



THE LANGUAGE FLAGSHIP

Creating Global Professionals

Discourse

NEWSLETTER OF THE LANGUAGE FLAGSHIP
FALL 2007

Changing the way Americans learn languages

Flagship Fellow serves as diplomat in Middle East

IN A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AMONG THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, EDUCATION AND BUSINESS, THE LANGUAGE FLAGSHIP IS GUIDING THE NATION TO A NEW PARADIGM IN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION.

Undergraduate students in the U.S. have long studied foreign languages as part of a distribution requirement of their bachelor's degree. As a result, few have developed adequate proficiency to put their languages to use alongside skills they develop in their majors. Enter 9/11, the rise of global economic competition, and the spread of conflict around the globe.

American deficiencies in languages and the concomitant lack of understanding of other cultures suddenly reached critical proportions. Government agencies, particularly those in the national security

arena, are clamoring for language-savvy graduates. Other federal agencies, and American businesses with global interests, are beginning to value the impact of such skills. The pace of language offerings at all education levels has quickened nationwide. But there is a deeper problem. Business, government and educational sectors are realizing that the traditional approaches and methods involved in teaching languages will not alone be able to produce the number and quality of language-proficient young Americans needed to compete and interact effectively in today's world.



Combination of innovative campus curricula and overseas immersion, Flagship programs engage students who are not language majors in study designed to offer "Superior" proficiency in selected languages. Until now, most college and university language majors in commonly taught languages have graduated with "Intermediate" or, in some cases, "Advanced" level language proficiency, neither of which is generally sufficient for sophisticated tasks associated with professional work in a global career. Only when learners reach the Superior level can they function in their professions with competence and imagination, discussing

the fine details with ease, fluency and accuracy.

Transforming the way Americans have done language for so many years is a somewhat epic task, Flagship principals admit. The task is no less than to mainstream language learning in people's lives and careers.

A Flagship triumph is when parents, university students, legislators, business executives and the American educational system, all work in concert to turn out a cadre of young people who equate language instruction with a specific outcome in their lives.

Careers in the diplomatic corps, the military, economic aid agencies and in other government posts will be among those outcomes. But the 21st century requires engineers, scientists, teachers, journalists and other professionals who are respected as competitors and as international citizens. "These will be thoughtful Americans who know it's not all about us anymore," as NSEP Director Robert Slater puts it. "There's a very different world out there," he says. "To instill in young people an understanding of other cultures so they can perform with sensitivity among those cultures is what

Former Flagship Fellow Heather Kalmbach was two years old when the famed 1978 Camp David Accords attempted peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Today she's a Political Officer for the U.S. Foreign Service based in Jerusalem, specializing in Palestinian human rights, women's issues, civil society and local government.

On September 7, Heather returned briefly to the U.S. as the first recipient of the Sol Linowitz Award for alumni of the National Security



Education Program's Boren Fellowship. Named in honor of Ambassador Sol Linowitz, who exemplified the concept of public service, the purpose of this award is to highlight the invaluable role that language and cultural skills play in the workplace. Heather reported, "I am in the Foreign Service owing much to my experience as a Boren and Flagship Fellow. Not a week has passed in Jerusalem and Saudi Arabia that I've not put to use the skills I gained during my fellowships."

Heather's tasks in Jerusalem require sensitivity and persistence. Speaking professional-level Arabic, sharpened in the Middle East as a Flagship Fellow, allows her to navigate through the challenges of diplomatic work with confidence.

Her career started as an undergraduate at the University of Arizona, where she chose her Arabic focus, and in 1996 Heather spent a junior semester in Morocco at the Rabat School

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it will take to ensure that the United States remains a respected international partner."

The Flagship difference

Flagship programs now operate at eleven universities with advanced programs in Arabic, Chinese, Hindi/Urdu, Korean, Persian/Farsi, and Eurasian languages. All of these languages are seen as currently critical to this nation's security and global development. At these institutions, Flagship instructional models for advanced language learning have been developed and are constantly refined for improved accountability and more precise outcome measurement. Recruitment mechanisms are in place to broaden the base of eligible students.

