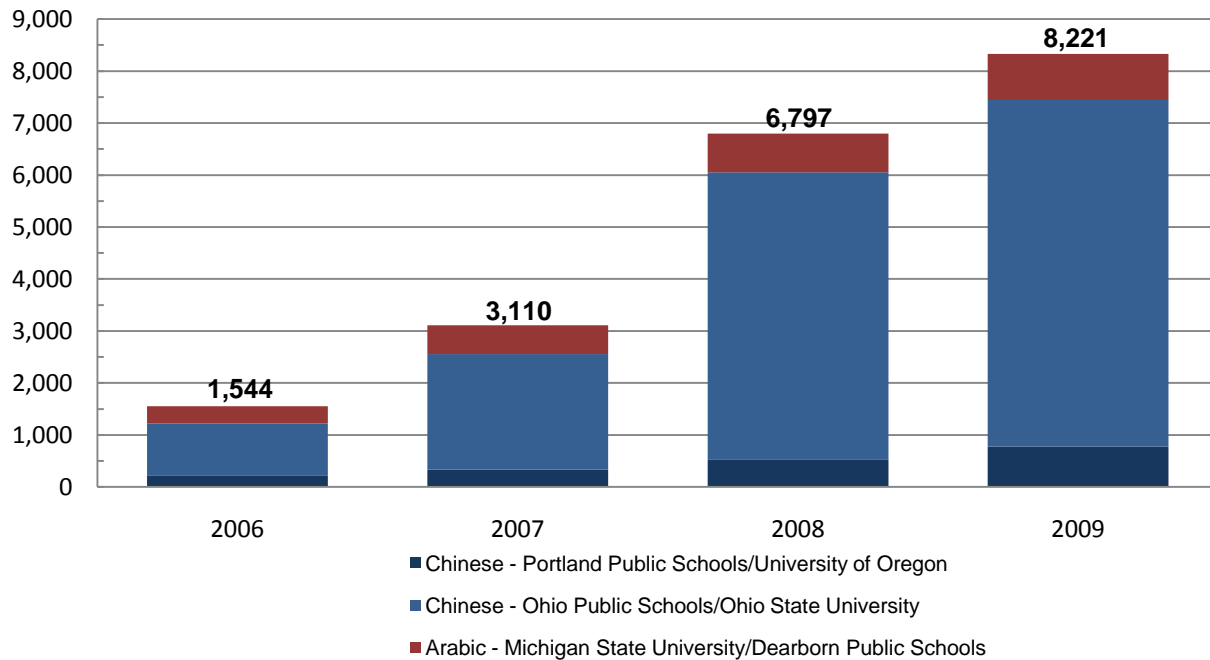
In 2005, The Language Flagship initiated three (3) pilot initiatives to examine different approaches to "push" an articulated approach to language learning down to elementary, middle, and high schools to examine best methods to create opportunities for students to enter college with an established and measurable skill in a critical second language, such as Chinese or Arabic.

The three (3) pilot efforts were designed to model a K-12 language curriculum development and implementation process in three (3) different environments. Programs were located in the Dearborn Public Schools in Michigan; the Portland Public Schools in Oregon; and in public schools across the state of Ohio. The goal was to develop K-12 language instruction programs that graduated high school students and provide a pipeline of students to Flagship Programs that would train these students to professional proficiency.

---

<sup>2</sup> The State Department Diplomacy Fellows Program is designed to advance certain candidates, such as Boren Fellows, Pickering Fellows, and Presidential Management Fellows, directly to the Foreign Service Oral Assessment, by-passing the Foreign Service Written Examination. Eligibility for Flagship Fellows for the DFP was still under review by the State Department at the completion of this report.

## K-12 Flagship Pilot Program Enrollments



### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE LANGUAGE FLAGSHIP 2010

In 2010, The Language Flagship made progress in the following strategic areas:

- 1) Robust Enrollment Growth
- 2) National Outreach to High Schools
- 3) Boren/Flagship Scholars
- 4) Flagship Fellows
- 5) Strategic Interagency Partnerships
- 6) Public Private Partnerships
- 7) Tracking Results and Accountability

#### 1) ROBUST ENROLLMENT GROWTH

In 2010, The Language Flagship successfully reached its goal of teaching over 2,000 students since the beginning of the program in 2002. Since the transition to undergraduate programs in 2007, Flagship enrollments have remained consistent from one year to the next. From 2009 to 2010, overall enrollment growth across languages was 51 percent. The 2009 cohorts consisted of a total 633 undergraduate students, and in 2010 enrollment grew to 954 undergraduate students. Total undergraduate classroom enrollments were 1,134, as there were 180 at-large students engaged in Flagship coursework. We expect this growth trend to continue with additional enrollments in spring 2011. The growth rate indicates increasing levels of interest in new opportunities by undergraduates for engaging in high-level language learning in conjunction with their majors.



