Languages and Literatures Team Meeting  
November 4, 2009  10:15 – 11:30  
4080 – Foreign Languages Building  

Present: Miles Efron, JoAnn Jacoby, Doug Kibbee, Kathleen Kluegel, Carl Niekerk, Curtis Perry, Bruce Swann, Caroline Szylowicz, John Wagstaff, Charlie Wright  

Bruce Swann took the minutes of the meeting.  

John Wagstaff opened the meeting by suggesting an agenda:  
1) Approval of the minutes of recent meetings;  
2) Discussion of the draft survey, its distribution, and the deadline for completion by respondents;  
3) Continued discussion of the Kilton/Kluegel plan;  
4) The question: can we justify, or not, the combination of English and Modern Languages and Linguistics from an intellectual standpoint? JoAnn has some statistical data which will assist in this discussion.  

The minutes of the meetings on October 21 and October 28, as revised in email discussion, were approved without comment. They will be posted to the NSM website.  

JoAnn reviewed the latest version of the survey with changes suggested by members of the group. Discussion focused first on two issues. The first was question 7 (“Why do you visit the library?”) and, among other changes, whether or not to include the option “I do this online”. The second issue involved questions 14 and 15 (”I sometimes visit more than one library” [yes/no]; and “if you answered ‘yes’ to the previous question, think of sometime recently when you had to use multiple libraries for a specific research or teaching project. Please describe which libraries you used and indicate whether having to visit more than one library made it easier or harder to accomplish the task at hand”), and to what extent they duplicated question 4 (“Which libraries within the University Library do you use?”), and whether or not they could be collapsed into one question, or deleted. JoAnn took suggested changes and will forward a final version to the group. John noted that the survey should employ terminology applicable to the broad range of patrons who use the library, suggesting the addition of “study” to the range of activities listed.  

JoAnn then asked about how and to whom the notification of the survey would be distributed. Initially members suggested contacts with which each was most familiar. Then it was suggested that a letter to the Humanities Council for distribution to the Executive Officers of the departments should also be included. The letter would explain the survey and the intention of its reaching faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students. Caroline will notify the members of the Arts and Humanities Division within the library.
JoAnn presented a handout which represented data gleaned from a survey from Spring 2006. The survey created “network maps of UIUC libraries.” The handout showed how users of the English and Modern Languages libraries were also users of other libraries within the UI library system. A humanities clustering effect was noted in the latter two, as well as the position of the main bookstacks as a hub. Miles asked what the graphs do and do not tell us, noting that the diversity of the connections may be stronger than the raw data. Charlie observed that in his experience faculty and graduate students use the Undergraduate Library only to retrieve a book or film. John and Carl concluded the discussion of the handout by noting that the proximity to the main bookstacks made the location on the second floor for English and Modern Languages an attractive option.

John then asked, in this context, if Dara’s list of observations concerning the intellectual commonalities between the English and Modern Languages libraries that had been communicated earlier via email (see Appendix I, below) should be discussed today or later. Kathleen stated that Dara’s list had made explicit the implicit assumptions of the Kilton/Kluegel plan. Charlie noted that the connections between continental and British literature are deep.

John asked if there had been any changes regarding linguistics since the Kilton/Kluegel plan. Several Team members noted the variety of libraries used depending on the area of study within linguistics, from computational linguistics, to sociolinguistics, to the history of a particular language. There was agreement that linguistics may always be a subject requiring coverage by more than one particular library. Doug noted that Translation Studies was a more recent development than the Kilton/Kluegel plan, so needs to be taken account of.

With several minutes remaining, John summarized one possibility as forming an English and Modern Languages and Linguistics Library in room 225 of the Main Library, with office space in 200D; some suggested additional space in 200 for reference materials. Caroline felt that if Library Advancement could move to 425 after Modern Languages and Linguistics moves, then room 227 could be added to the new language and literature unit. JoAnn said that this could be suggested in the Team’s final report, even if it were unlikely to occur.

John proposed that the meeting of November 11 begin in 200 Library in order to observe the space. Kathleen offered the English Library for the remainder of that meeting. The meeting ended at 11:40.
Appendix I

Date: Tue, 03 Nov 2009 13:05:09 -0600
From: "Dara E. Goldman" <degoldma@illinois.edu>
Subject: English/Modern Language commonalities
To: <wagstaff@illinois.edu>

John,

I have included some of my thoughts on the principal points of convergence between English and Modern Languages. Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend the meeting tomorrow. I have a prior commitment (i.e. one I had made before joining the committee) that I have not been able to reschedule. Consequently, I won't be able to clarify/elaborate/discuss these ideas this week, but you are welcome to share them and/or we can deal with them next week. In the meantime, feel free to let me know if you have any questions.

To my mind, the main points that could both justify such a merger and possibly serve as organizing principles for the restructuring of the literature side of things would be as follows:

1. Common bibliography -- although each area/sub-field certainly has its own set of primary/secondary texts (with only a small degree of overlap), the fields--both within and across the units served--share many critical and theoretical texts. I would imagine that someone from any number of units might have occasion to reference a particular work by/about Michel Foucault or Judith Butler, for example. And many of the journals are common to several of the units served.

2. Professional unity -- in professional organizations (the Modern Language Association chief among them) the union of English and other modern languages already exists. Again, this logic is also reflected in many of the leading journals in literary studies, which publish work on literary and cultural studies across the "national borders" of our respective language departments. The division is not limited to "departmental" structure or the idiosyncratic organization of specific institutions. Nevertheless, the professional organizations and publications point to the common disciplinary ground that unites these fields, whether located in separate administrative units or not.

3. Common practices/methodologies -- whatever we decide to do with the term "textual analysis," my understanding is that the label originated from a basic understanding of the shared tools practices common to many/most of our fields. Moreover, not only does this suggest common practices among faculty, but it also extends to the needs or our graduate and undergraduate students. That is, in both English and the modern language departments, we are often training our students to do the same things.
Obviously, this logic does not apply equally to all departments, programs, and/or subfields. Nonetheless, I would say these principles hold for the majority of literary studies. I suspect that similar arguments could be made for linguistics and, to a lesser extent, for the conjoining of literature and linguistics.

I hope that helps. Again, I am sorry that I won't be there in person tomorrow, but let me know if you would like anything further.

Best,

Dara

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