Essential to Flagship success is required study at an overseas partner university that has developed Flagship-specific language and cultural instruction in the target language.

To achieve the key Flagship goal of mainstreaming language into undergraduate curricula, the system must attract incoming students who can meet Flagship's higher entry qualifications. That means reaching out to K-12 school district administrators and encouraging them to nurture more proficiency-based language instruction in the early years of students' lives. For example, the University of Oregon's Center for Applied Second Language Studies (CASLS) and the Portland Public Schools are joint recipients of a Flagship grant to oversee a K-16 integrated Mandarin Chinese language learning program. The Oregon Flagship program is the first national K-16 model, already serving as a foundation for future programs throughout the United States.

Refocusing society's attitude about foreign language is essentially a communications task, says Flagship Director Michael Nugent. "We must make it clear to students, parents, business executives, educators and legislators that Flagship raises the bar a lot. It starts where other programs leave off. We have to create broad recognition that when serious students, down to the K-12 level, get on this path, it leads to good career placement."

As enrollees in Flagship, students can major in the subject of their choice, complementing those studies alongside a rigorous language component. The plan is designed to graduate them with the skills of a global professional. As such opportunities become diffused



"These will be thoughtful Americans who know it's not all about us anymore."



nationwide, Michael Nugent says, the setting for a new paradigm in languages will have begun. Success for Flagship will be when there is a diffusion of advanced language programs nationwide emulating the Flagship formula.

Flagship in action

In 2003, the first ten graduate students began Flagship programs.

Today nearly a hundred students have completed their work and have reached professional proficiency at Flagship university institutions and at Flagship partner universities overseas.

Based on the success of the first "post-BA" programs, The Language Flagship last year expanded operations to the undergraduate level. This fall, more than 100 undergraduate students are enrolled in Chinese, Arabic, Russian and Hindi/Urdu. The goal is to have

2,000 students enrolled by 2010.

Flagship also initiated three K-12 language programs, two in Chinese and one in Arabic, that have well-articulated paths into undergraduate Flagship language curricula.

Eighteen-year-old Lotus Chen, seen in this issue of *Discourse*, is a product of this new K-16 program. Lotus aspires to be a diplomat, perhaps following a career avenue like that of Heather Kalmbach, also featured in this *Discourse*. Heather and Lotus are excellent examples of the different means to achieve professional proficiency in language. Lotus began serious study of Chinese early in her school life. Though Heather started learning Arabic later, she's now using the language in diplomatic settings, thanks to her graduate Flagship experience.

Stories of personal achievement like these from all the Flagship centers and programs will populate future issues of *Discourse*, accompanying news of Flagship's progress in changing the way Americans learn languages.



Word from Flagship



Dr. Michael Nugent
Director
The Language Flagship

I am pleased to introduce the inaugural edition of *Discourse*, the newsletter of The Language Flagship. The purpose of this publication is to strengthen communication and collaboration among educators and professionals who are dedicated to creating a new cadre of global professionals. Over the coming years, we intend *Discourse* to serve as a vehicle for keeping our partners and "friends of Flagship" in government, education and the business community involved in Flagship initiatives.

Beginning with this first issue, we will provide a window into the multifaceted nature of The Language Flagship and how this international movement complements other language and cultural initiatives at the federal, state and local levels. As the name "Flagship" connotes, our purpose is to remain at the vanguard of language learning by fostering innovation and setting clear entry and exit standards for comprehensive, professional language education.

Our first issue is an introduction to The Language Flagship. From an eight-year-old girl who started at Woodstock Elementary School in Portland Oregon, to a Foreign Service Officer at the U.S. Consulate in Jerusalem, Flagship students and alumni are proving that we can begin to turn the corner on the challenge of producing highly-proficient speakers of critical languages.

In following issues, the *Discourse* editorial staff intends to provide more in-depth coverage of different aspects of The Language Flagship, including K-12 programs, undergraduate, graduate and overseas programs. We also will cover key questions and challenges facing advanced language and cultural instruction: language assessment methods and standards, curricular development, teaching methods and the use of technology.