Flagship Language	2009 UG Enrollment	2010 UG Enrollment	% Change 2009-2010
Arabic	165	256	55%
Chinese	307	403	31%
Hindi Urdu	29	45	55%
Korean	21	32	52%
Persian	16	24	50%
Russian	70	150	114%
Swahili	11	22	100%
Yoruba	14	20	43%
	<b>633</b>	<b>954</b>	<b>51%</b>

NSEP has developed a strategic approach to increasing national enrollments for students of all majors at participating institutions in 2010. Typically, undergraduates do not choose to attend a university based upon the language courses it offers. Rather, most undergraduates choose to attend a university based on factors other than language courses and the possibility to achieve a high proficiency in a foreign language. Flagship has started to change that model. Most students who enroll in a Flagship program join the program with a clear purpose in mind: to attain high level language proficiency while undertaking their chosen majors. The creation of Flagship programs at participating institutions has allowed institutions to use their programs to recruit top students of all majors on a national basis. Students are drawn to the opportunity Flagship presents to pursue their academic majors and interests while developing their advanced language skills. The Language Flagship programs attract top high school students and recruit some of the most talented undergraduate students on their campuses. Though the undergraduate program is still new, reports from institutional programs indicate that retention in Flagship programs has been high and that the majority of students continue with the program from year to year and gain greater language proficiency.

## 2) NATIONAL OUTREACH

NSEP recognizes the importance of language education as a core component of the undergraduate experience and has worked closely with its partner institutions to help support national recruitment in a number of ways. In 2010, NSEP made building a national outreach program to high school students and collaborating with other nationally- and federally-funded language programs for high school students a top priority. The purpose of this outreach is to recruit talented high school students into the Flagship program.

**National High School Recruitment:** The Flagship program is working closely with each of its centers and programs to improve their ability to recruit high school graduates with existing critical language skills. In 2009, Flagship funded a complete census of critical foreign language programs in U.S. K-12 schools. This data was provided to all grantees as part of a concentrated effort to recruit from a targeted pool of students with some formal critical language training. The Flagship also developed a mechanism on the Flagship website that would help students research, on a national level, the Flagship programs that would best suit their needs. This mechanism allows students to easily contact and compare the Flagship

programs in the language that they are most interested in studying. The Flagship also commissioned two (2) Flagship videos that have been used for information and recruitment. These videos have been posted to the Flagship website and been shown to K-12 teachers and students.

**Collaboration with other national and federally funded language programs:** Over the past year, Flagship has strengthened relationships with federal partners in the STARTALK and NSLI-Y programs and is developing a collaborative outreach program in concert with these partners.

### 3) BOREN/FLAGSHIP SCHOLARS

With the continued expansion of The Language Flagship and an extensive history with David L. Boren Scholarships, NSEP directed its efforts in 2010 to build an important bridge between these two (2) programs. The ultimate goal of this collaboration is to create greater pathways for outstanding undergraduate Flagship students to enter federal government service.

Undergraduate Flagship students engage in studies across a wide range of academic disciplines and combine these pursuits with advanced language study with the goal of attaining professional level proficiency (ILR 3 or ACTFL Superior) by the time they graduate. As a requirement of their Flagship studies, these undergraduate students also commit to a yearlong immersion at an overseas partner university where they directly enroll in courses in their fields of study and engage in professional internships or other experiential activities.

As outlined in the Boren Scholarship section of this report, Boren Scholarships provide undergraduate students with resources to acquire skills and experiences in areas of the world critical to the future security of our nation, in exchange for their commitment to seek employment in the federal government. As a cornerstone of NSEP's mission to enhance U.S. national security by increasing the national capacity to deal effectively with foreign cultures and languages, Boren Scholarships promote long-term linguistic and cultural immersion overseas that allows American students to develop vital global competencies.

In this inaugural year, a total of 15 undergraduate Flagship students in African languages, Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Persian, and Russian from 12 Flagship institutions were awarded Boren Scholarships for their yearlong overseas studies. The partnership between The Language Flagship and the Boren Scholarships has initiated opportunities for undergraduate Flagship students to gain invaluable experience that advances their development as global professionals with superior language skills who can communicate within the context of their academic disciplines. Equally, this partnership expands the qualified pool of linguistically and culturally competent professionals dedicated to serving the United States.