As the name *Discourse* implies, we expect this newsletter to foster two-way communication. We look forward to your input on all of these important issues. Please feel free to contact me or the *Discourse* editorial team with your comments or suggestions any time!

Flagship Fellow... (From page 1)

for International Training. The few months there were enriched by her stay with a Moroccan family.

Graduating from Arizona, Heather won a Fulbright Fellowship enabling a study year in Fez, Morocco, where she studied more Arabic, some French, and did a research project on women's micro-enterprises in that country.

Back in the U.S., she tackled a Masters program in Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Michigan. Deciding more time was needed in the Middle East for her thesis, she won an NSEP Boren Fellowship, using it to complete her work on the subject of democratization in Egypt at American University in Cairo.

Building on her research experience as a Boren and Fulbright Fellow, Heather then used the Flagship Fellowship to bring her Arabic language skills to the level of professional proficiency needed for diplomatic negotiation. Her year on the



Flagship Fellowship in Egypt involved "not just class time, but hours in the home of my professor in Cairo discussing Egyptian literature and film in Arabic, and chatting in Arabic with my Egyptian friends at cafes on the Nile."

As a result of her Flagship Fellowship, Heather was welcomed into a State Department delighted that her advanced proficiency in Arabic required no further instruction. She was ready to play her first role in the diplomatic corps, and the theater was Saudi Arabia.

At her current U.S. Consulate post in Jerusalem, Heather works with Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and has many Israeli friends. She is now adding Hebrew to her cultural and linguistic accomplishments.

NSEP Director Bob Slater noted that Heather and other students now in The Language Flagship programs "are leading a new cadre of Americans developing the skills to communicate effectively in the world."

Op-ed:

The next steps are critical

Dr. Robert Slater
Director, National Security Education Program



Senator David L. Boren spoke these words to the National Press Club in April 1990: "One of the greatest needs we have in this country...is to internationalize the thinking of the next generation of Americans. How in the world are we going to go out and compete economically, how are we going to be politically involved if we don't speak the languages of the world, if we don't understand the cultures of the world? How in the world are we going to be ready to go out into a new international environment and hold our own when the next generation of Americans doesn't seem to have an understanding that it's an international environment in which they're going to be living and competing? We must change."

More than seventeen years have passed since Senator Boren made that statement. While progress is evident, we have a long way to go.

The National Security Education Program (NSEP) has since its inception focused on providing the highest quality opportunities for U.S. students to gain professional-level skills in the languages and cultures of the world. The Language Flagship stems from the recognition that we are not sufficiently challenging our students, at all levels of education, to gain the highest possible level of language proficiency. We are also not sufficiently challenging our colleges and universities to develop curricula for a wider array of students (e.g., non-language-and-literature majors) to achieve higher levels of language proficiency. Just imagine if we were to tell a high school senior who achieved the advanced placement level 4 or 5 in math that our colleges and universities had nothing available for them beyond that level.

The next steps are critical. We must put in place a more effective system of K-12 programs across the nation whose objective is to graduate students at advanced levels of proficiency in whatever second language the system chooses to emphasize. The K-12 pipeline must yield a higher level of input into higher education. And we must diffuse throughout higher education a commitment to deliver more flexible programs of study that graduate students with language competencies that can be quickly actualized in the workplace.

Flagship coordinates 2007 Language Summits

This year The Language Flagship sponsored a series of three state-centered working sessions to assess the demand for language skills at regional, state and local levels. The goal of this series has been to review the economic, social and cultural imperatives for developing advanced language skills and to devise "roadmaps" at state and local levels that will result in new language instruction models for the American education system. Recognizing the importance of this process, the U.S. Departments of Commerce, Defense and Labor partnered in supporting the "2007 U.S. Language Summits: Roadmap to Language Excellence." Language Summits were hosted by three Flagship Centers at



At the Oregon summit: IBM Advisory Software Engineer Jon Lind and Julie Hui of Oregon Scientific analyze the group's findings.

the University of Oregon, the University of Texas, and Ohio State University. The three one-day summits in June convened representatives of each state's business sector, local and state government agencies, and educational community to articulate the need for advanced language instruction domestically and globally. Fascinating profiles of language demands emerged from the summits, resulting in commitments from the business, government and educational sectors to continue as working groups throughout the summer to design roadmaps for actions supporting language acquisition in each state. In October the universities will each launch a "Language Roadmap" that will be attended by senior representatives from all stakeholders.



The Flagship pipeline: from public schools to the university

Lotus Chen, 18, (at left with her mother) is an example of a successful graduate of the Portland public schools who has continued on to the Chinese Flagship Program at the University of Oregon. Starting her Mandarin language study on Friday nights at “Chinese School” when she was five, Lotus was encouraged by her father who had been a diplomat. In high school she participated in the Portland Public Schools K-12 Flagship Program designed to prepare students for the intensive Flagship Chinese curriculum in college. As one of the first nine Flagship Scholars at UO, Lotus is studying Chinese in addition to her major, which she expects will be in political science or international studies. Lotus aspires to follow in her father’s footsteps and pursue a diplomatic career.

Hundreds of elementary, middle and high school students are now developing Chinese skills as part of the Chinese Flagship program in Portland. They’ll graduate with proficiency levels far beyond many of the advanced courses offered at non-Flagship colleges and universities. From the ranks of Flagship undergraduates like these will emerge the nation’s new generation of global professionals.

Flagship Mission

The Language Flagship leads the nation in designing, supporting, and implementing a new paradigm for advanced language education. Through an innovative partnership among the federal government, education, and business, The Language Flagship seeks to graduate students who will take their place in the next generation of global professionals, commanding a superior level of fluency in one of many languages critical to U.S. competitiveness and security.

What Do We Do?

All Flagship centers provide students intensive language study in concert with their selection of an academic major. The program’s goal is to turn out graduates with dual strengths in professional-level language in addition to their chosen career domains. Several centers offer post-B.A. programs from one to two years in length.

The Language Flagship also funds a select number of pilot programs at the K-12 level, aimed at providing an articulated path from elementary grades to high school and on to an undergraduate advanced language program.

Our graduates’ ability to leverage their professional-level language and cultural skills in a selection of career domains is a distinct value to employers in the federal government, in state agencies dealing with domestic issues needing advanced language skills, and in global business and NGO sectors.



THE LANGUAGE FLAGSHIP

Creating Global Professionals

A new brand for a new language paradigm

The Language Flagship is a partnership between government, education and business. Our new logo comprises a blue diamond for government, the creator and seminal funder of this program; a gold diamond for business, a key beneficiary and supporter of this effort; and a green diamond for education. Education is at the center of this collaborative effort, responding to advanced language demands in both government and business. Two converging white lines thrust across all three partners, leading the nation to a new paradigm for advanced language education.

Flagship Centers

Arabic Flagship Centers

[Michigan State University](#)

[Dearborn Public Schools K-12 Arabic Program](#)

[University of Maryland, College Park](#)

[University of Texas, Austin](#)

Central Asian Turkic Consortium

[American Councils for International Education](#)

[Georgetown University](#)

[Indiana University](#)

[Princeton University](#)

[University of Chicago](#)

Chinese Flagship Centers

[Brigham Young University](#)

[The Ohio State University](#)

[Ohio Public Schools K-12 Chinese Program](#)

[University of Oregon](#)

[Portland Public Schools K-12 Chinese Program](#)

[University of Mississippi](#)

Eurasian Flagship Consortium

[American Councils for International Education](#)

[Bryn Mawr College](#)

[Middlebury College](#)

[University of California, Los Angeles](#)

[University of Maryland, College Park](#)

Hindi/Urdu Flagship Center

[University of Texas, Austin](#)

Korean Flagship Center

[University of Hawaii, Manoa](#)

Persian/Farsi Center

[University of Maryland, College Park](#)

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