### 4) FLAGSHIP FELLOWS

Despite The Language Flagship's focus on undergraduate programs, The Language Flagship continues to support the same number of fellowships for Flagship Fellows. The major objective of the Flagship Fellowship awards is to provide funding to select graduate students who are highly motivated to work for the federal government in an area related to U.S. national security. As for all NSEP-funded awardees, a service requirement exists for all Flagship



Fellows. Upon completion of a Fellowship, graduates must work in qualifying national security positions.

In 2009, The Language Flagship revised its requirements for the Post-Baccalaureate programs and converted the Post-Baccalaureate programs into Master’s degree-granting programs. This change resulted in an enhancement of student requirements, specifically that Flagship Fellowship applicants must be enrolled in a Flagship Master’s degree-granting program. This change in program policy improves the competitiveness of Flagship Fellowships with other Fellowship programs and for opportunities for federal employment.

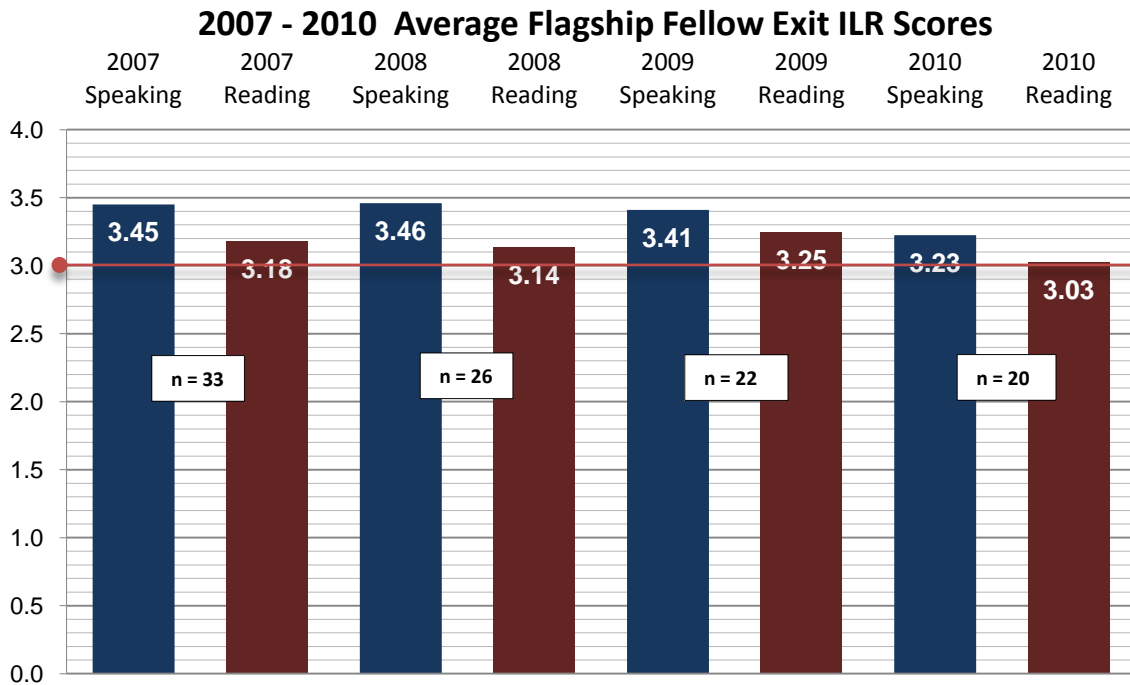
Flagship Fellows are expected to devote full-time effort to The Language Flagship. Flagship Fellows may not pursue requirements of other degree programs while receiving Fellowship support, nor may the Fellowships be combined with other sources of funding that would require students to devote less than full-time effort to the program. Applicants for Flagship Fellowships must first be admitted to the Flagship graduate program before they are considered for a Fellowship. Further, candidates for Flagship Fellowships must apply for a Fellowship in addition to applying for the graduate program.

Between 2003 and 2010, NSEP, through IIE, awarded 193 Flagship Fellowships. In 2010 there were 17 new Flagship Fellows.<sup>3</sup>

Number of Flagship Fellows by Language and Year								
Language	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Arabic	3	4	12	9	8	6	5	5
Central Eurasian	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Chinese	4	2	8	9	4	6	4	6
Korean	4	7	11	14	5	3	3	4
Persian	0	0	0	0	3	5	5	2
Russian	0	7	7	7	3	4	3	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>17</b>

Since 2007, each Flagship Fellow has been tested through the Foreign Service Institute (FSI), following completion of his or her overseas program. The FSI-administered assessments of “Speaking” and “Reading” provide the Fellows with a government-administered and verified ILR score. The data provided by FSI shows that Flagship has consistently met the goal of graduating students at or above the ILR 3/ACTFL Superior level. Monitoring and tracking student outcomes is a foundation of The Language Flagship program. Flagship continues to work with FSI and other government partners to ensure the successful assessment of the Flagship Fellows.

<sup>3</sup> For a full list of currently active Flagship Fellows, see Appendix J: 2010 The Language Flagship Fellows.



## 5) STRATEGIC INTERAGENCY PARTNERSHIPS

The Language Flagship has been a strategic partner representing the Department of Defense in cross-agency collaboration to create linkages and pathways amongst language programs for students that already exist within the Department of Education, the Department of State, Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), and the Department of Defense. This collaboration originally was envisioned and established in 2006 out of the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI).

In 2010, NSEP continued to collaborate with these agencies by participating in a standing working group. Established in October 2009, the mission of this working group is to ensure increased collaboration among strategic language programs spread across the four (4) organizations. The 11 federal programs included in these interagency efforts are:

Department of Defense  
 The Language Flagship  
 National Language Service Corps

Department of Education  
 Foreign Language Assistance Program

Department of State  
 Fulbright Critical Language Enhancement Awards  
 Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistants  
 Gilman Summer Language Institutes



Intensive Summer Language Institutes (Critical Language Scholarships)  
Intensive Summer Language Institutes for Teachers  
NSLI for Youth (NSLI-Y)  
Teachers of Critical Languages Program

Office of the Director of National Intelligence  
STARTALK

The mission of the current interagency effort is to promote cross-program collaboration and resource sharing to expand U.S. critical foreign language education from kindergarten through post-secondary education, and into the workforce. Flagship and NSEP have reinforced their commitment to these goals by continued cooperation with the interagency working group on strategic languages.

The working group meets bi-monthly to ensure inter-program communication and enhance cross-program articulation. In 2010, the working group agreed to and has collaborated on five (5) interagency initiatives:

1. Coordinate reporting of program outcomes in a single annual report to demonstrate to agencies and supporters the coordination between the programs.
2. Develop mechanisms for capturing student participation across federal programs, and work to capture student movement among programs.
3. Share outreach responsibilities across federal programs through collaborative campaigns for student recruitment in association with these programs.
4. Construct a collaborative website, which will provide pass-through to partner agencies, and be a shared portal for federal program information and data.
5. Develop a research agenda to document best practices for language programs.

In 2010, Flagship provided all partners with tools and resources to enhance recruitment from the STARTALK and NSLI-Y programs. The State Department's Gilman and Critical Language Scholarships programs have experienced a substantial increase in applications from Flagship programs. The working group's annual report will be submitted February 2011, and the new website will be available March 2011.

## **6) PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS**

The Language Flagship was conceived as a partnership between government, education, and the private and non-profit sectors. Through such a partnership, NSEP is able to set the foundation for long-term financial sustainability as well as affect the way a variety of sectors value language in the workplace.

Since 2007, The Language Flagship has brokered collaborative efforts across the public and private sectors that underscore the need for language skills for future U.S. public and private workforce. Based on past efforts that include State Language Summits (2007) as well as the

Metro Language Series (2008 and 2009), The Language Flagship held a summit in March 2010 which focused on the nexus among private sector needs, public policy and language educators to expand the dialogue on the necessity of language skills in the workplace.

In October 2010, Flagship hosted a National Dialogue and Keynote reception that brought together representatives from business, government, and the education and non-profit sectors to discuss strategies for the next five (5) years.

## **7) CERTIFYING RESULTS AND TRACKING ACCOUNTABILITY**

The Language Flagship was designed from the beginning to be results based. In order to ensure that all students who join the program meet the high expectations of the program, NSEP is developing a state of the art Flagship certification system to ensure the consistent collection of student data, and to aid in the tracking of in-program and post-program Flagship students. This system will ensure that all undergraduate Flagship students will be tracked from the time of their application for admission to a Flagship program through their domestic and overseas experiences, and onto their professional careers, in order to provide critical data related to the program.

Since the transition to the undergraduate program was first undertaken in 2007, few if any students entered into the program as freshmen, completed program requirements, and graduated. Nevertheless, as the nearly 1,000 recently recruited undergraduate students progress through their Flagship programs, additional assessment, course completion and internship experience data are collected. Upon completion of their Flagship programs, students will become alumni members and will have the opportunity to remain involved as Flagship alumni as they begin their professional careers or continue with their academic studies. As The Language Flagship grows, the number of students impacted by this program increases.

In 2010, the Flagship program graduated 104 undergraduate students from new Flagship programs, all of whom completed three (3) major Flagship components: undergraduate study at the Flagship institution; overseas study; and overseas internship. These students included many who had enrolled when the programs were first funded and who had not had the opportunity to benefit from a longer term instructional program.

Of these 104 undergraduate alumni, 59 achieved ILR 3 proficiency (56.7 percent). Another 35 undergraduate alumni attained ILR 2+. In total, 90.3 percent of all students who engaged in a complete Flagship program achieved Advanced High proficiency or better. The remaining nine (9) percent received an ILR Level 2

In an ongoing effort to improve, the Flagship program has used these preliminary results to make program adjustments to ensure that a higher proportion of students reach Level 3 proficiency. Based on an analysis carried out by the American Councils on International Education, the probability that an undergraduate Flagship student reaches Level 3 proficiency by the time he or she graduates increases significantly if the student first reaches Level 2 before departing for the academic year-long overseas Flagship study component. Accordingly, and in keeping with Flagship's research-based tradition, all Flagship Directors agreed in 2010 that any undergraduate Flagship student must reach a Level 2 before being



allowed to participate in the capstone overseas program. Furthermore, Flagship and its Directors agreed that as of 2011, all students must reach an ILR Level 3 in two (2) modalities, speaking and reading, to receive Flagship Certification.

The goal of the Flagship Student Certification system is to dramatically improve data integrity, minimize inconsistency of student data across programs, and to help ensure program accountability. All Flagship students are required to reach minimum proficiency levels before attending the overseas capstone to ensure student preparation but also to ensure program quality. The system will also have the ability to capture successful program completion and award Flagship Certification. The system makes it easier to conduct research on language pre- and post-testing and to generate reports on The Language Flagship regarding program enrollments, language attainment, and the instructional steps and interventions necessary for getting students to professional language proficiency

### FLAGSHIP: WHAT'S AHEAD

In 2011, The Language Flagship will start graduating the undergraduates who started the program in 2007. When NSEP transitioned The Language Flagship in 2007 from the small-scale pilot Post-Baccalaureate to the larger undergraduate program, it recognized that graduating students from across majors with certified proficiency levels as well as rigorous overseas study and internship experience would take time. Flagship currently has 1,134 students enrolled in programs nationwide and expects continued growth and expansion. Many of these students desire to pursue a career in government service and to utilize their linguistic and cultural skills to serve the country.



UCLA Russian Flagship Scholars

Today, The Language Flagship is poised to provide a well trained workforce that, upon graduation from the program, already possesses a high level of language proficiency and cultural knowledge of an area that is critical to U.S. national security. As such, graduates of The Language Flagship are ideal candidates for many positions within the Department of Defense and the broader national security and foreign affairs community, and can provide linguistic and cultural skills and insights that are highly valued and necessary for positions related to national security.

# NATIONAL SECURITY EDUCATION PROGRAM

## FLAGSHIP PROGRAMS IN 2010

### ARABIC

Michigan State University  
Dearborn Public Schools K-12 Arabic Pilot  
University of Texas, Austin  
University of Maryland  
University of Michigan  
University of Oklahoma  
*Alexandria University, Egypt\**  
*Damascus University, Syria\**

### CHINESE

Arizona State University  
Brigham Young University  
Hunter College  
Indiana University  
The Ohio State University  
Ohio Public Schools K-12 Flagship Pilot  
Portland Public Schools K-12 Flagship Pilot  
San Francisco State University  
University of Mississippi  
University of Oregon  
University of Rhode Island  
Western Kentucky University Pilot Program  
*Nanjing University, China\**  
*Qingdao University, China\**

### HINDI/URDU

University of Texas, Austin  
*Jaipur Hindi Flagship Center, India\**  
*Lucknow Urdu Flagship Center, India\**

### KOREAN

University of Hawai'i  
*Korea University, South Korea\**

### PERSIAN

University of Maryland  
*Tajik State National University, Tajikistan\**

### RUSSIAN

Bryn Mawr College  
Portland State University  
University of California, Los Angeles  
University of Wisconsin  
*Saint Petersburg State University, Russia\**

### SWAHILI

Indiana University  
*Zanzibar State University, Tanzania\**

### YORUBA

*University of Ibadan\**

\*Overseas Flagship Center